

Timeless Voices of Aviation

Project Kit

This project kit includes the information and forms you will need to participate as a volunteer interviewer in the EAA AirVenture Museum's heritage preservation program "Timeless Voices of Aviation."

Because the interviews you collect will become part of an important historical archive, we ask that you follow the instructions in this kit closely to ensure that your recordings are of good quality, and will be accessible in the future. Your cooperation will greatly assist us in the gathering, cataloguing, transcribing, and distribution of this important collection.

Thank you for joining us in the project!

If you have any questions try the "Frequently Asked Questions" sections of our website:

www.timelessvoices.org

Or you can contact us directly at:

Timeless Voices of Aviation
EAA AirVenture Museum
P.O. Box 3086
Oshkosh, WI 54903

Telephone: 920-426-6839
Email: timelessvoices@eaa.org

The eaa airventure museum's "Timeless Voices of Aviation" Oral history program is an official partner of the Library of Congress' veterans history project. We recognize our debt to the veterans history project in the production of this project kit.

Checklist

Please return this checklist with your interview

Before submitting your recordings to the Timeless Voices of Aviation Program at the EAA AirVenture Museum, be sure you have included the following:

- 1. The recorded interview, on a master copy of one or more video cassettes. After recording the interview please be sure that the “save/rec” tabs on the video cassettes have been moved to the “save” position to prevent recording over them. Cassettes must be labeled with the full name of the person interviewed and the date of the interview.
- 2. Completed Biographical Data Form for each person interviewed. This form provides the information we need to build a detailed database record of the interview.
- 3. Interviewee Release Form signed by each person interviewed.
- 4. Interviewer Release Form signed by the person(s) producing the recording. This includes interviewers and recording operators. The release form allows the collected materials to be available to the public through things like the Timeless Voices website, museum exhibitions, presentations, and publications.
- 5. Completed Video Recording Log. The log will assist our future cataloguing and use of the recording.
- 6. If you are offered original photographs, films, books, manuscripts, or other historical artifacts, please complete and return the Historical Materials Data Form. Please do not accept historical materials. The Historical Materials Data Form allows us to assess whether the materials will be useful to the EAA AirVenture Museum. Following receipt of a completed form, a member of the EAA AirVenture Museum staff will contact the interviewee directly.

Please submit your recordings to:

Timeless Voices of Aviation
EAA AirVenture Museum
P.O. Box 3086
Oshkosh, WI 54903

Interviewee Release Form

To be completed by interviewee

I, _____, am a participant in the Experimental Aircraft Association, Inc.'s "Timeless Voices of Aviation" heritage preservation program. I understand that the primary purpose of the "Timeless Voices of Aviation" program is to collect video recorded oral history interviews of America's aviation veterans and civilians that may be deposited in the permanent collections of the EAA AirVenture Museum and/or the Library of Congress. The deposited materials will serve as a record of aviation experiences; and may be used for scholarly and educational purposes.

I understand that the EAA AirVenture Museum plans to retain the product of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication, presentation on the World Wide Web and successor technologies, and other scholarly and educational purposes.

I hereby grant to the EAA AirVenture Museum ownership of my recorded Timeless Voices interview and the right to use it for the purposes as stated above, and release the EAA AirVenture Museum from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recording. The EAA AirVenture Museum acknowledges that copyright and ownership of my story is retained by me.

Accepted and agreed

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Interviewer Release Form

To be completed by interviewer

I, _____, am a participant in the Experimental Aircraft Association, Inc.'s "Timeless Voices of Aviation" heritage preservation program. I understand that the primary purpose of the "Timeless Voices of Aviation" program is to collect video recorded oral history interviews of America's aviation veterans and civilians that may be deposited in the permanent collections of the EAA AirVenture Museum and/or the Library of Congress. The deposited materials will serve as a record of aviation experiences; and may be used for scholarly and educational purposes.

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I hereby grant to the EAA AirVenture Museum the right to use it for the purposes as stated above, and release the EAA AirVenture Museum from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recording.

Accepted and agreed

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Civil/Commercial Involvement in Aviation

Dates of civil aviation involvement (Year) _____ to _____

Check all that apply:

- Pilot Mechanic Designer Builder
- Restorer Aerobatics Competitor Writer/Author Air Racer
- Administrator Air Show Performer Flight Instructor Airline Employee
- Record-setter Eyewitness to important event Public Figure FBO/Airport Operator

Companies/Organizations served:

Aircraft flown, designed, restored, or built (list 10 max):

Military involvement in aviation

- Pilot Bombardier Navigator Engineer Gunner Mechanic
- Other (Specify) _____

Branch of Service:

- U.S. Army U.S. Navy U.S. Marines U.S. Coast Guard U.S. Air Force
- Other (Specify) _____

Unit(s) served with: _____

Squadron(s): _____ Group(s): _____

Highest Rank: _____ Serial # (Optional): _____

Date(s) of Service (mm/yyyy): _____ to _____

Place(s) of Service: _____

War(s) served in: WWII Korean War Cold War Vietnam War Gulf War
 Iraq War Other _____

Medals/Awards:

Injured? No Yes Date(s): _____

P.O.W.? No Yes Date(s): _____

Aircraft flown or crewed (list 10 max):

Video Recording Log

1. Name and address of collector or interviewer:

Name of Collector/Interviewer: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: (_____) - _____ Email: _____

EAA # (If applicable) _____

2. Full name and birth date of the person being interviewed as it appears on the Biographical Data Form:

Name of Interviewee: _____

Birth Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

3. Recording format (please check):

Betacam VHS 8mm Hi8 Mini DV Digital 8 S-VHS

Other (specify) _____

4. Did you use (please check):

Clip-on microphone Built-in camera microphone
 Other microphone Tripod
 Additional lighting

5. Date of Recording (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

6. Location of Recording (person's home, library, EAA Chapter building, etc):

Indoor Outdoor

Recording and Interviewing Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to give you advice and ideas about how to set up and conduct a “Timeless Voices of Aviation” video oral history interview.

Even for an absolute beginner, following these instructions should result in a good quality historical document that will be extremely valuable to future generations. And remember, you will only get better with experience!

1. Setting Up an Interview

Selecting an interviewee

Although we are very interested in recording the stories of people who have made notable achievements in aviation, remember that the Timeless Voices of Aviation are not just the famous voices of aviation. We would also like to gather stories from ordinary, unheralded individuals. It is common for people to say things like, “my story doesn’t matter,” or “I didn’t do anything important.” In fact, that kind of modesty flies in the face of our purpose. An individual aviation story, be it one of serving a local airport, starting a flying club, designing and building an airplane, or serving the nation in war or peace, is one of the countless threads which, when woven together, creates the priceless tapestry of human flight.

Which thread is unimportant?

We are trying to record all aspects of aviation – so this means Timeless Voices is interested in civil as well as military aviators, plus mechanics, air traffic controllers, aircraft designers, builders and restorers, flight instructors, writers, air show performers, administrators, airport and FBO operators, and airline employees...from astronauts to ultralights and everything in between!

Here are some suggestions on where to find people with interesting aviation stories:

- Your friends and family
- Your EAA Chapter & local airport community
- Your local veterans groups (VFW for example)
- Your nearest aviation museum
- Your state’s Aviation Hall of Fame
- Through the letters page of your local newspaper
- One interviewee will often be able to suggest other people to interview
- Contact the Timeless Voices Program Coordinator to see if there is someone in your area waiting to be interviewed

Preparation

When you contact the potential interviewee, explain what Timeless Voices is all about and schedule a date for the interview. You may wish to refer them to our website, www.timelessvoices.org, or pass along a copy of our informational brochure (extra copies are available from the Timeless Voices office if you need them).

When you speak to an interviewee, it is often a good idea to give them an idea of the type of questions you will ask during the interview. People will sometimes be apprehensive about being interviewed, and this can help make them feel more comfortable.

The more informed you are about your subject, and the better prepared you are as an interviewer, the better your interview will be. Whenever possible, have the subject complete their Biographical Data Form prior to the interview. This will give a summary of the person's aviation career, and can be used as a guide to questioning during the interview. You may even have time to use your local library or the Internet to widen your knowledge of the events and time period your interviewee will be talking about.

Location

Try to find a quiet, private, well-lit room to use for the interview. Avoid rooms with fluorescent lights and loud background noises. You will need at least two chairs and enough space to conduct the interview comfortably. You may need an electrical outlet for your camera. Guard against extraneous noises such as telephones, televisions, or other conversations. Unless supervised by a highly experienced operator, we do not recommend that Timeless Voices interviews be conducted outdoors.

Conducting the interview in the interviewee's own home is often a good idea, as it can help relax the subject. Community Access Television stations can also be a good location, as well as a resource for equipment and technical support.

Take note of any windows. While lots of natural light entering a room is good, never seat your interviewee in front of a window. The window is highly likely to appear on camera as the dominant element on the screen, and your subject's face will appear as a dark shadow. Instead, use windows to light your subject's face, and find a darker background for the interview.

2. How to Capture Quality Audio and Video

There are three pieces of equipment that might be considered "essential" to capturing good quality audio and video:

- Video Camera
- Camera Tripod
- External Microphone

Video Camera

It is recommended that you use the highest quality video camera you can lay your hands on. In ranking order of desirability, the most commonly used video formats are as follows:

Digital formats	High Definition	Professional standard
	Betacam	Professional standard
	Mini DV	Very high quality
	Digital 8	High quality
Analog formats	Hi8	Good quality
	SVHS	Good quality
	SVHS-C	Good quality
	8mm	Basic quality
	VHS	Basic quality
	VHS-C	Basic quality

All of the above formats are capable of providing a usable video document, and are all acceptable for submission to the Timeless Voices program. In terms of providing “best bang for the buck,” we feel that Mini-DV currently provides an extremely high standard of image. However, we wish to emphasize that the quality of the equipment is secondary to the content provided by the interview.

Camera Tripod

Beyond the camera itself, a camera tripod is an essential piece of equipment for capturing consistent, steady images. A full-size tripod is recommended rather than a tabletop model. Good tripods can be purchased from such places as Target, Walmart, K-Mart, and any good camera shop without great expense.

External Microphone

Clarity of sound is essential for ensuring future use of the interview by historians, students and others. To help improve sound quality, it is recommended that you use an external microphone rather than the built-in microphone on your camera. We recommend a clip-on microphone (sometimes referred to as a lavalier mic) clipped on the subject’s collar or lapel, which can be purchased for as low as \$25 from Radio Shack and similar electronics stores. Before purchasing an external microphone, make sure your video camera has an appropriate microphone jack for its use.

Other points to note:

Background

Try to pick a background that is visually interesting, but not invasive. Never place the subject in front of a window or any other source of bright light. The less cluttered the background is, the better the interview will look. Ideally, you should leave about 3 feet between the background and the position of the interviewee.

Lighting

The interview should be conducted in a well-lit location. Try very hard to avoid fluorescent lighting, which tends to cast an unpleasant green/yellow tone over the videotape. Good natural light is best of all, while ordinary house lights or work lights are also acceptable. Beware that shining a light directly at someone's face may produce a harsh image. Remember to look at your set-up through the viewfinder of your camera before filming – this will give a good indication of whether you have got it "right."

Framing/Composition

Try and position the interviewee in an immobile chair so that he or she does not rock back in forth or turn from side to side. Position your camera on its tripod, about 3 feet in front of the subject and slightly off to one side, so that the camera is slightly offset from head on with the subject. The camera lens should be roughly level with the interviewee's chin.

Look through the viewfinder or use the LCD screen along with the zoom feature to frame the shot so that the interviewee's nose is at the center of the picture and the top of their head is a few inches from the top of the picture. Once the shot is set up in this way, try to avoid moving the camera or using the zoom feature during the recording process. The only reason to adjust the picture would be if the interviewee moves out of the shot, or uses their hands to demonstrate a point (fighter pilot describing a dogfight for example).

Sample image of how to frame your interview subject.



The interviewer should sit as close to the camera as possible, and the interviewee should be directed to look at the interviewer, not the camera.

Filming Tips

All recordings should be made at standard speed (SP). Please do not use extended time speeds. Be prepared! You can never have too many batteries, blank tapes, and extension cords. Finally, please take care to turn off the date and time feature so that it is not recorded in the corner of the screen.

3. How to Conduct the Interview

The following explains how to conduct a Timeless Voices of Aviation interview. These questions are specifically geared towards World War II veterans, but they give you a general idea of the format that should be used. By following this guide, you will be able to record a good, solid interview for the archive. First, make sure the interviewee reads and signs the Interviewee Release Form and the Biographical Data Form. As the interviewer you will need to read and sign the Interviewer Release Form.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW

- Every interview should contain several segments. Dividing an interview into segments allows for gathering important details while nurturing memory. We are hoping to capture recollections of life experiences and of the most memorable moments of one's aviation involvement.
- It is important to let the subject tell his or her own story. Try very hard to keep your own opinions out of the interview, and do not ask leading questions that suggest answers. Encourage the interviewee with nods of the head and facial expressions, rather than audible responses such as "yes" and "uh-huh" that will be recorded. Remember that at all times the object is to record the voice and story of the interviewee.
- To avoid asking questions that may not apply to the person you are interviewing, have the participant complete the Biographical Data Form prior to the interview; then review it before the interview. It will help you ask the most relevant questions.
- Feel free to share a few general questions with the participants beforehand. Often interviewees are more comfortable if they know what kinds of questions you might ask.

SEGMENT 1: FOR THE RECORD

1. After pushing the record button on the camera, let the tape run for about 10 or 20 seconds before beginning the interview. Once that time has passed, begin the interview by stating,
"This is an EAA Timeless Voices of Aviation interview with subject's name. The date is date of the interview, and the location is John Doe's home in city, and state. The interviewer is state your name."
2. Next, start with these preliminary questions:

Please state your full name and spell it.

What is your date of birth, and where were you born?

What is your present address?

SEGMENT 2: JOGGING THE MEMORY

From here you get into the meat and potatoes of the interview. Use a chronological format when asking the questions. You can use the following questions as a guideline. Feel free to ask questions of your own as well. Things to keep in mind: be sure to let the subject finish talking after each question before asking another question – try not to interrupt. If something that is said interests you, wait until the subject finishes with the previous question, then say, “Let’s go back to “_____.” If the subject gets completely off the subject, hold up your hand and let them see that you would like to ask another question. Try to keep the interview between 45 and 90 minutes in length. IF you have to go over an hour, remember that most video tapes only hold 60 minutes of video and you will have to stop the recording and put in a new tape.

The following questions are intended for World War II veterans, but no matter what the subject’s involvement with aviation, whether it is building ultralights or flying into space, it is best to use a chronological format starting with childhood memories when conducting the interview. If you have some doubt about what questions to ask, please feel free to contact the Timeless Voices Program Coordinator at timelessvoices@eaa.org.

Where were you born and raised?

What did your parents do for a living?

What is your very first memory as it pertains to aviation?

Did you have an interest in aviation prior to World War II?

What do you remember about the years leading up to the outbreak of war?

What are your memories of December 7th, 1941?

Were you drafted or did you enlist?

Why did you join?

Why did you pick the service branch you joined?

Do you recall your first days in service and where you were sent?

What did it feel like?

Tell me about your training experience(s).

For pilots – ask about Preflight, Primary, Basic, and Advanced Training and the aircraft trained in. For other crew members, ask about their specific training programs.

Do you remember your instructors?

What is your most memorable training experience?

SEGMENT 3: EXPERIENCES

After your training - where did you go?

Did you serve overseas? IF so, how did you get overseas?

Do you remember arriving and what it was like?

Which squadron and group were you assigned to?

Do you remember your commanding officers? What were they like?

What was your specific job/assignment?

** Make a good investigation of the job carried out by the individual. Those who worked with aircraft should be asked about specific types: what was it? What was it like to fly or maintain?
Combat techniques?*

Did you see combat? Tell me about some of your memorable missions.

Were there many casualties in your unit?

Were you ever wounded? IF so, when and how?

Tell me about a couple of your most memorable/harrowing/exciting experiences. (this is always a good question to ask)

Were you a prisoner of war?

IF so, tell me about your experiences in captivity and when freed.

Were you awarded any medal or citations?

How did you get them?

Higher ranks may be asked about battle planning.

SEGMENT 4: LIFE IN THE MILITARY

Ask questions about life in the service and/or at the front or under fire.

How did you stay in touch with your family?

What was the food and accommodations like?

Did you have plenty of supplies?

Did you feel pressure or stress?

Was there something special you did for "good luck?"

How did people entertain themselves?

Were there any visits from USO entertainers?

What did you do on leave?

Where did you travel while in service?

Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual events?

What were some of the pranks you or others would pull?

What did you think of officers or fellow soldiers?

SEGMENT 5: AFTER THE SERVICE

Appropriateness of questions will vary if the veteran had a military career after WWII.

Do you recall the day your service ended?

Where were you?

What did you do in the days and weeks afterwards?

How did you learn about the atomic bombs and what did you feel about their use?

After your service did you work or go back to school?

Did the G.I. Bill support your education?

Did you make any close friendships while in the service?

Did you continue any of those relationships?

For how long?

Did you join a veterans' organization?

SEGMENT 6: LATER LIFE AND CLOSING

What did you go on to do as a career after the war?

Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?

If in a veterans' organization, what kinds of activities does your post or association have?

Do you attend reunions?

How did your service and experiences affect your life?

Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

Thank the participant for sharing his or her recollections. Let them know that a courtesy copy of their interview will be sent to them from EAA Headquarters.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

1. Please be sure that the interviewee, interviewer, and recording operator sign the appropriate release forms.

Once the interview is complete, stop the recording and eject the tape. Close the save tab on the tape to prevent it from being recorded over.

2. Label the tape with the interview subject's name and the date of the recording. Do NOT label the tape case sleeve – this will be done the EAA AirVenture Museum with a specific format for archival purposes.

3. Send the completed recording and accompanying paper materials to:

Timeless Voices of Aviation
EAA AirVenture Museum
P.O. Box 3086
Oshkosh, WI 54903

If at any time you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Timeless Voices Program Coordinator Zachary Baughman at (920)-426-6839, or email at zbaughman@eaa.org.

THANK YOU for participating in EAA's "Timeless Voices of Aviation" video oral history program! You have preserved an important part of our aviation history, and helped Timeless Voices in its mission to, "Let No Story Go Untold!"