

## Tips for a Successful Interview

### Digital Stories of Our Heroes

#### Interview Tips

Conducting a successful interview is not difficult as long as you have prepared for it in advance. Below you will find a few guidelines that can make the interview easy, informative, and fun. Good interview questions will guide the interviewee, encouraging the telling of stories about the hero's experiences as well as information on how those experiences influenced the hero's life.

1. Provide the interviewee a biographical data form to gain basic information about the individual.
2. Research the background of the interviewee and the events the hero experienced. In the case of veterans, remember that they may not necessarily know famous battles or locations by the names used in history books or websites; to jog their memories, be prepared to rephrase your questions or to provide further explanations.
3. Create questions that will require detailed answers and avoid questions that require only a *Yes* or *No* responses.
4. Be sure that the questions cover the *five Ws and the H* (who, what, when, where, why and how).
5. Break your questions up into topics, which will help the interviewee to remember experiences; a scattered approach to questioning can confuse both the interviewee and the interviewer(s).
6. Make sure the first few questions are easy, to help "warm up" the interviewee as well as the interviewer(s) and make everyone more comfortable.
7. Provide the interviewee with a list of questions in advance. This will allow the hero to prepare his/her thoughts, ideas, and stories.
8. Hold a practice interview; if possible, try to incorporate follow-up questions when appropriate.

## Sample Interview Questions

[Interview Questions for Sam S. Ozaki](#) (442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team, Europe 1944-1946)

Fifth Grade Resource Students, Hough Street School, Barrington, Illinois

[Tips for Interviewing Veterans](#)

Veterans History Project, Library of Congress