

80th Division Oral History Project
Sample Interview Questions
(December 2009)

Before the actual interview, announce the following onto the audio tape:

- Name of the veteran.
- His or her birthdate.
- War served in and branch of service.
- Highest rank achieved.
- Date and place (town and state, not the address) of recording the interview.
- The interviewer's name and relationship, if any, to the veteran. Also, the name of anyone else present assisting with the interview.
- The interview is being conducted for the 80th Division Veterans Association.

Sample Questions to Ask the Veteran:

1. Initial set of biographical questions
 - a. Where were you born?
 - b. When were you born?
 - c. What did you do before entering the service?
 - d. Are there any other family members who served in the military?
2. Before Action
 - a. Did you enlist in the Army, were you drafted, or nationalized?
 - i. If enlisted, why and the reason for choosing the Army?
 - ii. When did you join?
 - iii. Where (town and state) did you join?
 - b. Were you an officer or enlisted man?
 - c. What was the initial pay back then?
 - d. Where did you receive basic training?
 - e. Did you receive any training other than basic?
 - f. When did you join the 80th Division?
 - g. What unit were you in? (Regiment, Battalion, Company, Platoon, Squad)
 - i. Where was your unit when you joined? Were you a replacement?
 - ii. What was your job?
 - h. How did you get to Europe? Can you describe the trip and conditions?
 - i. What did you do during the crossing? What kind of activities to keep busy?
 - ii. How was the food?
 - iii. Do you remember anything outstanding about the trip?
3. During the War
 - a. How did you cross the English Channel?
 - i. What was the mood of the troops?
 - b. When did you first see action?
 - c. Do you remember when you first fired your weapon?
 - i. If so, can you describe?

- d. Do you remember when you were first shot at?
 - i. If so, can you describe?
- e. Were you wounded?
 - i. Where (location)?
 - ii. Where (on your body)?
 - iii. Describe what happened, what you and your unit were doing.
 - iv. Was anyone else wounded at that same time?
 - v. Where were you treated? Battalion Aid Station? Further back?
 - vi. When did you return to your unit?
 - vii. Was it the same unit?
- f. Did you get any furloughs or passes?
 - i. When?
 - ii. Where (location)?
 - iii. How long?
- g. Did you have any close friends during the war?
 - i. Did they make it back?
 - ii. If not, can you describe what happened?
- h. How did you stay in touch with family and friends back home?
 - i. How often did you write?
 - ii. How often did you receive letters or packages?
- i. Did you ever capture any prisoners?
 - i. If so, can you describe?
 - ii. What were they like?
 - iii. Did you talk with any of them?
- j. Were you ever captured?
 - i. When?
 - ii. Where?
 - iii. How long were you a POW?
 - iv. How did you escape or were you released?
- k. Were you in the Battle of Argentan?
 - i. Where was your unit?
 - ii. What do you remember about that battle?
- l. Were you in the Moselle River crossing?
 - i. Where was your unit?
 - ii. What do you remember about that battle?
- m. Were you in the Battle of the Bulge?
 - i. Where was your unit?
 - ii. Can you describe the weather?
 - iii. What did you do all day when not fighting?
 - iv. What did you eat and how often?
- n. Were you in the Sauer River crossing to the Siegfried Line?
 - i. Where was your unit?
 - ii. What do you remember about that crossing?
- o. Were you in the Rhine River crossing?
 - i. Where was your unit?

- ii. What do you remember about that crossing?
 - p. Were you in any other major battles?
 - i. Where was your unit?
 - ii. What do you remember about that battle?
 - q. Were you or your unit ever under “friendly fire?”
 - i. Where was your unit?
 - ii. Was anyone hurt?
 - iii. Can you describe the circumstances?
 - r. Did you take part in the liberation of any concentration camps?
 - i. Which one(s)?
 - ii. Can you describe the camp conditions?
 - iii. Do you remember the date of liberation?
 - iv. How long were you there?
 - v. What did you do?
 - s. Where were you when the war ended?
 - i. Can you remember the mood of the troops?
 - ii. How long after you received word that the war ended before you moved out to another location?
 - t. What was the highest rank you attained?
 - u. Did you receive any medals or awards?
 - i. Which ones?
 - ii. Can you describe the action?
 - iii. Which one is the most valuable to you?
- 4. After the War
 - a. Did you remain with the 80th after V-E day (May 7, 1945)?
 - b. Were you part of the occupation force?
 - c. Where were you?
 - d. What did you do?
 - e. When did you get back home?
 - f. How did you get back home?
 - g. What did you do after the war?
 - h. Have you stayed in contact with other 80th Division veterans?
- 5. Reflections
 - a. How did the war affect your life?
 - b. What did you learn from the war?
 - c. Have you talked much about the war with your family?
 - i. If not , why not?