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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT
HONORS TOP NATIONAL INTERVIEWERS

Reception and Workshop to be Held for Participants

The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project (VHP) will honor 14 individuals, who have conducted more than 3,200 interviews of veterans for the Veterans History Project, at a reception on Monday, July 18. The oral histories resulting from their prodigious efforts are now part of the permanent collections of the Library of Congress

All of the top-producers have each conducted more than 100 interviews. The three who have contributed the greatest number of interviews to the project are Gary Swanson of Leawood, Kan.; Michael Lloyd Willie of Chattanooga, Tenn.; and Thomas Swope of Mentor, Ohio.

On Tuesday, July 19, a half-day workshop will be held at the Library so that local project partners and participants can benefit from learning about the experiences of the top-performing interviewers from across the country.

The Veterans History Project is a nationwide volunteer effort of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to record and preserve the stories of wartime veterans and civilian war workers. To date, the project has collected more than 35,000 individual stories, many of which are online at www.loc.gov/vets. The effort relies on thousands of volunteers across the country who interview veterans of all wars, as well as those who supported them on the home front.

Those interested in becoming involved in the Veterans History Project are encouraged to e-mail vohp@loc.gov to request a project kit. The kit is also available on the VHP Web site at www.loc.gov/vets or by calling the toll-free message line at (888) 371-5848.

Honored Veterans History Project Interviewers:

Gary Swanson has submitted 415 (and conducted more than 565) interviews to the Veterans History Project. Swanson works with VHP partner, Americans Remembered, which was founded by Bob Babcock of Atlanta. His hour-long video interviews are archived through the Jackson County Historical Society and shared with the Library of Congress.

Michael Lloyd Willie has submitted 397 interviews. In Chattanooga, WRCB-TV Channel 3

Eyewitness News, First Tennessee Bank and Erlanger, a nonprofit, academic teaching center affiliated with the University of Tennessee College of Medicine, formed a partnership to record local veterans' stories. The local project was launched on Veterans Day 2002, with Rep. Zach Wamp and Librarian of Congress James H. Billington in attendance. Willie has been the primary interviewer for Chattanooga's efforts on behalf of the VHP.

Thomas Swope has submitted 274 interviews. Swope learned about the Veterans History Project through his uncle Bernie Swope, a World War II veteran and VFW Post Commander in Ashtabula County. Swope participates in the project in memory of his father, Clarence Swope, also a veteran of World War II. Thomas Swope has produced and hosted a radio series titled "Legacies: Stories from the Second World War," which honors many of the veterans he has interviewed.

Gary Rhay, of Eugene, Ore., has submitted 266 interviews. Rhay, a Vietnam War veteran, has been working with a number of veterans' organizations and museums to preserve the personal histories of wartime veterans for many years and initiated his efforts before the Library of Congress launched the Veterans History Project.

Because of the strong support of Sen. Richard G. Lugar for the work of the Veterans History Project, a number of the top-performing interviewers are from Indiana. Lugar has partnered with more than 200 high schools and other community centers around the state to enlist help in conducting interviews of Hoosier veterans. More than 5,000 interviews have been collected throughout the state.

Emmy Huffman of Greencastle serves as coordinator for Lugar's effort to record veterans' stories in Indiana, and she has submitted 265 interviews herself. **Patricia McClain** of Scottsburg has submitted 267 interviews, and **Larry Ordner** of Newburgh has submitted 264 interviews. **Mary Jungemann**, an English teacher at Southport High School in Indianapolis, has contributed approximately 300 interviews in the past three years. **Gertrude Stephenson**, of the Christopher Harrison DAR in Washington County, has assisted McClain in recording the interviews of some 200 veterans. **Kelly Bergman** of Auburn has submitted 104 interviews on behalf of the Dean V. Kruse Foundation's WWII Victory Museum, another of the partner organizations working with Sen. Lugar.

Lyndle Barnes Jr., the president of the Buffalo Trace Boy Scouts Council in Southwest Indiana, established the Dick Lugar/Library of Congress Veterans History Project patch that Lugar presented to several scouts at a ceremony in August 2004.

Carol Fowler of Lincroft, N.J., has submitted 157 interviews to the VHP. In January 2001 Fowler began an internship to interview World War II veterans at Brookdale Community College's history department and Center for World War II Studies and Conflict Resolution, and she attended the Veterans History Project kickoff ceremony on the U.S.S. Intrepid in New York City on June 6, 2002.

Since then, Fowler has involved many of her other local community organizations in the project and continues to interview veterans through the Center for U.S. War Veterans' Oral Histories in Sea Girt, N.J.

Andrew "Bud" Fisher of Sylvania, Ohio, has submitted 154 interviews. Fisher served in the U.S. Army in Europe during the Korean War. He learned of the Veterans History Project through a news article in 2002 and called the local VHP coordinator to volunteer.

Harold Phillips of Winchester, Va., has submitted 131 interviews. A Vietnam War veteran, Phillips is a volunteer for the Winchester-Frederick County Archives and is working with their staff to record veterans' stories.

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