

Preserving wartime memories

AARP asks vets, civilians to share their experiences.

BY ROBERTA YARED

The newly launched Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress is looking for people to share their wartime memories, whether they were in the military or a home-front civilian.

Congress created the Veterans History Project by an overwhelming vote in 2000 to preserve the accounts of men and women involved in World War I, World War II and the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars.

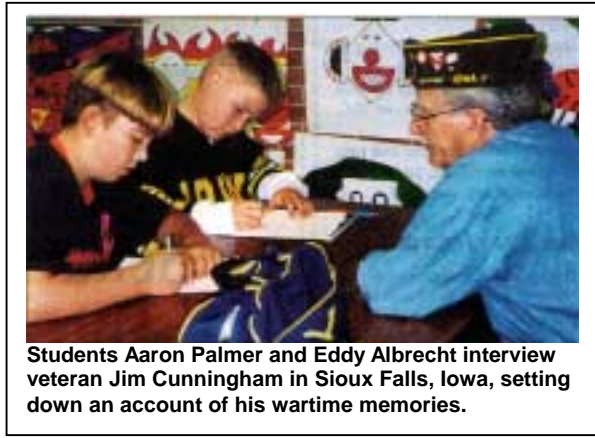
The project was spurred by Sens. Max Cleland, D-Ga., and by Chuck Hagel, D-Neb.—both Vietnam vets— and Reps. Ron Kind, D-Wis., Steny Hoyer, D-Md. and WWII veteran Amo Houghton, R-N.Y.

AARP, a major sponsor of this new project, is working with the American Folklife Center of the Library of Congress to create a national archive of experiences and documents for future generations.

“Now, more than ever, traits such as endurance, courage, loyalty need to abide,” AARP President Tess Canja noted at the Library of Congress kickoff in November. “Especially crucial today ... the Veterans History Project will heighten regard for these traits that are so essential in surviving difficult times.”

AARP has pledged \$1 million a year for three years, asking its members who have lived through the wars of the 20th century to participate in this important project.

The goal is to establish a comprehensive collection at the Library of Congress and on its website as well as at other historical and veterans organizations around the country.



Students Aaron Palmer and Eddy Albrecht interview veteran Jim Cunningham in Sioux Falls, Iowa, setting down an account of his wartime memories.

How you can participate

THE AMERICAN FOLKLIFE CENTER at the Library of Congress is seeking audio and video recordings, letters, diaries, photographs, maps, home movies, drawings—anything that helps you tell your story.

The center offers advice and sample questions to students and family members who wish to interview veterans for oral histories.

For a project kit, applications and more detailed information on ways to participate:

Write to the Veterans History Project, Library of Congress/American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Ave. SE, Washington DC 20540-4615. Or call toll free and leave a message at (888) 371-5848 or go online to www.loc.gov/folklife/vets.