



TIMELESS VOICES OF AVIATION

## PROJECT KIT

EAA AIRVENTURE MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 3065

OSHKOSH, WI

54903-3065

920.426.6880

FAX: 920.426.6765

WWW.TIMELESSVOICES.ORG

TIMELESSVOICES@EAA.ORG

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 a 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" section of our website:

[www.timelessvoices.org](http://www.timelessvoices.org)

Or you can contact us directly at:

"Timeless Voices of Aviation"  
EAA AirVenture Museum  
P.O. Box 3065  
Oshkosh, WI 54903

Telephone: 920-426-6800  
E-mail: [timelessvoices@eaa.org](mailto:timelessvoices@eaa.org)

*The EAA AirVenture Museum's "Timeless Voices of Aviation"  
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 Project at the EAA AirVenture Museum, be sure you have included the following:

- 1. Recorded interview, on the master copy of one or more video cassettes. After recording the interview the plastic tabs should be removed from the video cassettes 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 (see Biographical Data Form). This Form provides the information we need to build a detailed database record of the interview.
- 3. Release form signed by each person interviewed (see Interviewee Release Form).
- 4. Release form signed by the person(s) producing the recording. This includes interviewers and recording operators (see Interviewer's Release Form). The release forms allow the collected materials to be available to the public through things like exhibitions, publications, presentations, websites and TV productions.
- 5. Completed Video Recording Log (see Video Recording Log). The log will assist our future cataloging and use of the recording.
- 6. If you are offered original photographs, films, books, manuscripts or 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 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  
3000 Poberezny Road  
Oshkosh, WI 54903

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# INTERVIEWER RELEASE FORM



TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWERS, RECORDING OPERATORS  
AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a participant in the EAA Aviation Foundation's "Timeless Voices of Aviation" heritage preservation program. I understand that the primary purpose of the "Timeless Voices of Aviation" project is to collect video-recorded oral histories 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 Aviation Foundation plans to retain the product of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication, broadcast, presentation on the World Wide Web and successor technologies, and for promotion of the EAA Aviation Foundation and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant to EAA Aviation Foundation ownership of the physical property delivered to the EAA Aviation Foundation and the right to use the property that is the product of my participation (for example, my interview or performance) as stated above.

I also grant to the EAA Aviation Foundation my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photograph(s), provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation in the "Timeless Voices of Aviation" to be used, published, and copied by the EAA Aviation Foundation and its assignees in any medium.

I agree that the EAA Aviation Foundation may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction, or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release the EAA Aviation Foundation, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, including but not limited to, any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if interviewer is a minor) \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_



# INTERVIEWEE RELEASE FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWEE



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ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



# BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES



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**PERSONAL & CONTACT INFORMATION** .....

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:  Male  Female

Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Current address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

EAA Member:  No  Yes Membership # (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

**AVIATION CAREER** .....

Please give a brief synopsis of your involvement with aviation:

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CIVIL/COMMERCIAL .....

Dates of civil aviation career (Year): \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:

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

Companies/Organizations served:

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Aircraft (list 10 max):

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MILITARY .....

- Pilot       Bombardier       Navigator       Engineer       Gunner       Mechanic
- Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service:

- U.S. Army       U.S. Navy       Marines       Coast Guard       U.S. Air Force

Unit(s) served with: \_\_\_\_\_

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Highest Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Serial # (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Service (mm/yy): \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Places of Service: \_\_\_\_\_





Wars served in:    WWII    Korean War    Vietnam War    Gulf War  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Medals/Awards:

\_\_\_\_\_

Injured?    No    Yes   Date: \_\_\_\_\_

P.O.W.?    No    Yes   Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Aircraft (list 10 max):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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# VIDEO RECORDING LOG



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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 (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated length of recording (in minutes) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Location of recording \_\_\_\_\_

Indoor     Outdoor

7. If possible, please summarize the topics discussed in the interview in their order of appearance on the recording.

Meter Reading

Or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



(Continue on additional sheets as needed).





Meter Reading  
Or Minute Mark

Topics presented in order of discussion on recording

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Two columns of horizontal lines for recording notes, corresponding to the 'Meter Reading Or Minute Mark' and 'Topics presented in order of discussion on recording' headers.



# HISTORICAL MATERIALS DATA FORM



Name of Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a brief description of any historical items (for example, original photographs, films, books, manuscripts or historical artifacts) offered by the interviewee as a donation to the collection of the EAA AirVenture Museum. Please note the Museum does not accept loans. Please do not send items to the Museum – a member of staff will contact the interviewee to make further arrangements.

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# 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 to record 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, 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... to name but a few!

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
- 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.

### Preparation

When you contact the 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](http://www.timelessvoices.org) or pass on a copy of our informational brochure (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 about the type of questions you will ask during the interview. People will sometimes be apprehensive about an interview, 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

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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 the 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	Betacam Mini DV Digital 8	Pro-standard Very high quality High quality
Analogue formats	Hi8 SVHS SVHS-C 8mm VHS VHS-C	Good quality Good quality Good quality Basic quality Basic quality Basic quality





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All of the above formats are capable of providing a usable video document, and all are acceptable for submission to Timeless Voices of Aviation. In terms of providing "best bang for the buck" we feel that, with camera prices starting below \$400, Mini-DV currently provides an extremely high standard of image for the money. However, we wish to emphasize that the quality of the equipment used is secondary to the content provided by the interview.

For those who do not own their own video equipment, you may be able to rent or borrow excellent quality equipment from various sources within your local community. Community Access Television Stations can be a great resource for equipment, technical support and studio facilities. Corporations, schools, universities and libraries can also be helpful.

#### *Note about DVD:*

The first direct-to-DVD cameras are currently entering the marketplace. DVD appears to be an immature technology and we have concerns about non-standardization of DVD formats and the potential for image quality loss when editing from DVD. So, although DVD appears to have a bright future, at this stage we do not recommend it for Timeless Voices.

#### **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 any good camera shop without great expense, just make sure the mount fits your camera.

#### **External microphone**

Clarity of sound is essential for ensuring future use of the interview by historians, students and others. As mentioned previously, you can improve sound quality by taking care to avoid background noise. There is another big step you can take - instead of using the internal (built-in) microphone on your camera, use an external microphone positioned as closely to the interviewee as possible. We recommend a clip-on microphone (sometimes referred to as a lavalier microphone).

These can be purchased for about \$25 from Radio Shack. Check the connection required to your camera before purchasing, and make sure you get adequate cable length. Although wireless microphone systems are available, the cheaper hard-wired versions work just as well, and give greatly improved sound quality when compared to a built-in camera microphone. Clip the microphone close to the mouth of the interviewee, in the lapel/collar area.

If you cannot source a clip-on microphone, any other type of external microphone – positioned as closely to the interviewee as possible, is preferable to a in-built camera microphone.

It is important that the voices of both parties can be heard during the interview. If the interviewer speaks loudly and clearly when questioning, this should not be a problem.





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*Other points to note:*

### **Background**

Try and 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. 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. Specialist lighting instruments can also be bought or rented. 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**

Position your camera on its tripod, about 3 feet away from and directly facing the subject. The interviewee's eye level should be roughly that of the camera lens. Look through the viewfinder and use the zoom feature to frame the shot so the interviewee's head and shoulders are in the center of the viewfinder. Once the shot is set up in this way, do not move the camera or use the zoom feature in any way during the recording process. The only reason to move the camera would be if the interviewee moves so part of his or her face is out of shot.

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. If the interview is conducted as a normal conversation between interviewer and interviewee, you will achieve excellent visual results.

### **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 not to burn the date and time into the corner of the screen.

### **Finally - practice makes perfect!**

Before conducting your first interview, you may wish to do a trial run using a willing friend or family member. Set up the interview, record a few minutes of conversation and play back over your TV to check light, sound and framing / composition.

And once you have started, keep recording Timeless Voices interviews! Your skills will improve with practice, and you will be doing a valuable job preserving history for the future.

### **3. HOW TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW**

Make an introductory announcement at the start of each recording. Let the camera run for 10-20 seconds before beginning to speak. Record on tape the date and place of the





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interview, the name of the person being interviewed, and the names of other persons attending the interview.

### **Interview Length**

The length of the interview will depend very much upon the interviewee and what they have to say – many interviews are concluded in under 30 minutes, others will be longer than an hour. We ask that recordings do not exceed 2 hours.

### **During the interview.**

Keep the camera running throughout the interview, unless you are asked to turn it off by the interviewee. Never record secretly.

Remember at all times that the object of the exercise is to record the voice, and the story of the interviewee. The less we hear of the interviewer's voice, the better! Here are some tips to help you achieve a successful interview:

Don't begin the interview with questions about painful or controversial topics. The interviewee can be relaxed with simple starter questions like:

- When and where were you born?
- Tell me about your family background
- How did you get involved with aviation?

It is a good idea to move the interview along chronologically – this gives both interviewer and interviewee a natural "structure" to the interview.

Try to keep your questions short and simple. Avoid complicated, multipart questions.

Don't ask questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no", but ask "how, when and why" questions.

Try very hard to keep your own opinions out of the interview, and don't 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.

Be patient and give the interviewee time to reflect before going on to a new question. Many people take short reflective breaks in the course of answering one question.

Use follow-up questions to elicit more details from the interviewee. Examples of good follow-up questions include:

- When did that happen?
- What did you think about that?
- Did that happen to you?
- What are the steps in doing that?





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When you feel you have exhausted your questions, ask the interviewee "Before we finish, is there anything else you would like to say?"

At the end of the recording, be sure to thank your interviewee for their contribution.

### **Again - practice makes perfect!**

Conducting oral history interviews can be an extremely rewarding experience for the interviewer. There is so much to learn from the knowledge and experiences of others. Your skills as an interviewer will improve with practice - the more interviews you conduct, the more adept you will become at asking the right questions. More reasons to conduct more Timeless Voices interviews!

### **4. AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

After the interview is complete, please label your tape clearly with the full name of the person interviewed and the date of the interview. Send the master tape (not a copy) and accompanying paperwork to the Timeless Voices office. A convenient checklist is included as part of this package. It is extremely important that the Biographical Data Form and Interviewer/Interviewee Release Forms are included when you send the materials to Oshkosh.

If copies of the interview are requested by the interviewee, yourself or family members – you are encouraged to make them before sending the master tape to Oshkosh. Unfortunately for logistical reasons this is not a service EAA can provide free of charge.

You may wish to consider creating a transcript (a word-for-word written copy) of the interview on computer disk (preferably using Microsoft Word). Although time-consuming, a full transcript of the recording is an extremely valuable research tool.

### **5. AND FINALLY**

Thank you for participating as a volunteer in EAA's Timeless Voices of Aviation!

