

## AVI's Quick Start Tips



*Don't be intimidated by the notion of preserving history...be excited that you get to be a part of it!*

*Whether you're recording your veteran's history orally, or asking that they record their own memories in writing, here are some quick and easy tips to get started:*

### **1. Steal a tip from Nike...JUST DO IT!**

You can always go back and make any corrections you need to—the important thing is that you use the present moment to capture your loved ones memories.

### **2. Technology is your friend!**

Grab a tape recorder, a digital mp3 recorder, a video camera...anything that will easily help you record your veteran's story.

### **3. Take a stab at the NABAS.**

The most important piece of information to record are your Veteran's NABAS: Name, Age (birth date), Branch (of the military), Address, and his or her Story. As long as you get the NABAS, you can always fill in the gaps later.

### **4. Beg the question.**

Provide your veteran with a plethora of questions. These questions give them a jumping off point if they don't know where to begin. Don't be afraid, however, to deviate from your preconceived questions should new topics emerge during the interview.

### **5. Do as the Interview Pros do.**

If you've decided to interview your veteran, the best way to get their story is to avoid asking questions that can only be answered with "yes" or "no". Ask open-ended questions that require an explanation, or a story to back it up. This encourages your veteran to talk about his or her experience in more depth...and you'll feel like Barbara Walters in no time!

### **6. Get their story down to the letter.**

If you have asked your veteran to record his or her own story, suggest that they write it in letter form, either to you, or one of their friends. People are a lot less intimidated to take a stab at writing if they're writing something as comfortable as a letter.

### **7. Slow and Steady Wins the Race.**

Let your veteran go at his or her own pace. Remember that he or she is sharing deeply personal and life-changing experiences...try to be as sensitive and understanding as you can, and respect the memories and the individual. They have more than earned it.