



AAFES *the go where you go!*

AAFES

HISTORY PROGRAM

Conducting and Preserving Historical Interviews,
Photos and Documents

9/11 through OEF/OIF History Project

The AAFES History Program collects and archives personal stories, photos and documents from AAFES associates and retirees who have supported the U.S. Military in peacetime and wartime. The program also encourages input from military members, dependents and veterans who want to tell their stories of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.



AAFES History Program - 9/11 through OEF/OIF History Project

This publication provides guidelines and tips for AAFES associates and military members wanting to contribute their experiences with AAFES during support of rescue workers after 9/11 and throughout operations in OIF/OEF. The information included in this document is also designed for those wishing to interview fellow associates, deployees and military members who served in OEF/OIF.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, “We go where you go” has taken on new meaning as AAFES associates have followed Soldiers and Airmen into Afghanistan, Iraq and other locations in Southwest Asia. The enclosed forms will make it easier for you to conduct interviews or send your memoirs to the AAFES History Program at AAFES Dallas Headquarters.

Part of the interviews and photos submitted will be used in a 9/11 through OEF/OIF history book. The information could also be added to the AAFES History web site.

This Publication contains:

- Overview of the AAFES History Program
- Interview, recording guidelines
- Required forms
- Interview question ideas
- Memoir writing guidance
- Contact information

Iraq, 2003



AAFES History Program Mission

The purpose of the AAFES archives is to identify, collect and preserve photographs, memorabilia and documents pertaining to the origins, programs and policies of AAFES and make them available for research.

For more than 100 years, AAFES' mission has been to support the men and women of the Armed Forces around the world during military operations.

“WE GO WHERE YOU GO” epitomizes AAFES' mission, particularly when our service members are stationed far away from American shores.

The AAFES History Program collects stories and documents from retirees and associates. The program also documents military members, veterans or dependents and their experiences with AAFES at home and abroad.



Iraq, 2004

Collecting AAFES' history

The focus of the AAFES History Program is on audio, video and written memoirs of personal experiences pertaining to AAFES. The program welcomes photos, documents and artifacts (on an individual basis.) Please contact the staff historian if there is an artifact you would like to donate.

Recording, memoir, memorabilia and photo/document donations can be sent to:
AAFES

PL-C Staff Historian
PO Box 660202
Dallas, Tx 75266-0202

Note: The program does not accept items on loan.



Camp Doha, Kuwait, 2004

What happens to the items you submit?

Donated artifacts, photos or interviews with the proper release/donation and biographical information release forms:

- The AAFES History Program (AHP) sends a letter of receipt.
- All material is logged and archived for future reference and research.
- Some recordings and materials will be made available to the public through the headquarters building and the AAFES History web site at aafes.com, about aafes.

Information on audio/video recording

When conducting or participating in a recorded interview, it is recommended to use an external microphone. Place the microphone in front of yourself or the person to be interviewed. A tripod will be needed for the use of a video camera.

Set the microphone six to 12 inches from the person being interviewed and test for sound quality by asking the person to speak, stopping the tape, rewinding and playing back.

When making a video, focus the camera on the upper body of the person being interviewed. Have the view wide enough to capture hand gestures. Be mindful of the lighting. Do not video tape in front of a window or other bright light behind your subject, or you may not be able to distinguish their features on the recording. To avoid shadows on the face, direct and even lighting is recommended.



The location of your interview is almost as important as the equipment you use. Find a quiet area. Rooms with soft surfaces such as carpeting and upholstery provide better sound quality and fewer echoes. Avoid chiming clocks, humming fluorescent lights, hissing air vents, ringing phones, or background noises from television, radio or other conversations.

Be sure to remove the “erase tabs” on the audio or video cassette to avoid accidental erasure, or to prevent accidental recording over the original.

Bagram, Afghanistan, 2005

More information on recording oral histories

Recorded interviews should last 30 to 90 minutes. Introduce each recording with the date, location and names of persons present. Spell out names that may be unclear. Interview questions enclosed in this document will give the interviewer ideas on what to ask.

Photographs, letters or other documents can be useful to help jog the subjects memory. If the subject is willing to donate the photos or documents they will add value to the interview. Original photos and documents are preferred, but high-quality legible copies will be accepted.

Complete the biographical form in advance so you will have important information to use for the interview. Review the interview question form and select appropriate questions. When conducting an interview, be a good listener. Encourage the speaker by smiles or nods. If you do not understand a comment or terminology used, be sure to have the interviewee clarify.

Other tips when conducting an interview:

Keep tape recorder or video camera running throughout interview. Never record secretly.

Keep questions uncomplicated and short.

Avoid questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no.”

Encourage interviewee with nods rather than audible responses such as “uh-huh.”

Don't begin interview with painful or controversial topics.

Be patient and give the interviewee time to reflect on their answers.

Be yourself. Don't pretend to know more about a subject than you do.

Remember, obscene or offending language or comments can not be used.

Afghanistan, 2005



Biographical Form

In order for your information to be filed in AAFES' archives, this form must be filled out and submitted with your interview or donations.

First Middle Last Maiden Name

Check one

Associate ____ Retiree ____ Military Service Member ____ Military Dependent ____ Veteran ____

Address _____

City _____ state _____ zip _____, _____

Telephone (_____) _____ e-mail _____

Place of Birth _____ Birth Date _____

What department(s)/branch of service were you employed? _____

Title of your last position held _____

Did you deploy? _____ If so, where and when _____

Locations of employment or service _____

Did the military member, veteran or deployed associate sustain combat or service-related injuries?

__ If so, when and where? _____

Medals or special service awards _____

Are photographs included? ____ If so, please fill out the photograph log sheet

Are manuscripts or documents included? ____ If so, please fill out the manuscript form

Please use back of form to include additional information.

Release Form

AAFES History Program

SOUND ARCHIVES AND DOCUMENT GIFT AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FORM

In consideration of the commitment that the AAFES History Program has made to preserve the heritage of AAFES, I hereby donate in form and content all rights to the video and or audio tape recorded interview(s) given or sent on _____, together with any supplementary materials listed on the attached forms.

I confirm that I have the authority to grant the above the rights to the AAFES History Program.

AAFES shall have the right to use, reproduce, distribute and give access to the material for any purpose whatsoever and may use my name and or likeness in connection therewith.

Interviewer (if applicable)

Narrator

Si

Print name

Print name

Address

Address

Audio/Video Recording Log

Name of interviewer (if applicable)

First Middle Last Maiden Name

Name of interviewee

First Middle Last Maiden Name

Address of interviewer (if applicable or different from the subjects address)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____, _____

Telephone (_____) _____ e-mail _____

Recording format (please check which format applies)

Video type:

VHS _____ 8mm _____ High-8 _____ Digital _____ other _____

Audio type:

Cassette _____ CD _____ Digital _____ other _____

Date of recording _____

Location of recording _____

Corresponding materials

Are you sending other materials along with the recording? _____ If yes, please fill out the document or photo logs.

Please fill out topics covered in recording _____

Please use back of form to include additional information.

Photograph Log

Photos should first be numbered with a soft, #1 pencil on the back. Please do not use a pen or marker.

Name of individual donating photographs:

First Middle Last

If more than four photos are to be submitted, please make a copy of this form and continue listing.

Photograph #1

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Photograph #2

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Photograph #3

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Photograph #4

Place _____ date _____

Person (s) pictured left to right _____

Description _____

Memoirs and Document Log

Fill out this form when submitting written memoirs, documents, letters and other printed and written manuscripts. This form will be used in conjunction with the biographical form and release forms.

Name of person submitting documents

First Middle Last

Full name of person or business about whom the document relates:

Type date(s) of when document(s) was originally produced _____

Type of items submitted (circle those that apply):

Account books Letters Diaries Scrapbooks Other _____

Number of items submitted: _____

If these items are copies of the originals please verify if the original copies are held.

Note: The AAFES History Program encourages original copies be donated for safe storage and preservation.

What are the most important topics and events described in the documents? _____

Artifact Gift Form

If you have an historical item you would like to donate to the AAFES History Program, please contact the AAFES historian. Fill out this form and include it with your donation. Artifacts could include (but are not limited to): AAFES uniforms, memorabilia and souvenirs collected from overseas service or deployments.

Name of person donating items

First Middle Last

Type of item and date it was purchased, found or given as a gift _____

Date or era when the artifact was originally produced _____

If it is a souvenir, where did it come from and what is the story of its origin

Conditions

The owner absolutely transfers full title by signing below. All gifts are outright and unconditional.

Signature

Donor _____ Date _____

Printed name _____

The AAFES History Program would like to thank you for your gift.

Questions for interviews

Use the following guidelines when conducting interviews. It may be helpful to split the interview into segments. Remember, the purpose of this project is to record and preserve the historic support AAFES has given to military members since 9/11.

Core Questions

Administrative Questions (all interviews)

1. Full name
2. Position/Location assignment/Branch of service
3. Number of years with AAFES or in military service

Questions for AAFES associates (these questions will focus on support of the troops or rescue workers from 9/11 through OEF/OIF by deployees or distribution center, region and headquarter associates)

1. During _____ (Sept 11, war in Afghanistan or Iraq) where were you located and what was your position?
2. After _____ (Sept 11, war in Afghanistan or Iraq) what roles did you play in the support of troops (or rescue workers after 9/11) until 2006?
3. What were your most significant accomplishments? How did you feel about supporting the troops during war time?
4. If deployed, tell about your location, explain your living conditions, work schedule, food you ate, uniforms you wore, people you met and worked with or served at the TFEs. Did you learn about the customs and culture of the local people?
5. Were you or anyone on your team wounded by hostile fire? Explain the incident and be sure to include recovery and any awards incurred.
6. If deployed more than once, explain the differences in deployments. How did it feel deploying a second (or more) time? Did you deploy to different areas or countries?
7. Is there anything you would like to add?

Questions for deployed military members

1. Where were you located?
2. What sort of AAFES exchanges, restaurants or services were located near or in your base?
3. What is your most memorable experience in regards to AAFES' support of the troops during deployment?
4. Is there anything you would like to add?

Guidelines for memoirs

The AAFES History Program would like as much as your story as possible. Typewritten, double spaced text is easiest to read. Memoirs are best when they address a wide variety of events. The smallest details and thoughts are of great interest to researchers.

Getting started

Jog your memory by gathering up photos, maps, letters, etc. from the time period you would like to write about. Think about where you were and what you did on a specific date. Example: Where were you on Sept. 11?

Develop a time line

Write down all the places you went to during this time period. Add the dates to the best of your recollection.

Create a list of topics

You may want to develop a list of topics. Think about the people you served or worked and make a list.

Writing a memoir

Sit down with you mementos and photographs around you and try to write a page or two a day.

Start with information about yourself. When did you start working with AAFES and what was your position?

For associates supporting the war zone from distributions centers, regions or headquarters, how did you feel about supporting the troops? What was your position and how did your job impact getting merchandise and services to the troops?

For associates that deployed, write about your deployed experiences. Why did you deploy with AAFES? What skills have you learned from being deployed? How did it feel to bring a bit of home to the troops?

For deployed military members, how did your exchange privileges effect your deployment? Did the exchange bring you some comforts of home? Did you develop a relationship with the staff? How did it feel to walk into a PX in Bagram or eat a Whopper from the Burger King in Baghdad?

Write your most memorable experience serving the troops or being served by associates working for AAFES.



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document donations can be sent to:

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