

Session Synopsis:

Oral History in the U.S. Army: A Perspective on Interviewing and Recording Data

Since World War II, the U.S. Army has used oral history to help build the historical record.

U.S. Army Oral History programs seek to obtain historical information that may not otherwise be documented by conducting detailed interviews focused on significant events in order to capture the observations and opinions of participants and leaders at all echelons.

These interviews preserve lessons learned and assist in the transfer of institutional knowledge by providing an individual perspective on important events, issues, and personalities. This material not only helps to complete the record but also can provide future leaders with some insight when confronting similar challenges.

The transcripts and products are used widely in the preparation of official histories and internal studies. The interview techniques have been refined through modern journalism. Oral History activities and programs are practiced across the U.S. Army and are an integral part of the Army History Program.

Additionally, Mr. Mages will discuss the execution of the Lincoln conspirators on Fort McNair and provide a short biography of Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, in whose honor the post is named.

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is publishing a collection of oral history interviews conducted with 9/11 survivors titled, "Then Came the Fire: Personal Accounts from the Pentagon, 11 September 2001." The book will be released by the Secretary of the Army on September 11, 2011.