We went overseas on the

Sample #2: 

Lieutenant Commander Charles Hobson Wolfinger had never intended to join the military and

in every continent that was fought on during World War II.

Before joining his battalion in Europe, Folsom completed rigorous training at a training camp in

for a couple of days waiting for a high tide. . . .

When we got over there, I forget how many days it took us, but we had to stay in the Irish

on the way over they gave us all of these shots, and so forth. The guy on the top

transport the automobiles in those days. 

...Going into Normandy was a very moving experience. Seeing so many kids my age...that was

their last day. It was very hard to do that.” Like so many of his young comrades, Daniel Folsom was only

nineteen years old when the invasion of Normandy took place on the 6th of June, 1944. After being
drafted into the Navy in the fall of 1942, Folsom became a coxswain on a rhino barge where he spent four

years in service of the 111th Battalion NCB. His battalion was the only battalion in the Navy to fight in
every continent that was fought on during World War II.

[During my service] I went to Europe.... I was in Normandy on June the 6th, and came back from Europe... I went...into the Pacific. I went to the Philippines. I went to the South Pacific, and I went to Borneo, Balikpapan, and Brunei Bay, which are down in the

South Pacific. I went up to China for a landing, and then from there back to the Philippines. I...went off to Guam, and got mustered out from there.

Folsom and his battalion were active in both the invasion of Normandy, and the covert maneuvers that

took place in Slapton Sands in preparation for the landings made at Normandy.

Before joining his battalion in Europe, Folsom completed rigorous training at a training camp in

Virginia. “I went through boot camp...in Williamsburg, Virginia, and it was hot every day, very humid. I

lost a lot of weight being there. And, it wasn't hard to get into [the] regimen [of] what they wanted you to

do because I grew up on a farm.” After completing boot camp, Folsom became a Seaman Second Class, and he traveled to Europe by

ship.

We went overseas on the Mauritania to Europe, and it was terrible. It’s a British ship, and of course, it was wartime. The food was lousy, we got fed twice a day, and on the way over they gave us some shots. [We] were down in D-Deck, which is where they transport the automobiles in those days. [We] were bunked in hammocks, five high, and on the way over they gave us all of these shots, and so forth. The guy on the top hammock would get sick, and the four guys down suffered from it. So, it was horrendous.

When we got over there, I forget how many days it took us, but we had to stay in the Irish Sea for a couple of days waiting for a high tide. . . .

Sample #2: 

Lt. Commander Charles Hobson Wolfinger

USS Radford DD 446 USNTS (Tactical Radar)

Lieutenant Commander Charles Hobson Wolfinger had never intended to join the military and
certainly never imagined that he would eventually be part of several major naval battles in the South
Oral History Essay Components

Pacific during World War II. By the end of his service, he and his shipmates had become well decorated with awards and had seen their fair share of combat, including the heroic rescue of the USS Helena in the Battle of Kula Gulf, July 1943.

At the age of twenty, Wolfinger graduated in the class of 1940 from a Quaker college, Haverford, in Pennsylvania. Shortly before graduation, his father had been invited to serve as the chairman of the United States Draft Board, created as a result of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. Consequently, he gave his son an ultimatum: When Wolfinger turned twenty-one later that December, he would have six months to enlist in the military or be drafted regardless of his number. So, Wolfinger recalled, “…I volunteered early in the service because my father was breathing down my neck to draft me in the army…. I didn’t want to be involved in the dirt and grime of the army. I didn’t want to be a foot soldier. I thought the sea was a lot more romantic than on the land.” Hence, Wolfinger decided to join the Navy.

Sample #3:

Signalman 2nd Class Lawrence Edward Clingman
94th Seabees Battalion, USS Sheridan APA-51

Once Pearl Harbor was attacked, it didn’t take any coaxing to get Lawrence Clingman to join the Armed Forces. “We had heard so much about war that all they needed to do was what the Japanese did at Pearl Harbor and everybody wanted to volunteer,” Clingman relates. “I enlisted in the Navy at that time and that was on December the 12th, 1941.” The war had started only four days prior.

At the beginning of the war, there had been so many volunteers that the recruiters were quite picky. When Clingman went to boot camp down on the Chicago Navy Pier, “I went there to start Signal School training, when they decided that the lack of my four front teeth was sufficient to cause me to be kicked out—discharged—the first time.” The problem with not having front teeth was that he couldn’t pull the pin on his grenades one-handed. However, Clingman didn’t let this detail keep him out of the war.

Sample #4:

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Taylor
35th TFW/ 497th Intelligence Group

Robert E. Taylor served in the Gulf and Iraq Wars in the Thirty-Fifth Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW) and the 497th Intelligence Group. With the help of his family he was more prepared for the hardships of boot camp but not so much for the hardships of the Persian Gulf War that launched on
Oral History Essay Components

August 2, 1990. This was nine days before his wedding was supposed to be held. ³ “…We had a wedding scheduled for August 11, 1990 and Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait on August 1, 1990. By the 8th of August, it looked like my wedding was in significant jeopardy…”

However, Taylor’s commitment to service really began long before the Persian Gulf War.

My family… ingrained a pretty healthy view of the need to serve the country, to give back to the country. My oldest brother served in the Marine Corps… My second oldest brother entered the Army… My father had served in the Navy right after World War II and had ended his enlistment prior to the Korean War, so between all those military experiences, I guess it was just almost implied that I would go in.

II. Anecdotal Samples

Sample #1:

Clingman’s jobs included going onto the battlefield to set up bridges and airfields, to make landings with boats, and to distribute supplies. Clingman’s duties in the Seabees⁶ took him many places, including New Guinea, Eniwetok, Leyte Gulf, Subic Bay near Manila, Lingayan Gulf, the Panama Canal, Okinawa, and Tokyo Bay.

When Clingman arrived at Leyte Gulf, he witnessed the most important naval battle of World War II, which is now known as the Battle of Leyte Gulf.⁷ There is a river separating the islands of Taclobin and Leyte, but Clingman thinks otherwise. “In between the two islands, there’s a creek, but they call it a river, but you can step across it. That’s the reason I call it a creek.” He was in the transport area outside the bay, and in a perilous position, in Clingman’s own words, “It’s a big place and a lot of ships and we went into the gulf and there’s thousands of Philippine islands. With a ship that only moves twenty miles an hour, it’d be pretty easy for a Japanese submarine or a Japanese plane coming off the island or coming off one of their aircraft carriers to come in and get you real quick because you practically have no defense.”

At Leyte Gulf, Clingman saw what was occurring during one of the four battles fought there. “During the night is when the Navy engaged the Japanese fleet. That determined the outcome of this war in the Pacific. We were in the bay and you could see at the mouth of the bay the ships burning and the guns flashing and this was all done at night and, of course, we knew there was a big battle going on, but at that particular instant, we were not aware of the significance. We weren’t aware of how important this battle was going to turn out to be.” By the time this battle was over, the Japanese had lost almost all of her submarines and planes. Being out on his transport ship, Clingman was relatively safe from most of the fighting.

Because he served on a transport and supply ship, Clingman transported many troops and necessities over the Pacific. He remembers one time in particular.
We were taking Marines from the Philippines to Taku, China. That was after they had put an ice cream machine on our ship. Up to that time we’d never had one. After every evening meal, they’d give you two cups of ice cream and two wooden paddles. These marines were young marines. I mean, they’d never been in combat and they’d been in the Philippine islands playing softball all the time they’d been overseas. I mean, there just wasn’t anything for them to do yet. They were getting ready; they were massing troops, for the invasion of Japan. This was before they dropped the atomic bomb and these Marines were the replacements for the Marines that were in the 1st Marine Division that had been killed and there was one old sergeant that was more or less in charge of these young Marines. He was the one that was supposed to keep them tied down. These young Marines couldn’t wait. I mean, they were gung-ho and they wanted to get in combat just as quick as they could. They were ready to fight—anybody that wanted to fight, they’d fight.

Clingman describes a story about some of these young Marines who were on his ship and also gives some more background information. . . .

Sample #2:

. . .The crews were going to go to England by a new B-1710. However, Jones’s crew was unlucky and had to go by boat.

We left New York City aboard the troop transport General William Mitchell11 in 1944. As our convoy sailed through the harbor past the Statue of Liberty we did not know our route because it was top secret. We did know our destination was England. We were escorted by half a dozen destroyers. Our crew consisted of nine men: Gene Jones–pilot, Bruce Holliday–copilot, Johnny Haydon–navigator, Al Rosenberg–bombardier, Forrest Erickson–flight engineer, Dave Windes–radio operator, Bill Hopkins–ball turret gunner, Ervin ‘Smokie’ Smogoleski–waist gunner, and Ray Ackerman–tail gunner.

Jones’s crew moved to many new bases. They settled in Liverpool, at first, and then transferred to Manchester. At these bases, the crew went out to pubs where they met attractive ladies, however not all of them were grand. However, his crew went into combat very soon.

We reported for duty at the 96th Bomber Group12 stationed at Snetterton Heath, Eccles Road located in a vast plain of eastern England known as “The Wash”. The very next morning [September 8, 1944] at about three A. M. a sergeant aroused me and announced that I was on the combat mission... In the 96th Bomb Group, [it] was the custom to assign the worst old war-weary B-17s to newly assigned crews. On this first mission our crew was given an old brute named “The Bad Penny.” This name had been derived from the old adage. It had arrived in England with the original group and despite grievous combat damage from many [earlier] missions, [and yet]. “The Bad Penny” always managed to return. In our ignorance we marveled at this beautiful machine that was all ours. Soon we learned the truth. Loaded with 150 octane gas and 10,000 pounds of fuel, and an extra 10,000 pounds of bombs, “The Bad Penny” was very reluctant to leave the group.

I had never made a takeoff under actual weather conditions and had never piloted an airplane with live bombs. This day I had extra gas and ten very real 500 pound bombs in the bomb bays. I hit the cloud ceiling at 300 feet above the runway and climbed on the
b briefed heading toward Ireland at 500 feet per minute. The sky was filled with hundreds of circling aircraft all trying to find their assigned position… Confusion reigned. I could not distinguish the 96th Group in all the milling aircraft, so I followed Standard Operating Procedure and took up a wing position in an unidentified group. We flew to an unknown target and sustained serious antiaircraft damage as we dropped our bombs.

In the meantime our home group, the 96th, had received the recall instructions, aborted the mission and they returned safely to our base at Snetterton Heath. Over the target we found that we could not open the bomb bay doors. In this event we had been briefed to drop our bombs and that the weight of the bombs would force open the doors. We dropped [the bombs], but the doors did not open. Suddenly, we realized that we had armed 500 pound armed bombs rolling loose around the bomb bay. Our flight engineer, Forrest Erickson, bravely managed to manually open the doors and some of the bombs sailed out somewhere over Germany. Unfortunately, some of the bombs had not been completely released from their shackles; three of them were hanging by only one shackle. Two more were firmly attached to both shackles. Forrest managed to get the hanging bombs free before they exploded and our bombardier, Al Rosenberg was able to insert the safety pins in the remaining bombs… Finally, the job was done and with a sigh of relief we managed to slip back into formation.

Jones’s crew did thirty-five missions in total over the countries of Germany and Holland. Their first flight was on September 8, 1944…

Sample #3:

. . . In the Iraq War Taylor’s responsibilities had changed. He had risen in rank to a commander. This new rank caused stress for him, because he had to ensure that the missions were successful and to make sure that the people who were actually facing the combat were comfortable, capable, and had relief from stress. Taylor was concerned because a lot of the soldiers were being exposed to real combat for the first time, and he was worried about their reaction. Fortunately, his new rank also had its privileges. It allowed him to stay in Virginia and execute operations from there, which was a great relief for him and his family. Yet, he still faced challenges every day.

The Iraq War was a different situation as far as my responsibilities because of the technology changes and the fact that we were doing what we call “exploitation,” which means we were watching the situation and reading out information and gathering what’s going on from what we see and what we hear and then reporting that back out to troops in the field and to senior leadership. In the Iraq situation the way we would do that is our aircraft and sensors were all forward into Iraq, … gathering data, and then that data was transmitted all the way back into the United States. My job, at the time, was to make sure that our troops had the equipment and the capability and the skill to determine what was happening in that information and then work through the processes to get that information back out to… the senior general officers who were making decisions on how to execute the combat, or the actual guy on the ground who was pulling the trigger… We were talking directly to them, and we had to make sure that they knew exactly what was happening around them so that they could be prepared to defend themselves or to execute combat against those forces. It was a challenge everyday to make sure that everything was working correctly and that our troops were properly trained to understand what they
Oral History Essay Components

were looking at or what they were hearing—and that we were able to get that information back out to the people who needed it.

Taylor also found that in the Iraq War there were many differences from the Persian Gulf War. For example, in the Persian Gulf War the transportation system for supplies was overwhelmed because of the great volume of people in Iraq. However, “…for the Iraq War, the Department of Defense and General Franks learned huge lessons over the years about the issue of local contracting…we had access to international vendors.” This made the U.S. troops much more capable in the Iraq War than the Gulf War because they were not struggling for supplies.

Sample #4:

. . .The warm welcome in Greenock did not reveal the cold, lonely nights and the horror of war that awaited Kennedy on the battlefield. Surrounded by constant suffering and cries of the dying, he did his best to fulfill his job assignment, to “obey the sergeant and shoot the enemy.” He relates one particularly sad story:

I remember one fellow who was, got hit badly in the groin area, and he was bleeding and I was digging a fox hole, and he had his legs down where I was digging. And he was bleeding in all the dirt that I was shoveling out, and I didn’t want to tell him to move his legs, so I didn’t. It was messy because he was bleeding and he was dying. A middle age man that was in his thirties crying about … he wouldn’t see his children again or his wife. And it was very heartbreaking for me. But, I was all worried about this blood flowing into my fox hole.

This man was just one of the many casualties Kennedy had in his unit at the Battle of the Bulge. This battle was also known as the Ardennes Offensive. It started on December 16, 1944 in the Ardennes, in Belgium. Kennedy did not become a part of this battle until Christmas Eve. By then, the Allies were picking up speed and becoming more offensive, while the Germans began to lose the battle. This was fortunate for Kennedy because he was only a part of the very end of this battle when it had shifted in the Americans’ favor. It ended only a short time later, on January 16, 1945.

This was a very important battle because it was the last major German offensive of the war. If Hitler could win, then he could force the Allies to sign a peace treaty favoring the Axis powers. Both sides lost some resources, but overall it turned out better for the Allies. This battle represents the largest land battle ever fought by the United States. Kennedy comments on some of his less devastating memories of the Battle of the Bulge.

We were in France, in Brittany and Normandy, which was western or northern France. And we went to the Bulge area in November/December of 1944. Then, we went in boxcars and they called them “forty and eights” because they would hold forty soldiers or eight horses. And then we were transferred from one place to another in Europe… I remember once we got into the Bulge area, it was Christmas Eve, and there was a priest
Oral History Essay Components

there and he said midnight mass. And we went out and got some holly and decorated our
room in this home where we were quartered. And we had berries, red berries with the
holly and we just decorated the windows and the walls with this holly. . . .

III. Conclusion Samples

Sample #1:

For Whalen, all the combat he experienced didn’t change what he thought about the war. After
hearing about the things that Hitler had done, however, it was impossible for him to regret fighting and
taking all those risks. Lucky or not, no war is ever easy. “When you get into combat and there’s troops
shooting at you,” he said, “you get a little more religious, take things a little more seriously…[it] made
you think a little differently…[and] wonder why you were there.”

Sample #2:

. . . On January 24, 1946, Wolfinger ended his service in the United States Navy. He returned to
Pennsylvania with his wife and newborn son to resume his job at the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.
Today, Wolfinger still enjoys life in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Over the years, he has kept in touch
with several close friends he met during his service in World War II. Wolfinger’s opinions regarding the
military remain positive:

…I still think [military service] is a good idea. That is, I think we all learned how to get
along with other people—people from different parts of the country…. It’s a great
melting pot. I believe we should have compulsory service for everybody, not necessarily
the military, but some civil service or military service for everybody when they get out of
high school for a year or two. I’m all for it. Nothing about a little discipline [hurts]
you…

Sample 3:

In conclusion, Taylor’s outlook on war in general is summed up by a quote by Douglas
MacArthur, “No one hates warfare more than a soldier.” Taylor believes any soldier who likes combat is
a dangerous person because the people getting killed are your friends, and he hopes that any war or any
combat is the right thing for the right reason. Robert Taylor believes the single word “discipline”
describes both his academy and military experiences as a whole.
Oral History Essay Components

1 ‘In the U.S. Navy, a coxswain or cockswain was at first the swain (boy servant) in charge of the small cock or cockboat that was kept aboard a ship for its captain's use. In time, the coxswain became the helmsman of any boat, regardless of size.' http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/Coxswain [also include date when this references was used.] I will do a special lesson on doing endnotes and the bibliography. These endnotes are not always the best examples, since dates accessed are not always included. All endnotes are to be done with regular numbers (never i, ii, iii) – nor should they be inserted as footnotes (those go at the bottom of a page), whereas endnotes, as the name implies go at the end of the whole document.

2 Interview with Daniel Folsom on October 6, 2005. [Always endnote the name of your veteran and date of the interview. Follow the format shown here.]

3 ‘Slapton Sands, a US Army training area on the English Channel coast in south Devon which was used for exercises prior to the Normandy landings in June 1944.’ See I.C.B Dear and M.R.D. Foot, ed., The Oxford Companion to World War II. p. 1011.


5 Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the 561st TFW (part of the 35th TFW based at George AFB) deployed to the Middle East as part of Desert Shield. The F-4G was the only Wild Weasel aircraft and played an important role in Operation Desert Storm when they cut a path through Iraqi air defenses during the initial attack on January 17. For more information, see McDonnell F-4G Phantom II, 6 Jan. 2000, <http://www.vogue-web.ch/f4/f4_19.html>, (2 Mar. 2006).

6 A subordinate unit of the Air Intelligence Agency located at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington D.C. It provided a worldwide intelligence infra-structure support, physical and personal security, threat support to weapon systems acquisition and employment, and automation support. It also serves as the Washington area focal point for the Air Force Intelligence planning, logistics and readiness issues, communications/computer systems support and all military and civilian personnel actions and programs. For more information, see "497th Intelligence Group," 1997 AIA ALMANAC, <http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/aia/cyberspokesman/97aug/497ig.htm>, (9 Mar. 2006).

7 There were thirty nations involved with the Gulf War. It was mandated by the United Nations, but led by the U.S. The war began with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq because of unproven Iraqi contentions that Kuwait was illegally “slant drilling” oil across Iraq’s border. For more information, see http://ln.bigchalk.com [What was date of access?]

8 The term “Seabees” was derived for CB, which stood for “Construction Battalion”. The US Navy formed these divisions in December of 1941. The Seabees build naval bases, airstrips, roads, and also handle cargos. These duties were essential to the Pacific victory in WWII. These units are made up of civilian contractors and construction workers and were paid at least as much as a petty officer. Their Insignia is a flying bee wearing a sailor’s cap and carrying a Tommy gun, a wrench, and a hammer. [Source should have been included here!]

9 Upon returning to the states in 1942, General MacArthur had promised the people of Leyte he would return. In this battle, he returned with two fleets—the 7th Fleet under General MacArthur and the 3rd Fleet under Admiral Nimitz—and won the largest naval battle in history, effectively taking the Japanese Navy
Oral History Essay Components

out of the war and dealing the Japanese Air Force a huge blow. This was also the first time the Japanese used Kamikazes. [source not included!!]


11 General William Mitchell: http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/g4/general_william_mitchell.htm [date accessed?]

12 96th Bomber Group: http://dakotacom.net/~wtaebel/96thbg.htm [date accessed?]