



The Eighth in the East Oral History

Interviewer Training



Purpose

To interview and record people, both Americans and locals, about their memories of the Eighth Airforce in East Anglia.

Location

The Eighth in the East office or partner organisations.

Usually interviewees' homes, however, therefore a full driving license is desirable for this role.

Committed Time

Variable.

All oral history volunteers should be prepared to offer at least three hours each week, though this will depend on the number of potential interviewees.

Length of Role

Approximately six months, with scope for a longer role if desired

Expectations of your role

- ▶ To liaise with oral history coordinator to locate potential interviewees
- ▶ To undertake initial contact with interviewees and carry out preliminary research before interview day
- ▶ Carry out and record interviews according to training
- ▶ Post-interview liaison with coordinator, including transference of recorded material
- ▶ Liaison with technician for borrow and return of equipment post-interview
- ▶ To provide the information necessary to complete a DBS check if required



Your Training

To help you achieve your full potential as an interviewer, you can expect training from us in:

- ▶ How to conduct an oral history interview and post-interview procedure
- ▶ Good and bad interview techniques
- ▶ How to use oral history equipment
- ▶ Health and safety
- ▶ How to work with digital audio



How to Conduct an Oral History Interview

Pre-interview chat

- ▶ This is used to highlight specific areas worthy of pre-interview research and to introduce yourself; name etc.
- ▶ There is often a possibility that your interviewee may divulge much of the content of the interview. Do not worry if this happens to you! Try simply to identify key themes that it may be useful to look at before the interview.

How to conduct pre-interview research

- ▶ There are many resources other than the Eighth in the East website and team that you can use for pre-interview research, the contact information for some of these can be found on Dropbox:
 - ▶ Your local authority archive service
 - ▶ Local libraries
 - ▶ Imperial War Museum (Duxford especially)
 - ▶ Second Air Division Library, Forum, Norwich
 - ▶ Internet research
 - ▶ google.co.uk is a useful search engine to begin looking for information
 - ▶ Airfield Research Group: <http://www.airfieldresearchgroup.org.uk>
 - ▶ BBC World War Two History: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/>
 - ▶ WW2 Memories Project, East Anglia: <http://www.wartimememories.co.uk/eastanglia>
 - ▶ Historic Environment Records: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR/>

Equipment checklist

- ▶ When you receive your equipment from a technician, it is useful to acquaint yourself with it. On the front of the case your equipment arrives in, there should be a laminated list of everything included inside. Try using this to identify what each piece is, and make sure everything is present. Always check that everything is present before heading off to your interview.

Included you should find:

- ▶ Fully charged Tascam Portable Recorder
- ▶ USB Lead
- ▶ Microphone, including round fitted windscreen
- ▶ Microphone stand, including base
- ▶ 1M Male-Female Cable
- ▶ Headphones
- ▶ 32GB SD Card (inside Tascam Portable Recorder)

You will also need:

- ▶ Pen and Paper
- ▶ ID
- ▶ Your pre-written questions
- ▶ Some blank consent forms
- ▶ A project information sheet

Conducting the interview

Permission/consent procedure and forms

- ▶ Before starting the interview, repeat why you're carrying it out and show the interviewee a copy of the consent form.

There must be informed consent before the interview, but the form itself must be signed after the interview has been completed.

- ▶ Some interviewees may request to hear a copy of their recording before signing their consent form. This is not unusual, and should not pose a problem.

If this is the case, once you have uploaded the recording to your computer, email this recording to the your coordinator with an explanation of the situation.

- ▶ If people have second thoughts, be ethical and let them change their minds. You should, however, assure them about their rights to 'close' the recordings in an archive until their death or longer, and their right to anonymity. However, the interviewee must feel in control. You must always have their trust and respect people's wishes.
- ▶ The Oral History Society has useful guidelines on consent: www.ohs.org.uk/ethics.php#candc-meaning

Preparing the interviewee

- ▶ Often, people may be nervous before interview, so it is useful to assemble the kit, and begin with a quick chat (weather, area, etc) in order to get them accustomed to the set up. It's worth the time; a more relaxed and open interviewee will make for a better final recording.

Scripts

- ▶ Sometimes, an interviewee might prepare a script of things they've prepared to talk about. This is not a problem, simply ask them if you could take it away and read it at a later date, and then continue with the interview.
- ▶ Scripts can be archived along with the recording subject to permission on the consent form by the interviewee

Length

- ▶ Try to limit the length of the interview to about 60 minutes; you can always return for follow-up sessions.

Starting the interview

- ▶ Start the interview by saying your name, the date, where the interview is taking place.
- ▶ Then ask the interviewee their name, date and place of birth. Move on to their parents occupations- this can work simply as an ice-breaker, but it may also be relevant to the interview.

Location

- ▶ Always where the interviewee is most comfortable
- ▶ Be aware of relatives close-by as they may try to interrupt or lead the interview.
Try offering to perhaps interview them separately if they're persistent
- ▶ It's often good to sit using the corner of a table so that the microphone can capture full audio, but you're not sitting directly opposite which can be too formal
- ▶ Don't aim for perfection, but try to sit somewhere quiet that minimises external noises such as traffic, or pets
- ▶ Remember to turn off your phone



Photograph

- ▶ Please try to snap a picture of your interviewee before or after the interview. This helps to contextualise the interview when it is archived.
- ▶ Unfortunately, Eighth in the East cannot provide you with any photographic equipment, but it is hoped that you might have a device such as a digital camera, or if not a phone with a camera. The higher quality the camera the better for archiving the image.

Sensitive Subjects

- ▶ If the interviewee gets onto a sensitive subject then offer to stop the tape. There's no need to apologise or reassure, but try to be sympathetic where possible. Let them recommence on the same subject if they would like to, or pause the interview and begin on a different subject.



Use common sense about this- and use the play/pause button if necessary rather than stopping the interview where appropriate.

Ending the Interview

- ▶ The natural end of an interview is when it turns into a conversation
- ▶ Always try to accept hospitality where offered. People often need some time to relax post-interview. This is perfect time to get your consent form signed.



Post-Interview Procedure

▶ Naming your recordings

- ▶ It is essential that your recordings are named properly.

This allows for the creation of a system throughout the project that ensures no unnecessary duplicates are created, and all accompanying documentation can be tagged with the audio from the beginning.

See below to find out how to download and name your files.

▶ What to do with your files

- ▶ Listen to interviews, and be critical for next time.

What would you do differently? How could you improve? Perhaps even ask a friend or family member, depending on the preferences on the permission form.

- ▶ The next step in the process involves the creation of a summary of the recording by another volunteer. You may also have kindly volunteered to take on this role too, however, in which case you will also receive the training documents for this.

- ▶ Getting the recordings and image of your interviewee to the summariser can be done by uploading it to the 'Audio Files' folder on Dropbox.

When these named recordings have been uploaded in correctly named files, it's necessary to send an email to your coordinator informing them they have been uploaded. This is temporary storage only.



Health and Safety

- ▶ Always take your ID to interviews

- ▶ Always take a mobile phone

- ▶ Plan your journey (don't get stranded)

- ▶ Don't take risks

- ▶ If uncomfortable, just make excuses and leave

- ▶ Tell your coordinator, and someone at home of your plans

- ▶ Where you're going

- ▶ Expected time of return

- ▶ What should be done if you don't return



Interview Technique

The Good

- ▶ Encourage spontaneity
 - ▶ This comes back to discouraging the use of scripts. Often the most important information is to be found in the unexpected details.
- ▶ Questions
 - ▶ It's good to have an outline of questions and topics going into the interview, informed by the ones given by Eighth in the East (on Dropbox), and your pre-interview research. These are guides only, however, so be prepared to go off topic. You can always return to other questions.
 - ▶ Ask open ended questions; ie. tell me about, what made you do that, what were your opinions at the time
 - ▶ First questions are an important part of relaxing the interviewee
 - ▶ Use follow-up questions where appropriate. Don't forget to establish factual information.
- ▶ Patience
 - ▶ Try not to cut someone off and often allow some silence- especially if the interviewee has quickly answered a question. The interesting answer often comes after a pause for reflection.

The Bad

- ▶ Avoiding distractions
 - ▶ Try not to 'um/err', and avoid laughing as this can be distracting on the recording and hard to edit out. Use encouraging nodding, and polite eye-contact
 - ▶ If necessary, explain noises for the benefit of the recording
- ▶ Forgotten equipment
 - ▶ Always check your equipment before attending the interview (including pen and paper)
- ▶ Punctuality
 - ▶ Always aim to arrive slightly before the interview is due to start, this way you are less likely to be late
- ▶ Questions
 - ▶ Don't ask more than one question at a time
 - ▶ Don't hector
 - ▶ Don't ask leading questions

This is just a summary; more guidance can be found in the interviewer file on Dropbox.



Equipment



Introduction to the Equipment

The kit you will be using to record your oral histories is incredibly easy to transport, and utilise.

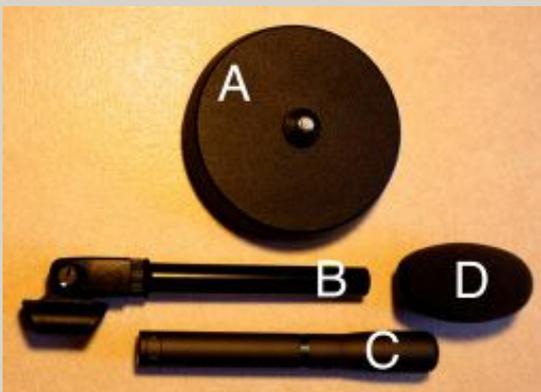
Whilst it may look slightly daunting, once you understand the settings and how to put it together- as explained below- it is a really easy set of tools to use.

No harder than a digital camera in fact!

Assembling the Equipment

Building the microphone

1. Screw the microphone pole [B] into the base [A]
2. Place the microphone [C] into the attachment on the end of the pole
3. If doing field recording, place the round fitted windshield [D] on to the head of the microphone



Connecting Microphone to Tascam Recorder

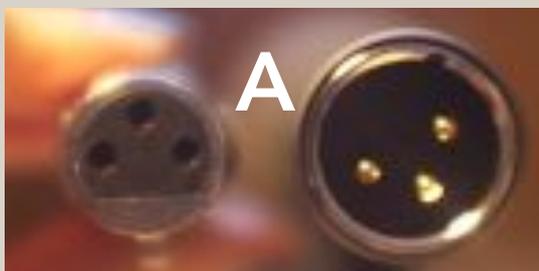
The two devices are connected by a male-female cable.

The Microphone [Picture A]

The female cable end will be attached to the end of the microphone

The Tascam [Picture B]

The male cable end will be attached into the port at the bottom of the Tascam Recorder labelled 'L'





Connecting headphones to Tascam Recorder

- ▶ These adjustable headphones are plugged into the side of the Tascam Recorder in the port with a small drawing of a pair of headphones on the side of the recorder.
- ▶ Make sure to use the headphones to check the Tascam is recording at the beginning of the interview, but there's no need to wear them throughout the whole interview.

Equipment Settings

- ▶ These settings will help you to understand how your Tascam Recorder works, and how you need to use it to capture audio.
- ▶ Other settings may need to be amended subject to recording conditions, and this will be shown below too.
- ▶ Some settings will be permanently the same and it is important to check that these are correct before recording to ensure the quality of your audio.



Turning on your Tascam Recorder

On the left side of the recorder, you will find the button to turn on and off your recorder.

MIC GAIN
[Top Left]

This should be set to
'M'

Auto/Limiter
[Bottom Left]

This should be set to
'Off'



+48V

[Top Right]

This should be set to
on

Speaker

[Bottom Right]

This should be set to
'Off'



How to navigate your Tascam dashboard

This is what your Tascam display should look like when you receive it

Menu	Click to access your menu options
Round Wheel	Use when on the menu to scroll up and down through your options
Enter/Mark	Use to select an option
Skip Buttons	Use to scroll left or right through your options



Checking your Recording Settings

1. Click menu, and use the round wheel to scroll down to REC SETTING
2. Press enter

Settings

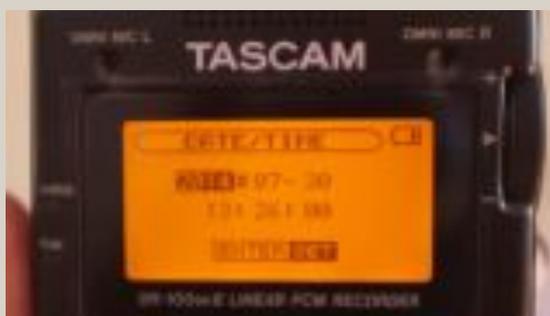
Format	Wav 16bit
Sample	44.1k
Size	2G
Pre Rec	Off
Delay	Off

- ▶ If necessary, change the settings using the round wheel and skip buttons, selecting when these settings are correctly entered.



Date and Time

Click menu, and use the round wheel to scroll past the first screen to DATE/TIME. Press enter. Use the skip buttons to change between YYYY/MM/DD and click enter to set when correct. It's very important this is correct for archiving.



Mic Settings

1. Click menu, and use the round wheel to scroll down to INPUT SETTING

2. Press enter

3. Scroll down, and the settings will change from 'MONITOR' to 'MIC' and you will see the screen to the left



Fixed Settings

Type

Mono

Playing Back Your Files

1. Click menu, and use the round wheel to scroll down to BROWSE
2. Press enter
3. Use the round wheel to scroll through your recordings, and press enter to play



How to Record



1. Ensure all your equipment is correctly put together, and that your equipment settings are correct before beginning.

2. To begin, press the large red button in the right hand corner of the Tascam labelled 'RECORD' and begin the interview as instructed using the information on pg. **NO**.

► If it's necessary to stop the interview at any point, for example if the doorbell were to ring, simply press 'PLAY/PAUSE', and when the interview recommences explain the disruption for the tape. Do not press 'STOP' as it will commence a new recording, and this will make the editing process more complicated.



Downloading and Saving Recordings



USB



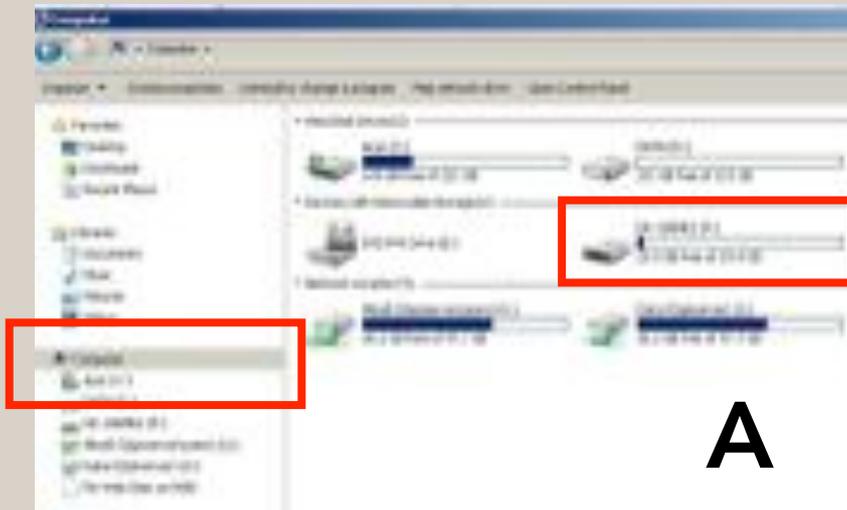
This method of downloading your audio files involves using a USB cable to connect your Tascam recorder and computer.

- ▶ The USB port on your Tascam recorder can be found on the left hand side of the device above the button to turn it on and is clearly labelled.



- ▶ The USB port on your computer will also be labelled, with the USB symbol (above right).

- ▶ Once your Tascam is connected to your computer it it may take some time to be recognised and accepted by your computer

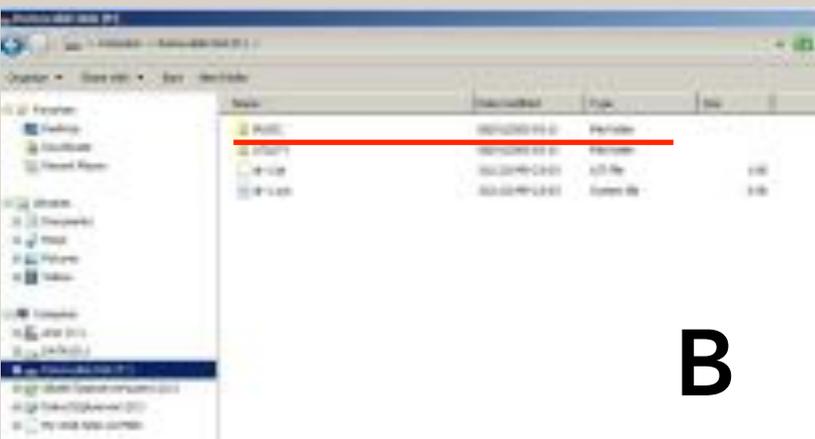


1. Use your main computer menu to access your 'Computer'

2. Your Tascam will be seen as a device with removable storage. It can be seen in picture A, called DR-100MK2 (F:)

3. Click to enter, and you will see the screen in picture B.

4. Select the folder entitled 'Music'. This is where you will find your recordings.





4. Select your files, click right, and select 'copy' [C]

5. Once your files have been copied, choose the folder you've created with the name of your interviewee, right click and select 'paste'.



Renaming Recordings

Naming your recordings correctly is essential in oral history work.

- ▶ With all recordings correctly named, each member of the team can correctly identify them, and they can be confident there are no duplicates, and all accompanying documentation is present too.
- ▶ The file naming system for this project uses information which helps identify the interviewee, the date the interview was conducted, and the interviewer.



The example used below to illustrate file naming was therefore as follows:

Interviewee: Reid

Date: 18/08/2014

Interviewer: Alex Reid

Reid14082014AR

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
Reid14082014AR	01/01/2000 00:15	Wave Sound	1,580 KB
Bailey14082014AR	11/08/2014 15:12	Wave Sound	490,312 KB
Bailey14082014AR (2)	11/08/2014 15:52	Wave Sound	392,063 KB

- ▶ To rename a file, right click and select rename.
Use your interview information to appropriately name your file.
- ▶ Remember to listen back to check it's the right recording before naming.
For suggestions of how to listen back to your recordings, see below.



Listening/Playback Software



- ▶ There are many different programs you may choose to use when trying to listen back to your recordings.
- ▶ Some which you may be familiar with include iTunes and Windows Media Player.

If you're more comfortable with these, or a choice of your own that you've used before for playback- please go ahead!



Audacity

- ▶ However, if you are unfamiliar with these programs, there is a free program which you can download from the internet called 'Audacity'.

- ▶ This can be found by typing 'Audacity' into google.com



- ▶ To import your recordings into Audacity, open the program and at the top of your screen select 'file' and then 'open'
- ▶ You can then open your recently imported recordings from their appropriately named folders.
 - ▶ This will take a few seconds/minutes depending on the file size.

Navigation tools for playback can be found top left.



Additional Information

Contacts

▶ These individuals are here to help and support you during your time as a volunteer.

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Additional Materials

▶ Any additional materials mentioned in this training document that are not included are most likely on the project Dropbox.

▶ When you joined the project as a volunteer, you should receive an email containing the link to this Dropbox

▶ You'll need to quickly create a free account to see the folder.

