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## OU helps preserve veterans' experiences

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

In 1945, Warren "Bud" Cornock of Rochester Hills was one of the first American servicemen to set foot in Hiroshima after the United States dropped the first of its atomic bombs during World War II. What he saw amazed him – the entire landscape was seared by the incredible heat generated by the blast. Buildings were incinerated and large trees were reduced to twigs. Only stone structures stood among the city's charred remains.

There are thousands of American veterans like Cornock with many fascinating stories to tell. Unfortunately, America's vets are dying at a rate of 1,700 per day, and their stories are forever lost. However, through the **Veterans History Project**, a Library of Congress initiative, Oakland University is helping to preserve the recollections of veterans for generations to come.

The goal of the project is to collect and preserve audio and videotaped oral histories of America's war veterans as well as materials such as letters, diaries, maps, photographs and home movies. The project covers World War I and II, and the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars. It also documents the experiences of civilian volunteers, war industry workers and others who served to support military personnel. All ranks and all branches of service are covered, including the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and Merchant Marine.

OU's **Video Services Department** and **Studio Video Club** recently began participating in the project by videotaping oral histories with veterans. In addition to preserving veterans' recollections, the interviews also are used as regular programming on **OUTV**, the university cable TV station operated by students and staff.

Brenda Cornock, Bud's wife, approached Video Production Team Leader Scott Burke with the idea of working on the Veterans History Project. Burke built upon her idea by initiating the OUTV series.

"Mrs. Cornock described the project and it sounded like a great idea," Burke said. "I'm a history buff and my dad served in the Korean War, so the project appeals to me personally. And OUTV needs more programming, so it's a perfect project for our students to become involved in and a great contribution to the community."

The interviews, conducted by junior English major and Student Video Club member Mike Vanderpool, are research-centered, yet relaxed enough to allow the veterans to feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

"I think it's wonderful that OU is involved in this project and airing the series to the community," Brenda Cornock said. "I learned about the Veterans History Project through a little article in a newspaper and obtained some information on it. My husband and I were looking for a place that would be willing to do an interview and thought Oakland University might have some students who would be interested. I contacted Scott and he was excited about the idea. With a little prodding, we can get more people to provide their recollections."

OU is pursuing the construction of a humidity and temperature-controlled environment to store the videotapes so it can officially partner with the Library of Congress. In the meantime, Burke wants to tape as many interviews as possible.

"We want to get OU students, faculty and staff who have served to contribute to this project," Burke said. "We'll also contact some local VFWs to find interested people. A lot of veterans may initially be hesitant to contribute, but our cable show places the interview in a context and helps the program guests relax. Creating the program is also great training in video and TV production for our students."

The "Veterans History Project" series airs on OUTV at various times and days. Check the **OUTV** Web site for a playback schedule. OUTV can be found on Comcast Cablevision Channel 74 in Auburn Hills, Berkley, Clawson, Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Oakland Township, Pleasant Ridge, Rochester, Rochester Hills, Royal Oak and Troy.

Visit the **Veterans History Project** Web site to learn more about this Library of Congress initiative. To participate in the project or learn more about the **Student Video Club**, contact Scott Burke at (248) 370-2460 or [sburke@oakland.edu](mailto:sburke@oakland.edu).

### SUMMARY

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