

H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum

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H.E.A.R.T.S Veterans Museum
463 State Highway 75 N.
Huntsville TX 77320

Introduction

The H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum is a staple part of the Huntsville community. The museum is significant because it recognizes veterans who have served our country. The museum recognizes veterans from all military branches and primarily those who are served dating back to the Vietnam War. These veterans provide numerous experiences, wisdom, and advice to young soldiers like me. The museum collects artifacts, showcases exhibits, and hosts events for the Veterans, Sam Houston, and Huntsville community. It was established to commemorate active duty soldiers and current war veterans.

The museum originated as an antique shop highlighting the achievement of a war veteran. The antique shop was owned by Charlotte Oleinik, an active participant in a post-World War II organization. Through its growing attraction, Oleinik, began to showcase her exhibits and transport more displays to locations such as elementary and middle schools, where she could instill the importance of the Armed Forces to adolescents. Military artifacts and old equipment were donated to her exhibit, recognizing Oleinik was impacting the community in a positive light. Due to the accumulation of multiple items, Oleinik decided to find a stationary location. Oleinik was later assisted by Charles Davis, a former World War II veteran, where he helped showcase her artifacts across the community. Followed by years of success, it became an official museum and open to the community of Huntsville.

Goal

I decided to research the H.E.A.R.T.S Museum and a war veteran. My goal and main focal point of this interview was to understand the impact the Museum has had on the community of Huntsville. By interviewing a veteran, I could grasp the true adoration and appreciation they had

towards the museum. I also wanted to learn information about a significant event they have been a part of while serving to let their story be heard. Learning how to conduct primary research was my goal.

Planning Process

Primary research is conducting research directly, whether it is through an interview, surveys, or even questionnaires. I learned many ways to conduct primary research through my Business Communication and Honors “Histories” classes. I decided to research a military veteran and museum, because being enlisted myself, I wanted to use this opportunity to gain advice and wisdom from true heroes.

I began formulating questions, based upon the interviewee whom the museum assigned to me. Due to my interviewee being a veteran, I wanted to make sure the questions were appropriate, respectful, and not crossing any boundaries. I had no information on who I was interviewing, so when formulating my questions, I could not be as specific as I planned.

Knowing I would be interviewing an older gentleman, I also wanted to pay attention to how my questions were being asked and concluded that they needed to be more straightforward, and simple questions. I learned the importance of audience analysis and its significance of how to communicate to others where it was to relay or retrieve information. I wanted to retrieve information from a historical war veteran, so I essentially had to plan my questions, based off of the criteria on my interviewee, being from an older, more traditional generation.

Interview

I had privilege and honor to meet with Robert W. Hall, a former Naval engineer, now retired. Hall served in the Vietnam War as a naval engineer and electrician. Upon receiving his

high school diploma in 1957, Hall enlisted within the Navy. Hall actually wanted to serve, even with rising political tensions and an unstable economy within the United States. Hall received sound advice from his uncle who also served, which fueled his motivation to protect this country. The greatest thing about joining the Navy was “The ability to see world,” Hall said. Soon into his time in service, a significant event in American history marked his introduction into combat. In 1958, he detailed the death of a Marine, which was the “prelude and countdown to the Vietnam War.” Hall never feared combat, which was significant, because he could have lost his life, “countless times” as he stated.

Once he became a part of the war effort, Hall served within one of two squadrons, where they traveled the South China Seas aboard a crew of 300 members. Hall’s motto being a chemical and electrical engineer, was “Have steam, will travel, have no steam, will not travel.” This quote was particularly interesting, because it exemplifies the significance of trusting the equipment that soldiers have to rely on.

He retired the Navy after seven brief, yet significant years. Hall later became a part of the Corps of Engineers, where he has worked under many branches serving on deployments as an engineer and electrician. Hall has served in numerous, with Iraq and Afghanistan to name a few.

Throughout the interview, much to my dismay, Hall frequently asked me questions, that pertained to my time in service so far. It was interesting, because at times, I felt the interview was mainly driven by him and I was being interviewed. Moreover, because of him being intrigued by brief military time, it felt as if we are having more of a conversation, rather than conducting an interview. He allowed me to share my experiences within the Army and related it to the Navy, which led us to have many similar experiences.

Hall now resides in Huntsville, Texas where he can be close to the museum, once again implementing its impact on the community and just close enough to the large Houston metropolitan area.

Conclusion

Hall is now an active member and part time employee at the Veterans Hearts Museum, located in Huntsville, Texas. He enjoys being an active participant, because it is “something we can do to help military.” Veterans who still involved in are significant to those beginning their service, such as I. Hall repeatedly said he would do it again and left some advice to adhere. Noting that “Times are changing,” Hall detailed the importance of brotherhood and its camaraderie. I agreed, that It is very essential to have teamwork and unity in any setting, especially within a war.

I really enjoyed this interview, because Hall illuminated a kindred spirit towards me, the museum, and the military. His character and patriotism exemplified what it means to be a veteran, which is to never forget your contribution to protecting this country and utilizing that knowledge for the betterment of today’s generation, such as myself. I believe the interview went successful and I really enjoyed my time there.

Overall not only did I learn how to conduct an interview, but I learned the importance of teamwork. I treasure the advice and history Hall gave me, because I will soon be in role one day, where I hope to implement his remarkable character traits.

Images



All images were taken by Michael Way

References

<http://heartsmuseum.com/index.html>

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100345447>