

OHMAR *Newsletter*

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SPRING OHMAR MEETING IN HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA

Friday/Saturday, April 2-3, 1993

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OHMAR will hold its Spring 1993 meeting at the sweetest place on earth, Hershey, Pennsylvania. Program chairperson, Pam Cassidy, Hershey Community Archives, has planned an exciting Spring program. The conference will be held Friday-Saturday, April 2-3, 1993 at the historic Hotel Hershey.

The day and a half conference will feature a special tour of the Chocolate Factory and OHMAR Banquet on Friday afternoon and evening, April 2. The Friday evening Banquet will feature Janice Henry, a local storyteller who has developed a presentation about the Hotel Hershey based on the use of oral histories

from the Community Archives collections.

Conference registration, oral history workshop, sessions, and Hershey Museum Reception will occur on Saturday, April 3.

A detailed description of the conference program is included in this newsletter. Registration packets will be mailed to OHMAR members in mid-February. If you are not an OHMAR member, write or call Pam Cassidy, Hershey Community Archives, Box 445, Hershey, PA 17033 (717) 534-3743 to request registration materials.

SPRING PROGRAM INFORMATION FOLLOWS

Conference Schedule Continued:

Noon Lunch \$10 pre-registered at the Hotel of lunch on your own in Hershey. A list of local restaurants will be included in your registration packet.

1:30 pm Afternoon Sessions

A. All Day Workshop continues

B. Community Oral History: Documenting Diversity

Oral history is an excellent tool in drawing diverse communities together and a means of celebrating that diversity. Three oral historians involved in a variety of oral history community documentation projects will discuss their work and the challenges they face as well as their successes.

3:30 pm Business meeting

4:30 pm Reception: Hershey Museum. Enjoy this opportunity to relax and talk with each other. View the recently completed permanent exhibit: Hershey, The Man, The Town, Industries and School.

OHMAR has reserved a block of rooms at the Hotel Hershey, one of the National Trust's "Historic Hotels of America," as well as a AAA **** resort. Take advantage and discover why Hershey is one of the most popular destinations on the East Coast. Saturday night the Hershey Theatre presents "Little Shop of Horrors," performed by the national touring company. For sports fans, Hershey Park Arena will have PIAA basketball championships all day and evening Saturday. If spring comes early the Hershey Gardens will be alive with the colors of early blooms

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS TO HERSHEY, PA (accessible by rail and car)

Rail:

Hershey is fifteen minutes away from the Harrisburg, PA Amtrak station. The Hotel Hershey provides complimentary transportation to and from the station.

Driving:

From the North and East:

Take Interstate 81 and 78. Take Route 743 South to Hersheypark Drive (approx. 8 miles). Follow signs to Hotel Hershey.

From the South:

Take Interstate 83 to Route 322 East. Follow signs to Hershey and Hotel Hershey.

From the West and East:

Take PA Turnpike to Exit 19 (Hershey/Harrisburg). Take 322 East to Hershey and Hotel Hershey.

ORAL HISTORY IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

by Patrick W. Carlton, Ph.D.

Operations DESERT SHIELD/STORM and PROVIDE COMFORT provided significant opportunities for the exercise of the historian's craft, offering unusual challenges to those involved, since it was carried out in two widely separated locations, at a previously unheard of "optempo", (1) utilizing space age communications and records management techniques. The work of military historians was important both for contemporary and historical purposes. As one participant put it, military historians served "...both Clio, the Muse of history, and Mars, the god of war." (2) In this dual role, they sought to preserve factually correct information for historical use while at the same time gathering data on subjects of potential utility to the Army in compiling information on mission successes and failures. (3)

Virtually the entire military-connected historical community, a large and many-faceted structure, was involved in the collection of information on various aspects of the war. Due to the highly decentralized nature of the Army history program, some duplication of effort almost certainly occurred. Clearly, there are significant verification-related advantages to such redundancy, although the parsimonious reader might argue against such profligate application of scarce public resources. The author has concentrated on the views, approaches, and collection activities undertaken by a sample of Army historians assigned, respectively, to the National Defense University; the Center of Military History; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Army Special Operations Command; and XVIIIth Abn Corps. It is felt that their views and activities constitute a relatively representative sample of the approach employed throughout the Army during DESERT SHIELD/STORM and PROVIDE COMFORT.

It is generally agreed among those involved that oral history offers significant advantages in documenting military operations. Such interviews capture the sense of immediacy, tension, concern and uncertainty surrounding mission preparation. (4) As one historian stated "...for many of the personnel...mortality was a major thought...Capturing that moment in time, before the result is known, is something only an oral historian on site can accomplish. Once the opportunity passes, it is gone forever." (5) Oral history can serve to "fill in the gaps" in the historical record, describing the oral give and take and explaining the underlying reasons for decisions made--preserving the information that is not normally written down. It documents the role played by strong personalities and generally portrays the drama and flow of human events. It gathers the perspectives, not only of senior personnel, but also those of middle and lower level actors, those whose faithful execution of directives and orders often spells the difference between success and failure. An understanding of how the overall decisional process evolved can make an invaluable contribution to the knowledge base. (6)

On the negative side of the equation, oral historians in DESERT STORM were often assigned a low priority by those upon

is indicative of the type of work occurring throughout the Army structure. The application of oral history techniques to the documentation of field operations of the Army is not new, tracing its roots to April, 1775, at which time the Massachusetts Provincial Congress dispatched magistrates to obtain sworn testimony from the survivors of the Army's first engagement, which occurred at Lexington, and which is credited with triggering the American Revolution. During World War II, Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, a trained journalist, developed the "lessons learned" technique, which employed oral interviews to collect information not only of immediate value to local commanders, but also to latter day historians. This technique, refined during the past fifty years, has become a standard technique of the military field historian. Oral history has, from the Army's perspective, proven to be an invaluable methodological tool, one that is widely employed within the military community.

Dr. Carlton is Professor of Educational Administration at Youngstown State University, in Youngstown, Ohio. During Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM and PROVIDE COMFORT, he served on active duty as Colonel, USAR.

Notes

1. Operational tempo--refers to speed of execution of military missions and organizational tasks.
 2. Robert K. Wright, Jr. "Oral History in the Foxhole: Serving Clio and Mars". Paper presented at Fall meeting of OHMAR, November 6, 1992, p. 12.
 3. Such information is routinely compiled by the U.S. Army as part of its ongoing "lessons learned" project.
 4. Janet McDonnell, Presentation to OHMAR, November 6, 1992.
 5. Richard W. Stewart, "Oral History Collection of Special Operations during Operation DESERT STORM". Presentation at OHMAR, November 6, 1992, p.9.
 6. McDonnell, Presentation.
 7. Wright, "Clio and Mars", p. 12.
 8. An MHD consists of one officer and two enlisted soldiers, equipped with tape recorders, cameras, a vehicle and individual equipment. At the time of the Persian Gulf War, the twenty-two MHD's were apportioned as follows: one in Regular Army; eight in Army National Guard; and thirteen in U.S. Army Reserve.
 9. Wright, "Clio and Mars", pp. 6, 9, and 12.
 10. Stewart, "Special Operations", pp. 10-12.
 11. Patrick W. Carlton, "Civil Affairs Operations in the Persian Gulf War". Presentation to OHMAR, November 6, 1992.
- [Wright, Historian, U.S. Army Center of Military History; McDonnell, Historian, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Stewart, U.S. Army Reserve; and Carlton, U.S. Army Reserve]