

Veterans Invited To Share Experiences In Wayne Township Veteran's History Project

By Henry M. Holden

The Wayne Public Library is inviting all township residents who served in any of the military branches to call Jody Treadway, director of the Wayne Public Library, and arrange to be interviewed, and become part of the Veterans History Project (VHP).

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000 as part of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

VHP's mission is to collect, preserve, and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.

The VHP has the goal of recording personal stories of all who served honorably in the

U.S. military.

"We just started the sign-up process in November," said Treadway. "The veterans don't have to be from a particular timeframe. They can be from any of the wars, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, the Iraq or Afghanistan Wars."

Treadway has a series of set questions, which take about 30 minutes.

"They are welcome to bring photographs, letters, anything related to their time in the military," said Treadway. "We videotape the person and send it to the Library of Congress. We don't keep a copy, but it will be available on the Library of Congress website.

"There is no end date to this program," added Treadway. "I just schedule the use of the video equipment with the

township first.

As a primary source, researchers, scholars and educators rely upon the VHP collections. The oral histories, photographs, manuscripts and other original materials are a rich supplement to historical text and a valued cultural resource.

"The whole focus of this is to put a personal aspect on what it means to be a veteran," said Treadway. "As long as they are no longer serving they are eligible to participate, regard-

less of branch or rank. Civilians who served in support of a United States war effort in a professional capacity also are welcome to participate.

"People didn't have to be in a war or conflict, they could just have served in any branch and received an Honorable or Medical Discharge.

"British-born writer, Simon Van Booy said, 'Language allows us to reach out to people, touch them with our innermost fears, hopes, disappointments,

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and victories. To reach out to people we'll never meet. It's the greatest legacy you could ever leave your children or your loved ones. The history of how you felt."

"I'm hoping that the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars members see this and come forward. It's important to do it now," said Treadway. "I always wanted to

interview my father who was a World War II vet, but I didn't, and now anything he could've shared with me is lost forever. That's why these men and women must come forward and not put it off. Especially the seniors, who are the last links to World War II and the Korean War."

Contact Treadway at 973-694-4272 X5101.