

How to Conduct an Interview TIPS

1. Know what you want to ask interviewee, before approaching them.
2. Look for person who can help tell the story.
 - a. 3 levels of interviewees: 1 overarching, strategic (the higher level leader – how does this fit into big picture?), 1 mid-level leadership – importance of the here and now, 1 guy on the ground
3. Make sure you have notebook and voice recorder (if possible) to take notes
4. Approach person you wish to interview
 - a. Introduce yourself
 - b. Tell person what you are doing (working on a story that...will be published in...)
 - c. Ask if it is okay to interview (would you mind if I asked you a few questions, would it be okay if I interviewed you on...)
5. First clarify person's full name, rank, correct spelling, position and unit/company
6. Try to phrase all questions with open-ended questions – this forces person to give you more than a yes/no answer
 - a. How did you?
 - b. Tell me about...
 - c. Describe?
 - d. Why?
 - e. What? (What does not force a descriptive answer, but it can lead into good command messaging)
7. Ask storyline questions
 - a. Please describe what happened; Can you tell me about..., etc.
 - b. Make sure you have the 5 W's of the event (Who, What, Where, When and Why?)
8. Ask followup questions – do you have any questions about the information they told you? Are there any gaps in the information?
9. Clarify any acronyms

10. Ask feeling questions/command messaging questions (see examples)
 - a. How did you feel?
 - b. Why do you think? (Why do you think this type of training is important? Why do you think this partnership is important?, etc.)
 - c. What makes the National Guard important, special, etc?
 - d. How did you Soldiers/Airmen/Guardsmen perform that day?
 - e. What was your impression of the National Guard during this?
11. Ensure numbers and facts are accurate
12. Thank interviewee for their time and agreeing to interview
13. Get contact information from person for any follow up questions you may have (skip this for higher level leadership. This is for technical experts who can fill in the blanks)
14. Ensure interviewee you will send them (or their aid) a copy of the finished product (this is great for building rapport and also will help gain viewership of your article)
15. Thank them again and say goodbye