

Lee College making 190 recorded oral histories digitally accessible via the Internet

BAYTOWN, TX — Lee College is bringing the voices and stories of Texas veterans to new life as part of a special project to digitize and securely archive 120 oral histories of former military service members, as well as approximately 70 oral histories that cover the history of Baytown.

Developed by the Lee College Library, the Baytown Veteran/Local Oral History Project is being funded by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services through a grant to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The TexTreasures Grant aims to increase accessibility to library treasures by helping member libraries make their special collections more accessible to researchers in Texas and beyond. Lee College is one of 13 libraries, colleges and universities across the state awarded a TexTreasures Grant for fiscal year 2017.

As part of its digitization project, the Lee College Library will make about 96 hours of recorded veteran oral histories available for listening online. Once converted, the files will be sent to the Portal to Texas History at the University of North Texas for preservation storage, metadata creation and Internet access.

“This project allowed Lee College to migrate valuable oral information interview from obsolete audio cassette tapes to digital MP3 files. This will help preserve them for a longer period of time,” said Paul Arrigo, library director. “Since they are now in digital format, the library can also share these oral histories to the entire world, whereas previously people had to come to the Lee College Library to listen to them.”

Members of the community can hear the oral histories for themselves – including 35 hours on the history of Baytown – at the fourth annual Veteran’s Appreciation Day to be held from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Saturday, June 10, at VFW Post 912 on North Main Street in Baytown. Attendees can climb aboard the Lee College Mobile Go Center to listen to the stories and learn more about the digitization process from Lee College librarians, and enjoy family activities like helicopter rides and memorabilia displays at the event.

For more information about the Baytown Veteran/Local Oral History Project at Lee College, contact the library at 281.425.6379 or library@lee.edu.