

CAREER ALBUMS

First, a decision: Scrapbook or Career Album – what’s the difference? Well, I decided there needed to be a name to distinguish the album I made for my son since it was so different from the usual scrapbook. So I coined the phrase “career album.” It is more formal in nature, designed to be a chronological layout of an individual’s career in service to their country, or their community in the case of a fire fighter or law enforcement officer.



Getting Started

If you decide to do a career album, you need to gather all the materials – any awards, letters from commanding officers, promotions, etc. Then write down when the service person was stationed at which locations. The easiest things to use for organization are **3 x 5 index cards**, using **tabbed dividers** for the locations and dates. On each individual card note the item from the file to be included in the album and file it behind the appropriate tab.



Gathering It All Up



Then go in search of mementoes and photos – things like programs and photos from his ceremonies, pictures of him or her, medallions, etc. My son was an enlisted man who went through the ECP (enlisted college program) so I included his college accolades and graduation programs and photos from the Citadel since he was an active duty student, plus his commissioning ceremony. Each of those items was listed on an index card.

For pages depicting the bases he was stationed at, I went to those websites and downloaded photos and histories of the bases (*“Work created by employees of the federal government as a part of their job is in the public domain, i.e., not protected by copyright,”* according to the Library of Congress website), adding each of those to an index card.



I made color copies of all the official documents in the album, for my son’s file (you can do this at a copy center or with a scanner), and made sure that each of the original documents I put in the album was only temporarily secured. I did this by using photo corners, sometimes in view and sometimes covered by other things like metal corners or something else decorative. You can use a corner punch with slits, too.

In the case of his commission, it was too big for the album, so I scanned it in two sections and used Adobe Photoshop software to merge the two images and then reduced it to a size that worked. It does a great job. Adobe Photoshop Elements software will do just as well at a fraction of the price. If you’re new to photo

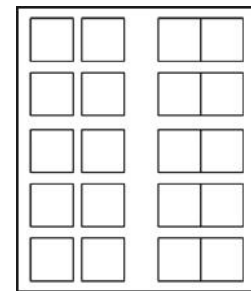


manipulation I highly recommend this software, and if you need a book to help you, one that doesn't get bogged down in details, try *The Photoshop Elements 4 Book for Digital Photographers* by Scott Kelby.

Then I noticed that some things were missing. There was nothing for boot camp – no documentation, no pictures, nothing. So I decided to skip that and substitute the Oath of Office as the first page. For the ending, I chose the Navy Hymn. The second verse changes depending on which part of the Navy the service person is in. For him, it was the aviation verse as he is now a Naval Flight Officer. There's one for sailors, submariners, women sailors, Marines and Seabees, too. I found a great page-long quote about naval officers to go with his commissioning, and some good quotes about the navy and leadership. (See other portions of this reference section for these **quotes** and many others too). Those types of things can be sprinkled in sparingly. The page-long items were given their own place on an index card. The cards are then all arranged chronologically.

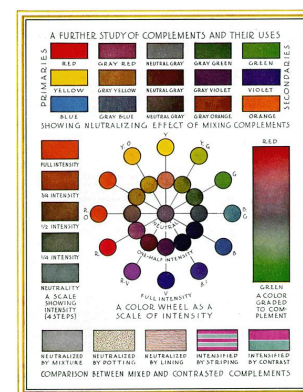
Planning the Album

Using copies of the **album layout pages** (also found here in the reference section as a pdf), and a pencil, start planning the career album. You may find, as I did, that depending on how long a career your service person has had, some things have to be left out. The album I did spanned 15 years and I ended up with 60 pages, total. That is the capacity of one of the K & Company leather albums if you have any thickness to many of your pages, which I did, since I used a lot of Making Memories pewter-finished alphabet charms and had a lot of programs and multi-paged base histories. You may have to do two albums.



The Fun Stuff

Now that you have your pages all planned out, you can choose your materials. We've hand-selected coordinating papers to go with each of the printed papers we carry as we know how hard it is to trust what you see on the screen. That's actually one of the fun parts of my job. I love color. I've even taken 3-day long classes on color in one of my other passions, polymer clay, but that's another story. Suffice it to say, I take color coordination very seriously. We've also chosen other items you might like to consider for each of our printed papers. Each of these items will be shown at the bottom of the paper product page.



Pulling It All Together

Now follow your layout plan and put your career album page together. If you have dimensional pages be sure to add spacers between your pages so that the album lies flat. Have fun and send us pictures of your pages for our gallery.