

VETERAN LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Principal Investigator:

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Project Title: U.S. Veteran War Resistance since 9/11

Brief Project Description: This project is designed to document war resistance and peace activism by U.S. veterans of any era in the period since September 11, 2001 and to explain the issues and challenges faced by veteran activists during this period. A full description of the project is available on request from the principal investigator (P.I.) who can be contacted at the email and phone numbers listed above.

What You Are Agreeing to Do: If you agree to be interviewed for this project it will involve one or more interview sessions with the P.I. during which you will be asked questions about your life particularly with respect to your military service and post-service peace activism. With your permission the interviews will be recorded and transcribed and may be used in the preparation of reports, articles, presentations and other scholarly projects. The length of such interviews can vary considerably, largely depending on how much you wish to share about the topics considered, but a typical interview takes one-two hours to complete.

Your Rights: Participation in this research is **voluntary**. You are free to withdraw at any time, to correct or amend any statement you have made, to request previously given records (including recordings and notes) be destroyed—although it is not typically possible to remove published statements from the record.

Your participation in this project is **confidential**. This means you will not be identified by name *unless you explicitly indicate that prefer to be identified* and details of your life that might reveal your identity will not be published without your explicit consent. This means you will be given a chance to review any materials submitted intended for publication before they are submitted and request the removal or modification of any statement pertaining to you, your words, or your experiences.

Risks: The interviewer will make every effort to avoid asking questions that may trigger difficult or unpleasant memories, but it is possible that such might arise during the interview. In some cases these memories may be traumatic. If such memories occur during or after your interviews please consider seeking help. The P.I. will provide contact information for nearest available counseling services for veterans.

Informed Consent Statement: I, _____ , understand that my participation in the U.S. Veteran War Resistance since 9/11 project is voluntary. I understand that I can withdraw from the project at any time and request that my previous statements not be used in the project—and all recordings and transcripts of my interview(s) be destroyed.

I further understand that I can decline to answer any specific question, request that specific questions or types of question not be asked, and that I can modify my answers for the record.

I understand that the principal investigator will make every effort to preserve my confidentiality except where and when I explicitly indicate a desire to be identified.

Signature

Date

	Confidentiality: Unless you initial at the left, you will be identified by pseudonym in any publication that references this interview. Initial at the left ONLY if you wish to ALWAYS be identified in published materials by your real name. Note can still request case-by-case attribution of your words to your real name even if you don't initial.
Initials	

Notes: The principal investigator (P.I.) for this project is Steven Gardiner, steven.gardiner@zu.ac.ae. Questions or concerns should be directed to his supervisor, Christopher Southgate, Dean of the College of Sustainability Sciences and Humanities, Zayed University, chris.southgate@zu.ac.ae. A copy of this statement and a short version of the project description should be made available to you at the time of consent to participate. A full project description is available on request by email to steven.gardiner@zu.ac.ae or by mail at Steven Gardiner, P.O. Box 144534, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, UAE.

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Life History Interview Directions

Interview onset presumes the prior consent of the subject as explained in the associated **cover sheet** and **informed consent statement**. The following are questions designed to elicit information from veterans of the United States military regarding the challenges they face as veterans and veteran activists in the post-9/11 era.

Note that subjects participating in this project are presumed to be self-defined peace/anti-war activists as indicated by membership in or active participation with veteran anti-war organizations, including but not limited to Veterans for Peace, Iraq Veterans Against the War and Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Questions are divided into six (6) sections:

- I. Background and demographic information
- II. Pre-military experience
- III. Military experience
- IV. Veteran Experience
- V. Veteran Activist Experience
- VI. Follow-on Questions

Confidentiality Protocol: Regardless of how a subject may wish to be identified in publication(s), on the protocol records sheets and in associated transcripts he/she will be identified only by Subject Code (see below) or associated pseudonym.

The only places where subject **contact information** will be associated with (and therefore retrievable) with his/her Subject Code (or pseudonym) will be the P.I.'s copies of the Informed Consent Statement—which will be kept in a locked storage cabinet –and in an encrypted database.

To avoid accidental disclosure all *draft* reports, articles, chapters and related materials intended for publication will refer to subjects by pseudonym until indicative portions have been reviewed and approved by subjects. Only after approval, at the time of submission for publication, will (if the subject has explicitly requested to be identified) pseudonyms be replaced with real names.

Subject Codes. The unique identifying code for each subject will be composed of the following:

Three Digit Interview Order Number: 001 – 999

Service Branch: A=Army, AF=Air Force, CG=Coast Guard, M=Marine Corps, N=Navy, NV=Non-Veteran

Years of Service: YYYY-to-YYYY

For example: **001-A-1982-to-1986**

Subject Code: _____

Pseudonym: _____

Date: _____

Place of Interview: _____

Introduction. Hello, I am Steven Gardiner, a researcher from Zayed University doing a project on veteran peace activism and war resistance in the United States.

Just to remind you, participation in this project is completely voluntary. You can decline to answer any question, request for me to avoid asking certain questions or kinds of questions, and withdraw entirely from the project at any time.

The focus of this interview will be your experiences with peace activism as a veteran and the challenges, opportunities and issues you may have faced. Other topics will be touched upon to provide a context for your answers.

Permission to Record. Do you consent to being audio-recorded during this conversation—with the understanding that you can ask me to turn off the recorder at any time?

Yes, subject consents to be audio recorded.

No, subject DOES NOT consent to be audio recorded—continue with detailed written notes only.

I. Background Questions. First I have a few standard questions related to your family background, personal history, education and so on.

I. Question	Answer	Note
1. In what year were you born?		
2. What branch did you serve in?		
3. What time period did you serve in (in years)?		

I. Question	Answer	Note
<p>4. What is your marital status? (If married or partnered ask 4a and 4b.)</p> <p>4a. (---) Is your spouse also a veteran?</p> <p>4b. (---) Is your spouse also involved with peace activism (veteran or otherwise)?</p>		
<p>5. What branch did you serve in?</p>		
<p>6. What time period did you serve in (in years)?</p>		
<p>7. Did either of your parents or grandparents serve in the military?</p> <p>7a. Did any of your siblings serve in the military?</p> <p>7b. If you have children are any of them serving or have served in the military?</p>		
<p>8. Where are you from? (hometown)</p>		
<p>9. How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity?</p>		

I. Question	Answer	Note
<p>10. What level of education have you completed?</p> <p>10a. (If appropriate): What did you/are you studying?</p>		
<p>11. Are you currently employed?</p> <p>11a. (If yes) What is your current occupation?</p>		

II. Pre-military Experience

II. Question	Answer	Note
<p>1. What kind of student were you in grade school?</p> <p>1a. In high school?</p> <p>1b. What was your favorite subject?</p>		
<p>2. Did you play any competitive sports when you were in high school?</p> <p>2a. (If yes) Which ones?</p> <p>2b. (If yes) How important were they too you at the time?</p>		
<p>3. Did you have any hobbies you were involved with? (In high school).</p>		

II. Question	Answer	Note
<p>4. Did you have a favorite movie when you were young?</p> <p>4a. Did you have a favorite movie when a favorite television show?</p> <p>4b. What about a favorite book? Or comic?</p>		
<p>5. Did you have any heroes—real life or fictional—growing up?</p> <p>5a. Who?</p>		
<p>6. Were your parents together while you were growing up?</p>		
<p>7. Did you work a paying job (or jobs) before joining the military?</p> <p>7a. (---) What was it?</p> <p>7b. (---) How did you feel about it?</p>		
<p>8. Were you ever in a fight growing up?</p> <p>8a. (---) How often?</p> <p>8b. (---) How serious?</p>		
<p>9. Were you ever accused or found guilty of a serious crime growing up?</p>		

II. Question	Answer	Note
9a. Tell me about that?		
10. What was your dream growing up?		
<p>11. How old were you when you entered the military?</p> <p>11a. What year was that?</p> <p>11a. (If before 1973). Were you drafted?</p>		
<p>12. Why did you join the military?</p> <p>12a. (If drafted). Did you consider conscientious objection? Expatriation?</p> <p>12b. (If volunteer). How did your family react to your decision to join the military?</p> <p>12c. (If volunteer). How did your friends react to your decision to join the military?</p>		
13. What was your biggest concern, anxiety or fear just before induction?		

III. Military Experience

III. Question	Answer	Note
1. Where did you do your basic training/boot camp/initial training?		
2. What was your military specialty (MOS)? 2a. Where did you do your MOS training? 2b. How long was it?		
3. Did you make any friends in basic or MOS training whom you are still in contact with? 3a. (---) Tell me a little about them.		
4. Setting aside for the moment if you would have joined the military at all, if you were doing it again and had a choice would you have chosen the same MOS? 4a. If yes, why? 4b. If no, what would you have chosen and why?		

III. Question	Answer	Note
<p>5. Do you remember anything from your initial training—official or otherwise—that made a lasting impression on you? (Anything that happened? Anything said? Anything about the situation? Anything that happened?)</p>		
<p>6. Where was your first post training posting? (What unit, where?)</p> <p>6a. Tell me about it.</p>		
<p>7. Where was your second posting?</p> <p>7a. Tell me about it.</p>		
<p>8. Were you ever deployed to an active combat zone?</p> <p>8a. (---) Did you experience “direct combat situations” (firefights, IEDs, mortar attacks, sniper fire) regardless of your designation?</p> <p>8b. (---) Is there any experience that made a particular or lasting impression on you?</p>		

III. Question	Answer	Note
<p>8c. (---) Were you ever wounded in action?</p> <p>8d. (---) Did you know anyone personally who was KIA or WIA?</p>		
<p>9. Regardless of whether you were deployed to a war zone or not, did you experience anything during your time in the military that made a particular or enduring impression on you?</p> <p>9a. (---) What?</p>		
<p>10. Did you have any conversations about the politics of American foreign policy and/or the particular war you may have been deployed to with fellow soldiers while service?</p> <p>10a. Did your anti-war position begin to form while you were still in the military?</p> <p>10b. When? Under what circumstances?</p> <p>10c. Did you discuss it with anyone? If yes—whom?</p> <p>10d. Were you ever “taken to task” for an anti-war position while still in the military? Describe this.</p>		

III. Question	Answer	Note
<p>11. Did you have regular communication (email, phone, chat) with anyone—family or friend—from the civilian world while serving?</p> <p>11a. Who? How often?</p> <p>11b. Was there anyone in particular who “helped you make it through” your service?</p>		
<p>12. Is there anything you particularly regret doing or not doing while in the military?</p> <p>12a. (---) What?</p>		
<p>13. Is there anything you are particularly proud of that you did while you were serving?</p> <p>13a. (---) What?</p>		
<p>14. If you could have a “do over” for your decision to join, would you do it differently?</p> <p>14a. Why or why not?</p>		
<p>15. If you were giving advice to your younger self—regardless of whether or not you think you would listen—what would you say about the military?</p>		

III. Question	Answer	Note
16. If you were giving advice to your child (or other younger person considering joining the military today), what would you say?		

IV. Veteran Experience

IV. Question	Answer	Note
1. What year were you discharged?		
2. What discharge did you receive?		
3. How long were you on active duty? 3a. If you were deployed to a war zone, how many times were you deployed? For how long?		
4. Did you experience any post-service re-adjustment / re-integration difficulties? 4a. (---) Physical? 4b. (---) Relationship? 4c. (---) Psychological? 4d. (---) Financial / economic? 4e. (---) Ethical?		

IV. Question	Answer	Note
<p>5. Have you had any dealings with the VA?</p> <p>5a. (---) What kinds?</p> <p>5b. (---) Describe the experience.</p>		
<p>6. Have you ever had an experience as a veteran where you found it difficult to communicate with a civilian?</p> <p>6a. Veteran of another era or war?</p>		
<p>7. Have you ever been reluctant to share your military experiences with a friend or family member because you thought the person in question wouldn't understand? (Or because you were ashamed? Or because it was just too hard?)</p> <p>7a. Describe this.</p>		
<p>8. Have you ever used your "veteran status" to drive home a point in an argument?</p> <p>8a. (---) Describe this? How did it make you feel?</p>		

IV. Question	Answer	Note
<p>9. Is there anything in particular in a typical year that reminds you of your time in the military?</p> <p>9a. (---) Do you seek out these reminders? Or avoid them?</p>		
<p>10. Is there anyone you served with who you are still in regular contact with?</p> <p>10a. How important is this to you?</p>		
<p>11. Have you used any veteran's benefits?</p> <p>11a. (---) Which ones?</p> <p>11b. (---) What was the experience dealing with the VA like?</p>		
<p>12. Have you been assigned a disability rating by the VA?</p> <p>12a. (---) What percentage?</p> <p>12b. (---) On what ground?</p> <p>12c. (---) What was the process of application like for you?</p> <p>12d. (---) Did you get help from any organization?</p>		

IV. Question	Answer	Note
12e. (---) If you could give advice to another veteran seeking disability classification from the VA what would you say?		

V. Veteran Activism

V. Question	Answer	Note
1. When did you decide to join a Veteran's peace or anti-war group? (What year? How long after discharge?)		
2. Why did you decide to become an anti-war/peace activist specifically as a veteran?		
3. Do you think veterans have a different kind of moral authority to advocate for peace than non-veterans? 3a. (---) Why? Or Why not?		
4. Do you think veterans have a different moral responsibility to advocate for peace than non-veterans? 4a. (---) Why? Or Why not?		

V. Question	Answer	Note
<p>5. As a veteran anti-war (or peace) activist have you ever been accused of being anti-American?</p> <p>5a. (---) Describe what you have experienced—be as specific as possible.</p>		
<p>6. As a veteran anti-war or peace activist have you ever been accused of acting treasonously?</p> <p>6a. (---) Describe what you have experienced—be as specific as possible.</p>		
<p>7. As a veteran anti-war or peace activist, have you ever had your courage, toughness, or “masculinity” (if appropriate) questioned or disparaged?</p> <p>7a. By other veterans?</p> <p>7b. By civilians?</p>		
<p>8. Has your anti-war/peace activism ever affected your relationships with friends and family?</p> <p>8a. (---) How?</p>		
<p>9. Has your anti-war/peace activism made relationships with other veterans, including those you served with,</p>		

more difficult?		
V. Question	Answer	Note
9. (---) If so, how? Be as specific as possible.		
10. What is your most important goal as a veteran anti-war/peace activist?		
11. Is there any event, practice, or trend in anti-war activism that you find to be particularly hopeful or compelling? 11a. What? Why?		
12. Is there any event, practice or trend in American social life you find particularly disturbing? 12a. What? Why?		
13. Is there any resource (organization, website, book, film, etc.) that has particularly inspired or supported your activism? 13a. Describe it. How did you discover it? What is so special about it?		
14. What is your most important goal as veteran peace activist?		

V. Question	Answer	Note
<p>15. Do you think that your military experience has a lasting impact on your personal, political and/or moral development?</p> <p>15a. (---) Describe this?</p>		
<p>16. In your experience are veterans taken as a group less likely, more likely, or about the same as non-veterans to “take care of themselves” physically, psychologically and otherwise?</p> <p>16a. (---) If less or more, explain.</p>		
<p>17. Have you considered “backing away” from anti-war activism?</p> <p>17a. (---) If so, why?</p>		

VI. Follow On Questions

VI. Question	Answer	Note
<p>1. Are there any questions you would like to ask me? (Personal, about the project, about my own service or activism?)</p>		
<p>2. Who else should I interview about veteran activism?</p>		

VI. Question	Answer	Note
3. Is there anything you would particular like me to address in any publications that might result from this project?		
4. Just to remind you, unless you tell me otherwise, your name and identifying details will be kept confidential. I will use a pseudonym to refer to you and obscure any details of unit, location and so on that would make your identity obvious. If you explicitly wish to be identified by your own name, please tell me now or let me know before publication.		

Concluding Statement: Once I have completed transcribing this interview, I will send you a copy of the transcript. If you have any corrections, expansions, things you want deleted, you can let me know. This may take some time, since transcription is a labor-intensive process that cannot be delegated (given the research design) to anyone else.

Remember that you can back out at any time—your story is our own and you have no obligation to allow me to use it or publish any portion of it, even if you want to publish it in other contexts. You are encouraged to stay in touch with me, to ask question, and to follow up at any time—I am always available at steven.gardiner@zu.ac.ae or steve@slgardiner.com.

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Getting Help. If you have, or think you may have, PTSD or other service-related psychological (mental, emotional) difficulties or physical injuries, including but not limited to TBI (traumatic brain injury), you may want to consider being evaluated by the VA. Information can be found at:

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/where-to-get-help.asp>

If you are in Crisis:

*** Call 911**

*** Go to the nearest Emergency Room**

*** Call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255**

*** Contact the Veterans Crisis Line:
1-800-273-8255 (press 1 - text 838255)**

Other resources:

* If you are a combat veteran call the 24/7 Veteran Combat Call Center 1-877-927-8387 to talk to another combat Veteran.

* If you are a combat veteran contact military OneSource for counseling and resources 1-800-342-9647.