SOCIAL DIALECT FEATURES OF MILITARY SPEECH: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF FARGO-AREA VETERANS

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this ***disquisition*** complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods study examines the potential existence of a military dialect separate from regional or social dialects experienced by civilians. In particular, how similar is the military-related storytelling lexicon of veterans in the Fargo-Moorhead area to the lexicon set forth in training bases and training manuals used by the U.S. military? The lexicon used by veterans in storytelling can sometimes seem opaque to an audience. It is typically dense with meaning borne by a few coded words. These words carry a contextual burden that can be better understood by an appeal to the dialect from which they were borne.

In order to disentangle the veteran way of speaking from other overlapping and intersecting social and regional dialects that make up a subject's typical speech, guided conversation and word-matching exercises were used to isolate lexicon that was typical to the military experience. The resulting interview transcripts were analyzed in comparison to military training manuals to arrive at a percentage of military-specific terms used in the guided conversation and a percentage of general knowledge military terms retained in the word-matching measure.

The resulting 1.85% of military-specific terms and phrases used by participants in guided conversations and 61% retention of military-specific term knowledge was used to show that the military dialect not only exists but persists in the repertoire of veteran participants. As the majority of those who work with veterans are not veterans themselves, these percentages represent a significant barrier to understanding veteran storytelling. This barrier hinders the successful reintegration and mental health of veterans who return to their communities without knowing how to meaningfully express their stories in their existing support networks.

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And finally to Pe Ell High School, the place that taught me discrimination is wrong, fighting for the downtrodden is right, and leaving home can be the best decision of your life.

PREFACE

On September 11, 2001, I was prepared to attend classes at The Evergreen State College. I had enrolled, established financial aid, and would be pursuing a degree in secondary education. I was 18 years old and ready to take on the world. That morning, my life would change forever as I watched the attacks on New York and elsewhere unfold on the news. I never went to class that day. I never attended Evergreen. Instead on September 18, 2001, I walked into my Army recruiter's office near Fuller's Market in Centralia, WA and took the oath of enlistment.

From that time, until March 17, 2005, I did everything the Army told me to do. When they told me to jump, I didn't ask how high, I jumped as high and long as I could. I let it soak in. I became what they wanted me to be, a faster, stronger, more violent version of myself. I was high speed, low drag, Airborne, all the way. I went places and did things I never thought I could. I performed physical feats I never imagined. I was fundamentally changed.

In the aftermath of my service, my marriage fell apart. I had trouble finding good work. I was behind. I became homeless and for a period of 3-4 years, I felt totally lost. It wasn't until I made the decision to move to Minnesota and return to school that I really began to regain some feeling of community: some sense of belonging. In college, the military was something I did, but it wasn't who I was.

Fast forward to today and I find I am on the cusp of completing this great capstone to my formal education and the feelings I have inside are utterly indescribable. I should not be here. So many of my sisters and brothers in arms are not here. It is with them in mind that I dedicate my academic efforts going forward to improving the lives of those who transition out of the military and attempting to help them build bridges back to their communities.

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1. INTRODUCTION: TEN NOUNS AND FIVE VERBS

What is Military Dialect and How is it Created?

In Tom Wolfe's book, *The Right Stuff* (1979), the author describes a kind of speech specific to the World War II-era Army. He writes, "In the Army one was continually around people who spoke Army Creole, a language in which there were about ten nouns, five verbs, and one adjective, or participle, or whatever it was called" (NP). Wolfe's account of the WWII pilots who eventually made up the astronauts of the Apollo Missions benefits from his time as a journalist. At several points in the work he makes keen observations about veterans, including this mention of the language difference between the Army and civilians. His brief description of "Army Creole" points out, not just a lexical difference accounting for the ten nouns, etc., but also a level of stoicism and non-verbal behavior that denotes a highly dense coded language, one in which few words are necessary because they carry a heavy weight. One example of this that might be familiar is the word "hooah," and its variations for different branches of service, "hoorah," and "ooya." Taken by themselves, these terms stand for many forms of acknowledgment between troops, sometimes explained as "anything but no." They stand for excitement or understanding. They're sometimes used sarcastically to denote a soldier who is over-excited. These terms began as the acronym H.U.A., heard, understood, and agreed/acknowledged[1] but as time went on the acronym was lost and the terms took on new meanings. Without Wolfe's narrative and others like it, however, the general population has no translator for the compelling stories that veterans can tell. A myriad of difficulties is introduced by this lack of simple understanding, on the part of most civilians, of the way that veterans

[1] There is some debate that the term is more likely derived from the "Huzzah" of the 16th Century British Navy, but its application in the modern military is either an appropriation of this existing battle cry/celebration or the origin of its use in WWII by Army Air Corps pilots.

speak, especially when relating personal narrative about experiences in war. As such, the purpose of this research is to discover features of veteran lexicon, in particular, the lexicon used in telling stories of military service, in order to lay the foundation for an interrogation of best practices for understanding and communicating veteran narratives.

In *The Language of War* (2002), James Dawes observes the effects of war upon language and the ways in which language, in turn, influences war. He writes, "Wars are born and sustained in rivers of language about what it means to serve a cause, to kill the enemy, and to die with dignity; and they are reintegrated into a collective historical self-understanding through a ritualistic overplus of the language of commemoration" (15). While not specifically elucidating a dialect of the soldier, Dawes discusses the effects of war on the language of entire societies. In general, this effect had been felt by entire societies at once, while in the exceptional state of war[2], but as declarations of war have become unpopular and the U.S. military no longer drafts soldiers from a broad swath of socioeconomic groups, the burden of this effect on language is borne by this small group of the population who elects to serve, while the remaining population is insulated from its effects. In this way, an already marginalized group, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, is further marginalized after inheriting a separate way of speaking that denotes overt prestige while serving in the military, especially when speaking formally, and covert prestige between post-service veterans but separates them linguistically from the broader social fabric of their communities.

Initial Entry Training, often referred to as Boot Camp for the Navy and Marines or Basic Training for the Army and Air Force, is the beginning of a soldier's cultural separation from what it means to be a civilian in the United States. The TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command)

[2] See Mary Dudziak's description of states of exception in which wars are fought in her work *War Time* (2012).

pamphlet 600-4, also known as the Initial Entry Training Manual or "Blue Book," has seen many different iterations throughout generations of Army service. The first iteration of what eventually became the Army Blue Book is contained in Frederic Von Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* (1779). This version of the Blue Book was used as the standard manual until The War of 1812. After this initial manual fell out of use, with innovations in warfare specifically designed to counteract it, the modern Army Training Manual was created and continued to be edited every few years and published under the "Blue Book," name. The significance of this document is that it has influenced each branch of military service since it was the foundational document for all troops during the Revolutionary War. While the current TRADOC PAM 600-4 applies mostly to current soldiers in the Army, previous versions and their service-dependent counterparts, like the Air Force's AFPAM 10-100 (Airman's Manual), the Navy's *Bluejacket Handbook* and the Marines' *Guidebook of Essential Subjects*, would be useful for discovering the language environment into which soldiers, sailors, and marines were placed during Basic Combat Training, which is the first contact point with the socialized way of speaking particular to the military.

In the modern military, the training manuals are updated every few years, and as such, the language contained within the manuals changes with each edition, even if ever so slightly. Mount Training for example, came along as a soldier task around 2004 and was added to subsequent TRADOC 600-4 publications to ensure that soldiers knew how to conduct mounted vehicle operations that were standard operating procedure in Iraq. The language changes, however, not simply because of the introduction of new terms or procedures. The changes are often the result of cultural shifts within the military itself. For example, when new technology arrives, new tactics evolve to best use it. The gas mask, the Humvee, mobile artillery, and the fragmentation

grenade all led to tactical changes that influenced military culture. Additionally, the military tends to act on the best facts at hand, like the Navy's move away from fossil fuels for the propulsion of ships in order to decrease their reliance on a globally contested resource. Sometimes these changes are top-down political changes, like the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy or the current administration's Transgender Service Ban. The TRADOC, that publishes the 600-4 also manages training of all soldiers in vocational as well as military-task training. Any change resulting from innovations or shifting priorities in training is passed up to the TRADOC and disseminated through its publications.

In addition to TRADOC's publications providing a new lexicon for recruits in the military, their instructors in Initial Entry Training have been socialized into the same dialect by using the same publications and being taught by people who spoke the way the TRADOC is written. The experience of Initial Entry Training takes place in relative isolation, with no significant contact between the recruit and her or his regional dialect or familiolect. The pressure put upon recruits during Initial Entry Training, combined with a managed-dialect exemplar (their instructors) in conjunction with the necessity to learn each concept within the 600-4 may produce what Kerswill and Williams (2000) refer to as "dialect levelling," or the evening out of existing dialects in favor of a dialect that is common to new inhabitants of a given space who arrived from diverse backgrounds (1). The status of this levelling could lead to a cohort-effect, essentially creating a cohort of soldiers who speak the dialect of the training materials they were given and forced to memorize and socialized into, while creating artificial linguistic change with the release of each new edition of the training manuals, speeding up the normally very slow process of linguistic change.

What follows in the remainder of section I is a review of literature that forms a background for the present primary research. This study was designed as a sociolinguistic investigation of lexicon. While other features of speech, such as phonology and grammar may be effected by exposure to military training, one of the most prominent features of indoctrination into the military is the introduction of a new lexicon for which many civilians have no context. Lexical terms include, not just a professional lingo or jargon, as is present in most workplace cultures, but prescriptions for the renaming of everyday objects to suit the needs of the military for a single, unified language environment. They go beyond the typical professional jargon because they form a system that is used to communicate across groups. While individual groups within the military do develop their own ways of speaking more like in-group units, like members of the same unit, just like any group in close contact does, the lexical terms peculiar to military training are prescribed in order to provide international organizational short hand among members, not just of the U.S. military, but of the militaries of allied countries that train with or under the U.S. military. Because of this lexicon's power to shape the discourse of the military and its uniqueness when compared to other aspects of speech, the military lexicon is the primary part of speech under examination in this study.

Identity and Meaning: What does Military Dialect Change About Veterans?

The first 3 chapters of TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 (the Army's initial entry handbook) are dedicated not to soldier tasks but to military enculturation, which includes converting every aspect of a recruit's life over to the military way of doing things, right down to the way they speak. This linguistic separation from the public at large contributes to Army cohesiveness, but also isolates new soldiers from existing support networks and, more notably, isolates the adopted dialect of the experience of military training from the native dialect of the experience of

citizenship. This contributes to a variety of post-war transition problems and alienates the civilian from understanding the realities of war. It also enables the perpetuation of "damaged veteran" stereotypes[3] that rely more on anecdotal evidence than any real understanding of what it means to be a veteran. In reality, a 2007 report[4] by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that, during the past three decades, the number of veterans in State and Federal Prison declined and when compared to civilian counterparts, reported a lower rate of "any mental health problems." Unfortunately, the stories of damaged veterans are written, like the stories of shark attacks or pandemics, into the history of the United States, from Lee Harvey Oswald to Jerry Seratto. The public is more apt to believe that they could be a victim of an extremely rare and tragic event than they are to evaluate how their perceptions shape the lives and livelihoods of others, especially when those others are an invisible minority.

Chapter one of TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 is dedicated to "General Subjects" (1.1). It contains information on Army History, recognizing the rank structure, observing military customs and courtesies, a section on "Military Quotations," the founding documents of the United States, and instructions for how to read a pay statement and get promoted (v). It's all caught up in the culture of the military, suggesting a transition from what it means to be a civilian to what it means to be a soldier. In the "Promotions," section, the manual reads,

> (1) E-4s must go before the local promotion board to gain eligibility for advancement to the grade of E-5, with the NCO support channel recommendation when they have reached the promotion point cut-off. (2) The promotion board tests you on a number of items including: (a) Leadership competency. (b) Basic Soldier knowledge and skills. (c) Oral communication skills. (d) Personal appearance. (e) Bearing. (f) Self-confidence. (3) When you succeed at the promotion board, your NCO support channel will recommend

[3] The "damaged veteran" stereotypes referred to here are primarily a product of personal experience but there is also significant research that relies on this deficit model. See Branker, Sinski, Falk, Blake, and Batten.

[4] https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/vsfp04.pdf

> you for promotion, and based on the Army wide point system, you will advance to E-5 when you have met the "promotion point cut-off" for your MOS (11.6).

In this quote, the first non-automatic promotion is described in the enlisted[5] chain of command. Before E-5[6], all promotions are a matter of time in rank. To become an E-5 (Sergeant), the soldier must learn to master several skills; (a) describes "Leadership competency," moreover the Army Values, described earlier in the manual are: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage (LDRSHIP). As such, the most important qualification for promotion in the Army, at least rhetorically, is embodiment of the Army Values. The quote goes on to list "Basic Soldier knowledge and skills," presumably those drawn from pamphlet 600-4 chapter 4 "Basic Soldier Skills" (4.1). "Oral Communication Skills," certainly might include the ability to speak, both to the promotion board, and to one's subordinate soldiers, which might require a specialized professional way of speaking like a soldier. Parts (d), (e), and (f) all have to do with looking and acting like a soldier. In sum, then, in order to obtain promotion past E-4, a soldier must accept the Army Values, know the 600-4 manual well, sound

[5] "Enlisted" generally refers to soldiers who join the military without prior college education. "Enlisted" is the opposite of "Officer," which is a soldier who went to college and later attended a commissioning academy. The two classes of soldier described here are divided by more than just college, however; they do not socialize with each other. They have separate facilities for recreation, housing, and all other out-of-uniform activities. They also are divided in the structure of their employment. Whereas officers can resign a commission at any point, enlisted soldiers sign a contract to serve for a given number of years, with no option to simply resign, discharged only for offenses which make the soldier physically unable to continue in military life, or which are punishable under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, to which soldiers are held for their entire careers. There is a class of soldier between these two called Warrant Officers. These soldiers are experts in a technical field but may not have any formal education on the subject. This includes inventors and civilian-qualified individuals in a high-need area. They function more as officers than enlisted, as there is a small portion of the force that holds these rank positions and they are held in higher esteem than enlisted personnel and sometimes higher esteem than junior officers.

[6] E-5 is the fifth grade of enlisted personnel. Enlisted personnel are graded between E-1 and E-10. Warrant Officers are graded between WO-1 and WO-5. Officers are graded between O-1 and O-10, but there hasn't been an O-10 (5-Star General) since Douglas MacArthur, who politicians like Clement Attlee, Joseph William Martin Jr., and eventually, Harry Truman, himself, deemed to have too much power. As such, the Secretary of the Army (a cabinet-level official) generally serves as the O-10. There is a pay-raise available for officers who have previously served as enlisted personnel. These soldiers are generally paid on the EO-1 through EO-10 scale but are generally rare because of the existing class divide.

like a soldier, act like a soldier, and look like a soldier. This constitutes enculturation, dangling the prospect of promotion over the soldier until conformity is achieved.

In *FM 24-19*, the Army's *Radio Operator's Handbook*, chapter five begins with an introduction to the phonetic alphabet for spelling hard to understand words over the radio. The theory is that any word that is too long to be understood can be spelled phonetically (Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, etc.) in order to be understood more clearly when communications are strained by technology or background noise. This much seems to make sense, but the manual continues:

1. To distinguish numerals from words similarly pronounced, the proword 'FIGURES' may be used preceding such numbers.
2. When numerals are transmitted by radiotelephone, the following rules for their pronunciation will be observed:

Table 1. Numeric Pronounciation (*FM 24-19*, the Army's *Radio Operator's Handbook*)

Numeral	Spoken As
0	ZE-RO
1	WUN
2	TOO
3	TREE
4	FOW-ER
5	FIFE
6	SIX
7	SEV-EN
8	AIT
9	NIN-ER

3. Numbers will be transmitted digit by digit except that exact multiples of thousands may be spoken as such. However, there are special cases, such as anti-air warfare reporting procedures when the normal pronunciation of numerals is prescribed for example, 17 would then be "seventeen."

Table 2. Extended Numeric Pronounciation (*FM 24-19*, the Army's *Radio Operator's Handbook*)

Numeral	Spoken As
44	FOW-ER FOW-ER
90	NIN-ER ZE-RO
136	WUN TREE SIX
TIME 1200	WUN TOO ZE-RO ZE-RO
1478	WUN FOW-ER SEV-EN AIT
7000	SEV-EN TOU-SAND
16000	WUN SIX TOU-SAND
812681	AIT WUN TOO SIX AIT WUN

4. The figure "ZERO" is to be written "0," the figure "ONE" is to be written "1," and the letter "ZULU" is to be written "Z."
5. Difficult words may be spelled phonetically using the four-step method. Abbreviations and isolated letters should be phoneticized without the proword "I SPELL."

(5.3-5.4)

Here, the beginning of a dialect prescription is revealed. Whereas the prescription for phonetic spelling of longer words seems excusable under the conditions described above, the prescription of new ways of pronouncing numbers seems less so, especially digit by digit. Whether or not the intention is to create a dialect, the prescription of a way of speaking for any reason creates a dialect, especially in conjunction with isolation from other ways of speaking. To some, calling this a dialect might seem like a stretch, but between phonetic spelling, radio procedure, number pronunciation, and prowords[7] messages like:

[7] Words used on the radio in order to signal intention. "I Spell" is a proword designed to signal that the sender is about to spell a difficult to pronounce word.

Table 3. Messages in Radio Phonology (*FM 24-19*, the Army's *Radio Operator's Handbook*)

7	TO SIERRA EIGHT XRAY FOUR FIVE
8	INFO TANGO THREE FOXTROT NINER TWO
9	EXEMPT CHARLIE TWO ECHO FIVE ONE
10	GROUP EIGHT
11	BREAK
12	MOVE YOUR HQ TO HILL ONE FIVE FOUR
13	BREAK
14	NOT USED (See note at end for example).
15	AUTHENTICATION IS BRAVO DELTA
16	OVER

(15.6)

become possible. To the studied radio operator, this exchange is a very important set of instructions, a set of instructions that must not be misunderstood.

The status of any linguistic variation is governed by issues of solidarity and identity in conjunction with existing structures of linguistic repertoire. In exploring the possibility of a socialized military dialect, one that does not rely on regional but social boundaries, an appeal to themes of dialectology, identity, solidarity, and communication in social groups is required.

Dialect, in particular, is something that is difficult to state definitively as one thing or another. Broadly, the book *Sociolinguistics* by Bernard Spolsky views dialectology as "the search for spatially and geographically determined differences in various aspects of language" (28). In its very essence then, dialectology searches for boundaries or isoglosses between certain ways of speaking. Inherent in Spolsky's definition, however, is the assumption that these boundaries are often geographical, even though he is hesitant to state that it is absolutely the case. Later in the book, for example, Spolsky writes, "Dialect concerns variations that are located regionally, or socially" (33). He also states, "Geographical space…is not enough to account for language variation" (29). Inherent then, in Spolsky's definition of dialect, is the acceptance of the possibility of a secondary concern of dialectology that is socially determined. This social

determinate for dialect as a subject of study enables us to think of the various social groups within larger geographical areas as having distinct ways of speaking. For example, a social group within a region (like the Amish in Pennsylvania) may have a dialect all their own because of their social isolation from other groups in the area just as easily as one might see language variation as a result of geographical isolation[8]. This geographical and linguistic isolation from other groups creates in-group/out-group identity but I've found in the literature that identity[9] is structured in a bit of a circular way.

Identity is seen as both the interpreter of experiences and the influencer of interpreted experiences. It is also seen as deeply personal and beyond the influence of the other who is outside a given, native, community of practice. For example, in *The Language of War*, Dawes writes, "to be named by an other is traumatic: it is an act that precedes my will" (22). Here, Dawes notes that, in war, epithets generally function as substitutions for the chosen identity of individuals within a given nation-state. The replacement of the existing name, chosen from within the group, with a name chosen for the group from the outside, one which obfuscates individuality and undermines the identity of the group, allows the other to dehumanize them. This assertion by Dawes meshes with Bucholtz and Hall's assertion that "identity is the product of linguistic and semiotic practices" (585). By replacing the existing signifier of the group with a signifier that carries pre-existing negative connotations, the naming of the group by the other represents a hostile act. Bucholtz and Hall further state that identities encompass macro-level demographic categories, position self and other, are constituted through social action (like

[8] For a full discussion of dialectology, see Alexander John Ellis' *On Early English Pronunciation* (1869), Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1905), *The Linguistic Atlas of the United States*, Harold Orton's *Survey of English Dialects*, and Thomas Callon Hudson's "Sociolinguistics In India" (1939) that paved the way for the eventual morphing of the field into the study of Sociolinguistics.

[9] Identity refers here to one of the main purposes of language: 1. To Communicate, 2. To Develop social identity. See Spolsky, Crystal, Dawes, and David Evans.

language), and are relationally constructed. As such, the identity of an individual is, by Dawes and Bucholtz and Hall's standards, socially constructed, with no reference to regionality at all. This is not to say that the region plays no part in the identity of the individual, but rather, that the social network of the individual is more important to developing identity than the regional location alone.

Many of the scholars already mentioned above address the issue, not just of separation through linguistic action, but also of solidarity through that same avenue. Dawes writes that sympathy is capable of becoming a shared point of contact between people. This might be said to be one of the fundamental building blocks of a community of practice[10]. Spolsky observes that "One of the principle uses of language is to communicate meaning, but it is also used to establish and to maintain social relationships" (3). We show our willingness to remain a part of a given group by speaking like other members of the group. Spolsky also writes "…the complex interplay of language structure with social structure means that any user of language is constantly responding to and signaling social information. In this way, speakers not only use their language to communicate messages but also to communicate membership in a social network. In his *Course on General Linguistics*, Saussure observes "language is not a function of the individual speaker" (14). Rather, this quote suggests, individual speakers make contributions to an existing community of language resources that combine to form the language. Junger writes that people crave tribes and that soldiers often find themselves missing war because they feel the loss of the brotherhood that came with being in the military. Soldiers don't necessarily miss fighting in a

[10] see Etienne Wenger (1990) Toward a theory of cultural transparency. Palo Alto: Institute for Research on Learning , Etienne Wenger (in press) Communities of Practice at Cambridge University Press; and Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation. New York: Cambridge University Press.

war, but miss the absence of the community into which they have invested their time. In *Communities of Practice*, Wenger observes that whole knowledge and meaning systems are based not on objective facts but rather on social interactions. Things mean, for a community, what the community decides they mean in solidarity with one another. In sum, communities use language to create social solidarity and meaning for their specific group. Their linguistic practices are then reinforced by the group creating a culture within the group that is separate from those outside the group.

If the authors above agree that solidarity contributes to social feelings of identity and linguistic practices, then the lack of solidarity likely also has an effect. Romaine notes that diffusion of linguistic features can be halted by social stratification. If a barrier of social isolation is placed around a given group, an ethnic or socioeconomic group, for example, the group ceases to share as much linguistic information with those on the outside of this barrier. Ruth Wodak, in *The Sage Handbook of Sociolinguistics,* observes that social stratification produces social division. Bernard Spolsky, in *Sociolinguistics,* notes that people who communicate regularly, speak similarly. It is no surprise then that veterans who often spend every waking hour around other veterans for a period of 2-8 years, develop similar ways of speaking.

Research Justification: Why does it matter what veterans are trying to tell us?

But how different is the language of veterans? In formal settings or in situations that do not call for a different way of speaking, veterans can and do switch to a code that is more in keeping with the Mainstream American English (MAE) dialect that they hear around them after returning to civilian life. The difference is only most evident when they attempt to speak about a situation or experience that has little context in the MAE dialect, one for which their adopted dialect is the way they spoke in the military. This means that any time a veteran attempts to communicate an experience of war, often some of the most necessary stories for them to

communicate for their mental well-being, they are faced with a language barrier that inhibits this ability and frustrates both the veteran and the person with whom they are attempting to communicate. This can be a therapist, a spouse, a child, or a general audience.

If the stories of veterans are to be heard and truly understood then an understanding of the way veterans speak in these situations is vital for those who wish to help veterans express themselves. Likewise, families of veterans who can sometimes feel as though their veteran family member simply doesn't talk about these experiences, can be helped to understand that the language the veteran has used to express these stories is coded and needs to be decoded in order to be fully understood. The reason then, for this research is to gain an understanding of the differences in veteran ways of writing and speaking, especially surrounding accounts of military-specific events, in order to enable those who wish to help veterans to decode the stories and understand their full meaning, in essence to recover veteran voices from the dialect of military service. Because a study of all veterans would be unwieldy, a specific community of veterans, those living in the Fargo-Moorhead area are studied in this dissertation. Their mutual presence in a single geographic area isolates one factor of linguistic difference. Veterans are not a homogenous group. They come from everywhere and have many different experiences, especially in different eras of service. By studying a single, small, representative group of veterans it is hoped that conclusions about the kind of solutions that might work for all veterans can be drawn.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Marginalized Veteran

One approach to understanding the status of the U.S. veteran is to consider them as involuntary agents in a semi-neo-colonialist project. My writing project, *Warrior Words,* an ongoing project with the Red River Valley Writing Project that I ran from 2016 until I left Fargo in 2019, attempted to bring the insights of literary and linguistics theory to the experience of veterans. Over the course of that time we found that the use of model-texts and storytelling in conjunction with a group-talk environment led to texts that were performable in a public environment. We arrived at these methods through studying sociolinguistics, ethnography, and postcolonialism.

Though I will not attempt to explore the U.S. veteran as a colonized subject within the scope of this project, one way of understanding how veterans are marginalized is to appeal to the postcolonial concepts of enmity and amity. Homi K. Bhabha describes how imperial domination produces feelings of "enmity and amity" in colonized subjects, some of whom materially benefitted from imperial power and thereby functioned as its front-line agents (ix). Benedict Anderson suggests that British official nationalism emerged as a means of reconciling the "inner incompatibility of empire and nation" (93). These conditions have caught up the United States soldier in a set of contradictory logics that produce the affective feelings of empire, its "enmity and amity."

One condition of post-coloniality that is marked by many post-colonial scholars is the feeling of being at once proud of one's cultural heritage, and ashamed of it in light of its difference from the colonizing other. This enmity-amity complex can be traced through a long

line of scholars[11] who examine it from different viewpoints. Though Benedict Anderson and Homi Bhabha agree on the presence of enmity and amity in colonized peoples, they arrive at this conclusion via different processes. Bhabha's experience of the phenomenon of enmity and amity is located in the context of a complicated Indian history that only recently includes the nation of India, whereas Anderson's experience of enmity and amity is located in the surprise he encountered as a political scientist studying Southeast Asian nationalism. He expected to find hatred in the colonized nations of Southeast Asia, but instead found love of nation expressed through artistic cultural production. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha writes, "My childhood was filled with accounts of India's struggle for independence, its complicated histories of subcontinental cultures caught in that deadly embrace of Imperial power and domination that always produces an uncomfortable residue of enmity and amity" (ix). For Bhabha, a childhood in the aftermath of Indian independence denotes a childhood filled with the stories of that independence movement, both the heroic and the grotesque. He grew in enmity for the domination of the colonial power, and amity for the courageous actions of his forbears. Simultaneously, however, he notes that the history of power and domination is a complicated one, and that the residue of that history is both the longing for the approval of the colonial masters (by creating a similar education system, for example) and the enmity felt toward the historic domination (the impetus for the independence movement). In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson cites this same phenomenon, writing, "…it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love…Even in the case

[11] In Arthur Keith's *A New Theory of Human Evolution* the author proposes a spectrum between moral codes of amity and enmity that defines those in the in-group of a given culture as distinct from those in the out-group (6). Conscience is defined as a kind of mid-point between the two, acting as the judgement to be enabled to help a friend, and the wisdom to know an enemy. Keith's work draws on Herbert Spencer's *The Man Versus The State* (1884), especially the post-script to the work, which describes a sort of political theory invented to encourage fear of an enemy and loyalty to the state (167-177). Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) sought to apply a biological lens to the understanding of tribal/national difference.

of colonized peoples, who have every reason to feel hatred for their imperialist rulers, it is astonishing how insignificant the element of hatred is in these expressions of national feeling" (145-146). For Anderson, the feeling of amity is expressed as love (or lack of hate), and expressions of enmity that ought to be present in colonized peoples. Though for Anderson the insignificance of the element of hatred enables the preservation of the cohesive nation-state, for Bhabha, this element of enmity becomes an uncomfortable residue.

In order to understand how Anderson and Bhabha came to such radically different conclusions, it is important to consider the histories from which they reasoned their way through the relation between anti-colonial nationalisms and feelings of love and hate. In *The Location of Culture,* Bhabha draws a distinction between feelings of enmity and amity in the context of decolonization. Bhabha's work emerges at a time when the terminology of enmity and amity could be found in Arthur Keith's *A New Theory of Human Evolution* (1958). Keith's work draws on Herbert Spencer's *The Man Versus The State* (1884), and Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) and other works on evolutionary theory that sought to apply a biological lens to the understanding of tribal/national difference. It is notable then that Bhabha appropriates the language of biology-based nationalism (nationalism based on biological homogeneity) to describe what he clearly defines as "processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences" (1). Bhabha writes, "we must rehistoricize the moment of the emergence of the sign…This can only happen if we relocate the referential and institutional demands of such theoretical work in the field of cultural difference-not cultural diversity" (47). Bhabha is speaking of the need for a reimagining of the historical moment of colonization but shunning the imposition of Western ideas of civility in favor of the inter-textuality that emerges from the interaction of Western and indigenous cultures or relations of power. The identifiable aspects of

race become a visible impediment to the understanding of cultural relations qua the combination of cultural practices in the postcolonial subject. As such, it follows that Bhabha's appropriation of a term caught up in the use of race as a biological determinate of in-group/out-group relations is in direct opposition to biological cultural location.

Franz Fanon, by contrast, describes in *Black Skin White Masks* (1967) the realization of enmity, when the colonized becomes familiar enough with Western culture to understand that they are colonized. Hatred emerges as a result. This hatred, he suggests, is not just of the realization, but the culmination of the pre-existing abuses now given name. He writes: "The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man…That this self-division is a direct of result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question…" (17). While Bhabha acknowledges little first-hand knowledge of the struggle for Indian Independence, Fanon lived through the political turmoil that led to the independence movement. As such, his persuasion is that the use of the language of the colonizer by the colonized is deemed subversive to the colonizer. In subverting the authority of the colonizer by the use of the colonizer's language (the product of the colonizer's culture), the colonized gains something back. She or he takes back some portion of the power differential between colonizer and colonized. For Bhabha, this duality creates an "uncomfortable residue" (146), but for Fanon, the moment of linguistic appropriation coincides with the death of the native culture. In the absence of the native culture, the hybridity of Bhabha's enmity and amity might dissolve in favor of binary opposition, making the colonized either indigenous or Western, but not hybrid. For Fanon, the colonized person in receipt of a Western education realizes her or his colonized state, and feels hatred. This is the opposite of what Anderson sees in his Southeast Asian nations, among which he observes love expressed through cultural production. If these three scholars (Bhabha, Anderson, and Fanon)

exist on a spectrum between love and hate, we would find that: First, Anderson recognizes the remarkable nationalistic love of the colonized for their nation. Second, Bhabha inhabits a liminal space between love and hate. Third, Fanon occupies the pole of hate, as a reactionary emotion in response to the anagnorisis of the colonial moment.

To leap to discussions of how the U.S. soldier is caught up in the same feelings of enmity and amity for the nation they elected to fight for may seem to some a great leap but it is a useful way of showing the ways in which U.S. soldiers are marginalized, as they experience many of the same situations, albeit to a lesser degree, and the spectrum established by Fanon, Bhabha, and Anderson illuminates the core questions posed by the experience of US soldiers, especially since the elimination of the draft in 1973. While this comparison might consume someone, or indeed many someones, who already believe in the idea of the U.S. Soldier as a colonized subject, my own research uses the lens of postcolonialism as a backdrop for questions of sociolinguistics. As a veteran, I was ideally suited to conduct primary research on the ways in which the members of the group spoke with each other. More specifically, I have attempted to interrogate the stages of enculturation, temporal suspension, and the aftermath of a military life as they affect language change and use.

There are numerous models for considering marginalized forms of cultural production in relation to the experience of U.S. soldiers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I have discussed three of what might be called classical post-colonial works (Fanon, Bhabha, and Anderson) though there is much more to draw upon. In order to more closely examine the U.S. soldier in a contemporary context, however, rather than abstracted under the larger label, "soldier," or, more controversially, "marginalized," it is necessary to examine ideas and theory from the Post-9/11 era, a time many recognize as a transition in the kinds of wars being fought

by the U.S. and a time in which my own service took place. In *The Language of War* (2002), for instance, James Dawes writes, "violence harms language, it imposes silence upon groups and, through trauma and injury, disables the capacity of the individual to speak effectively" (2). Dawes locates violence in opposition to discourse, describing the ways in which the two cannot co-exist. The enculturation of the U.S. soldier is enacted from the very beginning of training, with the memorization of commands and responses[12], directly negating individual agency over discourse and replacing the opinion with the command. Once commands are established, violence is taught and the language of the recruit slowly disappears in favor of the trained responses and violent reactions that come as a result of this enculturation. Each individual thought or movement is punished harshly, and the cohesiveness of the whole is given primacy over the needs of the individual. This process of military enculturation develops the Fanonian sense of hate between recruits and drill sergeants. The recruits both hate and admire their drill sergeants as they simultaneously want to be like the drill sergeant and hate themselves for the shame of being overmastered by the will of the drill sergeant. In one respect, recruits become like Bhabha's hybrid identity by the end of training. They see basic training as a form of torture they all endured, but also relate back to it frequently as a guide for how to live their lives. They find themselves, specifically, emulating the hatred expressed by their drill sergeants toward them. They enact this hatred upon the lower ranks, especially those who arrive from a training they deem inferior to theirs, which is the case almost immediately after they leave. Because they deem the later training inferior, based upon the over-riding discourse of the military community, they enact drill sergeant-like personas upon the lower ranks. For example, a normally good-natured supervisor might enact harsh physical standards or punishments upon a soldier who

[12] Example: Call and Response, "What is the Spirit of the Bayonet?" "To Kill, Kill, Kill, without mercy."

recently arrived from training, especially if they arrived at their duty station from one of the "easier" training bases. "Relaxin' Jackson," for example, is a slang term that refers to the Army's training base at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. It is named "Relaxin' Jackson" for its reputation as the easiest initial entry training base in the Army. It has earned this reputation through its status as the first, and for a time the only, training base to welcome female recruits[13]. It also has earned the reputation through the types of recruits who arrive there. It is the home training base for the majority of Quartermaster Corps recruits, who are the soldiers responsible for logistics and services.

Fort Benning is home of infantry recruits. Fort Sill is the home of the Field Artillery. But Fort Jackson, with its coed training, Quartermaster recruits, and pleasant weather in almost every season, has no such masculine flair. Therefore, when a supervisor receives a recruit from "Relaxin Jackson, it is their responsibility not only to train up the recruit in the military traditions and "standard operating procedures," but also to ensure the recruit can integrate with the rest of the unit. This is a result, not just of the desire to work alongside competent co-workers, but also of a profound sense of Andersonian love of country. This country that abused them to make them who they are, *a soldier*, also exports this training nearly everywhere it goes. It is a product of the national culture. The soldier who loves country exports this Andersonian nationalism hand-in-hand with the military training that is a resulting cultural product.

In *War Time* (2012), Mary Dudziak builds upon the work of Anderson. Rather than addressing Anderson's argument that nationalism is a form of love, however, Dudziak engages Anderson's theory of nationalism as a particular—linear, forward moving—relation to time. She

[13] Obviously, there is a component of this that has to do with sexism. For my part, I have seen the rampant sexism in the military and witnessed the aftermath of its pervasiveness but feel unequal to the task of expounding upon it further. For an excellent examination of the subject, I recommend Anuradha Bhagwati's memoir, *Unbecoming: A Memoir of Disobedience* and Jeanne Holm's *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution.*

considers temporal experiences of war time and peace time in the minds of civilians. Dudziak writes,

> Once war has begun, time is thought to proceed on a different plane. There are two important consequences of this shift: first, we have entered a time that calls for extraordinary action, and second, we share a belief that this moment will end decisively, so that this shift is temporary. Because of this, built into the idea of wartime is a conception of the future. To imagine the future requires an understanding of the past. In Wartime thinking, the future is a place beyond war, a time when exceptional measures can be put to rest, and regular life resumed (22).

As the state of war is considered to be exceptional and temporary, those who train to fight it must also exist in a temporally displaced liminal time. Recruits who join the military in a time of war know that they are doing something brave. Their culture tells them so. But they do not expect they are joining a state of perpetual war. They expect that the time for extraordinary deeds will come and go and that, at some point, they will be able to return to life, having done what needed to be done. As such, the state of training and enculturation is taken out of the normal stream of conscious time. It is a thing the recruit does, a difficulty the recruit undertakes because of the state of exception in which the nation exists. The recruit has a cultural conception of wars like World War II that had a beginning, (Pearl Harbor), and an end, (The Surrender of Japan). The recruit understands how the war is supposed to go but does not necessarily consider that the U.S. has not officially declared war *on a nation* since World War II. In the Andersonian sense, the soldier who joins at a war time, when time exists in a state of exception, does so for great national love, without knowing that the future dreamed of, with its parades, treaties, and armies in uniform, has long been gone. Dudziak doesn't consider individual love of country in the calculation of why people join the military, nor does she really consider why people join at all, but how society justifies the state of temporal exception. This justification of states of temporal exception, however, works to isolate the individual soldier from the society who justified the state of temporal exception, because, while the soldier is deployed or even living on-base, the

imagined community of the mind, the soldier's memory of the society remains static, whereas the society itself, moves ever onward, not actually pausing in its development, but going on living, thinking of the war in abstract terms as something distant and somehow separate.

In the aftermath of a military life then, the soldier, expecting to return to a life that resembles the imagined future, returns instead to a place of "uncomfortable residue," feeling a kind of enmity and amity for those around them. The soldier feels a kind of Coriolanian[14] pride for her/his service, and disdain for the public that questions it. On the one hand, the soldier feels betrayed that the future they have come back to is not like the ordinary life they had hoped for. A military enculturation saw to that. In the absence of civilian discourse, the violence of a military discourse has overcome the language of the soldier, bound up with the experiences of deployments and actions all existing in a state of exception, a time for extraordinary measures. The soldier is both separate from the population that she/he sought to protect and newly a part of it, especially as time passes and the discourse of the military changes in the soldier's absence. The state of being a veteran is marked by the un-homed nature of the hybridity of soldier and civilian. One feels enmity for the public in their ignorance, and enmity for the military for a time of pure suffering and breaking of the will. One feels amity with the military for making the veteran stronger and more able to adapt to situations, and amity for civilians given their highly ritualized, yet affectively inadequate attempts to honor the sacrifice of the veteran through hollow pronunciations like, "Thank you for your service."

Another condition indicative of the marginality one might borrow from Postcolonialism in order to understand the veteran experience is Fanon's theory of the racial distribution of guilt

[14] Shakespeare's Coriolanus returned to Rome a war hero, only to be maligned by the Tribunes of the People for his "pride," in his service. Shakespeare's framing of this pride serves as a vehicle for the Tribunes' jealousy of his elevation.

on the part of the colonizer articulated in his *Black Skin White Masks*. In short, agents of empire deployed colonized soldiers—in this case, Senegalese soldiers—in order that guilt for acts of atrocity not be laid at the feet of white soldiers. While this was a common practice in mid-twentieth-century imperial contexts, more recent configurations of military violence have changed somewhat. Mary Dudziak explores how the United States military ostensibly fosters an ethic of temporal abstraction as a means of placing military violence out of time. Wendy Kozol discusses how the United States military relies upon abstract, distant visualizations of war as a means of expiating guilt.

Frantz Fanon writes, "Unable to stand up to all the demands, the white man sloughs off his responsibilities. I have a name for this procedure: the racial distribution of guilt" (103). Here Fanon is exploring the power of the French Empire to use the people of other nations (but its own subjects) as tools of oppression to separate itself from the full guilt of the action. The responsibility that Fanon references is the emotional liability for the act of colonization. By distancing the colonial agent from the active participation in the abuse of the colonized, the international liability of colonizing nations can be minimalized. Likewise, the colonial agent feels better about the role in which they engage, making the role less traumatic for the agent. This sort of displacement of blame for colonial actions not only shows that the French Empire was cognizant of the shame of its oppression of Madagascar, but also that it felt the Senegalese were perfect rhetorical villains in the national imagination. These Senegalese soldiers could be imagined as innately *savage*, thereby displacing the savagery of colonial rule onto an ostensibly savage colonial subject. Fanon situates this racial distribution of guilt in a discussion of prejudice writ large, describing how it is used as a tool of the empire in general and the French Empire in particular to control diverse populations.

As evidence of this racial distribution of guilt, Fanon includes the graphic testimony of Rakotovao before a trial in Tananarive that details the subject's torture at the hands of a French colonial official, who uses Senagalese soldiers to torture a Malagasy victim. A part of the testimony reads: "The Senegalese made me kneel with my wrists facing outward" (104). Acting on orders from the French government, delivered by a French colonial official in the same room, the act of torture—from orders to actions—is displaced in this quotation onto a Senegalese soldier. Even the Malagasy victim of torture participates in this act of displacement. He identifies the Senegalese soldier as the savage torturer, not the French official to whom that soldier reports. No blame is placed at the feet of the French official in the testimony.

The success of this displacement depends upon pre-existing racial, religious, and cultural differences. As Fanon explains:

> The Frenchman does not like the Jew, who does not like the Arab, who does not like the Negro…The Arab is told: If you are poor it is because the Jew has bled you and taken everything from you. The Jew is told: You are not of the same class as the Arab because you are really white and because you have Einstein and Bergson. The Negro is told: You are the best soldiers in the French Empire… (103).

In relating all of these interactions, Fanon shows how the inter-relationships of power, especially as that power is used in the justification of military power, become circular. Each group is subjected to the will of the empire through designed rhetorical othering, becoming participants in their own isolation and subjugation. Yet this kind of circular reasoning, this justification for the enmity that leads to declarations of war and war without declarations, persists still today. The "racial distribution of guilt"—the displacement of historical guilt onto colonial subjects—depends upon mutual hatred. Arab subjects are encouraged to loathe black subjects, who are in turn encouraged to imagine their exploitation as soldiers as a source of deep and lasting pride. Indeed, Fanon's focus on the pride of soldiers is worth noting, in particular, in our present context. The United States has, since Vietnam, developed a significant culture of "honoring"

military service, as well as a simultaneous mythology describing the disparagement of military service members. As Joseph Darda has observed, the demand that we respect the military—that we "kick" the "Vietnam syndrome"—has produced a pervasive U.S. myth (73). This myth is premised on the belief that U.S. service members deserve respect for their sacrifice, and that they do not receive this respect. In essence, Darda observes, the United States military has produced a culture of grievance that divides service members from the broader population, much as Fanon suggests Senegalese soldiers were divided from other colonial subjects when they were described as the "best soldiers in the French Empire" and blamed for the atrocities of French imperialism.

In short, the allocation of guilt is not merely—or at least no longer—merely a product of racialization. Rather, guilt can be displaced across racial, cultural, or even temporal divisions. Mary Dudziak is perhaps best at characterizing temporal displacement of guilt. In *War Time*, Dudziak discusses the temporal displacement that occurs in U.S. wartime as a result of a similar process. Whereas Fanon writes of racial allocation of guilt, Dudziak writes of a sort of temporal distribution of guilt, wherein the U.S., in particular, uses its tools of state to obfuscate the act of war into eras (World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, The Iraq War, The War in Afghanistan), when in reality the U.S. has been at undeclared war nearly constantly since WWII, and even before. This displacement of time during times of "war," which has been shown to be nearly all of the time, results in similar kinds of cultural processes as racial distribution of guilt. The U.S. can hold up popular wars as exemplars of its glorious military might and discount unpopular wars as (sometimes insignificant) conflicts that were short-lived and probably still good for the people on whose behalf they were fought. Sometimes these wars are not classified as wars or remain secret until after the actions are concluded. Think of Granada, Panama, Cuba, and the drug wars.

Many casual observers of US foreign policy do not register these wars as wars at all, and many are quickly forgotten by those engaging in political debates. In *War Time,* Dudziak shows this contrast in her comparison of "Twentieth-Century American Wartimes (as commonly represented in scholarship on rights and wartime)" to "Twentieth-Century American Military Campaign Medals," which are medals awarded during times of conflict to soldiers who serve in the associated military actions (24-29). In the commonly represented war times, Dudziak cites World Wars One and Two, The Korean War, Vietnam, and The Cold War. Campaign medals were awarded in that time for 60 distinct campaigns, including, the World Wars and Vietnam, certainly, but also actions in Hondurus, Panama, Boca del Toro, Haiti, China, Austria, Germany, Japan, Italy, Lebanon, Thailand, Laos, Congo, Matsu, Cambodia, Grenada, Turkey, El Salvador, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia, and Bosnia, among others (29). The rhetorical separation of these times of war from the more politically popular times of war obfuscates the cultural values of the U.S. as viewed on a global stage and leads to a public that is sometimes surprised when confronted with the international view of the U.S. This separation of the state of war from the usual passage of time allocates the guilt of the actions of war not to a concrete timeline, but to an abstract *War Time*, that the U.S. populace is either in favor of, if the war is politically popular, or unaware of, if it is not politically popular.

In her work, *Humanitarian Violence*, Neda Atanasoski takes up a discussion of similar kinds of displacement, applied to ethnicization of religions and interventions that are labeled as humanitarian actions in order to ease public scrutiny and obfuscate other intentions. She writes, "...U.S. militarism – as well as other forms of interventionalism – in the present is in fact an instantiation of a postcolonial imperialism based in humanitarian ethics" (3). Whereas Dudziak's temporal displacement point refers specifically to the pre-9/11 war time states of exception,

Atanasoski cites humanitarian displacement leading up to and into the Twenty-first century. She traces the development of this appropriation of humanitarian ethos through roots in colonial racism and white guilt over the same. U.S. militarism becomes the tool of humanitarian intervention in regimes where human rights (as defined by former colonial powers) are upheld through the use of force. The use of force in Kosovo, for example, was justified on the grounds that Slobodan Milošević, was engaging in ethnic cleansing of Serbs, but the U.N.-led intervention resulted in the deaths of at least 488 Yugoslav civilians (Human Rights Watch NP).

Darda observes the same phenomenon in the first Bush administration, writing, "The convergence of humanitarianism and militarism allowed the United States to reassert itself as a righteous force in the world by recasting its wars as a defense against human rights abusers" (73-74). This rhetoric broke down when the U.S. ended military operations short of removing Sadam Hussein. The same mistake was not repeated after 9/11. In Operation Enduring Freedom, the U.S.-led coalition entered Iraq on the claim that Sadam Hussein possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) but is was shortly thereafter revealed that this was untrue, despite Hussein being executed for earlier ethnic cleansing, resulting in a civil war between the three Iraqi ethnicities that continues to the present day. The material gains in these examples far outweigh their humanitarian value, especially as civilian deaths in these interventions may only be negligibly fewer than those who were affected by the impetus for the interventions. The U.S. found itself in control of Iraq's oil infrastructure for the better part of a decade after the removal of Hussein. The U.S. maintained a hedge against Soviet influence in the Balkans as a result of the intervention in Kosovo. In the case of the Post-9/11 invasion of Iraq, the religious practices of the 9/11 attackers was conflated with Muslims of other ethnicities, resulting in no convictions

of Saudi Arabian citizens (the nationality of the attackers), but long wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan, sources of oil and insulation from Russian influence.

Wendy Kozol takes images of suffering as a discourse of the rhetoric surrounding visual representations of war in her book *Distant Wars Visible*. Kozol agrees broadly with Atanasoski and Darda regarding the Humanitarian displacement of the purpose of military interventions. Kozol writes, "Since [Kosovo] humanitarian principles have legitimized other U.S. military interventions...premised on claims of universality..." (33-34). Kozol, Darda and Atanasoski trace these displacements of the old style of war between nation-states, through colonialism to a kind of humanitarian-linked intervention that allows former colonial powers control of their old empires through means that are more acceptable under current international law. Each of them also discuss the displacement of the identity of the other (enemy or beneficiary of humanitarian aid) that eases the ability of the intervening power to justify the intervention on humanitarian grounds. Whereas Atanasoski focuses on the ethnicization of religion as a means of accomplishing this othering, and Darda on the function of the U.S. government in obfuscating its policies from its own people, Kozol finds that the entire personhood of the other is displaced in the selection of visual imagery to be transmitted to the public of the intervening power. She writes, "Subjects wearing abayas and dishdashas contribute to an orientalist discourse of Iraq as out of time, that is, a premodern temporality distinct from the present time of the intended viewer" (1).

Other aspects of marginalized peoples are to be noted in soldiers than simply the enmity vs. amity complex, the nature of hybrid identities, racial allocation of guilt, humanitarian violence, temporal displacement and the changes to recruit language. In *Indigenous Eyes Only*, the authors write, “reidentification is done in several ways. First, the peoples being colonized are

stripped of their names and called belittling ones, often in the language of the colonizer…Second, the traditional identifying names and icons of the people being colonized are used by the colonizer for undignified, demeaning purposes" (31). This reidentification, noted as an aspect of colonized peoples, is to be noted in the abnegation of traditional first names that is typical of recruit training. Soldiers are instead referred to by their surnames, and by other names designed to belittle and humiliate. Reference by surname is in keeping with the military's value placed on reputation. The surname stands in for a reputation for which the name stands, and in cases where there is a reputation associated with the surname, this reputation becomes the expectation for the recruit. In cases where there is no reputation associated with the surname, the race or ethnicity of the surname, along with its associated stereotypes is sometimes associated with the surname on equal footing with the reputation the surname might otherwise carry. Both surnames and demeaning names are used by the drill instructors in ways that demean them unless the surname carries significant military reputation, such as Bush, Biden, or McCain.

As for the cultural icons of the marginalized soldiers, these can mostly be shown negatively as the drill instructors refer to "civvy" clothes and property which is confiscated and stored for the duration of basic training. Civvy brands and styles are often referred to as being "from back on the block," associating them with poor, urban teens of color. The drill instructors lean on this comparison of a mythical poor, urban, teen of color as a simulacrum for the person the soldier once was and uses it to separate the recruit from the person they will become, often referred to as a member of the "biggest, baddest, gang on the planet."[15] Like many stereotypes, however, the drill instructors may be tapping into some small portion of the truth. In *Who Joins the Military*, Lutz finds that, "An important predictor to military service in the general population

[15] A common way that drill sergeants use to identify with recruits that may come from a gang-affiliated background.

is family income" (184). Lutz here references the post-1973 military policy of recruiting only volunteers and doing away with conscription. In the absence of a draft, the military has attracted recruits who are mostly poor, however, the vast majority of these recruits (76.4%) came from rural or suburban areas, rather than urban areas, belying the stereotype in use (178). What this number does lend credence to is that the poor are the ones serving most often in the post-draft military. Those who are affluent, privately educated, and urban tend not to join. The already marginalized become further marginalized, while the unmarginalized become less and less familiar with what it means to serve.

Military Enculturation

The transition that troops go through in training strips them of their identity and "issues"[16] them a new one. The Marines' guide for parents of new recruits even states plainly,

> The object of the first weeks [of] MCRD is to strip [recruits] away of all their civilian tendencies…They will no longer refer to themselves in the first person. The drill instructor is there to help institute this change in your recruit. They will demand discipline, hard work, integrity, and the core values, Honor, Courage, and Commitment. During this time you will most likely not [hear] from your recruit… (3).

It is made abundantly obvious in this quote that parents should not expect a civilian to return home after spending time at MCRD (Marine Corps Recruit Depot). Parents are told that they need to be strong during this transition and to write letters that will boost morale. They are encouraged not to contact drill instructors or wait for phone calls from their recruit. This can be seen as a violent transition, in much the same way that marginalizing projects are often violent. Then again, as recruits for the Marine Corps, the people about whom the guide for parents is written, will soon be engaged in violence as a profession. Perhaps it is a fitting transition.

[16] A common way of referring to anything the military gives to a recruit, "issuing" is the distribution of gear and supplies that make the military way of life possible. The issuing of an "identity," is another thing that makes military life possible.

Certainly, the process of military enculturation has at its core the principle of force unity. That is to say, in order to create a fighting force that can operate efficiently, it is necessary to abnegate some trained values and appropriate some others. It also makes sense to solve problems created by vowel sound mergers like cot-caught and pen-pin by prescribing a radio phonology. Additionally, it seems logical to bring people of diverse parts of the nation together in a single training station in order to focus on that training mission whole-heartedly in a few locations, combining, rather than dividing resources. At every step, the way the military does things seems to serve it well but in the shuffle to serve the military well, perhaps a question that deserves more attention is whether or not the recruits are served well by the transition to the military, and possibly even more so, how well does the transition to civilian life serve the veteran afterward.

TRADOC/Training Manuals

One of the first ways that a recruit is enculturated into the military is through the use of publications. These publications cover a wide range of topics from basic soldier skills to troubleshooting submarine nuclear reactors. There are a couple of publications that serve as a touchstone for almost all recruits though. These are the initial entry training manuals. For the Army, that is TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 the "Blue Book." For the Navy it is the Bluejackets Handbook. In the Marines, it's the "Essential Subjects" guide. In the Air Force, the AFPAM 10-100 (Airman's Manual) is used. Each of these documents functions as a civilian's guide to becoming a soldier. It's as if you've received a really great travel guide about how to blend in with the population of a foreign nation. Some history is covered. Customs and courtesies are relayed. Expectations are set forth and safety information is disseminated.

A controlled vocabulary is also employed. It is one that uses some military culture-specific lexicon and combines it with a more conservative version of the Mainstream American

English (MAE) dialect. It is more conservative for a few reasons. In part, this is a result of the long process that each of the manuals undergoes in order to be approved for changes. In part, this is also a result of a desire to avoid popular jargon that is considered unprofessional. It is notable also that each of these handbooks for initial entry training are published in virtually the same geographic area, the sociocultural area called the Tidewater by Colin Woodard in his book, *American Nations*. TRADOC Headquarters is in Fort Belvoir, VA. The Essential Subjects guide comes from Arlington, VA. The Bluejackets handbook is published in Annapolis, MD. The AFPAM 10-100 is published out of Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, in Washington D.C. The publishing houses for these books operate with the input of other areas because of the pieces of material that change based on the experiences of the military world-wide, but the writers are all housed within their individual command structures, in the same places where the handbooks are published. While proximity to the national capital is certainly a factor in this choice, the consequences, whether or not they are intended, are that the people who compose these handbooks are exposed to and collaborate in the same consistent language environment: one that is different from the language environment of most recruits.

These factors combine to form a tool for military enculturation that for a short time in the recruit's life is akin to a well-written travel guide to a foreign country. The recruits consult it to learn the language, the customs, social hierarchies, and keep personal notes and journals of their experiences and impressions or training. The Initial Entry Training Manual is an invaluable tool for helping recruits successfully complete training. It helps recruits to learn for themselves the ways in which they need to behave and function in the military. It gives recruits information about pay, benefits, what to expect in training, what some of their rights are, and gives each recruit a written list of expectations that if followed, will help them through one of the most

stressful times of their lives. In doing so, however, it replaces the presence of all other sources of information except those approved by the drill instructors. It explains that the only acceptable culture is the one contained in the manual and no reference is made to the relaxing of this culture after training. All exemplars of the culture represented in the manual are absolute exemplars. That is to say they purposefully represent the culture in the manual and this is a sociocultural environment that is not diluted in other experiences within the military.

Socialization

In training and in most military activities, soldiers are with other soldiers. They socialize in a closed group that mostly doesn't involve people who don't serve with them. In *Sociolinguistics of Identity*, Tope Omoniyi relates, "…identities come to the fore under conditions of stress, conflict, and lack of security…" (51). As training is often cited by recruits as one of the most stressful and conflicted situations of their lives, it is evident that the nature of their identities should be subject to modification under these conditions. Omoniyi also states that "…the sociolinguistics of identity focuses on the ways in which people position or construct themselves and are positioned or constructed by others…" (1). These identities, already in flux during the stressful time of training, become molded by the positioning of recruits relative to each other to avoid the real possibility of group punishment through ease of in-group communication in both verbal and non-verbal ways. Simultaneously, the drill instructors mold these identities from the outside by naming the recruits an other, separate from the trainers and other soldiers, but aspiring to be a part of that other, displaying the amity that they have for permanent party members (trained soldiers) and the enmity they feel for recruits (soldiers in training). Through socialization then, recruit identities are molded in a way that Omoniyi states is likely to affect their language in a way that is measurable with the tools of sociolinguistics.

Additionally, the mono-social environment causes a cohort effect that creates certain agreed upon customs and culture. The customs and culture of the cohort becomes the backdrop for the social group that develops on the micro level as platoons and squads, and at the macro level through identification with battalions and brigades. This is at least the structure of the Army. During Army initial entry training, each of four platoons in a recruit's basic training battalion is assigned a mascot that serves as the identifier for their platoon. This might be a warrior or a bulldog or some other sports-style mascot; usually it is something that can be seen as aggressive. Recruits are expected to identify with this level of organization first, followed by the battalion: usually a combination of numbers and letters that are simply memorized and forgotten, rather than analyzed. My own basic training battalion was 1/19th FA, which is the 1st battery of the 19th Field Artillery Battalion. This level of organization is typically more of a dividing line. It forms a social barrier. I know nothing about the 2nd or 3rd batteries of the 19th field artillery. I never met them. It makes logical sense that they might exist, but if so, I've no idea where, or even if they were also a training battalion. In this way, the battery, or outside of the Field Artillery the company, makes up the limit or border of the social unit of training for initial entry training recruits, whereas the platoon functions as the more closely related team.

Each platoon distinguishes itself through achievements during the course of training. When an achievement is reached, a streamer for that achievement is added to the guidon[17] (banner) for the platoon. This guidon functions in exactly the same was as a peacock's tail feathers. The longer, the fuller, and the more colorful the guidon, the more impressive a display

[17] In practice, the word guidon is pronounced "guide-on" which seems like an interesting departure from the more French-sounding "gwee-don." It is possible that the more Anglo-Saxon sounding "guide-on" pronunciation stands in for a more masculine-sounding covert prestige, whereas the origin of the word is likely the result of Lafeyette's influence over the production of the original Blue Book. The American view of French masculinity has likely changed since the Revolutionary War, and this term along with it.

it makes, and the better the drill instructors are evaluated. These guidons are carried in front of the platoon whenever it marches anywhere and come to be representative of the platoon itself. Each platoon takes the utmost care with the guidon. It is treated with similar honors to the national flag. It is an honor to be chosen from among the platoon as the guidon bearer. It is notable that there is no reason that the guidon is not referred to as a banner or flag because that's exactly what it is but as a guidon, the banner or flag carries a connotation that can be introduced as a new concept, which is the case with so many other lexical terms in the military. EMS training becomes CLS training. PE becomes PT. Going to the range becomes BRM. Guns become (don't call it a gun) weapons or rifles. The recruits accept these changes, not necessarily because the changes are meaningful, but because as they go along, there is social pressure to conform in every aspect of one's life. Failure to cohere as a group creates dire consequences, not least of which is to carry a naked guidon.

Dialect-Building

Changes in language arise through two major forces, contact and isolation. When the fundamental context of initial entry training into the military is understood, three things become clear with regard to language change. Recruits are isolated from the dialect of the regional, social, and family groups. Recruits are placed in direct contact with a multitude of other social and regional dialects. Recruits are introduced to a previously unfamiliar dialect in which their linguistic exemplars and training manuals are written. The result of these factors, combined with a high-stress environment in which instructions and communication must be exact in order to avoid punishment, is that the language of the recruit changes. This change comes in a couple of different stages but encompasses these steps: abnegation of existing dialect, levelling of dialect environment, appropriation of exemplary dialect.

One of the first things a soldier is punished for is talking like a civilian. Even before basic training begins, the recruits arrive at a processing station where drill instructors and contractors quickly train them to understand command grammatical structure. This is a structure that contains a preparatory instruction, followed by an inflected command of execution, for example, "position of attention, move!" This can also involve an element of organization, followed by an inflected command, such as, "platoon, attention!" Aside from introducing a new grammatical structure, this structure dictates specific phonological inflections that are unnatural for native English speakers and can be jarring. Pronunciation of these commands in civilian grammar or phonology is meant to sound strange by the end of processing before basic training, as recruits in basic training are expected to know these basic commands. As such, the recruit learns to abnegate her or his native dialect in favor of a style of military speech dictated by the few commands they know and understand by the end of processing.

Dialect levelling occurs when many different dialects come into close contact and begin to change because of speakers' close association with one another. Levelling occurs in basic training when recruits come into contact with regional dialects from all over the U.S. and must quickly and efficiently communicate with each other in order to avoid punishment. Some recruits simply change to a more formal register of their regional dialect in the beginning, adopting a sort of quasi-King James dialect in order to communicate at a common denominator until they learn more of the military way of speaking. Most simply remain quiet and await commands and movements of other soldiers and rely upon non-verbal communication by other members of their platoon. In this way, though the levelling of the regional dialects that are spoken may be temporary, the true levelling for the course of basic training becomes an impregnation of silence into the language. This is the lack of vocabulary that Wolfe describes in *The Right Stuff* and the

reason so many veterans are viewed as silent about their service. My own unit, the First Special Forces Group(A) is known as "The Quiet Professionals." It isn't that soldiers have no words for the ideas that Wolfe found missing from their expressed vocabulary, rather silence and non-verbal communication in the military carries a heavy burden in addition to words that Wolfe picked out. The silence is a necessary part of the levelling process because the recruit learns to listen carefully to the dialects being spoken and pick out the bits they understand. The silence is maintained afterward in the ritual of many of the same situations it was first learned. For example, a recruit learns to observe a command or instruction silently because they need to understand everything that is said the first time. The instruction will not be repeated. This may seem like simple politeness but I can attest to the fact that this silence, as opposed to "side-bar conversations" during instruction is, in fact, learned. Nobody does it when they arrive. They have to be taught.

At last, when soldiers learn to speak confidently in the dialect of the dominant military discourse, they begin to adopt this dialect to communicate with their superiors and each other. This usually coincides with a movement into a new phase of training. When a recruit begins to speak like a soldier, all kinds of understandings and opportunities become available to her or him that would not have been available to someone who simply remained silent and processed the instructions going on in the environment. With the completion of this step, the conditions for dialect building are fulfilled.

Sociolinguistic Principles for Discovering Linguistic Variation

In his work *Principles of Linguistic Change,* William Labov notes many different factors that lead to linguistic changes. Chain Shifting, which occurs when vowel sounds are displaced by changing tongue position, denotes a change in the sounds of words over time (601). As these

sounds change, the language changes around them and members of the community who leave at the beginning of a chain shift may find the dialect very different phonologically upon their return, though these changes often occur over more than one lifetime. Chain Shifting as a known concept of sociolinguistics, however, can give those who study language a guidepost from which to judge changes in language. This makes it a valuable principle to be aware of. In spite of its value, however, Chain Shifting generally occurs at such a slow pace that it would be difficult to measure over the course of initial entry training into the military. Its status as a primarily phonological shift also makes it difficult to catch in recordings. As such, it may be a difficult concept to catch in action during primary research.

Another concept of linguistic change examined by Labov is Mergers and Splits. Some mergers that most people are aware of are those between pen/pin and cot/caught. Whereas mergers eliminate phonemic distinctions between lexical terms, splits eliminate these distinctions. Labov notes that "there are several routes by which mergers can take place, but it is not yet possible to predict when a given language will show merger by approximation, lexical distribution, or sudden expansion of two phonemes into the same phonological space"(NP). Once again, Labov is primarily concerned here with phonology, but this concept is useful in discovery of the boundaries between two different stages of the same language variety. This could be useful in measuring the era of a given military narrative, especially when reading journals in which words that have merged may take on spellings that are easily confused for one another. From a phonological perspective, the merger could be noted and compared to the presence of the merger or split in regional dialect to isolate the military influence upon the recruit's dialect.

Labov next cites two positions on the Regularity principle. From one perspective, he writes, "Sound change is a change in the phonetic realization of a phoneme, without regard to

lexical identity" (603). Alternatively, according to the Principle of Category Change, he writes, "Changes that reflect several features of a sound simultaneously proceed by altering the category membership of individual words. Essentially, Labov concludes that both principles may be at work in linguistic change. In some ways, the second principle seems more viable as a way of measuring the changes that take place in recruit language over the course of training. Most of the changes to existing lexicon arrive from pronunciations that are new to the recruit, as added by either levelling or exposure to the military way of speaking, but rather than a permanent phonetic shift, this seems to be a temporary change to the category of meaning associated with the word. As such, the second principle is the more valuable of the two for this specific study, even if both principles contribute to permanent linguistic change.

Labov next elucidates the Mechanical Principle. He writes, "The relative progress of sound change is determined by phonetic factors alone, without regard to the preservation of meaning" (603). This principle lends credence to the view that linguistic change is based on choice, with speakers preferring to make changes that maintain parallel structure, rather than maintaining meaning in lexical choice. This could be seen as an explanation for the development of many lexical terms, including those found in military speech and even manuals. This principle allows not just for addition of lexical terms but also their deletion. Labov explains the Principle of Structural Compensation by writing, "When the rate of deletion of a meaningful feature of a language increases, the frequency of features that redundantly carry this meaning will increase" (604). Between these principles it can be understood that the rapid deletion of civilian terms from recruit lexicon could be a conscious choice in favor of the dominant training discourse which may contain redundant terms for the same concept.

Throughout the study of sociolinguistics, factors that change the contact and isolation of groups and individuals are put under examination to determine if boundaries can be found both unifying and delineating types of speech and language. Appeals to these differing contexts are ripe fodder for analysis with the tools of sociolinguistics, especially where transitions in language use can be noted. Until now, I have primarily concerned this review of literature with the transition between being a civilian and learning to become a part of the military. It is, however, just as notable that there is a major transition at work when veterans return to their communities or origin.

Codemeshing/Codeswitching

When veterans do successfully transition from military to civilian life, they often cite a kind of linguistic adjustment, as if they are learning a new language or code in which to operate. In “How Code-Switching Explains the World,” Gene Demby writes,

> So you're at work one day and you're talking to your colleagues in that professional, polite, kind of buttoned-up voice that people use when they're doing professional work stuff. Your mom or your friend or your partner calls on the phone and you answer. And without thinking, you start talking to them in an entirely different voice — still distinctly *your voice*, but a certain kind of *your voice* less suited for the office. You drop the g's at the end of your verbs. Your previously undetectable accent — your easy Southern drawl or your sing-songy Caribbean lilt or your Spanish-inflected vowels or your New Yawker — is suddenly turned way, way up. You rush your mom or whomever off the phone in some less formal syntax ("Yo, I'mma holler at you later,"), hang up and get back to work. Then you look up and you see your co-workers looking at you and wondering who the hell you'd morphed into for the last few minutes. That right there? That's what it means to code-switch (NP).

In a bit of a comical way, Demby is getting at the broad-form popular definition of code-switching that allows the term to encompass both interaction between languages, like Spanish/English and the meshed code of Spanglish, and the term’s more sociolinguistics-based application that deals primarily with changes in register between formal and informal, changes in style which includes membership in different social groups with different beliefs and the ways in

which their speech becomes different from those outside the group, and differences among dialects, which, carries a whole other set of meanings and scholarship. Perhaps Gumperz's explanation, from his 1982 work *Discourse Strategies* can elucidate the scholarly viewpoint more clearly. He writes, "[code-switching] is the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems" (Cited in Heller pg 34). Under this definition there are two separate grammatical systems coming together in one speech act to create a specific contextual meaning. One thing that is important to note that is specific to code-switching though, is that speakers remain fluent in both ways of speaking and, consciously or unconsciously, switch between the two in diverse contexts. In code-meshing, this difference becomes a little more nuanced and may apply to an initial process of code-switching, leading to a practice of code-meshing later on.

In *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students,* A. Suresh Canagarajah writes, "Our orientation to life becomes complex when we realize that we are simultaneously members of different discourse communities" (164). What Canagarajah describes is a process of conscious knowledge of language difference that leads to a choice to code-switch on the part of a speaker. This is not always an easy realization to come to. As can be seen in the veteran interviews later on in this dissertation, participants were often reluctant to view their language uses as fundamentally different from the language of civilians and yet they had, for the most part, been code-switching and code-meshing for quite some time, unconsciously. Those few veterans who mention a transition in language, primarily the ones who had to navigate another significant language transition into that of academia, noted the realization of their language difference as difficult or traumatic. As Canagarajah later notes, "The knowledge of periphery communities is…treated as inferior, local, or non-standard" (206). Just as the participants began to note that

they had pre-existing terms for some of the concepts they were beginning to learn, they simultaneously understood that their pre-existing terms were sub-standard or unacceptable versions of the concepts that would not mesh well in their new environments and so chose to eschew that part of their pre-existing code, in exchange for a substitute term for the same concept. The participant, Ajax, is a great example of this. His transition from the military to a Master's program was rife with these kinds of discoveries, in which Ajax found that the prestige of the veteran way of speaking was not applicable in an academic setting. "Violence of Action," no longer carried a unified social meaning among those with whom he wished to communicate the associated concept so Ajax was forced to figure out and use the socially accepted term.

Part of the friction that veterans encounter in this transition between forms of speaking and the negotiation of when to code-switch, if they decide to consciously do so, is their practice of word economy. As Wolfe noted, one feature of his "Army Creole," was word economy wherein a few words were made to bear the burden of a lot of meaning. As Wolfram and Fasold note in *The Study of Social Dialects of American English*, "The social acceptability of a particular language variety is totally unrelated to its adequacy as a communicative code" (7). In essence, veterans who are used to word economy that is no less communicative, when code-switching or learning new codes, are required to learn an expanded vocabulary that is perhaps, less economical than their pre-existing signifier for a given idea. In this way, they can become resistant to the change because they deem the transition as a semantic, or worse, pendantic shift with the only benefit being they can be understood by civilians. In a military that teaches them to value civilians less and soldiers more, this transition to accommodating the needs of a civilian audience can be difficult, especially when it becomes clear that for, the majority of this audience,

the veteran way of speaking is gruff, coarse, stoic, and worst of all, incongruent with the dissemination of information in a timely manner.

It is important to highlight, as mentioned briefly above, that the current understanding of code-switching provides for both conscious and unconscious usage of different codes. Carol Myers-Scotton writes, "…switching is simultaneously a tool and an index…unswitching therefore is both a means and a passage" (156). The understanding Myers-Scotton puts forward is one of conscious and unconscious communication of both information and social intent. For the speaker the switch is a tool that communicates intent, while for the listener the switch is an index of intent, ideally, but in the messy relationship of communication, especially wherein more than one receiver is involved, the lack of shared code between a veteran speaker and a civilian receiver can result in misunderstandings of the intentions of the speaker. The civilian listener, for example, may have an index for a given word that does not align with the intent of the veteran speaker, leading to misunderstandings that, in ideal circumstances might be considered simple misuse, but often can be mistaken for hostile or gruff conscious intent. In a way, this is one of the most important things for readers to understand about the barriers in place to communication between veterans and civilians. It's not just a question of being misunderstood and having to cope with explaining oneself on the part of the veteran but it can be the negotiation of a whole set of stereotypes that are exacerbated by people's misunderstandings of what might be perfectly acceptable speech uses in the military that are simply not in the civilian way of speaking. As a hypothetical, assume a veteran is newly transitioned to civilian life and sitting in a job interview. A civilian interviewer asks the veteran if she or he has ever experienced a stressful situation and how they handled it. The veteran, overcome by the civilian's seeming lack of understanding of the job of a military member laughs out loud at the question. The civilian is puzzled. Perhaps the

interviewer hasn't even found the spot on the application where military service is listed in order to provide the potential employer with the possibility of earning a tax break. The veteran, at this point, has a read to make. She or he might have been done with the funny joke about stress by simply laughing, especially if she or he was speaking to another veteran, whose intent for such a question would surely be to elicit laughter. The civilian interviewer, however, seems unsatisfied. Perhaps they ask again or attempt to lighten the mood by asking the veteran to clarify. It is at this point that the veteran must evaluate what level of trauma the civilian is prepared to shoulder in order to communicate their incredulity at the premise of the question. Does she or he tell the civilian interviewer about the time they sat in the lap of an injured comrade to take control of a vehicle while under fire? Does she or he tell the interviewer about a comical story from training that is only comical in hindsight? What is the proper level of communication of stress that is required at this point to demonstrate the absolute lack of understanding of the life of a veteran communicated by the civilian interviewer at this stage? These are questions that a civilian who uses the same indicies and and tools as the civilian interviewer will not have to ask herself or himself. It is a barrier that they need not overcome because of the shared code they have. The code of the veteran is marked by virtue of not just its grammatical structure, which can be totally different, but in its lack of congruent context with civilian codes. This is one of the factors that make transition so hard for veterans and the relative lack of information about this type of speech difference, especially in programs for and approaches to veteran transition almost forms an additional barrier as it is minimized in its impact due to the belief that most forms of English are mutually intelligible and that the native regional dialects of veterans carry more weight. Perhaps the last bit of that is true but if the regional dialect is a 45 lbs. free-weight plate and the veteran

way of speaking is 10 liters of water, will the same container work for both, no matter the weight?

Veterans in the Community: Transitions To and From

In *From Combat to Campus: Voices of Student Veterans*, DiRamo, Ackerman, and Mitchell describe a three-step process for veterans transitioning to and from the military before attending college. Their three steps are moving in, moving through, and moving out (80). Moving in refers to a period of adjustment to the norms of the military. They cite psychologists Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson, writing, "…when an individual is transitioning through the "moving in" process, she or he will need to "learn the ropes" and become familiar with rules, regulations, norms, and expectations of the new system (p. 167)." (81). The moving in process is concerned with recruits' reasons for joining. To join the military is to eschew some stasis that exists in one's life before joining. For some, this is something they have been waiting for since before they were eligible to join, making the catalyst a simple matter of aging-in. It is important to note here that the United States is a signatory to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OHCHR) and may not, therefore conscript children except those 16 and older so long as they do not participate in direct hostilities. Child Soldiers International reported in 2018, however, that at least 46 nations actively recruit personnel below the age of 18, including the United States(NP). There are no restrictions on the MOS of these recruits, except those that exist for adults on the basis of gender. For others, some exceptional event drives this transition. DiRamo, Ackerman, and Mitchell note of post-9/11 veterans that, "One motivating factor that emerged was that this cohort experienced the 9-11 terrorist attacks as adolescents and the effect was profound. In fact, fifteen of the 25 participants cited the attacks as a reason for joining" (81). This is a familiar story for me, as my

own story involves the events of September 11th. I joined the Army only a week afterward. Others enlist for what DiRamo, Ackerman, and Mitchell call "economic reasons," to include educational benefits, steady income, and caring for family members (81-82). Whatever the reason for joining, recruits go through a major disruption in their lives during the moving in phase of transitioning. This leads to the condition of malleability described above in basic training.

The moving-through stage describes the period of service or active duty for a military member. The length of this period generally determines much of how influential military culture is on veterans. Generally, the longer a person serves in the moving through stage of transition, the more enculturated she or he becomes to this military culture. The military culture that develops, however, may be different from the typical concept of war that civilians picture. Though experiences of trauma do occur in this stage, DiRamo, Ackerman, and Mitchell also note, "Other memorable events included those where an awareness of the Iraqi people emerged. The Marine who experienced the rocket bombing mentioned earlier was also touched by the determination of the locals" (84). This awareness of the humanity of the subjects of military intervention can be a traumatic realization for soldiers and generally leads to a disillusionment with their role in the military action being undertaken.

The moving out stage covers transitions back to one's community. During this stage, veterans undergo a variety of transition programs of inconsistent quality that are designed for a variety of purposes. Some programs focus on education about military benefits. Others focus on helping veterans acquire employment after transitioning away from active duty. For reserve and national guard components, this transition can be short or non-existent as troops are expected to return to their civilian jobs shortly after the end of the deployment. In addition to the difficulty

experienced from strained or broken relationships of the course of military service, many veterans feel a strong pull to return to active duty where a longed-for camaraderie developed in the moving through stage of transition. These difficulties, combined with the inconsistency of transition programs, lead to many struggles for veterans in this stage of transition. This is also a pivotal time for veterans as ensuring that one exits the military on good terms, with full benefits can be a difficult task. Many cultural tales exist within the military about the ability to reverse bad-paper[18] discharges that are actually seldom reversed. Many soldiers go on terminal leave leading up to their ETS date[19], during which they take a vacation, missing out on participation in transition programs and not using the time to find employment or transition to civilian life. If veterans miss any of these stages of transition assistance, it can be difficult for them to use their earned benefits or acquire work upon their return to their communities.

The State of Veterans Studies

Working to help veterans return from war has become a project of many scholars of late. Mariana Grohowski, Robert Ackerman, David DiRamio, David Cass, Jose Coll, Eugenia Weiss, and others have joined an emerging field of Veteran Studies, which is focused on the transition of recent veterans from the military to universities. *The Journal of Veteran Studies* is a relatively recent development, founded in 2015 by current member of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals, Mariana Grohowski (3). But the field at large has included multi-disciplinary interactions between Student Affairs, Composition and Rhetoric departments, Literature departments, History departments, Psychology departments and many others. Grohowski is also a member of the College Composition and Communications Conference (CCCC) standing group

[18] A bad-paper discharge is any discharge that is less than honorable on a spectrum that includes Dishonorable, General Under Dishonorable Conditions, General Under Honorable Conditions, Full Honorable. Most benefits require a discharge that is under honorable conditions. Some (like GI Bill) require a fully honorable discharge.
[19] The End Term of Service date indicates the date past which a soldier needs to either reenlist or leave the military.

on “Writing With Current, Future, and Former Members of the Military,” which was adapted in 2009 from the previous standing group, “Writing at the Military Service Academies” (3). Veteran Studies scholars have also given talks at the Virginia Tech *Veterans in Society* Conferences, and at a Summer Institute called *American Veterans in Society* in association with the NEH. Certainly the current level of activity in Veteran Studies is high, but the problems with which the field wrestles, seem to be old ones.

In the Introduction to their edited collection on Veteran Studies, *Generation Vet,* Sue Doe and Lisa Langstratt trace the history of working with veteran writers back to H. Adelbert White’s essay, “Clear Thinking for Army Trainees (1944),” which appeared in that year’s *College English* (1). Shortly after White’s essay, the U.S. government passed the G.I. Bill of Rights, which among other things, initiated an influx of soldiers into institutions of higher education. Legislative actions have continued to revise the function and scope of the G.I. Bill, but even in its current form, The Post-9/11 G.I. Bill is known primarily for its use as a tool of access for otherwise socioeconomically marginalized populations to attend institutions of higher education. The G.I. Bill has fit in nicely with concurrent innovations inspired by the work of Paolo Friere[20] and John Dewey[21], who were concerned with democratizing the Writing classroom and the university as a whole through the institution of Basic Writing (BW)[22] classes and open-enrollment policies.

[20] See *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), largely considered an answer to Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), which called for a pedagogy designed for colonized peoples that went beyond imitating the culture of the colonizer, toward a more modern system. Friere’s pedagogy draws on Plato and Marx to deliver that more modern system.

[21] See *Democracy and Education* (1916), which advocates for a “progressive education,” that is characterized by continual refreshing of the younger members of a social group with the cultural traditions of the older members. The effect of Dewey’s work formed the foundations of a more democratized approach to education of the whole population, rather than certain members.

[22] See Mina P. Shaughnessy’s *Errors and Expectations* (1977), which reports that students in open-enrollment writing classrooms were not simply making errors in writing, but practicing the dialect of their education and familiolects, creating the impetus to ensure all entering freshmen receive some basic writing education. The CUNY

The cooperation between innovations in serving veteran students and in serving other disadvantaged students has sometimes obfuscated the differences between these two groups, creating a sort-of detent approach to veteran education that leads to things like veteran programs being housed in TRIO[23] offices. This is the place where Veteran Studies, as a field, can be most helpful for universities: in articulating the differences between veteran students and other marginalized students, and in suggesting best practices for universities wishing to develop veteran-friendly programming that recognizes the sacrifices that veterans made to attend these institutions.

Much of the research in Veteran Studies focuses on this mission of helping veteran students transition to and succeed in college because the G.I. Bill makes them such an attractive student population. In *From Combat to Campus,* David Di Ramo, Robert Ackerman and Regina Mitchell locate the transition for guard and reserve troops to active duty as a major stumbling block for veterans who concurrently pursue part-time service and education. They cite this transition again with Ackerman in *Creating a Veteran-Friendly Campus.* Kelly, Smith, and Fox write of a transition to the military as an enculturation. What clearly emerges from this theme of addressing the many transitions of the veteran to and from the military, the civilian population, and the peculiar space in between called academia, is that the transition is an experience common to all veterans and unique in its life-changing magnitude for veterans. Some of the scholarship, however, views the transition as a place of deficit, whereas others view it as a place of strength. Hart and Thompson, for example, in *Veterans in the Writing Classroom,* write, "The strength of

BW courses, which were the first in the nation, sought to serve mostly students who were straight from high school, and in need of remedial writing practice, or older, non-traditional students in need of refresher courses.

[23] A federal program originally comprised of three student-service organizations, now comprising eight programs, TRIO programs are "designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds" (TRIO Web).

veterans in the classroom, however, is that they are "often undertaking a fundamental shift in identity—from military to civilian [or back to civilian] Those points of transition provide rich opportunities for writing and writing instruction…" (349). I take this to mean that the authors value the transition as a site of dramatic change in one's identity and see it as an opportunity to, given ample subject matter, allow veterans to explore and practice their writing craft through classroom activities and with the help and coaching of the instructor. Branker, on the other hand, writes, "…homecoming should be more than an event, it should be a process fueled by various campus resources that seek to connect the student veterans with the institution" (60). In this process, the veteran is socialized into the university not by writing instruction, but by the various campus resources that are available to acclimatize the veteran back into the culture, presumably before entering the classroom. Many would not distinguish between the two approaches, and indeed, might observe that both are possible at once. The difference between these approaches however, is primarily to do with the rhetorical positioning of the veteran student. Is veteran status a liability or an asset?

Part of this disparity in the scholarship has to do with how a particular group of veterans are positioned within the cultural narrative. Returning to Branker, the title of the work betrays a rhetorical positioning of veterans as "deserving." Blessing, in *Warrior Healers,* writes of a "desire to demonstrate respect that transcends political divides" (468). DiRamo and Ackerman, in *Creating a Veteran Friendly Campus*, speak of the "special group," in reference to combat veterans. All of these scholars tend to rhetorically venerate the most recent crop of veterans returning from the Global wars on terror. They are joined by a chorus of popular culture in movies, music, and television that similarly choose to venerate this group. This kind of veneration of the veteran student, however, is expressly warned against in Doe and Langstraat's

Generation Vet, which states, "idealizing veterans is, at best, irresponsible" (4). Darda, in *Ethnicization of the American Veteran*, suggests that the allowance of a special class of veteran writers and/or thinkers allows for the cultural phenomenon of reverse racism and the perpetuation of "national fantasies" (416). Part of the difference in Darda's case however, is that the group of veterans under examination in his work was those veterans of Vietnam, whereas Branker, DiRamo, Ackerman, and Rodriguez-Martin speak exclusively of Global War on Terror (GWOT) veterans. This shows some of the ways in which the two veterans have very different experiences of homecoming and transition.

Plainly these opposing views in the scholarship present an area of contention when it comes to how veterans are presented, not just to the public at large, but also to instructors in their perspective colleges and universities. A further division, based not just on the cultural assumptions about a specific group of veterans, but also on the perceptions of the veterans as a whole, is how to accommodate veterans with special needs or who are in need of physical accommodation in order to succeed in college. Branker focuses so exclusively on veteran disability, for example, that she writes, "student veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan…will all likely experience some difficulty with memory, concentration, and communication" (65). This view lumps every GWOT veteran, not only with the popular conception of Iraq and Afghanistan as the only two places of conflict in that war, but also conflates them with a stereotype of being damaged. Branker is the most extreme example of this rhetorical positioning, but she is far from alone in it. Sinski focuses her entire article, "Classroom Strategies for Teaching Veterans," not on strategies for teaching, but on ways of accommodating veterans, like dealing with verbal memory impairments, clearing aisles, warning before using loud noises, asking before touching veterans, and focusing on real-world assignments.

Kelley, Smith, and Fox note that medical advances have led to a more-survivable version of warfare, in which, veterans are more likely to return alive-but-injured, unable to continue serving, but very much capable of academic work. Many articles in the discourse on veteran pedagogies deal exclusively with TBI or PTSD, which is a very real problem, but experienced not exclusively by veterans. This wing of the scholarship has a lot of work to do in unraveling the veteran from the disability.

Another wing of the scholarship addresses the question of how to best serve veteran students by tracing the history of those who join. In *Who Joins the Military*, for example, Amy Lutz writes, "An important predictor to military service in general is family income…only 3.4% of participants who went to private schools later served in the military. 76.4% who had served were either rural or suburban" (178-184). Here, Lutz points to socioeconomic status as the greatest predictor of who joins the military, approaching that category from both the question of family income and school choice/options. Doe and Langstraat note that nearly half of their surveyed veterans reported joining for educational benefits. This presumes, of course, that the veterans required these benefits in order to pursue higher education. Hart and Thompson note that veterans are more likely to attend public schools (colleges) than private schools. In from *Combat to Campus*, DiRamo notes that his interviewees cited September 11th as a reason for joining, highlighting their buy-in to the veteran mythos. Kelly, Smith, and Fox note that veterans are more racially diverse than the general public, and that many attend community college or short for-profit programs in order to pursue professional certificates. All of these observations point to one over-arching theme, that the veteran is already a socioeconomically-disadvantaged individual when joining the military. The identification of this factor is meaningful, but must, as with other marginalized groups, be held almost at arms length when considering how best to

serve veterans, as the academy must not become a means only for dealing with the poor, and the poor must never become a faceless homogenous mass. I would like to see more scholarship that addresses walking the line between knowledge of the veteran population as deriving mainly from the socioeconomically disadvantaged and accommodating the needs of these students and training others to do the same.

Specific methods for teaching veterans can be found in the scholarship and many are very good ideas, if sometimes in conflict. In *Enhancing Veteran Success,* O'Herrin states that the most important thing a university can do to help veterans is to be aware of their presence. This comes through in the ability of the university to maintain contact-people for veterans and veteran student groups. While it is ethically questionable to require veterans to self-disclose at admission, veteran points of contact and student organizations can help to make this recognition less awkward. Hart and Thompson present three kinds of writing class interventions: veteran-only, veteran-focused, and veteran-friendly. Veteran only class interventions help veterans with the need to belong and help them identify each other on campus. This is designed to circumvent the isolation many veterans feel on campus and get them in a healthy social space, where they can engage in learning with other veterans. Veteran-focused class interventions incorporate veterans with people who are interested in veterans or the military, taking advantage of veteran knowledge to unify the classroom around the veteran topic and come to understandings about the veteran transition to academia. Veteran-friendly classroom interventions tend to be more geared toward allowing a veteran to participate in a classroom without feeling like their history as a veteran will be used as a basis to judge them. These classroom interventions correspond directly with DiRamo's moving in, moving through, and moving out model for veteran transition. Moving in covers the veteran (or any student) moving in to a new situation and getting the lay of

the land, so to speak. Moving through covers the point at which moving in is done and the real learning happens. Moving out represents a transition into a fully-acclimated member of academia. In conversation, these two theories fit nicely together and in conjunction, could make a very viable program. These could also be used to combat the phenomenon mentioned by Kelley, Smith, and Fox that some veterans may be reticent to take elective courses because of their seeming irrelevance to degree completion. By supporting elective courses with DiRamo's and Hart and Thompson's models, the veteran could overcome reticence to taking electives through a promise of veteran-friendliness. Sinski and O'Herrin, though rhetorically positioning the veteran as broken, present some very good ideas about accommodation for common veteran disabilities, and when encountering a disabled veteran, would be good touchstones for the betterment of any curriculum.

All that Remains

There is nothing inherently wrong with the desire to create a strong military culture that supports successful military operations or with universities' focus on the transition back to college afterward. At issue isn't whether or not it is good to enculturate troops. Rather, the literature bears out issues with transition, of moving in, moving through, and moving out. While some support is available, its inconsistency leads to feelings of distrust and rumors that confuse the issue. What remains is a completely life-altering experience from language, to culture, to physical changes. These changes, while benefiting force cohesion during the moving through stage, become challenges during the moving out stage.

In the introduction to their edited collection *Generation Vet*, Doe and Langstraat write, "The implications of the military-civilian gap are profound, and the disconnect leads to some acute contradictions about how the US public-including faculty-understand veterans" (15). Doe

and Langstraat describe this disconnect as a product of numbers. In the post-Vietnam military, all soldiers are volunteers, and as such, the military no longer represents a cross-section of society. Rather, the military has become a place where a warrior caste is trained and exploited. Doe and Langstraat suggest that among the solutions for this disconnect is the offering of "extracurricular writing opportunities for veterans" (18). They note several writing projects that attempt to accomplish this task, including the Warrior Writers Project, Project Unpack, Closer to Home, and others. While these programs bring veterans and civilians together in order to facilitate dialogue, they fail to address what seems to be a clear underlying issue of cultural difference between veterans and civilians. It is with this underlying issue in mind that the following methods were undertaken in order to discover the degree to which veterans retain a military way of speaking that represents a barrier to the kind of work that these projects hope to achieve.

3. METHODS: HOW TO HEAR VETERAN VOICES

Models

Veteran reintegration into communities is of vital importance to reclaiming the expertise and history of which veterans are exemplars. Veterans make up a significant portion of the total North Dakota population and to allow them to disappear into a silent and invisible minority is antithetical to the public good and contributes to an overall ignorance of the emotional toll of war. As such, as stated in the introduction, the purpose of this research is to discover features of veteran lexicon, in particular, the lexicon used in telling stories of military service, in order to lay the foundation for an interrogation of best practices for understanding and communicating veteran narratives.

The study was designed as a sociolinguistic investigation of lexicon. While other features of speech, such as phonology and grammar may be effected by exposure to military training, one of the most prominent features of indoctrination into the military is the introduction of a new lexicon for which many civilians have no context. The lexicon bears the weight of the discourse within the military. Because of this power and its uniqueness when compared to other aspects of speech, the military lexicon is the primary part of speech under examination in this study.

I conducted interviews with Fargo-Moorhead area veterans in order to discover the lexical features of this population and use the data to create an analysis of the status of local veteran lexicon. As mentioned in the introduction, a local population is easier to study and eliminates one variable to be considered. Participants were selected from a single geographic area in order to mitigate the differences in dialect that are dictated by participants' regional dialects. By selecting participants from a single region, who presumably share a regional dialect, the controlled variable, presence of military lexicon, is exposed. The method for data collection

was Guided Conversation[24], a method that involves slight deception of participants, in that the purpose of the interview has less to do with the questions asked, and more to do with specific dialect features under examination. This method is borrowed from Labov (1984) with some small differences. Rather than using a lapel microphone as is used in Labov, the researcher used a recording program on a laptop. While creating a lower quality recording as far as the sound itself, the introduction of a laptop to the interview made it easier for the researcher to stay on script and helped the participants to forget about the fact that they were being recorded. Additionally, rather than having participants talk about a brush with death or other significant experience from life, the researcher attempted to prompt stories about military service, which may or may not concern brushes with death. As the researcher is primarily interested in prompting veterans to share their stories and helping others prompt veterans to share stories, and given the high-stress nature of military training, the researcher deems this a natural extension of Labov's work, especially when working with this specific population.

Participants were read the consent form (Appendix), which features a brief description of the features under study, but does not explain which terms were expected or measured. Observer's Paradox[25] remains circumvented by the lack of specific information about the parts of speech under examination, but the participant is able to consent to have their speech studied.

[24] Out of the ten objectives of a sociolinguistic interview listed in Labov (1984), the following four are to be realized primarily through guided conversations: 1. To gain comparable answers to questions that enable us to contrast different attitudes and experiences of particular sub-cultures (e.g. danger of death, fate, premonition, fights and the rules of fair fighting, attitudes towards ethnic minorities, ambitions relating to school and education). 2. To prompt the informant to relate personal experiences which would show up community norms and styles of personal interaction and where speech style tends to be close to the vernacular. 3. To stimulate group sessions and record conversations whereby informants engage in conversation among themselves and not with the field worker. 4. To locate the topics that are closest to the informants and also give them a chance to raise topics of their own.

[25] The Observer's Paradox, as commonly observed in sociolinguistics, is a phenomenon that states simply, when a subject's behavior is under observation, it is likely to change. Any method of data collection for which subjects are aware that they are under observation, requires some explanation of how this phenomenon is circumvented or accounted for.

While the participants were cognizant that their speech was under study, and may have slightly self-monitored, the nature of the stories being related in the questions (about experiences as a soldier), are of a nature that helps to reengage the participant in natural speech, as noted by Labov.

Each participant was asked to participate in two interviews (see attached scripts Appendix) a guided conversation and a word-matching exercise. While the guided conversation takes its inspiration from the work of Labov, the word-matching exercise is more influenced by the work of the Harvard Dialect Survey, under the direction of Vaux, Bert and Scott Golder (2003). These two methods were used as complimentary to each other, with the guided conversation bringing out more natural speech patterns using the experiences of the military as an access point to the lexicon in use, and the word-matching exercise used as more of a quick-hitting vocabulary quiz. One possible weakness in the word-matching exercise method is that it relies heavily upon memory for some participants. Some participants served for only a short time many years ago, whereas others are in active service. Complicating the memory-based task, is the known symptom of PTSD that includes memory-loss. Alone, therefore, word-matching is less valuable than guided conversation in providing pure linguistic data, however, as a supplement to the guided conversation, it offered the researcher the opportunity to directly address the lexicon put forth in military culture, the TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 and other IET manuals.

In the guided conversation script questions 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 are designed to prompt participants to tell stories that are dense in the language of the military. These questions take the Labov model of talking about high-stress situations but also the mundanity of everyday life in the military. They are open-ended and provide the participant an opportunity to speak

uninturrupted about life in the military, especially with regard to experiences that they share with other veterans. Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 are designed to elucidate the experiences that veterans have with their interactions with civilians. Most veterans have some story about having difficulty communicating with civilians. These stories are rich with detail and the questions asked are designed to find the nexus of communication issues, while helping to identify veteran lexicon present in the telling of the stories.

The word-matching script asks for defitions of specific terms and prompts participants to provide terms based upon both the formal and informal lexicon from the TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 and the researcher's personal experience of the military. Questions 1-4, 7-8, 10-11, and 13, 15-19 are designed prompt definitions from the participants. Questions 5-6, 9, 12, and 14 are designed to prompt specific terms from the participants. One of the weaknesses of this part of the method is that like other ways of speaking, the way of speaking in the military changes over time. By standardizing the questions asked to each participant, the measure creates a snapshot of the participants' familiarity with a particular era of military language use over all participants, but does not necessarily create a clear picture of the lasting power of the participants' own military way of speaking as compared to their own era's lexicon. Rather, these questions favor the way of speaking particular to the researcher's era of military service and the researcher's own branch of service, The Army. Thankfully, this period lies directly at the centerpoint of participants' service periods and was directly adjacent to most participants' eras of military service. In order to mitigate this factor, other versions of the TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 and other manuals were consulted during analysis. In this way, the general standard presented in the scripts was standardized across participants but differences in lexicon can be explained by reference to the 600-4 that is most closely adjacent to the participants' time of service.

At the end of the interview(s), the participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the interview. Interviews were conducted one on one but participants were given the option to interview in groups. While the one on one format proved a more private setting, in which participants were open to sharing personal stories, the group format was provided as an option in order to encourage more natural cross-talk between participants who shared similar experiences. Though in the end, no participants elected to pursue a group interview, it would be a valuable addition to the data set for future researchers.

Interviews were always conducted in public spaces, such as cafés, parks, or libraries, in the Fargo-Moorhead area. The reasons for this were many. In a natural setting, like a café, it is easier to prompt participants to engage in more natural speech. This aided the researcher in getting the participant in the correct frame of mind for a guided conversation. Additionally, the anonymity of the crowd provided some good cover for conversations that sometimes included difficult material. While sterile laborotory environments can also be anonymous, they're not as comfortable and can remind the participants that they are participating in an interview for which their speech patterns will be judged. The informal settings also allowed ease of access for both the researcher and participant. At many times during the Warrior Words[26] program, participants struggled to find parking on campus and struggled to find the room in which the workshop was taking place. Having participants meet at a restaurant or other public place eliminated these issues. It is also noted in Ackerman & DiRamo (2009) that veterans have an inherent distrust for academia as a culture. As such, the elimination of factors that remind participants of their

[26] A Red River Valley Writing Project program managed by the researcher in preparation for this research, Warrior Words, is a community-based writing project for veterans that attempts to give veterans an outlet for their stories. Veterans prepare written pieces and perform them at the end of the workshop for a live audience. Warrior Words has been in operation since 2013. The researcher managed the project for Red River Valley Writing Project from 2014 to 2019.

participation in research or the researcher's status as an academic, becomes paramount to establishing a good rapport with the participants.

Data collected via guided conversation was analyzed for content and compared to an existing lexical data set[27]. Researcher aimed to recruit 20 participants, but received participation from 7 participants. This set is viewed as a representative sample of the veteran population of the Fargo-Moorhead area because it includes participants from each of the most widely represented branches of service in the area (The Army and Air Force) and encompasses the entirety of the all-volunteer military era, from Vietnam to the present. While the 7 participant data set may seem like a low number, it concerns a difference between Macrosociolinguistics and Microsociolinguistics. At the Macro level, large sociolinguistic surveys like the Harvard Dialect Study have a large number of participants and work well to identify larger trends over a broad region. At the Micro level, however, much more detailed analysis of a few participants is possible. This is especially valid because of the researcher's assumption that military training is a universalizing experience, in which veterans are introduced to a unique lexicon that is independent of regional conceits. Participants were recruited from the local pool of military veterans. The participants were between the ages of 25 and 65. They represent service in the Army, the Air Force, The National Guard, The Army Reserves, The Navy, and The Air National Guard. Personal emails were sent to existing veteran contacts (of the researcher). Others were contacted in person at veteran groups and events. Emails varied slightly based upon the nature of the existing relationship, but were primarily based on the email in the Appendix. All participants were given a copy of the consent form before being asked to participate, either by email, as an attachment, or in person, at the interview.

[27] The TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4 Blue Book (Initial-Entry Training Manual) was used as an existing data set which most participants are familiar with.

Recruitment was limited to those who self-selected to be interviewed, given information about the project. Emails were sent to past participants of Warrior Words and other veterans' organizations around the Fargo-Moorhead area (Eagles, VFW, VA, Veterans of Hope) in order to recruit a large enough sample of participants. Subjects who are not veterans (as defined by having taken an oath of enlistment or having been a commissioned officer in of the U.S. military forces) were not selected to participate in this research.

The researcher feels that veterans, as a community, are a vulnerable population, though not specificially listed by the IRB as a potential vulnerable population. The researcher is a member of this population and made every effort to ensure the comfort of participants. The researcher was present in the space for the interview and read the consent form to participants before each interview. Participants were then given the informed consent form, informing them of the methods used in the study and seeking their permission to be studied. Upon receipt of the signed consent form, the co-investigator began data collection on the participants. Those who did not wish to be participants in the research simply indicated that preference at the time. Though participants were informed that their lexicon was under study, the specific use of the terms is nuanced and the participants were unaware of the complete circumstances of the use of data collected.

As with any life experience of the magnitude of military service, there were likely to be subjects and memories that emerged that are psychologically difficult to acknowledge. Many veterans are never given a forum to do so. The researcher’s status as a veteran and shared membership in participants' community served to mitigate this factor. If participants found that they would like to have a follow-up conversation with a psychologist or mental health professional, and they expressed this wish in the interview or afterward, the researcher was

prepared to refer them to the Veteran's Administration. Participants were kept anonymous in data collection and reporting through the use of aliases and separation of data transcription from consent forms.

The researcher is aware of the potential emotional trauma that comes with discussing veteran stories. While this is a considered risk of interaction with participants, potential benefits include a better understanding of veteran ways of speaking, resulting in better community understanding of veteran stories.

Procedures for Analysis

Analysis of participant interviews was conducted by transcribing the entire interviews from audio files to word processing documents and creating a list of "correct" responses for comparison to participant responses. For example, question 1 of the word-matching script asks, "What is the spirit of the bayonet?" The answer the researcher expected was some form of "to kill," or "to kill without mercy," as this is a popular chant during the bayonet-training phase of Army basic training. By first selecting these responses and corresponding participant responses with researcher expectations, it was possible to determine whether or not there was a significant portion of overlap between the researcher's experience of military training and the participants' experiences.

For question 2 of the word-matching script, the researcher expected the answer, "blood," or "bright red blood," to the question, "What is the Spirit of the Bayonet?". This is an addition to the chant in question 1. For question 3, the researcher expected the answer, "artillery," to the question, "Who is the King of Battle?". Artillery is informally nicknamed the king of battle, especially if you ask artillery officers. For question 4, the researcher expected, "infantry," to the question, "Who is the Queen of Battle?". Infantry is informally nicknamed the queen of battle.

These two questions call on knowledge learned mostly through cadence-calling, which carries a surprisingly large load of information about the military for songs created to keep troops moving in unison. Question 5 allows for many right answers, as the researcher is familiar with the terms "getting smoked," "beating your face," "corrective PT," among several others to the question, "What is doing exercise as punishment called?". Any form of these might be deemed correct. These somewhat depend on the individual trainers that a recruit encounters and continue on to be modified as one encounters new supervisors as physical punishment is never really gone, even when a soldier reaches permanent duty. Question 6 is meant to prompt some of the same responses but is asked in a different way in order to clarify. Question 7 has the correct answers "A top is a first sergeant, A chief is a warrant or petty officer, A skipper is the captain of a boat," to the question, "What is the difference between a Top, a Chief, and a Skipper?". These are each informal nicknames for positions that have authority over most soldiers. Some variation on these themes is expected across different military cultures. For question 8, the researcher expected the answer, "an area of the battlefield that is subject to machine gun fire," to the question, "What is a field of fire?". This is taken directly from infantry tactics in the TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4. It may also be found in the training manuals of other service branches. For question 9, the researcher expected the answer, "Medic/Corpsman, Jumpmaster, Rigger," to the questions, "What do you yell out if you're injured? What if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air? What if you're having trouble with a parachute on the ground?" These may vary based on Airborne[28] status or branch of service. Jumpmaster and Rigger would only be familiar to Airborne personnel. Corpsman is a medic in the Marines. For question 10, the researcher

[28] To be called Airborne means the soldier has completed a 3-week course in paratrooper infiltration conducted by the 1/507th infantry in Fort Benning, GA. This is a specialized school that is reserved for advanced infantry troops and their direct support personnel. As such, most soldiers never become Airborne.

expected the term “buddy-fucker,” to the question, “What is a Blue Falcon?”. This was an informal way of communicating that a peer was causing trouble for the platoon. The use of the term “Blue Falcon” communicates the initials of the term in question, bf without causing offense to other parties who may not be comfortable with profanity. This is an act of self-preservation, however, rather than strict empathy. There are stiff punishments for the use of profanity in the presence of some officers. For question 11, the researcher expected the answer “informal punishment carried out by one’s peers,” to the question, “What is a blanket party?”. The best example of a blanket party that civilians may be familiar with is featured in the film *Full Metal Jacket,* in which Gomer Pyle receives a blanket party for his ineptitude. This is also referred to in films like Aaron Sorkin’s *A Few Good Men,* under the term, “Code Red.” For question 12, the researcher expected the answer “Platoon Sergeant,” to the question “What is the non-commisioned leader of a platoon called?”. This is a question of chain of command that comes directly from the TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4. For question 13, the researcher expected the answer, “a group of jumpers or squad on one side of the aircraft, either inboard or outboard,” to the question, “What is a stick?”. This term is again reliant on Airborne status or knowledge of paratrooping operations. This question often strikes civilians as one of the oddest substitutions, because out of context, asking someone what a stick is can be rather comical. For question 14, the researcher expected the answer “C-4, plastique, or Composition explosive,” to the question “What kind of explosive is in a claymore?”. This is a combination of soldier knowledge and lexicon. The answer comes from the 600-4. For question 15, the researcher expected the answer “yell out gas, gas, gas or make the three bang warning,” to the question, “What do you do if you see or smell CS in your AO?”. This is also a combination of soldier knowledge and lexicon. The instructions for what to do when there is CS gas in your area of operation come from the 600-4.

For question 16, the researcher expected the answer, “Field Manual, Technical Manual, and Army Regulation,” to the question, “What is the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?”. These again are definitions contained in the 600-4. For question 17, the researcher expected the answer, “the amount of distance between two elements of a convoy,” to the question, “What is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?”. This information was added to the 600-4 after mount training was introduced to the military around the mid-2000’s. For question 18, the researcher expected the answer, “A non-commissioned officer,” to the question, “What is an NCO?”. This question is answered in the 600-4. It is also common knowledge across military service. For question 19, the researcher expected the answer, “Advanced Individual Training,” to the question, “What is AIT?”. Again this is both common knowledge and contained within the 600-4, but is specific to the Army.

Participant responses are charted in the results section into the categories of “correct,” “associated,” “intuited correctly,” “intuited erroneously,” “incorrect,” “doesn’t remember,” and doesn’t know.” These categories are important because of the nature of the responses as products of sometimes foggy memories. Some responses are simply correct because the participant remembers the term. Associated responses may be slightly different, but still communicate the same intentions. Responses that are intuited correctly may be the result of familiarity with military culture or unconscious memory. Responses that are intuited erroneously seemed to be guesses that may use civilian understandings or language root words to intuit a meaning that is incorrect, even if the participant may remember the answer with more time. Responses that are simply incorrect represent guesses made that are simply unrelated. In some cases, participants remember that there is a term, but don’t remember that term. Those responses are coded as such. Responses coded as “doesn’t know” are only recorded when the participant states that they don’t

know. In this way, the terms are organized to create a clear picture of data that points to a direct relationship to language difference and creates a class of participants' relationships to one another with regard to the language.

These terms are all bound up in the training of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines for assimilation into the armed services. Some are specific to certain branches others, are specific to certain jobs or qualifications, but it is conceivable that all terms would be familiar to a single veteran, especially if that veteran immersed her or himself in the local or national veteran culture. If, however, a given participant is not conversant in any of these terms or only a small portion of them, it is not cause to believe that the participant did not receive these terms and digest them at one time or another. There are many variables that go into such an exercise. Among these are memory, branch of service, time since service, era of service, status as combat veteran, military occupational specialty, among many others. Rather than an end-all be-all, the word-matching exercise is a fair barometer of closeness to the researcher's own experienced veteran lexicon. It is for this reason that the word-matching exercise serves as a supplement to the guided conversation.

Analysis continued with attention to the guided conversation responses on the part of the participants. As the guided conversation doesn't lend itself to a "correct" answer that places the veteran into one box or another, this section of the analysis focused mainly upon the veteran's own experiences with communication difficulty and use of lexicon contained within training documents or military cultural terms when speaking about experiences in the military. This analysis took many different forms over the course of the writing of this paper, but the researcher settled on this method of all-of-the-above sources for military terms contained within the participants' responses primarily because the 600-4 was unequal to the task of containing the

whole of military culture. It would also seem like a waste of many years' work for the researcher to artificially attempt objectivity at this stage. Many terms that are contained in military lexicon are not necessarily contained within the training documents but are instead socially and culturally maintained and disseminated. Therefore, when a participant used a military-based term either found in a training manual or one recognized by the researcher as part of the military lexicon, at least where the origin and meaning can be explained, that term was counted as a use of military lexicon. The researcher, from a quantitative standpoint, counted instances of military lexicon used in the overall conversation, instances of the "you know" collocation, found in each interview, total number of unique terms used, and density of military terms in the interview as a percentage of overall words used. Additionally, the researcher noted the content of the conversation for instances of difficulty communicating with civilians, difficulty communicating with military trainers, or instances of identification with either a military or civilian social or linguistic group. These instances were noted to create another chart, one which illustrates not just specific terms and their meanings that are produced in natural speech, but also some of the reasons for the use of these terms. Each of the questions in the guided conversation script are designed to elicit this kind of information.

4. RESULTS

These results address the research questions in a few different ways. The word matching exercise established the presence of a knowledge of or access to a repertoire of words and phrases that have military specific meanings. These words and phrases have a staying power that indicates they remain a permanent part of a veteran's lexical repertoire, giving them access to conversations with other veterans and displaying covert linguistic prestige around other veterans. The existence of this separate repertoire establishes some of the justification for calling this way of speaking a separate dialect.

As the results section continues, individual, as well as aggregated results are shown to place the guided conversation results in the context of individual veteran experiences. The guided conversations show the ways in which veteran stories are altered by military dialect. The use of unique words and phrases that have specific military meanings creates a barrier to understanding between those who have access to the military-specific repertoire and those who do not. Additionally, some words that seem to make sense to a person without this repertoire have different meanings when used in military-specific phrases. Functionally, these factors isolate the veteran from social interactions that might otherwise occur around the telling of stories. Essentially, without someone to listen, veterans become an invisible minority that is pressured either to not speak, for fear of being misunderstood, or to seek out each other for therapeutic socialization, resulting in further linguistic isolation.

Word Matching Results

In the word matching exercise participants averaged a recall rate of 61%. That is to say that the average participant retained knowledge of 61% of the terms tested for in the measure but there is wide variation between individual performances. The percentage among participants who

served in the same service branch as the researcher (Army) was higher still (69%), which includes a participant who underwent electroshock therapy, having much of their memory erased. Four of the seven participants were familiar with 50% or more of the terms. The highest retention rate recorded (Dinlas) shares both a service component (Army) and era of service (GWOT) with the researcher.

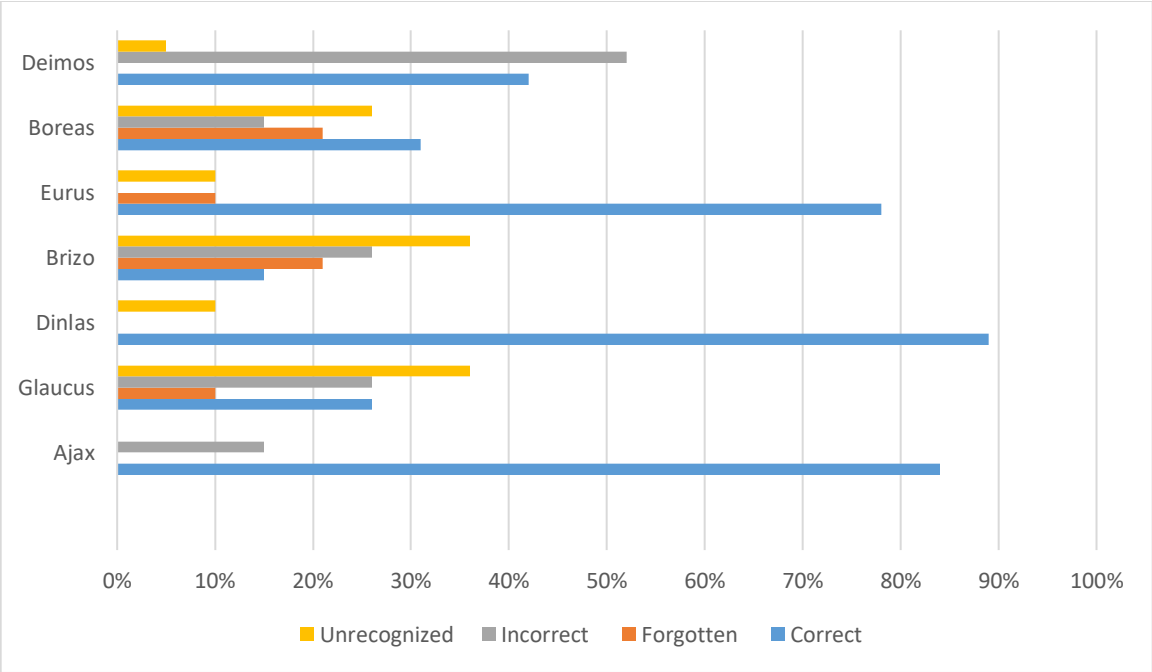

Figure 1. Word matching exercise results.
Results are expressed in decimals to represent percentages (i.e. 0.1=10%). Where a line is not present, the value is 0.

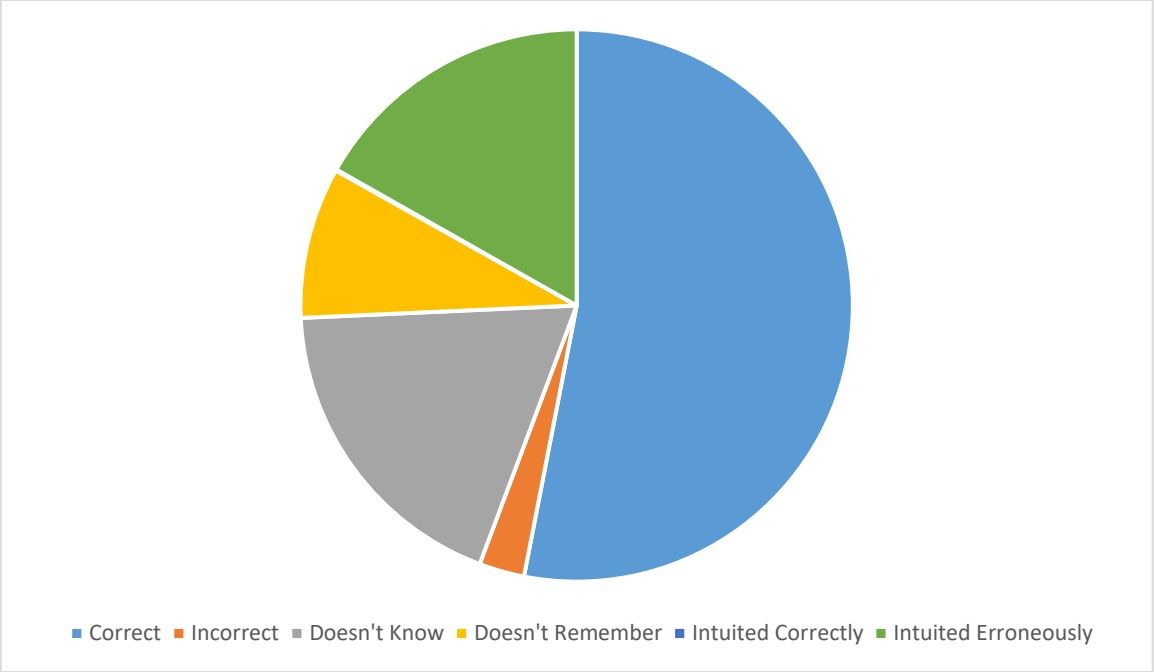

Figure 2. Overall word matching term retention percentage.
Percentages are expressed as portions of total responses (114). One answer of 114 scored IC but was of insufficient size to appear on the chart.

Clearly on display in these results is the connection between service component and language similarity. As most of the word matching was informed by the TRADOC 600-4 manual of the Army, and the cultural terms not contained in the manual were informed by the researcher's own experiences in the Army, the participants who showed the best retention of these terms were members of the Army. The next highest retention was found in the Air Force personnel, one of whom also served in the Army. The Air Force was split off of the Army after World War II in order to enable the branch to focus more exclusively on aviation. In addition, the researcher worked closely with the Air Force during Airborne operations in the Army. It is likely that the Air Force veterans scored second highest because they were members of the branch that was most closely related to the Army veterans and the researcher's own experience. The Marines are not represented in this group. The Navy veteran, Brizo, had the most difficulty recognizing the terms in the word-matching measure. This is likely because Brizo was farthest

removed from the culture of the Army, having served in the Navy, which has always been separate. The Navy and Marines are closely related in the same way the Air Force and Army are. The Marines are essentially the Navy's infantry. A researcher who was a Naval or Marine veteran may receive results that would be the inverse of these because of their close association with Navy/Marine culture and language.

Guided Conversation Results

The results of the guided conversations are less quantifiable but do contain some quantitative insights. Overall, 1.85% of the words and phrases used by participants in their guided conversations were words with specific, military-exclusive meaning. This only accounts for individual words, not military phrases, which will be elucidated in the qualitative analysis. Additionally, the researcher discovered that the collocation, "You Know," was used by each participant and served several different functions. It was used as a kind of ellipses in place of something like etc. One example of this is when Ajax says, "But shit, I was young back then, so I mean, we thought we were sexy so like—no shirt, you know, dog tags banging, you know aviators…trodding through Capital Mall you know? Thinking we were badasses…" Here the collocation is used almost like an utterance. It takes the place of silence, where someone else might insert an ellipsis, especially in writing. It was used as a way of identifying with the researcher, as in, "you served, so you know." For example, when Ajax says, "And, you know, they have these little building events and stuff and just their comments and stuff," the reference being made is to something we share context for. Ajax understands that I also went through the events described. In this case, the collocation acknowledges our shared identity of service. It was also used as an interrogative, as in, verifying whether or not the researcher understood the meaning behind a statement. For example, Ajax says, "you used to call it the line ride. You

know? You just get in line." Here Ajax uses a military specific phrase and uses the collocation as an interrogative to preface an explanation of the term, to ensure understanding. Its presence in each of the participant's guided conversations and multiple uses suggest that is part of the shared method of speech common to many of the participants. Additionally, the data bears out a strong correlation between a specific service branch (the Army) and use of this collocation. Participants with service in the Army used the collocation much more often (85.25 times on average compared to 7 for the Air Force and 39 for the Navy) than those without Army service. The outlier in this case is Eurus, who used the collocation only three times. Another possible reason for this outcome is regional dialect. Eurus, Boreas, and Brizo were all raised outside the Midwest, where "You Know," seems to be a more common regional dialect feature. In the article, "The High Frequency Collocations of Written and Spoken English," Dongkwang Shin observes the "You Know" is the most common Spoken English collocation within the collected data set, indicating its status as a large part of overall English speech (207). On the other hand, there are few other explanations than regional or branch preference to explain the difference in the number of instances of the collocation found in this study. Brizo has spent the most time in the Midwest of the three, accounting for the increased usage of the collocation, followed by Boreas, who has spent more time in the Midwest than Eurus. Though in a sample size this small, it could simply be individual difference.

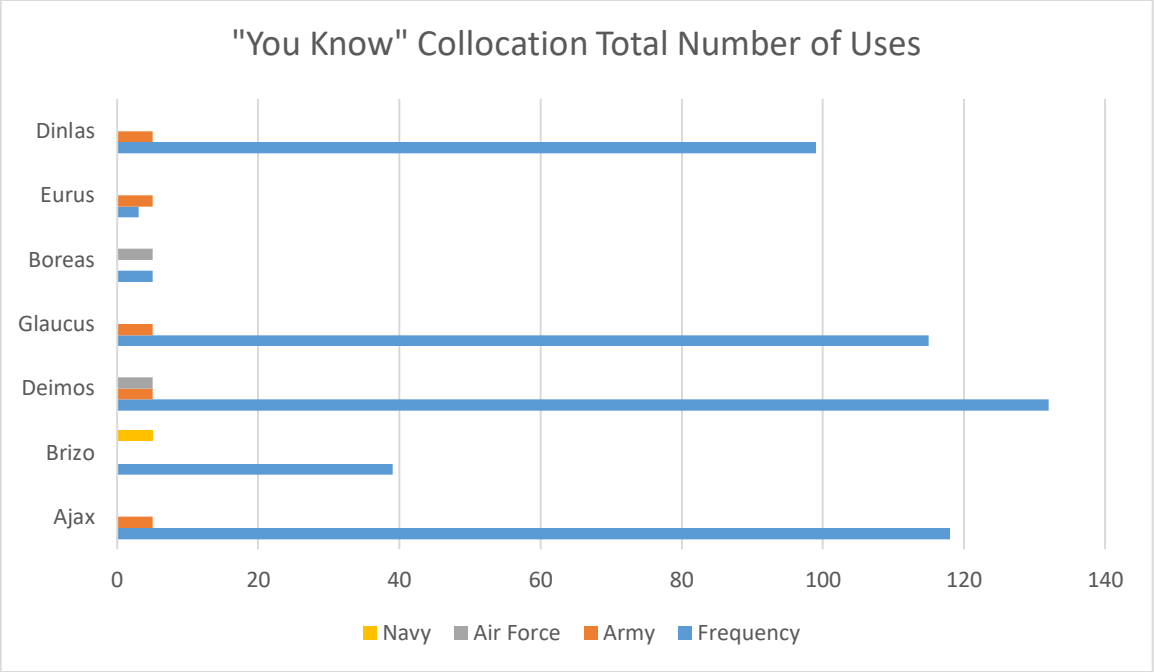

Figure 3. "You know" collocation total number of uses.
A value of five is assigned to service branch in order to represent the service branch of each of the participants. Deimos served in two branches.

Qualitative Results

From a qualitative standpoint, the participants each showed some awareness of the differences between the way they spoke as veterans and the way civilians speak. For example, as Ajax transitioned from the military to college, he experienced a difference in nomenclature associated with a skill for which he already possessed expertise. He observes,

> …I tell people all the time you know, I went back to college and I'd never went to college before. But as I was going through college it felt like it was more of like a language course than actually learning… Words like dynamic and you know, violence of action in the military—well, that just means that you're gonna take charge and show initiative. Like shut the fuck up. Violence of action. Let's do that.

Here, Ajax found that a Master's program in Emergency Management used many of the same skills used in the military, but called them something else. Ajax uses the example of the civilian word, "dynamic," probably in the adjective form, defined by constant change. Ajax compares this civilian word to the military phrase, "violence of action," which is a kind of action

performed to create chaos within the element being acted upon. Like many translations, these two terms don't translate directly very well, however, in Ajax's mind, they represented the same signified idea. For Ajax, the learned concept of dynamism already had an existing nomenclature, "violence of action." The military phrase was the first understanding of the phrase, and therefore, the signifier learned in college to represent this already signified idea became the newer phrase, like learning a synonym for a familiar word. These differences were not only noted in transitions to college, which is a natural transition in one's lexicon, but also in encountering civilian speech shortly after service in the military. This often took the form of feeling as though they couldn't speak with civilians or that civilians wouldn't be interested in hearing about their service. Glaucus explains, "Uh, not that maybe we didn't want to talk about it or anything like that, it was just never brought up. Don't know why. Never, you know…" Here Glaucus observes the fact that Vietnam veterans were not popular when they returned from war and that few people seemed to be interested in talking about his service. This was observed in other Vietnam-Era participants as well. Deimos observes,

> Nobody wanted to hear about what you did, where you were, what you are and what, what you did uh in any bar I was ever in. You know? Get up and walk away from you. They didn't want nothing to do with ya. A—and, so you didn't talk about it. You didn't say much. You had to think about if you even wanted people to know you were in.

Clearly, Vietnam-Era veterans experienced social isolation as a consequence of interactions that dealt with their military experiences. For a long time they were even denied membership in the VFW because Vietnam, lacking a formal declaration of war from Congress, was not seen as a foreign war. At least, that was the given reason. Korean War veterans, however, had been welcomed into the organization. Vietnam veterans who speak about the trouble they had joining the VFW often cite the unpopular status of the Vietnam conflict as the real reason for their denial. Whatever the reason, most veterans who have served overseas are now eligible for VFW

membership but many Vietnam and later veterans have fled the organization and others like it because of the political nature of membership requirements.

Although many of the participants acknowledged a change of some kind in their language or culture as a result of their military service, many were careful not to blame the military when asked about it directly. When asked about difficulty communicating with civilians when they left the military, most participants did not directly answer the question. Deimos talked about the loss of a spouse, which is common among deployed soldiers. Many spoke of the transition to college as a difficulty in language adjustment, but no one comes out and says that they blame the military for making it difficult to communicate with civilians. Many times, their acknowledgments of difficulty come as a result of their personal lives, whether that is a transition to college, the loss or maintenance of a romantic partner, or some other kind of reaction that they view as not systemic or societal, but relational. They put the onus for this deficiency on themselves, which tends to make them struggle emotionally. Because the data bears out that the results are highly context-dependent, the next section will briefly elucidate the context of each participant and explain their individual results as a product of that context. I hope to place each participant's results in an understandable context that will help the reader make connections that I will elucidate in the discussion section.

Participant by Participant Results

This section covers individual results in context. The participant's background, service length, occupational specialty, and a collection of the military-specific words and phrases they used in the guided conversations are all considered in order to understand each participant's language change. While each participant underwent some version of the same basic forces of

linguistic change, the size of the different branches and the different eras in which they served lead to individual results that vary widely, even though similarities and patterns have emerged.

~~Ajax~~

Ajax was a member of the US Army and Army National Guard for 20 years. Ajax served during the eras of Operation Desert Storm and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, roughly from the early to mid 1990's until the mid 2000's. Ajax was raised in the Midwest and comes from that regional dialectal background. During service, Ajax served as a drill sergeant, receiving both sides[29] of the training that occurs in initial entry training (instructor and recruit). Ajax and I developed a friendship over the time of three consecutive *Warrior Words* workshops. When the time came to be interviewed, Ajax was very candid. Ajax confessed bouts with alcoholism and an understanding of the shades of meaning of different uses of the word "fuck." While Ajax bears no ill will for the military, a tacit acknowledgment of difficulties underlies the guided conversation. Feelings of being misunderstood by civilians arise, for Ajax, out of a difference of experiences, but not necessarily out of a difference of culture. While Ajax acknowledges a sacrifice was part of the job of being a soldier, it seems to land more as a mental shift that one undergoes as a part of the patriotic duty underlying voluntary service. Soldiers understand things because they must and civilians don't because they've never had to.

[29] Drill sergeants attend a drill sergeant school before being placed into a training battalion. During drill sergeant school, they re-acquaint themselves with training skills and any changes that have taken place since they attended basic training. Between drill sergeant school and initial entry training, Ajax would have encountered the kind of linguistic and cultural indoctrination that takes place in basic training over and over again. If Bloom's taxonomy is to be believed, Ajax should be one of the most able to recall aspects of military culture of any of the participants because he was both a recipient of and exemplar/instructor of the culture.

Table 4. Ajax Military Specific Words and Phrases

Words (21 unique words 30 uses)	**Phrases** (31 unique phrases 83 uses)
MEPS x2	Fuck-fuck trick
package	Service in
Barracks x2	Reception station
PT x3	Civilian clothes
MP x4	Paperwork shuffle
Deployments	Drill sergeant x2
exercise	Reception duty
IED	Shared misery
Guard x2	Field MP
Guardsman	Garrison MP x2
NTC	Dog tags banging
Firefight	Mission prep
Inbrief	Two thirds one third rule
Outbrief x2	Office duty
Debrief	Engage the enemy directly
Humvee	Embracing the suck
LAW	.50 caliber Sniper Rifle
M-16	MK19 grenade launcher
K-Pot	Unleash the fury
MOPP	Out in the desert
AIT	Tribal knowledge
	Line ride
	Active duty
	Living on the economy
	Briefed in
	Spun up
	Grunt MP
	Nine mil
	NBC Gear
	Atropine injectors
	Violence of action

Ajax uses 31 military exclusive phrases in the guided conversation. See the footnotes in the transcript for explanations of the phrases. When combining instances of words and phrases used, 3% (113) of the words Ajax used in the guided conversation have a military-specific meaning. Ajax answered 16 of the 19 word-matching exercise questions correctly. That is a retention rate of 84% after a 20 year career and a 10 year absence from service. Ajax has, with participation in several veteran programs available in the area and a self-described

transformation for college, successfully reintegrated into the community. There are constant struggles to unify the experience of the military with the experience of civilian life but Ajax has found productive ways to channel these difficulties and extremely positive family support.

Boreas

Boreas served in the US Air Force during the time shortly after the Vietnam conflict, widely recognized as peace-time, but with its own conflicts and complications that are less well-known than other wars. Boreas served for only two years and seems not to have suffered a lot of complications with reintegration, and yet, feels unresolved guilt over not having done more during service. Boreas was medically chaptered[30] from the Air Force after the sudden death of a relative. It is likely the Air Force was cutting force size anyway, but Boreas is unclear about the specific reason for the medical chapter. Boreas makes a big deal of the claim that military service was nothing out of the ordinary, an everyday job, but a medical chapter usually does not occur unless the injury or illness is of sufficient extremity that the member can no longer function in the military, even if retrained.

Table 5. Boreas Military-Specific Words and Phrases

Words 7 unique words 12 uses	**Phrases** 10 unique phrases 14 uses
Barracks	Ground pounders
Eglin (X4)	In the back (or rear)
Sergeant	Maintenance line (X2)
Basic (X2)	Tech school (X2)
PT (X2)	Permanent party
Field	Basic training
Ramps (X2)	Unit commander
	First sergeant
	Tech sergeant
	Field 3 (X4)

[30] A medical chapter is a separation from service based upon a service-connected disability that prohibits further service in the military. This can be a devastating way to be removed from the military as it often isolates the veteran from the benefits they expected to receive as part of their service.

Having served only a short time (2 years), quite a long time ago (~50 years ago), it is not a surprise that Boreas retained only 6 of 19 terms from the word matching measure. 3.5% of the unique terms used in the guided conversation, however, did have a military-specific meaning. Boreas used 7 unique words and 10 unique phrases, amounting to 17 (3.5%) of total unique words and phrases. When accounting for overall words used (1926), 26 (1.3%) of the instances contained military specific words or phrases. Boreas also had far fewer unique terms used during the guided conversation, indicating a much lower overall vocabulary than Ajax, for example. This is possibly the result of not attending college after leaving the military. Boreas has not integrated well with the community. It took leveraging a personal relationship to prompt attendance at Warrior Words and to allow for an interview. Boreas does not feel connected to other veterans because of a sense of guilt that more was not accomplished during service. While Boreas communicates on a surface social level well, difficulty comes when a conversation about military service must delve deeper than the surface and Boreas, a natural extrovert, unfortunately is forced to retreat from social interactions that go any deeper than small talk by guilt.

Brizo

Brizo served in the Navy during the peace time between Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This service took place mostly aboard a ship, physically separated from the mainland of the United States. Brizo served for 8 years and had some difficulty during transition. Brizo separated from the Navy with a fully honorable discharge at the end of what can be called a complete term of service.[31] Brizo was not well-served by the word-matching measure as the Navy has very little common culture or language with the Army, from which the majority of the terms were drawn, but it is evident from the number of unique military phrases used that a

[31] Most military contracts are written for 8 years, with 2-6 active years and 2-4 inactive ready reserve years. A full term of service is achieved when an enlisted member serves a full 8 years on active service.

difference in vocabulary is still present. Specific naval terms were infused in Brizo's vocabularly in much the same way as Army participants had. Additionally, Brizo's vocabulary is influenced by an upbringing in the Southern US, which distinguishes this interview from others. Brizo is mostly positive about the experience of the military but found a feeling of alienation that others do not always feel during service. Brizo craved the acceptance of fellow service members so much that upon separation from the Navy, a romantic relationship with a former shipmate was maintained, but Brizo found this relationship was hollow and that it felt like holding on to the Navy, rather than a loved one.

Table 6. Brizo Military-Specific Words and Phrases

Words 5 unique 12 total uses	**Phrases** 8 unique 10 total uses
Gear	On line
Ship (X8)	Boot camp
Gyrocompass	Real world
Debrief	Engine room
Department (X2)	USS Sacramento
	Oiler Supply Ammunition Ship (X2)
	Aircraft carriers
	Cultural debrief (X2)

Brizo used 13 unique military words and phrases, accounting for 2.6% of overall unique words used. Over the course of the guided conversation, these military-specific words and phrases appeared 22 times (out of 2114), accounting for 1% of the overall words used. During the interview, Brizo focused on personal shortcomings for difficulty integrating into the community rather than changes in culture. Brizo also fixated on the age difference between veterans and traditional students as a source of tension when transitioning to college. Since leaving the Navy, Brizo has difficulties with loneliness and depression. Integration has been achieved, however, and Brizo has a family and productive work.

Deimos

Deimos served in the US Army for 4 years during the Vietnam War. A cook by training, Deimos ended up doing anything but cooking in the field, serving on an infantry fire team for most of the time spent in Vietnam. Deimos received a fully honorable discharge at the end of 4 years of service. The adjustment to civilian life was difficult. Deimos' spouse had been unfaithful and was unable to help ease the transition back to community life. Deimos fell into alcoholism and drug abuse, working jobs that did not require human interaction, such as trucking. Deimos did not attend college after the military. Deimos has never reintegrated socially with a community and has moved around quite a bit since returning from the military.

Deimos harbors racism toward those against whom the Army fought in Vietnam. A general racism underlies this more extreme version directed at Vietnamese people. Some of the language used in Deimos' interview is coarse or racist in nature. Deimos shares a dialect of upbringing with Boreas, but the two don't sound much alike. They served in different branches and have not spent considerable time together, though they have met. Deimos' interview was the longest. There aren't many available avenues for disclosure in Deimos' life. The interview allowed for a thorough accounting of stories Deimos had not told anyone, believing that nobody would be interested.

Table 7. Deimos Military-Specific Words and Phrases

Words 41 unique words 56 total uses	**Phrases** 37 unique phrases 51 total uses
Chow (X2)	Induction center
Barracks	Smokey Bear Hat
SFC	Drill instructor (X2)
E-7	Mess hall (X3)
SSG	The military way (X2)
Cadre	Drill sergeants (X3)
E-6 (X2)	Permanent duty station
Battalion	Permanent pass
Company	Court martial
KPs (X2)	Mess sergeant
AWOL	Delayed transfer
SGT	Air Cav
Stripes	The world
OJT (X2)	The 'Nam
Billets (X2)	Article 15
Armor	Baby killers (X2)
Bunkers	Class A's
Civilians (clothes)	Fire base (X3)
Fatigues	Spider holes (X2)
Process	Radar duty
Props (X2)	50% guard
PCs (X4)	50 on 50 off
Bird	Trip flares (X2)
Chopper (X2)	Shut down (X4)
ordinance	Charlie Brown
FO	A Shop
XO	Call for fire (on own head)
LPs	Policing up
.45s (X2)	HELO pad
Tracers	Beehive round
Klicks	Alert patrol
Hot	Non-essential combat gear
Harassment	Entrenching tool
.38	New back
M-16	81 mortar round
M-79 (X2)	Combat pay
Claymore	Dear John Letter
Mines	
Minefield	
Plate	
E-5 (X4)	

Of the 714 unique words Deimos used during the guided conversation, 10% (78) had military specific meanings. Of the 6275 total words used in the guided conversation, 1.7% (107) were words and phrases with military-specific meanings. Many of the total words used in

Deimos' guided conversation were repeated or utterances and stammering. This skews the percentage of total used words in the guided conversation. It is plain from the comparison of unique words used, though, that the number of military-specific words and phrases as a portion of unique words used is quite high and would represent a significant barrier to understanding.

During *Warrior Words*, Deimos briefly recounted events that led to receiving the Bronze Star with a Valor identifier. These events inform Deimos' telling of the events of service in Vietnam. Other veterans showed Deimos the utmost respect while speaking, but Deimos is still unable to overcome the belief that no one else cares about veterans. Deimos is now living with a relative as a sort of hospice relationship. There is very little time left for Deimos to be social with anyone, as it becomes increasingly more difficult with age and isolation. Deimos' relatives were largely unaware of any of Deimos' stories before hearing them at Warrior Words. Now that they are aware, they ask about them from time to time. Deimos' continued use of coarse, racist, and specialized language during retellings of the stories, however, holds others at arms-length and makes them prefer not to discuss these things as they are difficult to decode and it is hard to give Deimos the benefit of the doubt on racist language.

Dinlas

Dinlas served in the US Army and Army National guard for 20 years during the era between Operation Desert Shield and The Global War on Terror. Dinlas recently completed this term of service. Most participants who served in the National Guard report less trouble reintegrating into their communities. They maintain a presence in their communities during their service and so are infrequently affected by the kinds of isolation felt by active duty soldiers. On the other hand, they, more than other participants, report feeling a kind of hybridity that vacillates wildly between the two sets of requirements. Dinlas is one such soldier, but also shows

signs that language has been affected more than realized, using one of the higher percentages (6.9%) of military-specific language in the guided conversation. Dinlas also underwent a change in personality from a self-described punk to someone who is more family-oriented and responsible. That change has not come easily, however.

Like many of the participants, Dinlas attended college after joining the military, but unlike many, Dinlas had not left the military completely when starting college. This led Dinlas to separate service experiences into two phases, Active Duty and Guard. During these different phases, Dinlas held different jobs and experienced military life as both a soldier and a "citizen soldier." Dinlas describes guilt as one of the fundamental things that military members experience that civilians don't. It's a kind of guilt described by most participants and seems to underlie much of the experience of being a soldier.

Table 8. Dinlas Military-Specific Words and Phrases

Words 30 unique words 46 uses	**Phrases** 30 unique phrases 48 uses
Processing (X2)	Active Duty Training
Reception	Delayed Entry (program) (X3)
Basic	Basic training (X5)
Formation (X2)	In-processing
Platoons	Reception battalion
PT (X3)	Active duty (X6)
PMCSed	The guard (X5)
Convoys	Guard guys
Deployed/deploys/deploying (X7)	Chemical agent monitors (X2)
TOC	Radiation room
Raven	Sergeants training day
FOB	Motorpool day
Infantry	Sergeant's time
ETS	Barracks maintenance
Sergeant	Service mindset
company	Signed for
Drill (X2)	Frequency hops
Colonel	Camp Fallujah
Barracks	Combat Infantryman Badge
Battalion (X2)	Battalion Commander
PX	Direct-support level
Bunker	Duty station
Hangar (X2)	Drill schedule
Extension	Bravo company
Briefing (X3)	First Sergeant
Unit	Train up (X3)
Zero (X2)	Company commander
Qualify	Space-A
C-130	Full Body Armor
M-16	Seal pup

Out of 858 unique terms Dinlas used in the guided conversation, 6.9% (60) of the words and phrases had military-specific meanings. Of the 5399 total terms used, 1.7% (94) were uses of military-specific terms. After a 20 year career, Dinlas retained near-perfect recall of the terms from the word-matching exercise (17 of 19). Dinlas had just left the guard as of the time of the interview. Dinlas seems to have reintegrated by working with people. While there is still some very fresh integration work to do, because Dinlas is only freshly finished with National Guard

duty, there seems to have been a mental shift from military to civilian that took place as Dinlas completed this final term of service. While Dinlas participated in an early version of Warrior Words, it was one in which the role assumed was more geared toward mentorship of other veterans. Dinlas did not feel the need to share but approached the workshop as a writer helping other veterans learn to write their stories. While Dinlas agreed to participate in this research, it is less something that was therapeutic and more from a desire to help others get better help. In this way, Dinlas has largely overcome the difficulties associated with transition.

Eurus

Eurus served in the Army Reserve and currently serves in the Air National Guard. This service started during the GWOT[32] era. Eurus was a communications/radio specialist in the Army and became an MP[33] in the Air Force. The use of specific terms in these fields is common, even outside of military service, but within military service, there are specific types of equipment that make the terms that describe these jobs further removed from even civilians who are experts in these fields, let alone those who have never studied in them. Eurus is currently in college and is studying for a graduate degree. Like Dinlas, Eurus reports feeling a kind of hybrid identity. One person is the soldier/airperson, another is the civilian/student. The two don't often meet.

[32] Global War on Terror (2001-Present)
[33] Military police

Table 9. Eurus Military Specific Words and Phrases

Words 28 unique words 45 uses	**Phrases** 23 unique phrases 42 uses
MEPS	Army Reserve (X5)
Basic (X4)	Air National Guard (X4)
Retention	Air Force (X2)
Drill (X2)	Adjust Fire
Commo	Direct Combat
SINGAR	Tech School
M9 (X4)	In-processing (X4)
TIBFID	Sergeant major (X4)
AIT (X2)	Pre-deployment
31U	Pro-mask
Army (X2)	Out-processing
Deployed (X2)	Running troops
Attached	Air Force Reserve
Convoyed	Active duty base
Mask (X2)	Rotation-heavy
Chemalarms	War zone
S-1 (X3)	Security forces
Colonel (X3)	Into the shit
Tour	In country
Sector	Flak vests (X2)
DEA	Kept my head down (X3)
Bagram	Drill sergeants (X3)
Rotation	Chow line
M-4	
Kevlar	
M-16	
Platoon	
Private	

Out of 714 unique terms used in the guided conversation, 7.1% (51) of words and phrases had a military-specific meaning. Out of the total 3175 terms used, 2.7% (87) had military-specific meaning. As Eurus is currently serving, recall rate in the word-matching measure was quite high (15 of 19), especially for a participant whose current branch is different from the one used to develop the word-matching measure. Though there was no gap in military service, the length of time since Eurus' Army service makes this a significant rate of retention.

While it is difficult during a veteran's service to determine how well she or he will integrate upon leaving the military, Eurus has made many steps that will ease transition once it comes. College seems to have been a big help to those veterans who have transitioned successfully and Eurus is currently on track to finish a graduate degree. Eurus has also maintained an identity that is separate from military service. This identity that does not rely on the veteran self seems also to be an aid in successful transition. As such, it seems Eurus is likely to succeed in transitioning.

Glaucus

Glaucus served in the Army during the Vietnam Era. Following Glaucus' service ECT[34] was administered to treat symptoms of PTSD. As a result of this therapy, large portions of Glaucus' memory are blank, especially surrounding military service. This makes the results in the word-matching portion of the interview a little misleading. While Glaucus remembers a lot of military specific language, as is borne out in the guided conversation, the word matching exercise used terms from a time in the training of a soldier that is very traumatic. As such, it is no surprise that Glaucus scored lower than others. Glaucus is also separated from the era of military service from which the terms were drawn by 30 years.

[34] Electroconvulsive Therapy, also known as Electroshock Therapy, is administered in order to kill the brain cells associated with a traumatic event. Its use today is mostly taboo.

Table 10. Glaucus' Unique Words and Phrases

Words (18 unique words 29 uses)	**Phrases** (18 unique phrases 22 uses)
Barrack	2nd Lieutenant
MOS	Advanced Training (X2)
Infantry	Moved up
ROTC	Command structure
OCS	Scout dogs
MOS's	Discharge papers
PTSD	Transfer station
ETC	Veteran headquarters
Group	Processing center
Unit (X2)	Tet Offensive (X2)
Briefing (X2)	Flak vest (X2)
Barracks (X6)	Unit headquarters
Fatigues (X2)	Saigon headquarters
E-5 (X2)	Ten in
KP	Drill Sergeants (X3)
Headquarters (X2)	Three-day pass
AIT (X2)	Regular lieutenant
Colonel	Mess hall (X4)

Out of the 5,399 total words Glaucus used in the guided conversation, 1% (51) were words and phrases with military-specific meaning. Out of 761 unique words Glaucus used in the guided conversation, 4.4% (34) were words or phrases with military-specific meaning. While Glaucus' overall word-matching retention rate was low, (5 of 19) the staying power of this way of speaking exhibited in the guided conversation, given Glaucus unique circumstances with a long gap in service and psychological intervention, is remarkable.

Like Deimos, Glaucus reports returning to a public that was simply not impressed with military service. The unpopular status of the Vietnam Conflict created a sentiment of loathing for soldiers in many civilians, or at least that is the impression that Deimos and Glaucus came away with. They both felt pressure to find a way to fit into the public again but neither had much support in doing so. The difference between the two, that seems to have set Glaucus apart from Deimos in terms of successful reintigration, was that Glaucus went to college and Deimos did

not. Glaucus also had some bridges to civilian life with friends and the 4-H organization that helped with transitioning, whereas Deimos was left relatively alone with a lot of trauma and no real feeling of solidarity or bridge of any kind. Not surprisingly, Glaucus reintegrated into the community where Deimos failed to do so.

Clearly each of the participants has been on a context-dependent journey and no measure, no matter how carefully crafted, could ever hope to encompass those experiences in a single test that shows definitively that one is using a single set of military specific terms across all branches and eras. The individual results reveal, however, that each participant's language was affected in some way by the military. Significantly, each participant gained access to a new repertoire of lexicon that helped them to identify each other but served as a barrier to understanding for those who did not serve, and that language in the military, even in the specific branches, changes over time and between social groups experiencing contact and isolation, like all living languages do. "Veteran," therefore, as a label has not been as useful at describing a specific dialect of English as it has been at describing a specific set of experiences that each of the veteran participants have undergone that has led to the same kinds of changes in language but with different specific changes. In the discussion/conclusion section, these changes will be examined as catalysts for language change and conclusions about the results of the measures will be drawn.

5. DISCUSSION

Yes, Veterans Speak Differently. Now what?

What is plain from the results is that when veterans speak about their experiences in the military, as they did in the guided conversation measure, they access a repertoire of military-specific language terms. This is no great surprise. As they trained they were exposed to a system of dialect building that included dialect leveling, the existence of a written and spoken exemplar dialect that they were motivated to adopt, the pressure of high-stress situations in a multi-dialect environment that encourages the creation of quickly understood signs, and the immersion in a new culture that is unified in its view that the culture from which recruits come is inferior to the culture to which the recruits aspire. Compound these factors with long periods of isolation from native familiolect and contact only with speakers of the received dialect and the resulting system of language acquisition and retention plainly has its intended effect. It also has an effect that is perhaps less intended. The change remains in place for decades afterward. One of the most significant findings of the interviews was just how long the difference in speech remains a part of veteran repertoire. Glaucus is the best example of this staying power. After half a century of civilian reintegration, this participant still used and understood military-specific language. Recall the 5 of 19 score achieved by Glaucus on the word-matching exercise and 51 military-specific words and phrases used in the guided conversation. Whether or not this change in the repertoire of veterans is intentional, its existence and persistence create barriers to the telling of veteran stories that might aid veterans in transition. Those veterans who successfully transition usually do so because they have acquired the means to separate their veteran identities from their civilian identities while maintaining both as whole identities. One way they accomplish this is through codeswitching.

Veteran Codeswitching

Veterans codeswitch when speaking to civilians about their service. This can be when speaking to family members, counselors, interviewers, or audiences in a performance. This act of codeswitching is a translation of an experience whose roots are in one dialect (the dialect of military service) into another dialect (one the intended receiver is more likely to understand). As with any translation, something of the meaning is lost. When veterans codeswitch it comes across sounding something like an Icelandic Saga[35]. Like the saga tellers, they talk about their exploits in a matter-of-fact way that belies the underlying emotion. For example, when Dinlas was asked about the first day of military training, the response sounds a lot like any other civilian trip might sound:

> Din: So we flew down to South Carolina. We made it all the way to uh Ft…what was it…Fort Jackson. And we did the…I thought we were in basic training…And it wasn't like that at all. It was—I'd say for the first 36 hours we were doing all of our in processing and there was not a lot of sleep…you know…to be had.

Here Dinlas describes the initial stages of the very traumatic introduction to the military, but to the civilian reader, or receiver, it seems like Dinlas had a rough night of sleep after a business trip. None of the emotion that might mark a civilian's telling of the same story are present. The hyperbole, the thick description of the comfort of the rooms or the quality of the food, none of these details are present. It is simply, I went here, we did this, then we did something else. This is not only a result of translation of the experience into a civilian way of speaking, but also a result of the way soldiers are trained to report information in the field, via a S.A.L.U.T.E. report, in which the soldier reports the Size, Activity, Location, Unit, Time, and Equipment of any encounter.

[35] See Kellog's *Sagas of the Icelanders (2001).*

You might be wondering how using this example is valid, since Dinlas was speaking to me when it was collected, however, each of the veterans who were interviewed took some time to adjust to speaking with me as a veteran. They each probed with bits of veteran language until I seemed to understand. By the end of the word-matching exercise they were sure of my veteran progeny, and more importantly, of my membership in their group. Additionally, Dinlas and others are accustomed to translating their experiences for civilian consumption, and therefore mostly default to codeswitching in their everyday speech. In no part of any of the interviews did any of the participants perform what I might call a pure form of the veteran way of speaking. But if all this is the case, does the veteran dialect really represent a barrier to sharing stories?

Times When Veterans Don't Code-Switch

Well, yes, there still is a barrier to sharing veteran stories. For one thing, code-switching is a learned ability. Veterans do not leave the military knowing that they need to code-switch. Typically soldiers live on or near a post during their time in the military and most vacations occur in military-friendly places that do not require much code-switching. Even those who become consciously aware of the differences in speech may choose not to switch into a more suitable way of speaking in order to express the disdain for civilians that is ingrained in many parts of training. As some of the participants describe the transition to civilian life they note changes to language being a barrier for them. They learn the language they need to use in their civilian lives by interacting with those who use the language they need to acquire, in much the same way that they acquired the military way of speaking. There are differences though. Veterans have to choose to learn this skill. Some never learn to codeswitch when speaking about military topics. Others learn different codes, for a career or social group that is different from the military but made up of familiar identities from within military groups. Boreas, for example,

worked solely in the labor industry after leaving the service and never really reintegrated with a social or career group.

When veterans choose not to codeswitch, they are usually in a space where they can be sure people will understand what they are saying. They are usually talking about specific events peculiar to the military. They usually have a purpose for using the dialect. One example that springs to mind is when one of the participants was attempting to persuade a fellow veteran to join the Warrior Words workshop so that their stories could be told. The participant saw that I was having trouble getting the veteran to understand exactly what the workshop was about. Knowing that the workshop could do this veteran some good, the participant spoke directly, with a slightly more Southern-sounding phonetic delivery, and in short, clear sentences. I had a physical reaction to the performance, feeling my stomach curdle slightly as I remembered my drill sergeants using the same delivery to give me instructions. While the veteran still refused to participate in Warrior Words, the message from the participant was clearly received and had an impact. At times the code-switch is also used, whether consciously or subconsciously as the barrier that it is. As Myers-Scotton puts it, "…switching to a language not known by all participants is a common means of exclusion" (174). This can take the shape of veterans verifying each other's membership in the shared group by asking questions that demand a response in the veteran way of speaking or, quite commonly, speaking specifically about a specific type of weapon or munition used exclusively in military service. In this way the veteran signals her or his intent to verify the veracity of any claims put forth by someone claiming membership in the veteran community. It is a litmus test. While some memory-fogginess is allowable in response, the test only works if some of the shared code is maintained.

Veterans don't go around assuming that everyone will understand the military way of speaking. Quite the contrary, most veterans elect not to speak about their experiences in service rather than feeling misunderstood when they do. The veteran way of speaking is not some kind of mechanism for making a veteran forget how civilians speak, or at least how they spoke when the veteran joined the service. Rather, codeswitching for veterans becomes a reality that is bound up in the act of hoping that their closest friends understand enough of their stories to learn something about them on a personal level. Fundamentally, however, codeswitching will always be a poor substitute for the full understanding of the source dialect of veteran stories. As such, those who wish to help veterans tell their stories in a therapeutic setting must confront the uncomfortable question of whether to have the veteran translate their stories for public consumption, or to train civilians to understand the source dialect.

Translating the Text or Understanding the Dialect?

As you might have guessed, the answer is mostly both. While it can be very powerful for veterans to use small parts of the pure dialect in specific situations, as in for a small part of a performance that illustrates command grammatical structure, too much of this type of dialect makes a performance unintelligible. Likewise, an audience will withstand a brief primer but not sit through weeks of classes to understand a performance that takes place in a dialect they will never have the context for. Instead, performances that seek to bring veterans and civilians closer together in understanding their language differences must seek to preview these language differences in specific chunks of the performances and also provide aids for understanding like asides on the part of the performers that explain what is going on and small portions of the program that may contain vocabulary used in the performance.

Outside of the theatre, veterans and civilians must be trained to listen for context inherent in coded language. For example, with my small group of veterans that I meet with on every other Monday evening, one of the first things I do with new members is have them introduce themselves to the group and then explain the context of their introduction. I might say "Hello, my name is Tony, I served in the Army's 1st Special Forces Group from 2001 until 2005," but then I would be prompted to expand on what it meant to serve in the Army as opposed to other service branches, what it meant to be in the special forces, what it meant to serve in that period, and perhaps what jobs I did during that time. By creating a window to speak to the context of the introduction, my participants are compelled to imagine the kinds of information that are encoded in their introductions and might not be evident to those to whom they are introducing themselves. When civilians enter the group, because the group is based on forming connections between civilians and veterans, I have them introduce themselves with their name, hometown, college and job. Then I ask them to expound on the meanings they derive from these identities and veterans find that civilians encode similar kinds of information in their speech. The difference is the number of people who share membership in these groups. Whereas, at any given time, there might be as few as 1800 parachute riggers in the entire Army, who share a set of terms that have to do with rigging parachutes, the number of people in a civilian's hometown or who attended the same alma mater is likely much higher and more socially accessible by sharing this information in the form of an introduction. By training the members of my group to listen for opportunities to understand a person's context, the civilians learn to ask relevant questions of veterans in the group, like, "what was it like to be a parachute rigger?," and veterans learn to identify touchpoints of context that may help them make themselves understood more fully by a civilian with whom they now have a more complete picture of how to communicate.

Suggestions for Working with Veterans

As a person reading this dissertation you are likely either interested in helping veterans or are yourself a veteran. Thank you for that, one way or the other. The following suggestions come from the perspective or someone who is a veteran, but who has also worked extensively with veterans and has thought about what each role means. There is, by no means, a magic bullet to use with all veterans in all situations. Your greatest tool in the tool box should be your personal empathy, which will often guide you to the right conclusion without needing my advice.

With all that said, the results bear out some logical conclusions:

1. The staying power of the lexical terms within the available repertoire of veterans leads to the conclusion that some fundamental change has taken place in the way veterans speak after training. This infusion of terms to which veterans maintain lasting access leads to the availability of descriptions that can only be understood in the specific social group from which they were borne.
2. Veterans become aware, over the course of time, that others do not share knowledge of these terms and will use them sparingly, usually only to tell stories that require their use or to measure the degree to which someone shares their veteran identity.
3. Even though veterans engage in codeswitching in order to mitigate the incidence of misunderstanding when telling their stories, a portion (around 1%) of their language when telling these stories is reliant on terms that are outside the civilian repertoire.
4. Veterans often blame themselves for misunderstandings when they speak with civilians. The frustration derived from extensive codeswitching and efforts to translate their stories or explain terms that have no direct translation is exacerbated by

their view that any deficiency in communication is rooted in their inability to relate socially with civilians.

5. The language used in the military changes and varies based upon several factors. Service branch is a big factor. Marines and Seamen have a different language from Soldiers and Airmen. The training manuals and different methods of operation are big reasons for this difference. Other factors include the era of service and the theatre of operation. World War II soldiers serving in the Pacific spoke differently from those serving in Europe and very differently from those serving in the Vietnam or Dessert Storm eras. This variation can also be a result of initial entry training base and units served in. A special forces soldier who trained at Ft. Sill has many different lexical terms associated with stories of service than a supply specialist who trained at Ft. Jackson.

Based upon these conclusions, and other experiences working with veterans and being a veteran myself, I can offer the following pieces of advice:

1. Because veterans have lasting access to a set of lexical terms exclusive to their service, interactions in this style of speaking can be helpful for recall. As such, those who wish to help veterans understand each other and be understood by others should ensure that the veterans they are working with have access to these kinds of interactions. These can help veterans give voice to forgotten memories, fill in the holes in stories, and feel like others implicitly understand their struggles.
2. Because veterans only gradually become aware of the extent of their language difference, there are many states of being along this spectrum. A veteran who has just been discharged may not be ready to talk about their stories in the same way as one

who has had time to process their experiences. As such, any prompting for storytelling should be volunteer and at the veteran's own pace, and efforts should be made in the workshop setting to allow the veteran to tell the story in the way that is most comfortable for them at the time, with only gentle prodding to clarify.

3. Because veterans can be unaware of the extent to which their language has changed, they may be surprised to find that people need definitions for what they see as simple terms. They may become frustrated with the process. Allow them to take breaks as needed but make the environment such that their unique knowledge is sought and valued. Be the interested party in the room, rather than someone who is trying to fix something about the veteran.
4. While veterans welcome the idea that their problems with being understood aren't entirely their fault, they tend to avoid anything that sounds like criticizing their service branch. To tell a soldier that the Army has abused them, for example, is likely to lead to the facilitator being tuned out as politically incompatible with the veteran, who already distrusts those in academia. I've found that veterans often respond best to being asked to share and then asked additional questions for clarification. That is not to say that they will not allow for translation or eventually come to an understanding that their way of speaking is different, but rather, the person who wishes to help veterans needs to walk a line between handing out a blame and making sure that the veteran knows that, whoever the fault belongs to, there are times when they are unclear and need to elaborate or explain if they wish to be understood.
5. Because veterans of different eras and branches speak in different ways they sometimes have redundant terms for a given concept. Head, lavatory, and latrine for

example, are different service branch-specific terms for the restroom. They are typically at least aware of the differences between the way the different branches speak, in the same way someone who speaks in the Midwest dialect is able to identify someone speaking in the dialect of the Deep South. They are less cognizant of the differences between themselves and veterans of other eras, especially between themselves and veterans who served during the era of the draft. Mixing veterans of different service branches and eras in the same workshop or space can be beneficial for all those involved because they learn to communicate with veterans who are different from themselves and build the network of people who are able to understand them.

Areas for Further Research

Veteran dialect, in order to be more fully understood, should be divided and studied by service branch, by era, and by parts of the dialect (phonology, lexicon, grammar etc.). The understanding of this fundamental obstacle to understanding the stories of veterans is of paramount importance to furthering the progress being made in veteran programming. It might be possible, given enough study, to codify specific interventions for translation of specific veterans' speech. This would significantly improve the services provided to veterans who might begin to feel understood more often by those with whom they interact.

It is also possible to study the types of programs that bases use to transition soldiers from service to civilian life. If the process of language change could be reversed or at least mitigated by an intervention instituted at the end of a veteran's service, reintegration could be greatly improved, or at the very least, standardized. As it stands, each discharge process changes with

each new commander placed in charge of it, resulting in a moving target for reintegration assistance.

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APPENDIX A. SCRIPTS

Guided Conversation Script

1. Describe the first day of military training.
2. What was a typical day like during your service?
3. What is one thing you wish civilians understood about the military in general? Your service in particular?
4. How were you treated when you finished your service?
5. Are there any unique tools you used during your service? How would you explain these tools to a civilian?
6. What are some things veterans experience that civilians don't?
7. Describe your first permanent duty station.
8. Did you ever deploy? If so, describe the process of being briefed/debriefed.
9. What sorts of equipment did you carry?
10. Do you remember any difficulty in communicating with your trainers? What about in communicating with other people when you left the military?

Word-Matching Script

1. What's the spirit of the bayonet?
2. What makes the green grass grow?
3. Who is the "King of Battle?"
4. Who is the "Queen of Battle?"
5. What is another term for doing pushups?
6. What is forcing someone to do exercise as a punishment called?
7. What is the difference between a Top, a Chief, and a Skipper?
8. What is a "field of fire?"
9. What do you yell out if injured? If having trouble with a parachute in the air? On the ground?
10. What is a "Blue Falcon?"
11. What is a "Blanket Party?"
12. Who is the non-commissioned leader of a platoon or wing?
13. What is a stick?
14. What sort of explosive is in a claymore?
15. What do you do if you see or smell "CS in your AO?"
16. What is the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?
17. What is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?
18. What is an NCO?
19. What is AIT?

APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPTS OF COMBINED INTERVIEWS

Ajax Interview

Ajax is an Army veteran of Desert Storm. Ajax served as an enlisted soldier.

TA: So, Describe the first day of military training.

Ajax: The first day of military training…man—so I came from Mandan, North Dakota. I rode a bus to Fargo. Went through MEPS[36]. Then—what was funny about that was you had to fly from Fargo to Minneapolis to Atlanta or wherever. I had never been on a airplane before. And then, for whatever reason, the MEPS guy gave me, uh put me in charge of three other guys. He was like, "You take the package[37]. This is a number you call when you get there," and shit like that. No idea what I was doing. Day one I was already thrust into leadership. And then…they did the whole fuck-fuck trick where, you know, you're up all morning and then they bring you in about two in the morning. You know, they disorient ya. Then you land. Then you get to where you're going and it's the whole "get off the bus." It's two in the morning. They're yelling at ya. Then they put ya in the first like big—group barracks I've ever been in. And what do you do? You're scared in anticipation and you know—you know that you have to get up early but it's all…it's already like two, two thirty in the morning and you don't know if you should take a shower…if you should go to bed. You want to service in but you sleep like shit anyway when you're there. And you think that you're like getting things started but you're at reception station[38]. So your time hasn't even started to count yet.

[36] Military Entrance Processing Station
[37] One soldier is generally put in charge of ensuring the others' records make it to the training base.
[38] Reception Station is a unit designed to in-process new recruits. It is where recruits are issued uniforms, fill out HR paperwork, receive vaccinations, and are tested for physical readiness for basic training. It is also known as Purgatory, Reception, Receiving, CIF, or Reception Battalion. After recruits have cleared reception, they wait for a basic training class to open before shipping across the base to begin. This wait time is generally 1-3 weeks.

TA: Right, ya.

Ajax: You know. And then it's just get up from there. You're still in civilian clothes. And then you've got to go through the whole damn paperwork shuffle for like 6 hours and fill it out block by block and I can't remember I don't think you got your clothes fir—maybe you did like start getting sized up the first day—but ya, it was scary and awesome and… You know after being a drill sergeant[39] afterwards and understanding what those emotions were like and then…I think I only had to pull reception duty like a couple of times. So…umm, but ya, that anticipation—fear of the unknown—and you really…you really figured it out fast that that's what that is… You just don't know what's gonna happen. And you have to learn to adapt and—it's awesome.

TA: Ya. What was the typical day like, uh during your service?

Ajax: Like early I—like it was different in different phases you know what I mean?

TA: Ya

Ajax: So when you were younger, you know, you got up and you did PT[40]—you know, five thirty in the morning or whatever. In uniform and it was a big bonding thing. Usually you were drunk from the night before still. You know, the camaraderie of shared misery…you know? Umm, and then uh, I started out as a military policeman so we started right—and I was never like a field MP, I was always like a garrison MP[41] when I first started, so… you know, it was just regular shift work. And umm, just regular cop

[39] Drill sergeants, also known as drill instructors (typically sergeant for Army and instructor for Marines), are the individuals responsible for training new recruits. Drill Sergeants typically live with recruits for the entire 9 weeks of training and manage all everyday operations of the platoon. A sergeant is usually only eligible to become a drill sergeant after completing their first term of service and attaining the 6th enlisted rank, E-6. A special school provides the training for drill sergeants.

[40] Physical Training

[41] Field MP's serve as base security during deployments. Garrison MP's serve as base police for large permanent military bases.

duties, you know? Umm, eight hour shifts and you had some PT in there and you had a few other things and uh, that was awesome. It was awesome being a beat cop. When I shifted out to the Pentagon, then it was like—kinda like office duty. You know, eight to four thirty. Umm, shitty commute. The best part about that was my boss out there—we'd run every day at lunch in the summertime… We would run from the Pentagon to the Capital and back. And that was a four hour—err four-mile trip—one way. So it was a eight mile run every day at lunch. But shit, I was young back then, so I mean, we thought we were sexy so like—no shirt, you know, dog tags banging, you know aviators…trodding through Capital Mall you know? Thinking we were badasses. You know? He didn't make us do it in the wintertime because we liked to do it in the summertime, spring was his favorite, because he said like all the office ladies from all the office buildings around the capital would come out and sit on the—on the—the goddamn uh Greenway there…the Mall area. They'd sun their legs in the summer so he was always like "Let's get out there boys and check it out!" So that was awesome. Umm, then, after that I when I was a drill sergeant, then that was awesome. Day started at like two thirty in the morning. Umm…shit didn't get over until like ten o'clock at night but, just exhausting, but one of the best jobs I ever had.

TA: Uh huh

Ajax: Then deployments were pretty typical as far as you know…you're up at five, five thirty…you get your mission prep[42] stuff done. Umm—I definitely lived the two thirds, one third rule. You know, two thirds of your time for your guys, and one third of your

[42] Mission prep for Non-Commissioned Officers generally consists of reviewing a list of tasks and target times provided by the commander and scheduling the execution of such tasks before the NCO's soldiers are aware of the mission.

time for you and you try to have all your—your stuff ready to go so that by the time they got up they didn't have to hassle with, you know, a bunch of shit. So—and then…towards the end…you know, the higher up you get, the easier it gets. So, you know, office duty stuff…still tried to, I still tried to hang with the young guys, you know, when it came to like PT and obstacle courses and shit like that. You know, the whole lead from the front mentality.

TA: Mm hmm, ya—

Ajax: It was awesome. It has taken a toll on me now. But I knew no other way so I that's you know…so…

TA: What's something that you wish civilians understood about the military in general and then maybe your service in particular?

Ajax: I wish they understood the word fuck a lot better.

TA: (chuckles) There's multiple shades of meaning, right?

Ajax: Exactly! You can pepper that thing into anywhere. It's like Picasso with a paintbrush, man. Umm…I don't know. What would I want them to know? I guess part of it would be like we're not all heroes. Umm, we're not all heroes, yet, at the same time…because you volunteered…it kinda makes you uh a little bit above, but you know, I don't know…umm, we're not all bloodthirsty killers. We didn't all engage the enemy directly. Umm, but it feels like a duality. Even though I say that, like we didn't all engage the enemy directly…but we're still willing to sacrifice…you know? And they were still willing to step forward not knowing what they were going to get into and and all that stuff.

TA: What percentage of guys do you think would have said no to engaging the enemy directly?

Ajax: That would have said no?

TA: Ya

Ajax: That's a hard question. You know…I don't know if anybody…you know if it—when an enemy engages you umm, you don't get a whole lot of options. Umm, but I know that there's guys out there that would have said you know, that's not what I signed up for. I signed up to be a mechanic or I signed up to for college benefits. But I think when it comes down to it, the guys that would have said no would be a pretty small percentage. You know—in circumstances like that.

TA: So how were you treated when you finished your service?

Ajax: You know, I think I was treated alright. For the most part—I don't think I treated myself very well. You know, um, I had a hard time transitioning in than they had accepting me. You know, it's harder on me than it was on them. I think, um, the guys that I work with now, they're all younger. And they all, they all look at me like with reverence. They know that I was in the military and they know that I was at war. And, you know, they have these little building events and stuff and just their comments and stuff and "well, you must have, you must have done stuff like this while you were in Iraq" or, you know, "you had to deal with things like this" and umm, I try to tell them like fellas you can't—it's like apples and oranges. You can't compare the two…

TA: Ya

Ajax: You know, but then, sometimes I kinda want to tell them—every once in awhile something will come out of my mouth that…I don't want to say is inappropriate…but

I'll just be like…you know, we'll be in a meeting and people will be getting animated and worked up…I'll be like fellas, calm down…no one's shooting at us today. You know, no one's going to die…if we fuck this up—we're gonna be okay. You know, and then they look at me like this…like a dog watching TV for the first time—they all kinda tilt their head, they're like "uh, ya I guess you're right…"

TA: They don't understand the context.

Ajax: No.

TA: Ya.

Ajax: There's no reason to get bent out of shape. You know, so…

TA: Are there unique tools that you used during your service? And how would you explain those tools to civilians if you had to?

Ajax: Tools…like, you mean like actual physical tools or like or do you mean like leadership tools or…

TA: Any of those

Ajax: Or like coping skills? You know?

TA: Ya

Ajax: Ya, you know I think a big one is embracing the suck[43]. And appreciating and understanding that sometimes things can be so miserable that they'll be cool later on. So you suffer through it now so you can tell the story later. Like, "remember that time when we were freezing our nuts off on that one exercise[44]?" And you're like oh ya, cause right when you go through it like sucks but when you're sitting at the bar reliving

[43] Embrace the suck is a common infantry saying that means basically there's nothing one can do about one's circumstances, so it is better to enjoy what you can in a given situation.
[44] Exercise in this context refers to a war game or field training exercise in which soldiers are put into sometimes difficult conditions in order to assess readiness for the given situation.

it somehow it makes you cooler. I mean with tools I got to use a lot of cool shit. I mean I shot a .50 caliber Sniper Rifle[45] at an IED[46] one time. I got to, I got to shoot a MK19 Grenade Launcher[47]—I mean god damnit, that's America right there. When you can unleash the fury like that.

TA: Ya

Ajax: And not just in training but to be out in the desert, you know, and—and protect that stuff, I mean…that stuff is cool, um…you know…mentorship, I miss having that a lot in the military. From the military—you know as far as like in the civilian world. I miss the mentorship. Umm, that somebody above you actually gives a shit about you and your career like where you're going. You know what I mean? Umm, I miss that a lot. I miss the camaraderie and the brotherhood a lot. I guess those are tools that you use to get through. Umm, I don't know. I liked that it was clear and defined. If you want to get to this rank you can achieve it. Just, this is what you have to do. Or you know, umm, I kinda miss the discipline like everybody knows the basics. You know, there's a ton of tribal knowledge where everybody you know, they still work with you to bring it up. So…can we uh take a time out just while I chew?

TA: Ya

(Time passes)

TA: So, umm, what are some things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

Ajax: (Chuckles) Hmm, what's some things…umm…I think loss of individuality…

[45] A long, heavy, accurate rifle that shoots large diameter super-sonic rounds that deal devastating damage to a target, especially a human target.
[46] Improvised explosive device. These are the most common type of land-based explosive used in the Global War on Terror by those seeking to do harm to U.S. troops.
[47] This is a large, mounted, automatic weapon that fires grenade rounds. It is capable of levelling buildings with a few well-placed bursts of fire.

TA: Uh huh

Ajax: You know, that's a big one. Where everybody has to get their head shaved. Everybody has the same clothes. I think that, I think, uh, even though the other night at Red Lobster I had to wait twenty minutes to get in…standing in line for food, standing in line for everything…you know…you used to call it the line ride[48]. You know? You just get in line. You don't know why. I guess we gotta be in this line now. Umm, I don't think they miss…I think they miss out on a lotta the connectedness. The concept of fast friends.

TA: Mmm hmm

Ajax: You know, the concept of shared misery…umm, I think, even if they are patriotic, I think veterans have a different flavor of that patriotism. Umm, I think they miss out on being something part of bigger than themselves…you know? I see it all the time where I work now. Nobody feels like they're really truly part of the Bobcat team. You know, at payday they do…you know…when they're handing out SWAG[49]…I think people come. They do a job. They leave. You know, whereas the military is a lifestyle. You know, it wasn't just a career. It was a…it was a commitment. It was a you're in the Army now. And we don't give a shit what else…or…it wasn't just a job man. I think that's all the tools I can think of.

TA: Can you describe your first permanent duty station?

[48] A result of the "embrace the suck" philosophy, calling a line the line ride is a way of making light of the typical long lines one must endure in the military.
[49] Stuff we all get: an acronym for promotional merchandise that is handed out by a company.

Ajax: So…mine was a little weird. So I started out in the guard[50]. Then uh, I got in trouble and went to Desert Storm as a guardsman. And then when I came back, um, when I was in Desert Storm people said "you know you got a flair for this military thing" I came back from Desert Storm I struggled for about three months. I worked at a window factory. I was like this sucks. And so I went active duty[51] and the first duty station then was Fort Irwin, California. Which, uh, you know is now known as NTC or National Training Center[52]. And it's a place where you know you're gonna go and train for the desert. You're like. I was a garrison cop. So it wasn't like I was out in the box for three weeks straight and all that other stuff. I was actually on Fort Irwin proper and just did cop duties. And it was great, man, I mean, sunny, desert, you know, you're halfway between L.A. and Las Vegas. You know, what was I, twenty years old back then? Twenty-twenty-one? So, you know—you had shift work. You'd get days off so you buzz out to L.A. for a few days or out to Vegas. You know, I lived in the barracks. Which that was cool, you know, because everyone's in the same boat. You know, and then you had everybody from Beer trash to guys that wanted to get married you know, you had smart kids and party kids like me. And the nice part about that was at Fort Irwin you were kinda in the middle of nowhere so like "living on the economy[53]" wasn't really a big option. You know, so…I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it a lot. As a cop, you know, cops are cocky and arrogant and I was a dick. It was good. Ya.

[50] The Army National Guard is a part-time citizen/soldier force usually called into duty to deal with natural disasters or extreme domestic strife.
[51] The active duty Army is the full-time professional Army that most of the public envisions as the Army.
[52] The NTC is a training center where guard and reserve troops attend field training exercises and where regular Army troops often serve as opposing forces for the troops being trained.
[53] This refers to a situation in which soldiers live off-base and receive a housing allowance. Because there are no towns near Fort Irwin, "living on the economy" was not possible. Soldiers usually have mixed feelings about this status as they can be subject to unscrupulous landlords near bases, but often feel a little freer that they would living on-base. It seems Ajax was relieved to have reliable military housing at no cost.

TA: So you said you deployed to Desert Storm. Can you describe the process of when you got there and when you left? Like what was the process of being briefed in and then debriefed on the way out?

Ajax: Man—so getting briefed in…so, I was a guard guy. And so we had to get spun up[54] at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. So we were there for about a month. And that was kinda—that was kinda scary but the scary part wasn't the going to war and stuff. The scary part was the chemical weapons threat[55].

TA: Ya

Ajax: That took it to a whole different level. That could have happened. I wasn't afraid to like die in a firefight[56]. I'm nineteen years old I'm like I could do that, having never been shot at before. But what was hard to wrap your head around is that you could die just laying in your cot, you know, not see it coming or whatever. So we spent a lot of time on that. Umm, a lot of the briefings were about environmental concerns, like the heat and bugs and bullshit and umm and then—ya it was the inbrief—I guess that was a long time ago I don't recall a whole lot. And I think the outbrief was even less. I mean that was literally, I mean from time I think that we left Saudi Arabia and landed, it was literally like a hundred hours and I was back with my family and stuff. So there wasn't a whole lot of debrief. I remember the hardest part was the TB shot. The test. Cause I was drunk when I got it and I was drunk when I got it read. And I remember my

[54] Spun up refers to being trained to go onto active duty. Because guard units serve only part-time, they must be trained up to ensure readiness for combat operations. Spun up is a reference to the sound a turbo charger makes. The fan spins, making a high-pitched whine until it releases a jet of air into the engine of a vehicle, resulting in a release sound and a boost of speed.

[55] During Operation Desert Storm it was feared that Sadam Hussein would gas American Troops with chemical weapons. U.S. soldiers deploying for this operation were issued mission-oriented-protective-posture (MOPP) gear to deal with this threat. This consisted of a gas mask, charcoal suit, rubber gloves, and rubber boots. Soldiers being spun up would drill donning MOPP gear with a stopwatch.

[56] An exchange of gunfire with the enemy.

buddies were like "dude I don't think you went through the line" and I'm like I think I did right? "Well you might not get to go home" Oh well fuck you. So the outbrief wasn't anything really. Just took your shit and get out.

TA: What sorts of equipment did you carry?

Ajax: In Desert Storm?

TA: Ya

Ajax: Back then I was just a grunt MP[57]. I did field duty stuff. Then I—so I think—in our Humvee[58] we had a LAW[59]. We had some grenades. Just a regular old M-16[60]. Nine mil[61]. Our NBC gear[62] everywhere. Fucking gas mask…ugh…sorry…umm…stupid ass K-Pot[63]. You know, shitty old steel helmet. Oh, the atropine injectors[64]…

TA: Ya

Ajax: Yup—those were live. Those were real. Umm nerve agent pills. Umm, the stupid MOPP boots. These stupid ass rubber boots and we can't—there's no way to fold those things…to make them fit into anything. The filters for the gas masks: those things were legit and a pain in the ass to pack. Umm, ya, it was pretty standard stuff back there. Nothing too fancy.

TA: Do you remember if you had any difficulty communicating with your trainers?

[57] A low-ranking MP who also did menial work as needed by the unit.
[58] The High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV or Humvee) replaced the Chevrolet Blazer and M151 Jeep as the standard light-duty truck of the entire military in 1983 and saw widespread use in Desert Storm.
[59] The LAW (light anti-tank weapon) rocket system is a light, shoulder-fired anti-tank rocket first used in the Vietnam War.
[60] Standard rifle carried by most troops in the military from Vietnam to the present. Now being phased out in favor of the lighter, more adaptable M-4.
[61] A 9mm Beretta Sidearm known as the M9 is the standard sidearm for military troops who carry one.
[62] Nuclear, Biological, Chemical gear, also known as MOPP gear.
[63] Ajax here conflates the K-Pot, a Kevlar ballistic helmet, with the earlier steel version of the same helmet, which was heavier and hotter.
[64] Each soldier was issued two spring-loaded injectors in case of chemical attack. One was 2 Pam Chloride, to stop the heart, the other was atropine, to restart it. This was thought of as a defense against nerve agent. I'm honestly not sure of the science behind it. It sounds like Ajax wasn't either.

Ajax: My trainers?

TA: Ya, drill sergeants or instructors at AIT[65] or anything like that?

Ajax: Like, there was no trouble because you never communicated with them—I mean that was a one-way conversation usually.

TA: (Chuckles)

Ajax: But, I guess I don't know what you're going for. I don't think so.

TA: Okay, what about communicating with other people when you left the military?

Ajax: Ya, umm, just umm, lemme, I tell people all the time you know, I went back to college and I'd never went to college before. But as I was going through college it felt like it was more of like a language course than actually learning. You know, it was like what, you know like organizational leadership and military leadership, you know, the terms and the words that civilians use…where in the military was head and shoulders, on leadership training, above all the civilian stuff. So I didn't feel like I learned a whole lot. But I learned the words that civilians use and respect and you know, peppering in their conversation that are much different than what we used.

TA: Ya

Ajax: Words like dynamic and you know, violence of action in the military—well, that just means that you're gonna take charge and show initiative. Like shut the fuck up. Violence of action. Let's do that. And just learning that—So that's what my Master's program at U of Mary became for me was strictly a language course.

TA: Alright, are you ready for the lightning round?

Ajax: Yup

[65] Advanced Individual Training is the job or MOS training a recruit receives after basic training.

TA: Okay, what's the spirit of the bayonet?

Ajax: Blood!

TA: What makes the green grass grow?

Ajax: (Chuckles) Blood Drill Sergeant! BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD!

TA: Who's the king of the battle?

Ajax: Supposedly the infantry…right? Or, ya I think so.

TA: Who is the queen of the battle?

Ajax: That's artillery!

TA: Okay

Ajax: No? Is that "you're wrong?"

TA: Reversed it. That's alright. Uhh, what's another term for doing push-ups?

Ajax: Beat your face.

TA: Uhh, what is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

Ajax: Corp—no, not corporal punishment…umm…shit…not physical punishment…uh, on-the-spot correction.[66]

TA: (Chuckles) Uh, what's the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

Ajax: That's all different branches. Top's Army. Chief's Air Force, and a skipper's gotta be Navy.

TA: Okay, Uh what's a field of fire?

Ajax: (Chuckles) That's awesome. That's what that is. A field of fire is your sector of fire that you're responsible for with just your individual weapon. No matter what weapon it is,

[66] A term used by drill sergeants for challenging a given behavior at the moment it takes place.

you have a left and right limit cause you know that your battle buddies have the other sides covered. So you're responsible for your sector.

TA: What do you do—yell out if you're injured?

Ajax: Medic!

TA: And if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air?

Ajax: To be honest, no, ouch god damnit that hurts! (Chuckles) Umm, I don't know I've never jumped out of an aircraft.

TA: What if you're having trouble on the ground?

Ajax: Get your ass over here, like what do you mean?

TA: Alright What's a Blue Falcon?

Ajax: It's a buddy fucker.

TA: What's a blanket party?

Ajax: That's when somebody fucks up and you uh, toss a blanket over them in the middle of the night and you beat the piss out of them.

TA: Who is the noncommissioned leader of a platoon or wing?

Ajax: Uh, platoon is a platoon sergeant. And a wing? Aw shit, who knows? Snuffy. That's what we call those guys.

TA: What is a stick?

Ajax: That is like a jumping out of an airplane term where you guys gotta line up in like umm…situate guys and you gotta jump your ass out of the back.

TA: What sort of explosive is in a claymore?

Ajax: C-4

TA: What do you see—uh what do you do if you see or smell CS in your AO?

Ajax: First you put your mask on, then you signal gas, gas, gas. (Pounds on table three times)

TA: What's the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

Ajax: Umm, FM is a field manual, a TM is a technical manual, an AR is an Army Regulation.

TA: And what is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

Ajax: That's the difference between individual elements and individual things in that element.

TA: What is an NCO?

Ajax: Non-commissioned officer.

TA: And what is AIT?

Ajax: Advanced Individual Training.

TA: All done.

Ajax: What? (Chuckles) No…

Boreas Interview

Boreas is a Peace Time veteran of the US Air Force. Boreas served during the early 1970s. Boreas served as an enlisted airman.

TA: Describe the first day of military training.

Bor: My first day?

TA: Mmmhmm

Bor: Oh my god…that was July of 1973. So, I got a Lackland by San Antonio—the airbase…our training site. And…we got in late in the night before… And we didn't get to bed or—er to our assigned barracks until…1 or 2 o'clock in the morning? Then, we got woke up at--5? Ya. So (chuckles) that was our first day. But my brother and I, we both went in at the same time. My brother and I were just tying our shoes when the lights flipped on.

TA: Uh huh

Bor: Because farmers err used to getting up in the morning anyhow, my brother and I. So, it was nothing new to us as far as getting up early. And then…it was like…it took us to breakfast and then from there we just went to (sigh) oh what was it? Haircuts? Anyway, we got all our military uniforms, from shoes to hat to everything in between…and then…we what…let me think here…then after that we went to lunch and between lunch and dinner…I can't remember… (chuckles). I couldn't tell you I thought, Oh ya, shots too! Ya, that's uh that was after din—er lunch. Yes, we did get shots…oh my god…lots of em. But, a lot of people went down too. (Chuckles) after they got the first ones…I remember that. But didn't bother me. But ya, we got our shots the first day too. That's uh, oh man…poor old arms. I mean, both sides were sore. That was our first day. And then that night just went to bed. We were all so exhausted we went to bed early. Every one of us. 50 guys. We all just (ppbbt)…sacked out early. Cause the night before or the day before…our first day…man. It was something. But that was our first day.

TA: What was a typical day like during your service?

Bor: My typical day? What meaning uh, during basic or during training or…?

TA: At your—At your duty station…

Bor: At my—oh! At Eglin…Oh, well…Of course first thing you go and get up and go get breakfast and ya and then uh go to my shop…and then we…you know, you get there early enough we have coffee and doughnuts during the wait for the sergeant to come along and give us the our daily—what we're gonna do for the day.

TA: Back in those days the Air Force didn't do PT in the morning huh?

Bor: Not at my du—not at Eglin.

TA: Okay

Bor: At basic oh god yes. That was before…that was uh…actually before breakfast…tell you the truth…

TA: Ya

Bor: Yup before breakfast we got—we had to do PT. I remember that. But Eglin, no. We didn't. I was 99 lbs. soaking wet when I went into the service. Ya, it was nothing to me. PT.

TA: What's one thing you wish civilians understood about the military in general?

Bor: (Sigh) …depends on what branch you go into…everybody—every branch has their specialties and and something like the Army, Marines…they're ground pounders…so—so they're in the field. They're the ones that now uh Navy…Air Force, Coast Guard…they're a little ways back in some respects. But I'm not saying that they don't get shot at either because that's not true. They do, especially at their fields they're all if they're in combat situations but—but overall, I would say that if I was telling a young kid or people in general…especially young chil—young guys…outta high school…go in the service. But! Go in the Air Force. Don't go in the ARMY or the Marines or those others because you will be…that's what you're gonna do. You're gonna be shooting. So you're gonna shoot at somebody and somebody is gonna shoot at you. But the Air Force, Navy, and stuff like that…I mean…it depends…

TA: What's uh, something you wish civilians understood about your service in particular?

Bor: (Sigh) It wasn't nothing. I didn't do really anything spectacular or really anything interesting or anything like that. It was just I was there. And I did my…I did what I was trained to do and it wasn't nothing like I say, spectacular or anything. It just wasn't. It

was just go to work, sit at the shop, or you're out on the maintenance line[67] and on uh, and doing your work. And it's nothing. That my job could be converted into going to a public um, airfield…and doing the same bloomin' thing…working on piston engines…is what mine converted into. So I could go to any little small airport and even here, here like Fargo…at at at maintenance field. So, that's what my specialty was. And it was nothing really spectacular. It was just something that's there. If it was jet engines or something like that I really wanted to do then I could have gone further. Something else. But I didn't. So pistons engines was it was. Nothing spectacular. Really it wasn't.

TA: How were you treated when you finished your service?

Bor: How did I what?

TA: How were you treated?

Bor: How was I treated?!

TA: Mmm hmm

Bor: Oh (sigh) well…it was a culture shock…at basic…pure and simple. You don't know what to expect. Yes, they yell. And they weren't pleasant about it. But got to tech school and—and my permanent party base…It was—it was nothing. It was just…you went to work. Or went to school…at tech school I went to school. Then did did my uh studies…so it was nothing…bad. It was just like I say: the culture shock of basic training… They're getting you into the rhythm of what they want you to do.

TA: Mmm hmm

Bor: That's the only thing that was different.

TA: Are there any unique tools you used during your service?

[67] Usually a literal line painted on the tarmac of an airfield where aircraft in need of maintenance are parked.

Bor: No. Nothing. I just used wrenches and sockets. That's (chuckles) what I did. Nothing—nothing that…no specialty tools at all. None.

TA: Okay, were all the tools known by the same names as they are in the civilian world?

Bor: Umm…let me think…A vast majority…yes. Umm…hmm, I'll have to think about that one. (thinks about a minute) Nothing I can think of right top of my head that was special that's different…cause it it was related to the military…I don't think there was nothing that you couldn't find out in the real world—in civilian life…so…

TA: What are some things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

Bor: (Sigh) PTSD…stuff like that? Umm, they also a lot of em get all at some some uh parts they they have problems…that they…some don't want to talk about…Others don't want to relive or don't even want to be reminded of em. But as far as myself…nothing. Nothing that I…nothing spectacular, like I say. Nothing.

TA: Describe your first permanent duty station.

Bor: Eglin Air Force Base. I got there in J-January…it was…I was I can't ome from home. I had leave from the west coast. Of course I went down to east coast er well, at er, umm In the con—there at Eglin…The Gulf Coast. It was hot. That I can tell you. Get off the plane and I was in my winter—winter uniform and got off there and I was like (choking sound) oh my god what did I do? I put the wrong uniform on. Cause I was west coast and it was a little chilly. Got out there and I was peeling off clothes boy…it was warm. It was hot. But umm, my first day it was getting in to know where my shop was. Where the—where my unit commander was, who he was…I was introduced to him. First Sergeant of the unit. Met him…like I said…in my…my shop. My tech sergeant…and everybody there and uh…that was my first day. Then we got…and then the second day

was…I got there. They took me and got me my tools. My toolbox. Got me situated out. And that was pretty much all day. Make sure I had up to date shots…Time for more shots…(chuckles). Seemed like. But I didn't get any. But first couple days was interesting. To say the least. But it was nice weather. That I can tell ya. It was really nice.

TA: Did you ever deploy?

Bor: No, never ever.

TA: Ever temporary duty somewhere?

Bor: Nope! Never did. I was stayed right there at Eglin.

TA: What sorts of equipment did you carry on a daily basis?

Bor: Just my tool box for to go from my shop out to the--to the umm…ramps. To check on air—er our aircraft. And then if not we set at the shop and worked on—on uh build-rebuilding a motor… or putting a motor ready to put on a aircraft if uh we so des-if we needed to…but pretty—it's either one of two places. So…

TA: Do you remember any difficulty in communicating with your trainers?

Bor: With my trainers?

TA: Mmm Hmm

Bor: (Sigh) Not really I can think of. No, I don't remember ever having any problems understanding what they were trying to say or do or try to teach us whatever the case may be. No, I never had any problems.

TA: Did they communicate in a standard way?

Bor: No, they taught us different…different language as far as how to communicate on the phone…from…I helped worked on relating information about I worked nights for a

little while at my…at my…at Eglin. So at night, at the shop…I was just there and unless I had to go out on the on the umm…ramp to work…but otherwise I just stayed at the shop…and then at night…bout five-six o'clock at night they umm…they…umm brought oil samples from all of the aircraft down on the on the line. Brought em to us and then we had to log em in. And then I had a call over to field 3… and tell em that we—give em the tail numbers of all of the aircraft and of the sample and and then umm a sergeant was with me so the civilian—in fact he was a civilian—more to be more precise…he was there at night. So him and I we took all those samples and we took em out to field three, which was off our main base…we had to go cross-town. To field three to drop off the samples. So they checked the samples of oil of every engine that was out there on the aircraft of all the aircraft that we had out there. So…that's what we did…And that was, and that was…you had to read off the numbers. And it's just not it was a language all its own. But it still carries over into civilian life as well. Same. Same language. Because…that's just the way it was. So everybody know—knew what you were talking about when you talked about an aircraft.

TA: So did you have any difficulty communicating with people when you left the military?

Bor: After I me—left? (sigh) not really. Not really. I kinda got back in the swing of things afterwards but pretty quickly. But…but um…no I didn't have any…any problems at all…converting back to civilian life after getting out. And it was kinda strange not to have to work on aircraft or anything like that. I thought, well that's kind of strange. (Chuckles) not doing that…which I—actually, believe it or not, I actually really enjoyed doing. Just wish I'd stayed in longer and done a few more things. That's my only regret.

TA: Do you—do you miss the people necessarily or was it the work more?

Bor: It was—I had a few—I had quite a few friends in the service that I got to know and got to chum around with. We went doing things together. Like on the weekends. Went out off base, onto the beach and played volleyball and had a good time. And I had some friends in the different—they were doing different things in the on base you know and they weren't from my shop exclusively I mean so I didn't really… Oh I had one friend that was in my shop but he he was he came in about the same time I did. So he wa—he was just right out of school. Same as I was. So we got to go around and chum around a little bit but primarily my other friends that I really uh did things with eh, they were from different shops—different places around the base that I got to know. And ya, missed em, ya. After I got out? Oh heavens yes. I missed em a lot. Because we did a lot of things together and we had a ball. And I wish I wished I kept up contact with em. But I didn't so…

TA: What is the spirit of the bayonet?

Bor: I have no clue.

TA: What makes the green grass grow?

Bor: That I don't know either. I never heard of it.

TA: Who is the king of battle?

Bor: That I don't know either.

TA: Who is the queen of battle?

Bor: I don't know that either.

TA: Okay, what is another term for doing pushups?

Bor: Oh god…I don't remember (chuckles) I don't remember. I know there's another term for it but I…we were told…

TA: What is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

Bor: Uh, oh god…I can't remember…I just had it top of my tongue…I can't remember.

TA: What is the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

Bor: Now, what was those again?

TA: A top, a chief, and a skipper.

Bor: Oh, that's Navy terms. And…chief is a chief petty officer. So in other words…he's I think he's the highest ranking non-commissioned officer on a boat…on a ship actually. Better say it the right way. Uh, uh Top…that was one of the Top? Uh that's umm, mmm. Can't think of that one. And a skipper of course is the captain of a boat. Or a ship. So he was the main one. Top is next down. And the chief is below them.

TA: Okay, what is a field of fire?

Bor: (sigh) I'm gonna say it's a battleground.

TA: Okay

Bor: But, but I could be wrong. I don't know.

TA: Mmm hmm, is it a specific part of the battleground?

Bor: Field of fire? So that would be…your area that you can patrol or hold for hold for on your base or whatever. For uh, field of fire it would be for the firing line. You know like your field of vision for for for the enemy to so you can shoot in that area.

TA: Mmm hmm. What do you yell if you're injured?

Bor: The what?

TA: What do you yell if you're injured?

Bor: Call for medic.

TA: Okay. What about if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air?

Bor: Better hope to god you have a reserve. (chuckles).

TA: Uh what if you're having trouble with a parachute on the ground?

Bor: Go get another one.

TA: Okay, what is a Blue Falcon?

Bor: (sigh) Could be different things in different branches…but I think a Blue Falcon in the Air Force is just the…the umm the umm…oh god…I've heard the jets of…it's like the Blue Angels. I think is, but it's referring back to the Air Force…They're especially…umm training stunt…uh jet re—um—flight…

TA: Mmm hmm. It's okay if you don't know.

Bor: It depends on what branch you're talking about.

TA: Alright, what is a blanket party?

Bor: Oh, we were…a little blanket party is for somebody that hasn't been doing something like everybody else like at basic…there was a few of those I heard about. It's somebody that either A: didn't shower…enough, or didn't shower at all, so he got a little blanket party, meaning that he a bunch of guys got together and took him in the bathroom and…scrubbed him down. And I heard of a few of those that happened. So that's what it is is a punishment—it was kinda basically like within your group or or or or within training or boot camp it's in your flight. You take care of it yourself. You don't expect the sergeant to do it. Cause he ain't got to do it.

TA: Who is the non-commissioned leader of a platoon or wing?

Bor: Sergeant or a… I know in the Navy it's chief. But it… in the Air Force it's sergeants. Tech Sergeant. Master Sergeant. Senior Master Sergeant. First Sergeant is the for the whole uh unit…so it all depends on what what like in my, in my instance it's my tech sergeant. And then I had a umm oh god what was the head of the whole shop? What was his rank? I know it was a sergeant but it was…oh god can't remember. And I should…(chuckles). I talked to him every day.

TA: What is a stick?

Bor: A stick?

TA: Mmm hmm

Bor: (Sigh) Again it's uh maybe uh referring to a rifle?

TA: Okay…

Bor: Or…uhh something else referred might reef—be referred to but I can't remember I don't…I really don't know…personally…

TA: Okay. What sort of explosive is in a claymore?

Bor: In a Claymore? C-4 is the main thing. And then shrapnel…throws shrapnel out.

TA: Mmm hmm. What do you do if you see or smell CS in your AO?

Bor: I don't know.

TA: Okay. What is the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

Bor: I don't know. I don't—don't remember.

TA: That's fine. What is an interval is it relates to mobile elements?

Bor: You wanna repeat that again please?

TA: What is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

Bor: I don't know.

TA: Okay. What is an NCO?

Bor: Non-Commissioned Officer.

TA: Okay, and what is AIT?

Bor: I know that IT is an instructor but A I don't know.

TA: That's fine. That's all I've got.

Brizo Interview

Brizo is a veteran of the US Navy who served as an enlisted sailor in the early 1990s.

TA: So, describe your first day of military training.

BRI: Umm, just kind of confusion or sleepiness… umm, I mean you're kinda scared. What was gonna happen cause you're gonna have to wait to get all your, your gear. Umm… I uh, you kinda feel like you're in a movie. Err, that's how I felt, like I was in a movie. And it kinda made me laugh because it was just like wow, this is—this is, it's funny because you know they're trying to brain—err kinda starting to start the err, you know, not brain washing but they're starting to try and prep you, umm, to think a certain way already. And so it's kinda, it's—it was kinda funny to me. So that—I don't know, but you were sleepy, I was sleepy cause of the whole, like transition and stuff, so ya, like I don't know, I just kinda took in what it was and just kinda felt like cattle standing on line to get (chuckles) certain items…so ya…it was…

TA: How did the—how did they the—uh instructors feel about you smiling and laughing?

BRI: That? They didn't like that…

TA: (Chuckles)

BRI: Umm—there's a lot of times, I mean, this is the first day but a lot of times through boot camp I'd like have to like do extra push-ups (chuckles) but umm—ya, I just didn't show it, I mean I kinda hid it to myself and just like oh wow, this is happening…

TA: Ya

BRI: It was just kind of surreal I guess. That would sum it up just kind of surreal but kinda entertaining.

TA: What was a typical day like during your service?

BRI: Umm, so on the…well it depends, so on the umm for training? Because I spent like a year and a half training and then it was on the ship…so for a typical day…I guess I mean you would just get up and umm—do your job (chuckles) you just get up, get ready, and just, I mean it just feels like you're sleepy all the time and then umm, so like I said school…it was like get up go to school and like pretty much a party afterwards like I mean after school. And then, umm, then…I was on the ship—those were like 18-hour days so that was—it wasn't the funnest time, umm, I don't know, you just did a job. And then I would just try to relax by listening to music or running. I did run. I picked up running in the gym a lot. Til like 2 AM. So ya…

TA: What is uh, one thing you wish that uh civilians understood about the military in general?

BRI: I wish—they understood the need for it. And I wish they understood that the reason they have rights and the freedom they do is—is because of people that came before-hand and sacrificed their lifestyle so that they could have freedom. Umm…so that's one thing, and then the second thing is I wish they understood people better and not pre-judged them as being—not able to—see the complexities of what they're doing. So misjudge them as being dumb or being less intelligent.

TA: Is there anything you wish people understood about your service in particular?

BRI: Umm, I guess—I would say—held to I guess that it's difficult being a woman in—the military. Umm…but…I think—umm—I guess the only thing that stands out in my mind would be that I don't—I do not fall into that typical stereotype that people—you know? And nobody does…nobody falls into that voluntary stereotype—but, umm, I guess—umm—I don't know, I mean that was…I was young…not really…I guess—I guess to say you know like hey, I went through the same experiences as the people that they would typically see as a veteran…but okay—you know? Like it's not you know, I mean like I went through the same experiences is not but I try, to not like…like I try to live in the real world also…so you know its just like—I don't know people like—they think I did like an administrative position or something but I was an electrician. I worked an engine room and you know, so I guess I wish they understood that—umm—I did a real job. I wasn't just…

TA: Mmm-hmm

BRI: I don't know, not to say anything about administration…

TA: Right

BRI: --but you know?

TA: Ya

BRI: So I guess that's—umm—that would be the only question or the only answer I have for that right now.

TA: How were you treated when you finished your service?

BRI: Umm…like I don't know, it was kind of a lost period…umm I kinda felt like…I was shunned because I didn't have education…like when I applied for jobs. Like we didn't go to college. And it's like well, I have all this experience—umm and so I was I was

kinda treated…like I was less intelligent…than the average…person my age. And umm…so we were going—cause I transitioned right from the military and then a little bit, you know, like within a year I was in college. And then it was just like—like I felt lost and I didn't know anything and so I felt like less intelligent. And so I just had…like I think that pushed me to improve myself.

TA: Mmm

BRI: That…I could do it (chuckles) so…it was a lonely time…(chuckles)

TA: Ya…Are there any unique tools that you used during your service?

BRI: Mmm…like?

TA: Like things that you used at your job that aren't really available to civilians?

BRI: Umm…let's see…not really…I mean, well, as far as like—tools I would say—I mean things I worked on…so I don't know that's like rough…so the things I worked on were like ship-based…so like the gyrocompass[68] and it's not transferrable really to the world unless you decide to work on, like a, a ship…of civilian…people… But, umm, so the—the systems that I learned to fix that would be—I wouldn't say it's tools, you know, like you know, when I think of tools, I think of like a screwdriver…umm so no—I mean—it was more based around the stuff that I worked on—that's not transferrable.

TA: What are some things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

BRI: Umm—loneliness…that…you know…I mean it is experienced in…the civilian world but not to that extent. I think the having to transition your entire being: your entire self, your entire personality…umm…and you're stuck somewhere that…you know, like you wouldn't be like say the Persian Gulf…with me…so you know, you're sitting there

[68] A gyrocompass is a ship's navigational tool that is immune to magnetic interference. It is also used in torpedo and weapons guidance aboard ships.

you're on a ship…you like ask yourself so how did I get here? (Chuckles) And so that loneliness that homesickness…umm—the kind of—having to…the main thing I guess is when you're in those places to having to dehumanize the people…

TA: Mmm

BRI: That you're there for…like for example: for the Persian Gulf you're—in order to survive and kinda keep doing your job you're…you have to kinda detach yourself with them as people. So that's umm…something that usually civilians do not have to do. To see them as a group of people not as individual…

TA: Mmmhmm

BRI: …people…

TA: Can you describe your first duty station?

BRI: So my first duty station…umm…what are you—well, so this is like after school…

TA: Ya

BRI: And stuff like that…so okay, so the first duty station was Washington state. Umm—err it was USS Sacramento[69]. And…umm…it was just a big ship (chuckles) with umm—it was a oiler supply ammunition ship and so I had about 500 people on there…about 40 of those were women. And about 20 of those were women that were more…err like would be considered feminine I guess…

TA: Mmmhmm

BRI: And umm…so ya, so it was just a big oil supply ship so we like we would umm we would replenish the other ships…the aircraft carriers whatnot with jet fuel so it was

[69] The USS Sacramento was a fleet support ship that carries oil, ammunition, and refrigerated cargo for the US Navy. It served from Vietnam until the Global War on Terror. It was decommissioned in 2004 and later scrapped.

just…it smelled like a floating gas station. (Chuckles) so that was…umm…my duty station.

TA: Uh, did you ever deploy?

BRI: Yes, two times.

TA: What was the process of being briefed in when you got into country or debriefed when you left?

BRI: Umm, honestly like the well it was more than two times but it was six-month deployments. I did like the longer ones but we'd go out for the like a couple months at a time umm…basically like the debrief before you go was, umm, the appropriate attire to wear…so with being a woman they wanted you to have…you know shirts that would button all the way up or umm don't show your arms. And basically, umm, be careful of sexually transmitted diseases so that was like the biggest thing was have the big box of condoms there that to get to get people to you know I mean that was you know like obviously focus on you know don't go crazy. (Chuckles) But that was—it was—It wasn't…there was no kind of cultural debrief. You know about…it's just like watch yourself. Umm…wear certain…err make sure you're covered. Wear certain attire. That was pretty much it.

TA: Sort of focused on cultural integration into the place you were going?

BRI: Ya…I mean like…you know they might have said that the money they used or whatever but it was more like just survival skills to get through it. It wasn't—there wasn't any kind of—umm really cultural debrief…I mean I was maybe some people got more but I think that was dependent on what department you were in. I was in engineering and you know they just kind of just told us…just don't…like…wear a

condom. Honestly…and you know they might have some of the umm…other departments might have talked a little bit more about the culture but…umm I mean the only thing like the Persian Gulf area is just like with women they're just…I avoided all places…I entered through the back door but they did mention that.

TA: Mmm hmm

BRI: There were certain places I couldn't go through the front door. Umm…that was…especially like Dubai or whatever…umm…it was which has just like wholly changed. It's amazing how much that city has transitioned and modernized. Umm it was nothing there when I went there so…it was…sorry is that getting…

TA: No, no you're good.

BRI: Is it gonna cost ya like dollars?

TA: I can't let anyone else transcribe it anyway. Uh, what about debriefing when you got back? Was there ever any like…okay you're back in the states now—here's what doesn't pass anymore?

BRI: No, I mean the only thing that out here…

TA: Did they take the box of condoms away?

BRI: Ya, they're just like remember you can't drink unless you're 21 here now. I mean, cause the whole time I was in the service it was like pretty much under 21 so you're all like remember you can get arrested now so that was the only thing that they debriefed about.

TA: Huh.

BRI: So (chuckles) don't get arrested.

TA: What sorts of equipment did you carry?

BRI: Umm…well…so I was an electrician so I was I did not on average—err besides like with training or doing like individual like shootings off the ship…I carried a tool belt. (Chuckles)

TA: Mmm Hmm

BRI: With umm, electrical equipment…a lot of times I carried like a umm…electric meter[70] mainly you know you had like your particular screwdrivers that you would use and your umm wrenches…so that was what I did (chuckles)

TA: Umm…do you remember any difficulty communicating with your trainers when you arrived at training?

BRI: Umm…I didn't…I tried to be low-key and not be the person to stand out because I was like…lacking… Umm I really didn't talk to them. I just kind of…umm…ya I don't even remember any conversations I just do what I need to do…

TA: Mmm hmm

BRI: And I knew what I needed to do to pass so that's what I was focused on.

TA: What about communicating with other people when you got out of the military?

BRI: Umm…that was a little harder…during when I got out I think…so with my transition I ended up marrying somebody that was from my ship after we got out. And so I think that going toward that relationship was something I was attached to to kinda keep that military attachment going.

TA: Mmm hmm

BRI: That didn't last very long…so when we divorced that was my complete detachment from any military person. And that's why that was a very…that was a very hard time.

[70] A handheld instrument that measures voltage in a wire or socket.

Umm…I didn't really talk to a lot of people especially starting undergrad and then I think I had two friends that I really talked to during undergrad. Umm and I would say "friends" in quotations just because it's like I felt like they were young and umm…you had to get through chemistry somehow so you had to make connections but it…I just don't—I feel like I didn't have any friends during undergrad.

TA: Mmm Hmm

BRI: Umm—it was just I studied all the time and it was just—cause I was like well…nobody gets me.

TA: Hmm

BRI: So…

TA: What led you to the conclusion that nobody got you?

BRI: Umm just cause everyone else was focused on like going to fraternity parties and I'm like whatever, I've drank for four years and I'm you know, ready to you know it's just like—it's not a big deal anymore. Now I'm legal…

TA: Mmm hmm

BRI: …to drink and it's just like why would…what's the big—umm

TA: You're like you know you guys can get arrested right?

BRI: Ya! Ya, and it's like…

TA: (Chuckles)

BRI: …like I kinda just felt like everyone was there and their parents were paying their way. And it's like I felt like I've gave up those years of my life. Umm…and it's like I have this whole other lifestyle, especially when the…when people would talk to you like oh, well…have you talked to your parents about this? Err like we need to send your grades

to your parents or whatever and I'm like I've been an adult you know—officially since I was like 17 so my parents signed me over…so that's that was like the hardest thing.

TA: Mmmhmm

BRI: We're gonna send this to your parents like I'm like they have nothing to do with my education.

TA: Ya

BRI: Like it's I'm a independent person but…umm so anyways, all that, I don't know…if that was here for the question but…

TA: No, you're fine.

BRI: So…

TA: So I have a bit of a lightning round now.

BRI: Okay

TA: Uh so it's basically gonna be like word definitions. Umm and if you don't know it's okay to just say you don't know. Umm, a lot of these are based on Army terms.

BRI: Ya, that's why I was like, I know you're gonna…

TA: Ya…

BRI: Ya

TA: So, what is the spirit of the bayonet?

BRI: I don't know.

TA: Okay, what makes the green grass grow?

BRI: …I've heard that before but uh…I forgot (chuckles)

TA: Okay…

BRI: (Chuckles) I don't know…I think I've blocked like periods of time in my head. But anyways…

TA: Who is the king of battle?

BRI: Well…so I don't think about the king of battle, I think about umm, Neptune…the god of the sea…

TA: ahh, sea god

BRI: Ya, so that was, that was our big thing with the transition…

TA: Uh huh…

BRI: Or the crossing the equator…

TA: Okay…

BRI: That was…

TA: Nice

BRI: That's the Navy

TA: Uh Huh

BRI: Not the king of battle

TA: (Chuckles) who is the queen of battle?

BRI: Me! No I'm just joking (chuckles) umm…I would like think of like Joan of Arc…

TA: Okay, what is another term for doing push-ups?

BRI: Oh my goodness…umm…umm I knew that at one point…I forgot now.

TA: Okay, what is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

BRI: …Umm…I forgot…it's been so many years…I'm not gonna second…I just did it…

TA: What is the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

BRI: I'm not sure top, umm, a chief umm were enlisted and our, we're all in the Navy we're all enlisted and a skipper is like the captain.

TA: Okay, what is a field of fire?

BRI: The first thing I think of when I came in, and this is not the—it won't be the term of it but…just thinking of the Persian Gulf and seeing the fires on the oil fields…

TA: Mmmhmm

BRI: …but I don't know what the—what it is in Army terminology, but that's what umm—I think of at night in the Persian Gulf—of looking around and seeing all the fires—it was kinda surreal but…so that's what I—it was to me…(chuckles)

TA: What do you yell out if you're injured?

BRI: Help

TA: Uh, what about if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air?

BRI: I did not parachute…umm…so I don't know until afterwards and then I went to a parachute range but…

TA: Okay, what about if you're having trouble with a parachute on the ground?

BRI: Umm…no idea…

TA: Okay, what is a blue falcon?

BRI: No idea…

TA: Okay, what is a blanket party?

BRI: Well, a blanket party, I mean that I guess that's what they termed it on the ship is like when during crossing the equator during Wog[71] day they would put a blanket over you and beat you as a initiation so…

[71] Wogs (or Polywogs) are sailors who have not crossed the equator or the international date line. Wog day was a celebratory ceremony in which wogs were put through their paces and emerge as "shellbacks."

TA: Mmm hmm

BRI: So you can't see who it was…

TA: Ya, who is the non-commissioned leader of a platoon or wing?

BRI: Umm…I should know that but…I do not know…

TA: Okay, what is a stick?

BRI: A gun? That's my guess is…

TA: Ya, what sort of explosive is in a claymore?

BRI: I have no idea…

TA: What do you do or say if you smell CS in your AO?

BRI: I have no idea.

TA: What is the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

BRI: I don't know.

TA: What is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

BRI: I uh, I just guessing…I don't know this is just like a period of time between…I don't know…

TA: Okay, what is an NCO?

BRI: Umm…non-commissioned officer.

TA: And what is AIT?

BRI: I don't…I don't know.

TA: Alright. That's all I have.

Dinlas Interview

Dinlas is a 20 year veteran of the Army and Army National Guard. Most of Dinlas' service occurred during Operations OIF and OEF in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TA: So, uh, describe for me the first day of your military training.

Din: Active duty training?

TA: Sure.

Din: When I first started?

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: Umm, I know I was in the delayed entry program.

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: And that started sometime in May, you know, my senior year. And I was 17. And then, uh, I had all summer to goof off before I knew had to ship out in September.

TA: Right

Din: I believe it was September 27th. And the…that was the first day of getting on the plane and flying to—I had never went on an airplane. So we flew down to South Carolina. We made it all the way to uh Ft…what was it…Fort Jackson. And we did the…I thought we were in basic training…

TA: (Chuckles) Ya.

Din: And it wasn't like that at all. It was—I'd say for the first 36 hours we were doing all of our in processing and there was not a lot of sleep…you know…to be had.

TA: What—What year was this?

Din: Uh, 1997.

TA: Okay.

Din: And it was all that in processing stuff and and then we went and they bussed us to—and I remember being so nervous because I thought this is it. This is Basic Training. You know, like the movies. And then we stopped and they put us in reception battalion. And so we were at reception for gosh, it was almost two weeks before the next basic training

class was gonna go. So that quickly turned to complete boredom. We we just sat there. And that was basically the beginning of it—the first day was just a in processing experience. The first day of basic all I remember is getting there um…being shoved, you know, off the busses and getting into formation[72] everybody was sweating. I remember dripping sweat in the—you know cause it was still hot and it was South Carolina. And that was the big memory that I have is that I remember being scared. And the—then they brought us all into our little—you know—organized us into our platoons, our group or whatever. And…we were in the—you know—we kinda had that first day and then from then on it was just basic training. All that get up at, you know, super early and, you know, go crazy and everything else. You, you probably remember some of that.

TA: Ya.

Din: So, the…I'm trying to think of anything else. I remember I was active duty and even though I was delayed entry there were guys that were around me on the first couple days who knew everything. They knew how to form to march, how to be in formation, and I later learned that those were all people who had been in the guard. They were guard guys who—they had been training already. For, you know, a good six months or a year before they shipped to basic. So I always wondered—until I got to the guard I—I was like what the heck? How do those guys know all that? And—cause I was just completely—I went from walking around like a civilian one day to being in basic training. And there wasn't even any real—even though I was technically delayed entry… I wasn't uh, you know, I, I was not doing any prep prior to going.

[72] An organized arrangement of any group of soldiers into their constituent units (Battalions, Companys, Platoons, Squads).

TA: Ya. What was a typical day like during your service?

Din: When I was in Germany, when I was active duty? It was—this was pre-9/11[73]. And um, those days were a lot of—you get up, you do your PT, and you got—we got an hour and a half for break, uh after PT. And we went and did uh, we got changed. We had breakfast. And we went to work and we worked basically all day fixing our—uh I was an electronics guy. So I fixed radios and—or not necessarily radios as much but night vision and chemical agent monitors[74] and all that stuff. We had a radiation room. You couldn't—you had to like, wear gloves and you couldn't cause all that stuff has radioactive components…and so, we were kind of, uh I don't know. We felt kinda special though cause we cause we were…sorta the only few people that could do that stuff.

TA: Mmm Hmm.

Din: And…I think the only other times we were doing something different were sergeant's training day or motor pool day. And those days you just went out and you PMCSed[75] or you—they did whatever sergeant's time they had. We did a lot of convoys. So—so out of that stuff and—trying to think—you know I deploying in the guard was a lot different. That was—we never really had a weekend. We never stopped. You know? And it was basically—where active duty it was a lot of night only that but we had to do a lot of cleaning. You know, a lot of barracks maintenance and all that stuff.

TA: Mmm Hmm

[73] 9/11 here refers to the attacks on New York of September 11th, 2001. This was a notable transition for many in the military for a few reasons. The military began a troop build-up, recruitment got far easier, and those who were already enlisted were given warning orders for deployment. It was a major transition between a basically peace-keeping force and a basically war-fighting force.
[74] Handheld chemical testing kits that warn soldiers of the presence of Nuclear, Biological, or Chemical threats.
[75] To PMCS a vehicle or piece of equipment is to perform Preventative Maintenance, Checks, and Services according to the Technical Manual for the vehicle or piece of equipment.

Din: But in the—in the guard guard, we never really had any of—or when I was deployed we didn't have any of that. It was just non-stop—either I was in the TOC[76] or I was flying a Raven[77]. Or I was out on a mission with whatever group I was with. And that was it. So, it was like a non-stop—it never ended. It was kinda just—you were doing stuff or you slept. And then you'd have a little down time here and there to play on the computer or whatever. That was pretty much it. So, hey, I don't know…pretty simple life.

TA: Ya. What's one thing that you wish civilians understood about the military in general or your service in particular?

Din: Well, um, I think…I get a lot of—especially when I go to guard—we get a lot of um…people coming up, "thank you for your service," come up and uh give you a lot of uh, you know, like we were at Pizza Ranch and somebody like paid for our dinners, like, ahead of us, you know? And I don't really like all that stuff because I wasn't really—I was in a company of people who were, um, really out in it. You know? I was—I spent most of my time on the FOB[78]. I will—I'm not, you know, I don't like this whole hero treatment when I didn't do much to deserve it. So, that really bugs me. I wish people understood that the military isn't just a bunch of heroes. It's a bunch of kids trying to pay for college. You know?

TA: Uh huh

Din: And there's not a lot of people—I mean you have your guys in the infantry or you have your guys who are out there…you know…really putting it on the line. There's a lot of

[76] The Tactical Operations Center was the headquarters building for a temporary military base or Forward Operating Base (FOB).
[77] A lightweight, short-range surveillance drone used for observing the immediate area around the launch point.
[78] Forward Operating Base. A temporary fortification built for a specific short-term purpose.

guys, even in Iraq, who are working in offices. You know? And that's basically what they do. So, I just—I think it gets too much, you know? I worry about the over—like this worship—hero worship for the soldier in our culture. I think that's a little bit—I think it's scary, like what our society is moving towards. So…ya.

TA: Mmm hmm. How were you treated when you finished your service? When you finished active duty and went National Guard or whatever you did?

Din: I never really had any huge problems.

TA: Uh huh

Din: Um, in fact, when we came back from Iraq, we got the whole hero's welcome. Like we had a parade, like—like it was almost overwhelming. Those people lined up down 8th Street in Moorhead from the interstate all the way to where we stopped, at Concordia College. And…ya, it was just like what I said before, like the…like, it's almost too much the—you know. You get it. But the um, active duty—we—when I came back, the…it was a lot different because I wasn't coming back from a war zone. (Chuckles) I got into a lot of fights. I remember that because the group of guys that I was in, I—I was—in high school I was a big like—I was in to the whole punk rock music scene and everything else. And I still am to this day, I—to a point. But I'm, you know, at a certain point you've gotta hang it up a little bit and…but like, when I came back from that, like my younger brother was like…we had fought before like when I came home on leave from active duty and so he had it in his head that he was gonna try to you know, really prove it or whatever and so we got into a lot fights. And I got into fights with other people just I think—there was a transition coming out of active duty for me, partly because I hadn't deployed. Like 9/11 happened and I just happened to get out of the

Army like kind of, as my time went out but if I would have—I felt a lot of guilt and I—I did a lot of uh, I was way, I mean I drank way too much and I was like—I mean, part of why I went back in the guard was just because I couldn't let it go. Like I—it was like I had to deploy. Like I just—even though I didn't even agree with it. It was just part of—like I couldn't feel like I could I didn't want to, I didn't feel like it was…I feel like it was unfinished business. So, there was a lot of that. When I got back from Iraq, it was—again, it was a lot of—it was almost just too much positive. You know? It was just like guys, hold on a second. You know? And you still feel that sometimes when you're especially when you get to the more like out by our base…at Camp Ripley.

TA: Ya

Din: It's like—I mean, it's a lot more politically conservative there, I think socially conservative there. So you get a lot more of that. And I know one of my former friends, when I got back, he—we were at a party and he um, he was drunk and we were all drunk but he said uh, like, he said how—so like how many brown people did you kill? You know, like, you know kind of in a snarky way, you know? And that really bothered me. I didn't really—I wasn't in a—I didn't really want to get into it with him and I—I just left. But, it was—like that was kinda painful cause I had always considered him a good friend. And he kinda turned on me and another guy did too, kinda—you know, I come from a crowd that we're—someone in that crowd is gonna accuse you of being a tool of the state or whatever. Or, you know what I mean…

TA: Yeah

Din: And I just kinda—you know, that was kinda painful and…one more guy kinda got into it with me about it—but I, I gave back—like we were never gonna physically fight, but

I argued back just as strong as he argued. And we kinda just got—it reached a conclusion…so it was…I don't know. That kind of stuff was always negative but but uh, you know, I guess the more I get older, they were—I mean, there were a lot of people upset when I left. You know? They weren't happy that I was kinda going off to fight in this war that this president that they didn't agree with had started.

TA: Yeah

Din: But I think, with the service sort of mindset, it's never about the president that's in power. It's I mean, our system succeeded, our system failed, our system made the decision one way or the other. We don't ask a lot of questions. We go forward and no—I figured if it wasn't me it was somebody else. You know?

TA: Mmm hmm. Were there any unique tools that you used during your service? Like to do your job or anything like that?

Din: Well, again it's two phases. Um, for uh, the electronics shop stuff we had the full component of tools. I mean, we had tool boxes and we were actually all signed[79] for them. You know? That was a huge deal. You locked that up because that was gonna be where you lose all your money when you—when you ETS[80]. But aside from that, you know, I'm sure you might have heard this and you probably experienced this: but like the, like the Leatherman or the multi-tool…is—I mean I don't think I went a day, in my service time, without using it.

TA: Mmm hmm.

[79] When a soldier signs for a piece of equipment, they are effectively borrowing the equipment and are expected to return it in serviceable condition or they are charged the cost of replacing it.
[80] ETS or End Term of Service is the point at which an enlisted soldier's contract with the government expires and they either get out of the military or renegotiate a new contract.

Din: For one thing or another. So that was—and then…I'm trying to think…I know…over in Iraq we just—I had a Garmin. Like we had GPS and stuff like that.

TA: Mmm hmm.

Din: But aside from that, and what they issued us…the only other thing that I found really interesting was, um…some of the stuff we used to clean weapons. Like I had a sergeant who gave us all brake cleaner to clean our weapons with. And those kinda things…you know, just sort of the improvised stuff.

TA: Mmm hmm.

Din: To kinda get around whatever problems was, was going on.

TA: Have you ever tried to explain any of those tools to a civilian that didn't really understand how they worked, or?

Din: Um, I guess no. Not necessarily.

TA: Mmm hmm.

Din: I'm trying to think…um… most of my friends, on their own, fell in love with multi-tools, you know, in one way or the other. They're, I mean, they're a pretty great invention.

TA: Uh huh…

Din: So, I think, they didn't need much explanation. And I'm trying to think of…um…the only thing that I would say that I would have a hard time explaining to sometimes would be some of the equipment that we used…

TA: Uh huh.

Din: …or that we repaired, like your night vision goggles and uh the uh chemical agent monitors that we fixed, and things like that. And even just how the radios work…all

that stuff…you know, how they have frequency hops[81] and how you have to fill them with the, you know, they come in with this separate thing and you fill it…just to get it to be secure with everybody else. All those little things. Those are—I don't know. And then, the one thing that I had fun explaining is um, we had a guy that set up—we wired the whole base when we were over in Iraq for internet.

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: Like he paid somebody, you know, and kinda got it done under the table. He was uh, you know, kinda one of those people who was always good at finding that…situation, you know?

TA: Right

Din: And so little things like that was—I think people—their minds are blown when they know that we had like wireless over there. You just had to open your laptop. So those kinds of things are always fun to talk about.

TA: What are some things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

Din: I would say, um, even though I didn't—you know, again—my uh, I there's a lot of guilt that people can't understand if they haven't—I think you really get treated from the beginning like you need to be a part of whatever is going on. You need to do your part. And in certain instances there's situations where you're—you're not called to do that.

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: Or whatever…or, or you're…like I said, my thing that I've carried with me all the time is still—I was in a whole company of people that were over—in probably one of the

[81] Military radios use frequency hopping to remain secure and safe from interception.

more dangerous times…we were…we were at Camp Fallujah[82], right outside the city. And my company had like a 15% casualty rate. And that's casualties—injuries…

TA: Ya

Din: Um…and what we…who we lost was three guys…four guys…and so a lot of guys injured, a few guys killed…but I never went near any of it. I was—the closest I ever came was just—we would all roll out like a whole company-wide…like a big company-wide operation…we would roll out. And I'd be there for that. Or I'd be on individual patrols but never—nothing like that ever happened to me. You know?

TA: Ya.

Din: So I never feel like I got to really test my—my combat skills, you know?

TA: Right.

Din: Never fired my weapon at a—at the enemy, you know? So it was, um, you know, what do you do? It was, even when I was in situations where we were being fired upon, it was—we had a perimeter and these guys…they handled it. Like my combat infantryman badge…is because we called in close air support. You know, we called in a helicopter. Or uh, was it an airplane? I can't even remember. But it was nothing that I did. I just happened to be in that situation and ya… I never really, I never really felt like I got to prove myself. You know? So that's something that I think civilians will never really understand. And nobody will ever understand how self-actualized and how kind of at peace or happy I was over there when I was just living my day-to-day. Because it's a very simple life in most instances. You wake up. You do your job. You kind of—I mean—there's just not a lot of complication. So, I really enjoyed it. I was—like our

[82] Camp Fallujah was a former Mujahadeen Base that the Army used to support Marine Operations in the city of Fallujah, Iraq. Fallujah was the scene of some intense fighting resulting in heavy Marine Casualties.

unit is a mess. We're always a mess just by nature. But, you know, when we're doing our monthly drills.

TA: Uh huh

Din: And it's just always just a complete cluster and the—the thing about it, like when we were deployed…we were a well-oiled machine. Like, we did our train-up. We got good and then I think we were—we were better in a lot of ways than some of the active (waiter interrupts) So ya, that's—nobody quite understands that. It's…it's not a lot of suffering, it's a lot of—I don't know. You get to kinda do the things that you were trained to do.

TA: Uh huh

Din: It all feels very real. I mean, there were guys in the eighties who went their whole careers without really deploying or doing anything. You know, I don't imagine that was painful. That's really hard to explain because logically, I know that's ridiculous on an intellectual level. We shouldn't be in—we should not look forward to situations where we're deployed, you know?

TA: Ya, uh I mean, I understand what you're saying though. Like, you get all this training. You get trained up. You wanna actually use it. You know? It's hard. (Chuckles) It's not easy to go through.

Din: I wasn't taking part in this. I was really new. My first—when I first joined the guard it was 2004—late 2004. It was so bad. I mean, at the time it was just—I mean it was a real low point. And the Army was really struggling at that time to get recruits. And I walked in the door at the recruiting station for the guard over at the armory and they would not let me leave. Like they—you know what I mean? They were freaking out

that somebody just walked in the door. I don't think they had had that for months. And it was…um…they brought me pizza and everything, you know? It was very—I got the VIP treatment. So, you know, that was really cool and all but I knew what the, you know, the whole thing was. (Waiter interrupts) So ya, like, I don't know. What was the question? I was gu—I got off to talking…

TA: What are some things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

Din: When uh—I remember now…my first real drill, like after I signed my paperwork, was January of 2005. And at the end of drill, the Colonel came in—or like the battalion commander came in and told us all we were deploying. That was my first drill. And I didn't know the guys well enough to be high-fiving em but these guys were high-fiving and you know what I mean? They were hitting it hard and just excited—going crazy. It was—it was everything they ever wanted.

TA: Ya. Um, describe your first permanent duty station.

Din: It was Kitsinga, Germany. And the—uh, I got off the plane in Frankfurt. And I got to spend the weekend there. That was kinda cool. And I was 18 when I got off the plane…just about to turn 19. And it was a former World War II-era German barracks. I believe that was when it started. There was an airstrip on the base. It was really small. And we were like, the whole base was basically us. And we were like a battalion or what's one—no, just a battalion. That did all of our—all the electronics stuff. We were like a direct support-level installation in the first infantry division. The—there was a PX[83]. It was pretty small.

TA: Uh huh.

[83] The Post Exchange is a retail store akin to a Wal-Mart, with discounted prices and no tax, geared specifically toward veterans.

Din: There was gym, which was actually fff—pretty nice. Cause it was an old uh, bunker or hangar or something that they had converted to—I think it was a hangar—they had turned into the, you know, the gym. And then we were right outside of a really beautiful small city, like we got our little orientation…and we were in the middle of Bavaria. It was—it was the best first duty station that you could have asked for. I did four years there because I put an extension in. And you know, Germany, you know, beautiful German countryside, you know, castles everywhere. We were near Brooksburg…uh, not too far away from Frankfurt and Nuremburg. And everything felt very old world, you know, and very, I don't know. We really enjoyed it, you know, we went out clubbing a lot too. We uh, I did a lot of sight-seeing and stuff like that. So, I kinda wish that I had been, like I had done college first. Because I would have appreciated it more I think. I wouldn't—I really didn't know what I was looking at sometimes. So, but ya, it was great.

TA: So you said you—you deployed to Iraq. Can you describe the process of being briefed and then de-briefed when you left?

Din: Well…before we left…there wasn't a whole lot of briefing except for them telling us where we were gonna go.

TA: Mmm hmm…

Din: We scrambled for the rest of that year. Up until…was it September or October…we scrambled up to that point, just to finish our, you know, our drill schedule and until we—until the day came.

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: And that was just a lot of prep, you know, getting stuff ready or whatever…and then the day that—like I was headquarters…Moorhead is headquarters. And they farmed me out to be a headquarters guy at Bravo company, which is in Crookston. So I got this word that I was going to Crookston. I showed up there and I—and again I think it always takes time for these things to get together, but I—it really felt chaotic. Nobody really knew what was going on. But we all were there and I found the First Sergeant or whoever. He got me pointed in the right direction. And we stayed the night there. My—my uh then girlfriend—now wife—she came up, well so she stayed with me in the hotel. And I knew I was shipping out the next day. So it was a really surreal feeling. And, not knowing what to expect, almost just sick with like nervousness, you know? Like, and it's not even ner—like fear—it's not like real things, it's just fear of the unknown. And I'm trying to recall from there if—I know we uh—I remember a lot of busses and a lot of airplanes. And then we landed, um, eventually we landed in uh—was it Kuwait or was it Je—yeah, it was Kuwait. And, suddenly we were there and it was like, it was super—we were there for like a week or two. I can't recall, but like, we did a lot of like improvised training. Never really had a briefing. I mean, they talked to us a little bit. And, oh I forgot to mention, we have a train up…

TA: Ya

Din: So, the six-month train up happened in Mississippi, so that was kind of a pause in between those—those things. And there we got a lot of—our company commander was super concerned, and he didn't want any of us to die…which was a weakness of his…We got a lot speeches about how real it was gonna be. I remember that. I remember a lot of train-up, I mean just getting ready. We were in great shape by the

time we got done because we had a six—we had six whole months. So, by the time we got over, we were uh, I mean we were a pretty solid unit and uh at that time, then we got on the plane and went over—I kinda forgot that part. But the—suddenly we were in Kuwait and I remember we went to the range to zero[84] our weapons. And I remember asking somebody like what happens next, are we gonna qualify[85]? You know, I was just dumb. And he was like, "No, the next time you shoot this weapon it's gonna be over there in the combat zone so you better get your zero right." And then it kinda sunk into me, you know, I was like…okay…And I remember we took, uh, C-130[86]'s in and hit the ground in Iraq and we were at Takadam for a few days. And then they bussed us over to Fallujah. Or did they helicopter—yeah, they helicoptered us over. It's been so long. I took a lot of helicopters in Iraq. Cause I had to travel here and there for different things and it was always a helicopter. Space-A[87]. And finally we got to the end. At the end of the deployment, that was a whole different set of briefings. And then they briefed the hell out of us. We were at Fort McCoy, in Wisconsin.

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: It was constant—non-stop—all day, I was sitting and listening to people tell us all the different mental health things. We had—we watched these videos and it was—it was like—they were grown adults acting, but they were—it was like high school-level acting. Comedy-produc—not comedy but drama troupe…doing these videos about alcohol abuse and domestic abuse and all these things that—I mean, but the time it was

[84] To zero a weapon, a shooter must adjust the sight of the weapon until the sight becomes accurate for the shooter's style of shooting.
[85] To qualify with a rifle, a soldier must shoot at least 26/40 targets from ranges between 20 and 300 meters with the weapon being tested.
[86] A fixed-wing propeller troop transport plane that first saw service in The Korean War.
[87] Space Available flights are flights that soldiers can take for free if there is space available. This is available on most government-owned planes and some commercial carriers.

over we were just like Holy Crap. Fine. You know, I'm not going to do any that. You know, it was just like I mean, it was almost like a little bit of overkill? You know? So that was a big thing I remember because we—gosh, we—at the time we didn't get a lot of like—there wasn't like a big like final, congratulatory thing…We just never got…we never got enough troops in the same area to do some kinda thing like that. So I don't know, it was…it was weird. And then we did three months of just going to drill and having more of that. Like, more of the same stuff. So…ya. It was crazy. I know that they thought that they—I think there's uh, they probably didn't handle the previous generation's wars very well…for veterans… So once they figured that out, it was overkill, like Army classic overkill.

TA: Right.

Din: Like this time we're gonna get it right by just beating them to death with it.

TA: What sorts of equipment did you carry when you were deployed?

Din: We had our full body armor, neck guard, groin cover…and so that was the big heavy thing. And all of our weapons—err all of my ammunition pouches and ammo. And we had the M-16. I had the full, like uh, one of them like, it's like a three-point sling or whatever you call it?

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: Ya, I had one of those, just trying to be cool and then uh, so we had all those things. And the Kevlar. I think it weighed about 60 pounds when you put it all together. You know, you had it on, boy it was heavy.

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: And then, trying to think of individual things that I carried…aside from my GPS and I had a knife…as well. I think everybody carried some sort of a knife…just a combat knife of some sort. Like I had a Seal Pup. I can't remember what everybody else had but everybody had something like that. Just to have on them.

TA: Do you remember any difficulty communicating with your trainers when you got to Basic Training?

Din: Mmm, not really, just being scared. I was just a kid. It was my first time away from home. And I kinda just had to take it day-by-day and I don't think I ever had problems communicating with them or understanding it. And like the mental side of things—it was never a problem. I always caught on to that right away. Like I was always the first guy done in map reading or land nav or whatever. And radios was always…all that stuff was easy-peasy. Where I always struggled was the physical side. Like I was never—you know, I mean I had to do remedial PT when I first got to the base—basic training. Because I could only do—gosh—I mean when I first got there it was like 14 or 15 push-ups. You know? Just embarrassing. And it was always like that—I—even when I was a kid I was never physically as strong as all the other, you know, kids my age. It seemed like I was always kinda playing catch up. Ya, but I finally, you know, I did a lot of PT to make up for it. Never really became a real—huge PT stud, but I eventually got to a point where I—where I had a good baseline, you know?

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: With the uh, anything related to the classroom or mental side of things or whatever I was always fine.

TA: Do you remember having any trouble communicating with civilians when you got back?

Din: Mmm, only those instances I mentioned before. But people here in Fargo are largely pretty good. They uh, you know, people seem to understand it. They know that you shouldn't go around asking crazy questions or anything like that so, for the larg—for the most part I didn't have a lot of trouble with that part of it. You know, people were pretty cool. Pretty chill. Aside from those experiences that I had mentioned.

TA: What is the spirit of the bayonet?

Din: I may—I don't think I know…

TA: Okay, what makes the green grass grow?

Din: Blood, red blood. Is that right?

TA: Mmm hmm

Din: Ya.

TA: Who is the king of battle?

Din: The uh, the infantry…no that's the queen of battle. (Waiter interrupts) Artillery.

TA: Ya. Okay, who is the queen of battle?

Din: Infantry.

TA: Alright, what is another term for doing push-ups?

Din: Beat your face?

TA: Okay, what is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

Din: Smoking.

TA: What's the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

Din: Well, a top is a first sergeant. A chief is a chief warrant officer. Um, skipper, we don't really have in the Army, but I'm assuming a Captain or something like that in the Navy.

TA: What is a field of fire?

Din: That's…when you're laying out your plan, that's wherever your position—it's your right and left limits of where you can put your weapon, so that you don't end up shooting your buddy.

TA: Okay, what do you yell out if you're injured?

Din: Medic?

TA: What about if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air?

Din: That I don't know. I was never airborne.

TA: Okay, uh a parachute on the ground?

Din: (shrugs)

TA: Okay, what is a Blue Falcon?

Din: A buddy-fucker.

TA: (Chuckles) What is a blanket party?

Din: That's when they pull the blankets—err guys hold it on the sides so they can beat the hell out of the guy underneath the…it's uh…Full Metal Jacket.

TA: Who is the non-commissioned leader of a platoon or wing?

Din: Hmm, if it were a platoon it would be the platoon sergeant. I don't know about a wing.

TA: What is a stick?

Din: A stick? Not sure.

TA: Okay, what sort of explosive is in a claymore?

Din: Little um balls. Little metal—what do you call those…ball bearings? Ya, and they blast out of this—I don't know it's like the I'm not sure if they're huge ball bearings but I think they're tiny little ones…

TA: What do you do if you see or smell CS in your AO?

Din: Say Gas, Gas, Gas. Do the thing (makes international gas signal)

TA: What is the different between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

Din: An FM is a field manual. Um, TM is a technical manual. Field manuals are more like leadership or, you know, bigger concepts. A TM explains the device or whatever it is that you're trying to fix. And then the AR is Army Regulation. That's the rules you have to follow.

TA: What is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

Din: That's how far a distance you keep from the person in front of you and behind you.

TA: What is an NCO?

Din: Non-Commissioned officer.

TA: And what is AIT?

Din: Advanced Individual Training.

TA: Alright, that's all I got.

Eurus Interview

Eurus is a currently serving member of the Air National Guard and a veteran of the Army Reserve. Eurus served during the Global War on Terror Period.

TA: Alright, so, describe your first day of military training.

EU: (Exhales) Do you…so my first day of actual training um—went through MEPS, basically, like everybody else does…exactly like everybody else does. Uh…went to what I thought was gonna be basic right away. Turns out it wasn't basic. It was

retention. Umm, where you get there and they put you in holding for—for what is supposed to be three days. Um, I was there for two weeks. A lot of us were, cause they—um, it was the people who needed glasses; they—the glasses thing was down. So we ended up sitting there for two weeks in sort of a weird version of like pre-basic. Like they—they taught you how to get from point A to point B roughly, like you just walked. And then they sorta taught you some stuff bay basically it was go to breakfast, kill time, got to lunch, kill time, go to dinner, go to sleep. And then uh, did that for two weeks. Um, so that was my introduction to it. And then basic actually started and and it i…it got a lot better. Basic was way…um harder, but it was it was more intense I guess? But at least, like, you felt like you were moving forward. Retention, you just treaded water the whole time…um, which I think is a pretty good introduction to the military. Like you're not, you're not moving forward, but you're…at least it sucks. So that was my, that was my introduction.

TA: What was a typical day like during your service?

EU: Umm, while I was Army, is uh, I've been Army Reserve and in the Air National Guard. Currently, I'm full time with the Air National Guard. Um, so it's more like uh day-to-day job. But typically, um, Army Reserve, it—it was um, show up to drill, do training for two days—three days, whatever it was, and then just go back to being a regular civilian. Um, so I got very used to turn it off, turn it on and that whole lifestyle.

TA: Okay, uh, what's one thing that you wish civilians understood about the military in general-

EU: --uh we don't all know each other.

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: Like, I don't understand how many people they think are in the Army but I don't know the vast majority of them. Um, there's—there's no reason to—and I'm only speaking for myself here—but something that I wish people understood more—there is no reason to thank me for my service. I didn't do it for them. I never took them into consideration when I did it. Um, all of my reasons were my own. And—and very little of it had to do with…um trying to, like, protect the freedoms of a bunch of people I've never met. I'm perfectly comfortable, like, justifying it in terms of, like, if I have to do something terrible to another person it's because I'm trying to save myself, or one of my friends or even just somebody who's wearing the same uniform as me. I still don't like to think of it as, like, I—I'm doing this to save you people. So you owe me something.

TA: Mmm hmm…

EU: I—I don't…it makes me feel uncomfortable. Cause I feel like I'm getting thanked for something that I shouldn't be. I—I don't think I deserve that. Also it feels very…false, um when—it it's very much just lip service. Because a lot of the people who do thank me for my service will also, like, not do anything to help veterans after they've been released from the service…or provide any sort of mental or physical healthcare for service members. Um, they're perfectly willing to justify a war but, as soon as that part of it is over—and I'm speaking very broadly here—those people tend to kind of forget about our service. Or they feel like the—I thanked them for my service—that's enough. It's the same kind of people who put entirely too much stock in um, the National Anthem, which I don't understand. I—it's just a song. It doesn't actually have anything to do with veterans. It's not a Harry Potter spell. We don't get stronger every time

someone sings it. It's just. A. song. Umm, same thing with the flag: it's just a symbol. I understand the importance of symbols but I don't understand the weird fetishizing of it.

TA: Mmm hmm. How were you treated when you finished your service? So if-if—did you ever have a period where you were sort of back from somewhere and…

EU: I had a break between—cause after Iraq I got out of the Army Reserve. I stand by that decision every single day.

TA: Ya…

EU: There was maybe a year and a half break in service before I ended up back in the Air Guard. Umm, which was entirely just due to—I was just tired of being broke. Like I got used to having a steady paycheck. So I went back in…kinda worked out nicely for me. Umm, I have—I have never had a—anyone mistreat me because of my military service. Umm—which is really good. I've had umm some pretty bizarre assumptions be made about me because of them, but mostly—mostly it's been overwhelmingly positive. And even like—like the thank you for your service thing is just like a mino—nobody's spitting at me. Nobody's doing a, like, post-Vietnam—calling me a fascist, like that kind of stuff. They're just making me mildly irritated because they're thanking me for service. It's a good complaint to have.

TA: Mmm hmm (visitor interrupts) So are there any unique tools that you carried during your service?

EU: You mean like linguistically or…

TA: No, like any uh wrenches that civilians wouldn't understand or…

EU: Oh…honestly, no, umm, cause I'm, I'm—there used to be when I was Army cause I was commo. Uh, so we had a lot of, like, slang for the radios and stuff—not even slang.

It was the technical name for the radios. But you still don't, like, call it a radio. It—it's like a SINGAR or whatever the hell. Umm, so there—it used to be a lot more jargon-heavy. Now, since I'm a cop, it's still—especially if I'm speaking to law enforcement outside of the Air Force, in any branch or civilian law enforcement or whoever, um—or even, um, internationally cause we did stuff like with the German Polizei, a cop is a cop is a cop. We all speak a fairly common language. Umm, as far as like most people can pick it up pretty quick. I sometimes refer to, like, a pistol as an M9 cause that's what we carry. But, otherwise, there-there's uh…limit to the amount of jargon that we use on my side of it. We—like, getting into the Air Force stuff, it's very jargon-heavy. But I try not to—I try not to talk like that in my normal life. I hang out with enough civilians that I make a distinction between who I'm talking to.

TA: Mmm hmm. And what are some of the things that you do to sort of explain your jargon-heavy tools to civilians?

EU: Usually, um, when I'm talking about something like—like the TIBFID, which is our travel—how we track travel for deployments and stuff…I try to…I just try to use very broad language to talk about it as in just then I log into the thing that tracks all of our travel. Or like, the big Excel Sheet that does the thing…like it's and it's basically what it is. You just kinda boil it down to what it is at like its essentials and whatnot. Um, now that I don't do—I don't have a very technical-heavy job, it's it's a lot simpler.

TA: Mmm hmm. So what are some of the things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

EU: (Exhales) I-I do think we…and for me specifically…I think I am a lot more used to uh, things just going wrong, in the most catastrophic way possible. Then I think—and and

just being able to be flexible with it, or if something doesn't work out how it's planned, I'm used to things not going how they're planned. Like, that's every plan just falls apart immediately. I'm used to that. You just adjust fire and go on. Um, like, that kind of flexibility to it is is what I like to think has been, for a lot of us, a big take away. I think—I don't think that, I don't think that we experienced more stress necessarily than most civilians do cause I—there are stressors in every aspect of life. I—I don't think there are enough people who have experienced direct combat that it has a—I haven't specifically—so it doesn't really impact how I think. So—but I do think I'm more equipped to handle those—some of those stresses because of my military experience. It's like we have intentionally been put into stressful situations before. It's the difference between, like, thinking you can handle a thing and knowing you can handle a thing. Because I've been in a situation like that. Like, ya, I can work without sleep. I've done it. It's cool. I don't like it but you do what you've gotta do. As opposed to like, ya, I could probably do that. That's my big takeaway from it.

TA: Umm, describe your first permanent duty station.

EU: Uh, I was umm, I was guard—well, I was reserve, so…uh the first place I was like, stationed, stationed would be Fort Gordon for AIT. Uh, it was 19 weeks for 31U. So I was there for a—a good long while. Umm, it was hot. It was gross. It was AIT for the Army. Like it was pretty regimented. Umm, I was the stupid kid who got engaged in Tech School. I was that guy.

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: Um, it was a fun lesson-learned.

TA: Ya

EU: Umm, stuff like that. It-it wasn't…it was a nice like, dip a toe into military life… but like with that knowledge that you're going home at the end of it. So that was nice.

TA: So you said you deployed…

EU: Mmm hmm

TA: Um, what was the process like of of being briefed when you got to country and being debriefed when you left?

EU: (Chuckles) We uh, so I deployed in 2003 with the Army Reserve and then to Iraq. And then in 2013, with the Air National Guard, to Afghanistan. Umm, which I kinda, I kinda dig because I got to see like the opening and the closing of some—like, our two-front kinda thing we had, like, going on for a decade there. Umm, but, umm I—for my Iraq in-processing, I-I still remember this. There was a sergeant major who clearly didn't have anybody attached underneath him. He was just like a free-roaming Sergeant Major…

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: …which I think is the most dangerous thing in the world. But this dude was super cool, umm, he—we got to uh, Kuwait, finally, because it was 2003 like everything was still trying to figure out, like, we were trying to figure out how to make a war happen. Umm, so I got stuck at Fort Carson, umm, trying to do our in-processing and uh, for pre-deployment. I got stuck there for like three months…just waiting to get on the rotator and get out of country. Anyway, we got to Kuwait before we uh, convoyed up to Baghdad. Umm, there was a Sergeant Major running around uh with uh he still had his, still had his mask on. Umm, his pro-mask… he was still wearing it like, strapped to him in that weird like hip-holster thing that you can do. But he had no gear on and uh, he

had a M-9 in a underarm holster, um, which the Army rarely does. But, like, dude looked like he was ready for some stuff to go down. Umm, he briefed us on hanging on to our masks, uh, making sure that we took care of each other, and that it was stupid-hot so keep drinking water, um and that they were doing, um ChemAlarms like 3-4 times a day at the um, camp in Kuwait that we were at. Just to keep people ready or whatever. Umm, so keep your gear handy, you know, that kind of thing. Uh, which, hilariously, we got up to Baghdad and the brief we got was, "put your masks away, just—you're fine. Like, just forget it." Which we did and it was awesome. Umm, but that was my in-brief to that. Comparatively, is it okay if I tell like a little side-story?

TA: Ya, absolutely.

EU: Okay, so, when I was in Afghanistan, uh, I got placed as the S-1, almost immediately. Which, I'm pretty sure I got off the plane and I was wearing glasses and they're like "grab the little nerdy kid." But whatever. Umm, I got put—I was the S-1 section, which is our administration. Umm, so I—I was handling uh, taking care of the Colonel's like—whatever stupid crap he had. I took care of, uh, in-processing/out-processing and arranging outgoing travel for everybody. Umm, it was a pretty busy job and kind of rewarding but I—and it was it was a six-month tour—three months into it, I-I was done with it. I figured out a way to transfer out. I took over a sector, cause I-I was going nuts. Like, my friends were actually doing stuff and I was just doing paperwork. I realize paperwork needs to get done but eh—mmm, I wanted to actually be doing something. I wanted to be running troops again was what it was. Uh, anyway, but while I was doing that, halfway through my three months as the S-1, we switched commanders. The commander that we got in was a reserve Col—an Air Force Reserve

Colonel. He was a full-time DEA agent. Umm, and he was an idiot. He uh, he was, he was a terrible terrible person. But anyway, I used to go around with him when he would do his, uh, in-processing briefs…with the sectors…and I swear to god he was doing the uh, Pandora brief, from uh, Avatar? He was just like, "Look left, look right, one of you will die."

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: And it was such a—cause again, I can only compare this to Sgt Maj Doesn't Give-a-Shit, from Iraq ten years ago at that point, who was in like an actual war zone and was like—"look you guys are gonna be okay. Here's what we're doing. Here's how you can take care of yourself." Versus this guy, who is at that point running—we're still taking mortar rounds, but Bagram was basically, at that point, an active duty base. It was a rotation. The people—most of the people who had been there had been there before and knew what they were doing. Security forces is very rotation-heavy. All of those guys knew what the what was and this idiot is up there talking to them like it's their last day on earth and they're gonna be getting into the shit. And I was—you (exhales) okay. Sure. At the end of it, like, he left and I'm just like, I'm gonna go. I don't have a good follow-up to that. Like, really? So he used to come out to—like, once I got moved to the sector, he used to come out and lecture my guys on whatever the hell. He would leave and I'm like let's—let's just go to work now and it'll be fine. Take care of each other. Whatever. There's no reason to be that guy. Anyway, that was my different experiences with in-processing in-country.

TA: Uh, what sort of equipment did you carry, uh, on a regular basis?

EU: At, for my full-time job, out here I usually—you have the option to arm-up with either an M-4 or a pistol and a shotgun. Your shotgun usually sits on a mount in the truck. You have it there for emergencies. I usually do that cause it's easier to do, like—cause we walk around and do a base-check, like, check doorknobs, like, check every—make sure all the buildings are secure. Uh, I usually do an M-9 cause it's just easier. Uh, so—or if you're like do dispatch you just take an M-9. Umm, and then we wear, uh, either a plate carrier or the vest with the plates, and then your radio, flashlight, uh—but you have a non-lethal so there's a baton or a taser. Umm, you got your first-aid kit. Just basic—basic cop stuff after that. Uh, gloves, you know, PPE, that kind of thing. Umm, when I deployed, it was—it was very much, uh, well, when I deployed in 2003, we-we were still wearing flak vests at the time, so it's like half a sand bag?

TA: Ya

EU: Umm, cause they, I mean, you—we didn't know. Anyway, it got better eventually. Uh, so I'm wearing uh flak vest, Kevlar, and then M-16, like the full, like musket, M-16 at the time. So, which it whatever—M-4 is better, I guess. Umm, so ya, that's pretty much it.

TA: Uh, do you remember having any difficulty communicating with your trainers when you got to Basic Training?

EU: No, No! Cause I didn't try.

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: Um, I just—I kept my head down and was very much just like go along to get along. Just get through this…umm…and, okay, cause I—I looked like every other skinny bald white kid with glasses… So, like, unless I was actively fucking up, there was no reason

t—that anyone would pay any attention to me. So I—I just kept my head down. Umm, one of my drill sergeants…umm—cause i—it was couple of drill sergeants assigned to each platoon and then they took turns, like, running the whole thing. One of my drill sergeants came up behind me in the chow line and said, "How's it going private?" Good drill sergeant. And he was like, "what platoon are you in drill se—err private?" and I'm like, yours, drill sergeant. He was like, "How do I not know who you are!?" And I had to go up and introduce myself to him every morning after that…

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: …until he learned my name. Uh, which I thought was a good position to be in. Just like, went along, kept my head down, told—don't be somebody whose name is no. That's it. And it worked out really nicely for me.

TA: Uh, what about communicating with other people when you—when you got back from either training or deployment?

EU: I don't—I don't think so. Uh, I don't think I had any difficulty communicating with them. I remember like a bad week when I got back. Like where I was like ironing my jeans and shit. But, like, that went away very, very quickly. And like now, I can—I can switch back and forth remarkably—it's not even—I don't even consider it like code-switching…I cause it's not just my language changes. My entire, like, like, attitude switches back to I don't need to be like that in a normal day. I can just be a person right now. Uh, even like, my everyday on base, like, that's just like me doing my job. As opposed to, like, I don't really switch it back on for drill weekend but for like a deployment, where I need to be in charge of people, I do try to take that responsibility very seriously. So I do try to make sure that all of my people are taken care of. Like I'm

constantly counting them. I make sure they have all their equipment. I make sure they're fed. I make sure they're not hitting each other. I make sure they're—whatever. Like, I—I'm much more focused on their stuff at that point. Umm, but, and my language does change a little bit, umm, but I do think—I've got a nice, like, hybrid going now. So I can—like I don't need to like code-switch between words.

TA: Okay. What's the spirit of the bayonet?

EU: To kill!

TA: What makes the green grass grow?

EU: Blood!

TA: Who is the king of battle?

EU: I don't know but "he follows me."

TA: (Chuckles)

EU: Who was the king of battle? Shit. I can't remember how it goes, I just remember "the king of battle follows me."

TA: Ha, who is the queen of battle?

EU: I could not tell you.

TA: Okay, what is another term for doing push-ups?

EU: Front-leaning rest?

TA: Okay, what is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

EU: Smoking.

TA: What's the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

EU: Oh god, a Top is a first sergeant. A chief is—see this is gonna get confusing cause I switched branches—but a chief for us is the equivalent of a sergeant major. It is a very different think. Skipped—captain of a boat maybe?

TA: Okay. What's a field of fire?

EU: It's where you can hit with your, uh, a sector you're assigned to with whatever weapon you have.

TA: Okay. What do you yell out if you're injured?

EU: Man down? Medic?

TA: Okay.

EU: Oww

TA: (Chuckles) What about if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air?

EU: Oh my god, I have no idea.

TA: Okay. (Chuckles)

EU: I just plummet to my death.

TA: Uh, if you're having trouble with a parachute on the ground?

EU: Why did I have this parachute?

TA: (Chuckles) What is a Blue Falcon?

EU: Shhh (chuckles) uh Buddy Fucker. Uh, somebody who screws over his friends. Somebody who is fucking…somebody—sorry—you say friends…eh eee…the person next to them. Somebody fucking up the whole platoon.

TA: What is a blanket party?

EU: Umm, it is a…it's a "Code Red" from *A Few Good Men*. It's a non-judicial punishment. It's—I've never actually seen one—people talked a lot of shit about it in AIT. It never—nobody ever tried it. We—you'd have been kicked out of the Army.

TA: Uh, who is the non-commissioned leader of a platoon or wing?

EU: Uh, platoon sergeant, or in our case, uh, squad leader.

TA: Okay, what is a stick?

EU: I don't—I don't know.

TA: Okay. Uh, what sort of explosive is in a claymore?

EU: Uh, there's ball-bearings and some—there's C-4, isn't it?

TA: Mmm hmm. What do you do if you see or smell CS in your AO?

EU: (Chuckles) Some asshole is dropping smoke all over the place. It's just wafting in your direction. Or, ya, smelling it isn't the problem. It's tasting it… anyway, somebody is dropping smoke somewhere around you.

TA: Uh huh, so what do you do?

EU: Probably mask up if that's an option. Uh, in basic, uh you end basic with this giant ruck march back to wherever the hell. Uh, the platoon in front of us had apparently not used all of their CS during the FTX that we were coming back from. And they're just chucking it. And we're walking through it and my drill sergeant is just puking his guts out. And we're like should we mask up? And he's like, "Don't be bitches!" (imitates vomiting sound). And so we would just walk through it. Like honestly, free-standing CS—if you're not locked in a room with it, you can—you can just go through it. It's—it sucks, but it's fine.

TA: What's the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

EU: Uh, field manual, training manual, and what was the last one?

TA: AR

EU: (sighs) What was an AR?

TA: Like the AR 670-1

EU: I know I—I know, at one point, I knew what an AR was. We don't really do them. We don't deal with those a lot. Uh field manual—err training manual is for training. Field manual is for in the field.

TA: Mmm hmm

EU: It's more practical. Training manual is: you're sitting at a desk. You can go through this thing. It's a little more…I don't want to say scholarly but it's a little more removed from the field.

TA: Right. Uh, what is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

EU: The distance that you have to move.

TA: Okay. Uh, what is an NCO?

EU: Non-commissioned officer.

TA: And what is AIT?

EU: Uh, advanced individual training.

Glaucus Interview

Glaucus is a veteran of the Army and served during the Vietnam War Era. He was enlisted and volunteered to go to Vietnam.

TA: So uh, describe the first day of military training.

Gla: (Long pause) I don't remember.

TA: Ya?

Gla: It's…well close to 55 years ago. Uh, uh…I remember…getting on the airplane…kinda…And I think I went down there, I I I think uh my mom or somebody drove me down to the airport, dropped me off and that was about it. And uh, you know, there was no ceremony to this. And I got on the airplane and I went someplace. And I suspect it was Denver. And then I went someplace else which was Ft. Bliss in Texas for Basic Training. I I I know I was there and I assume when I got off the airplane there it was the first day in Basic Training, basically. Uh, but beyond that point I don't remember. And I don't remember getting on the airplane for sure except that I know where I lived and I was on the way to go and get there. So uh, no, so otherwise I don't remember. Uh, uh, I don't actually remember a lot about Basic Training either, specifically. I remember you know living in the barrack kinda, you know. Blocked in the little block buildings getting up and—but that's all and little bits and itty-bitty pieces…is all I remember.

TA: Umm, was Vietnam already underway when you joined?

Gla: Ya.

TA: And were you drafted or did you volunteer?

Gla: I volunteered.

TA: Okay

Gla: Umm, there's two reasons for that or I guess there's one reason for that…and if you volunteered you could select your MOS. And I did volunteer so—I could. And I had already graduated from NDSU. So, uh, so I volunteered but the problem was—it wasn't necessarily a bad deal but—it it it it uh, you volunteered because you didn't think you were going to be in the infantry. Because you knew that wasn't a very good deal. And

you didn't go through R—because I transferred I didn't go through ROTC…and, which is…and I did apply for OCS but I got rejected which, in retrospect, was a good deal because life expectancy of a 2nd Lieutenant in Vietnam was not very long…

TA: No

Gla: So—uh, so in retrospect that was a good deal. However, there were a lot of…a lot of other—well several other MOS's that I would have been more interested in and would of enjoyed the experience more. Although, what I did wasn't bad, but there were others that would have been better. But it was no way of knowing I didn't have a list and he didn't know—I, I don't quite remember how it all took place…and why I, you know, didn't get what I probably should have had. You know, I obviously didn't apply for it, but knowing what I know now there are a lot of things that I would of done. That would of been, you know, much more interesting and maybe more useful in the future.

TA: Ya. What was a typical day like during your service?

Gla: (Sigh, long pause) Well, I—geez that stuff's hard to remember you know. Um, it's um, almost impossible. Umm, I suppose there's several reasons but, uh, I know I was in Ft. Bliss for Basic Training. And then I went to Chicago for two months for, for uh, advanced training. And then I went back to Ft. Bliss for about six months. Uh, and then was transferred to Vietnam. I then came back to Ft. Leonard Wood for about three-four months and then moved up. Uh, but after Advanced Training I went back to Ft. Bliss uh…typical day was going to the uh, to the warehouses where they kept all the food and the trucks came in and whatever else was doing food inspections. Truck would come in with a gallon of eggs and if eggs came up with too many broken we'd reject the trucks and then and then uh, the driver would pay us ten bucks for helping to unload

the truck and we would unload potatoes (chuckles) well, we were inspecting the truck and so on—so forth. So we—we did that a lot. We could make extra money. At that time, you know, you didn't make very—the money wasn't very—it was not very good. (Chuckles) So that was a good deal.

TA: Um, what's one thing that you wish that civilians understood about the military in general?

Gla: The discipline that's instilled—and it happens automatically. You don't realize it happening. The military is particularly good at that. And it's almost…I don't know if I'd want to call it brain-washing but it's it's they are able to instill this command structure…uh, and you basically believe and do this without question. Uh, you, you, uh you you, if you follow orders without question you uh, you do this at a uh, with discipline, you…you you you do things like polish the hell out of your shoes and that kind of stuff that…it's just trivia…that makes really no difference except that it instills this, this uh this discipline and this sense of pride. I, you know, and I didn't know that at the time but after I think about what's going on now and how this all works to and and and you're recently up until recently I really didn't know any better. And so you see, uh, more of that happening uh—and the circumstances course are different but but uh, you know, in the last few years now the last three or four years is that you know I got more involved…uh, you uh you now have developed uh more of a sense of pride into that that I didn't have before. Uh, but then, you know, we're in Vietnam too so, we got—circumstances are substantially different than they are today too. Uh, you know an an and that's truth. Uh, however, uh, the memory of all of that uh is, in the memory a lot of things, is largely gone. And it will probably never return. At this point I expect it

won't return. Uh, because in, like well about 1980, in the early eighties…I got pretty sick. And at the time they, of course didn't really know about—well they knew about PTSD but nobody ever—nobody ever asked the question whether I was in the military. The question was never asked. They just said "well, you've got depression." Well, ya, I did. However, (chuckles) there was more to it than that. And so, uh, the only way they could fix it was they uh sent me through ETC finally. Well, that erased your whole damn memory. I mean that sucked. At the time I didn't realize it but later on, I mean, when I came home I didn't recognize the clothes in my closet. And eventually, you know, it starts coming back and uh…but some things never come back.

TA: Uh, is there anything that you uh, you feel like your service in particular uh taught you or uh anything that you, you would like people to know about your service?

Gla: (Long silence) Oh I think it taught me discipline. Uh, and I think it taught me pride and ownership and and and and probably to an extreme degree uh uh perfection and trying to do everything and go as far as you could go. And do and and be you know, I mean uh good enough is never good enough kind of deal.

TA: Uh hmm

Gla: And I—I see that in a lot of our vets. I think that's that's what's happened and I think that's what's really instilled in me and what and and and I see it in a lot of other guys too. And it's like the pride of ownership. And—and you get to realize later on and maybe at your age don't—and maybe you do that but particularly because of our circumstances you realize that um uh uh an extreme pride of ownership…later on. And control too. At the beginning there wasn't of course. I mean, you didn't tell anybody.

TA: Right

Gla: I mean you literally didn't. It was like, some people happened to know but otherwise you didn't go around advertising. You didn't put it on your resumé.

TA: Ya…How were you treated when you got back?

Gla: (Long pause) Well, because of where I lived in Wyoming, uh, not bad. I mean, it wasn't like we had uh, you know, and I never went through or or or was exposed to um…the…oh whatdya call it: protests and that kind of stuff. Um, you know I was able to semi you know get off of the airplane and nobody knew I was military. Even in Oakland I don't really remember…uh so I never saw any of that. And going into a small town uh you know you didn't see any of that. And uh, nobody, you know they said "okay well fine you're home." And you know you were just gonna do what you were gonna do. And uh, life goes on. Um, you know, there was no…well there was nothing beyond it really. You know, you're home son, okay. Now what?

TA: Ya. Would you say that that uh people treated you (waiter interrupts) um, are there any unique tools that you used during your service? Like what were the tools of your MOS?

Gla: Well I was, basically took care of scout dogs and uh food inspection. So there was really no, uh, well in terms of food inspection, the tools that uh, I used, uh—and happened to be—I actually happened to enjoy um just because of the circumstances uh we did a lot of sampling and statistical analysis and and, you know, getting in a shipment of potatoes and we wanted to know if they was good potatoes or bad potatoes you know got real so. And and I particularly liked, you know, math and and and that kind of thing led to this kind of thing which is statistical analysis and I sort of enjoyed the research and and and the research tied together the statistics and math and whatever else. And I enjoyed that in college too so—so it was kind of a—you know that was

kinda the fun parts you know. I was able to do that. And I understood em. You know a lot of guys didn't have a clue what that all meant but I understood the stuff. And and it was kinda fun.

TA: Did you find that it was easier or harder to explain that kind of thing to civilians did that sort of help you transition to college when you got back or…?

Gla: No! (Long Pause) I got out three months early to go to college. That was the deal at the time. I don't know if you still do that or not. I don't know if it still—probably not but whatever. Um…and and of course and so I went to get a second Bachelor's degree, I thought well that'd be kind of fun. I didn't know what else I was gonna do anyway. You know, and besides that, it got me out three months early. So (chuckles) if for no other reason than I had the G.I. Bill and and uh, with the G.I. Bill and when I went for my masters and the assistantship and stuff, why I couldn't afford to quit school cause I'd take a hell of a pay cut…(chuckles)

TA: Ya

Gla: So I uh, so now when I went to college after that and uh doing my second degree at North Dakota State for most of it, uh…nobody asked…nobody told, uh a deal, uh… in fact when I first registered—uh I went in to see my advisor uh, I said well here's my discharge papers and he told me "well what you want me to do with that?" It was just his attitude and he said that frankly, I mean just like we don't care.

TA: Uh huh

Gla: And I thought well do I I I gotta prove that I'm supposed to be here and whatever else. We don't give a shit. (Chuckles) you know? And so and so that uh so then okay fine. Well, and so I was um—I don't know that there was a transition. Uh, and if there was, I

didn't recognize it. Uh, I know that, uh you know, from the first quarter and a few more quarters in I stayed in a room with this uh lady, uh, you know, not too far from campus. You know, it was the only place I could stay and you know…and then after awhile I used to watch the news with her. And uh, or at least a few minutes. And then uh, almost every night was Vietnam pictures and movies and more or less about that deal and so you saw—which you sorta—this…this is normal um…so there wasn't uh (long pause). There wasn't a transition there wasn't…you know you're really not as …. there. But uh, there was no veteran's services or anything like that on campus that I was aware. Uh, and nobody pointed me to that direction that I knew about. When I went into see my advisors they were all "so what?" You know? They'd say "Oh gee, that's good." But there was no veterans services to help do some things for you and help you out. There was none of that. You know, there was no communication to get a return. Uh, and so I just sorta went to school and just sorta did my thing and and and and uh, never went beyond that. Uh, I I I do know now, you know, I didn't know then…and I wasn't exposed to it then—I don't know why—but uh, here recently, I looked up Montana State and I looked up what the—I was trying to find a couple kids I knew there. So I looked up the, uh yearbook. And it happened to be online and they had it all scanned and whatever else. I didn't find the guy—people I's looking for. But—but uh in the process of that whole yearbook there were several pictures of of and statements about uh uh uh uh Vietnam War protesting and so on that was going on on campus. And I did—I knew nothing about it. I hadn't heard about it I hadn't been around or whatever. I mean I went to class and and uh uh uh I went home and studied and I went to class

and I went back home again and and and I didn't interact on campus really. I didn't belong to any club or anything.

TA: Um, so what are some things that veterans experience that civilians don't?

Gla: When and where?

TA: Uh, anything that a veteran experiences that a civilian doesn't.

Gla: Oh god I don't know. (long pause) That would depend upon…what kind of veteran term you came out of.

TA: Uh huh

Gla: By a bunch. Because in our—our circumstances, we didn't have a group or a unit or anything else. So so there's nothing there that you can say well, gee whiz, we experienced this great teamwork and this wonderful whatever kinda thing and and it was all, you know, we didn't have any of that. So uh, you know, when you're one guy ya went and one guy came back and uh, you know, ya you you you you probably knew a couple people when you were there at the time but but you uh didn't remember their names and and you didn't—there wasn't any uh—there wasn't any closeness that we felt. Uh, and I think that was on purpose. And I think subconsciously that was done because if you didn't develop this closeness you didn't lose anybody.

TA: Mmm hmm

Gla: I I I I'm convinced that's what's going on. You know, but, but I don't—I mean—but but I do know that and I think, I think since then…um…(waiter interrupts) in-in-in the case of Vietnam I think one of the things that civilians uh, largely may not understand is that…you have this uh, uh…coldness added to—kinda thing. There—you ain't worth a shit at hugging. You know you, and and and and they don't understand why or how

come that is that way. I think that's one of the things that's happened to guys in Vietnam. Other eras…you know, I wouldn't know but… (waiter interrupts) piece of iron in me…

TA: Piece of iron shrap…?

Gla: Uh huh, ya, in my leg. Didn't know about it until I had x-rays here six months ago about…having a damn nerve hip problem.

TA: Huh

Gla: He says "it looks like you've got a piece of metal in there." Really? I don't know where else it woulda came from. He's like "well I'll look into it." Then…"well, shit, it ain't worth the damn trouble." (Chuckles).

TA: So you said your first duty station after AIT was back at Ft. Bliss?

Gla: Ya. Ya, I was a little irritated about that. I don't want to go down there. I want to go some place else.

TA: (Chuckles)

Gla: It wasn't necessarily…it was hot and dry down there. But, but I really wanted to go someplace else cause I'd never been anyplace else with people.

TA: Ya. Was there anything to do there or was it just norm… like normal Ft. Bliss? (Chuckles)

Gla: Ya, I did get kind of involved with some off-campus veteran activity kind of you know—on duty I never did but uh, when we'd go out on things for weekends well we went out to—well one or two times we went out to White Sands. You know?

TA: The Missile Base out there?

Gla: Well, no, just the White Sands…desert. Um…and and and and up in the mountains there's places around there that you know, you've never gone by yourself cause, you know, you don't know how to get there and so, you know it, quick trip going up there and get around some of the you know, kinda (waiter interrupts) we had a chance to seeing some of the sights…

TA: So, you said you guys didn't deploy in units to Vietnam. You just sort of reported, as single soldiers, to wherever you were going?

Gla: Yup.

TA: What was that like? Like when you got into the country did they just say like here it is? (waiter interrupts) what was it like when you got into country? Like your briefing?

Gla: No briefing.

TA: No briefing?

Gla: No briefing. None.

TA: Huh

Gla: Definitely not. We got off the airplane. We loaded on a bus. Went to the transfer station or whatever they called it. (Long Pause) Three story wooden barracks. The mess hall. And then, from there, I ended up at the veteran headquarters in Saigon. Which was where I got assigned anyway. I don't know how I ended up there. I assume somebody came from there and picked me up. But I don't know that. I don't remember. Uh, cause, um… you know, you get up there to these barracks and this processing center…I was in the middle line. And I remember they put me on the third floor of this thing. Of course, you felt kind of war that's aware of mission or whatever. I mean it's not a like a solid building by any means. There were, I don't know, several of us there, I guess. I don't

know any of these people but uh, so we went over to the mess hall and got something to eat. And coming back in the mess hall we crossed the street to the barracks the mess hall was just shut down and the cook would come and get us (long pause) and the Tet Offensive started. There was shooting all over. And I mean shooting. There were bullets coming over our heads. We had no fucking idea. Didn't have helmet, didn't have fatigues, didn't have flack vest. Didn't have shit. I mean, we had nothing. Uh, and these bullets…flying all over. And the and the and the cook's just "get down in the ditch!" Probably a good idea. (chuckles)

TA: Ya.

Gla: (Long Pause) Layed in the ditch for…I don't know how long. Then went to the barracks and barracks was about half empty. So I said well, there ain't no way I'm going back up on the god damn third floor. (Chuckles)

TA: Right.

Gla: That's probably not a good place to be, so…

TA: (Chuckles)

Gla: And so I went, and then, went to my unit…I don't know how I got there. Uh, and I don't remember—I'm pretty sure—well, I don't know… uh, I don't think I remember anything at the time…but, you know, the big invasion…and maybe they did and never registered it…you know, I was new kid on—fresh off the boat, I got no idea what's going on…

TA: So it's a surprise then?

Gla: Ya (chuckles)

TA: (chuckles)

Gla: Ya, oh ya.

TA: Sitting in Saigon in 1968 in the barracks and all of the sudden the Tet Offensive starts…

Gla: Uh huh (chuckles)

TA: (chuckles)

Gla: Ya, well, people—they were shooting as for real.

TA: Ya.

Gla: You know. And you got nothing. And you got no unit. You got no—you know what I mean? This is just—we were just a half dozen guys and uh all all all lost the same way basically.

TA: Mmm hmm

Gla: Uh so ya. Ya. So I got to unit headquarters. Whatever you call it. Someplace around Saigon. I don't know where. I had a, a typical you know, uh, Saigon house, you know, kind of thing. Where it wasn't a military purpose-built building. It was a typical Saigon house. And they knew I was coming. But they didn't know why. They didn't have any use.

TA: Were you debriefed when you left the country?

Gla: Nope.

TA: Nothing, just…

Gla: I was at Saigon headquarters for two months and they were like, oh, better luck than some guys. I didn't know what I was supposed to do but I was just sitting around Saigon. I had nothing to do. I had a captain there that was around, but he hadn't been in any more combat and wars than anyone else. So, so anyway, you fast forward and it

comes time to leave…and I'd been ten in, and so I knew I was going to be getting orders. And so I got orders. Um, and I—I don't know a helicopter went back to Saigon and went back (waiter interrupts) to uh, to headquarters… and they said, "well, we're gonna promote ya to E-5 so you don't have to go back and do KP."

TA: (Chuckles)

Gla: Okay, that's nice. I coulda been E-5 before but I don't know. They tried to promote me to E-5 but they said I don't have an interview. You know? So…

TA: So you say you didn't have any fatigues or any equipment of any kind?

Gla: No, I didn't have that until I got to headquarters.

TA: Uh huh. What did you carry before then?

Gla: Before I got anything?

TA: Ya

Gla: I mean, nothing.

TA: Nothing? You just came in your civilian clothes?

Gla: No, uh, fatigues.

TA: Ya?

Gla: Ya, nothing but fatigues. That's it.

TA: Ya.

Gla: My duffel bag didn't have a helmet in it or you know, I mean you weren't issued stuff first and carry it with you.

TA: Right.

Gla: I mean, you didn't even have a rifle. You weren't issued a helmet and flack vest and stuff like that.

TA: But then when you got to headquarters what did they issue you?

Gla: Well they must have issued me the stuff then.

TA: Ya

Gla: But I don't remember. I mean, I had to get it, but I don't remember.

TA: Ya. Do remember any impressions about uh, how it felt to carry it or…?

Gla: No…In training that's pretty much indoctrinated into you. And then, you kinda…it was an accepted part of life. A tradit—I mean you didn't question it.

TA: Ya.

Gla: And uh, a particular one I got trained in. Not so much in AIT cause that was a big base. Pretty much stayed inside. Once in awhile we'd go out, but not very often. But at train in I went out a lot. And so, uh, you know, you carried it with you all the time. I never shot the damn thing, but…(waiter interrupts)

TA: Ya. You remember, um, any difficulty communicating with trainers?

Gla: Trainers like…

TA: Like your Drill Sergeants or any—anybody in AIT?

Gla: Drill Sergeants maybe. Kind of. But uh, knowing what I know now. It was a necessary part of the training but uh, at the time course you didn't know that. And I was like, you can't find a bigger idiot. But in the AIT training I went to Chicago. They weren't trying to go to Vietnam. Of course there wasn't a lot of vets in Vietnam. They were mostly all, you know, around the world. But not in Vietnam. They didn't need—well, they needed them but they—so these guys were never around that kind of stuff. And they were…uh they were educators. They weren't drill sergeants. They were educators and they…uh

the military prescribes a specific curriculum and they took no liberty—reading the sucker word-for-word basically.

TA: Right

Gla: And you pass the test, life goes on and they it's a—it's an amazing training system. But, I mean, you you you learn what you need to learn. Period. Uh, you don't learn any theory of why this is true or not. It's just "this is what you need to know. This is what you do." Period.

TA: Right.

Gla: And you pass the test and life goes on. But they weren't uh, they were instructors and teachers. They weren't um uh, Drill Sergeants.

TA: Uh huh

Gla: They didn't have that mentality. They were just kind of ordinary people. And and uh and and and the culinary deal wasn't on a military base. It was in Chicago at their at the at the at the uh uh livestock yards is where it was. You know, the packing plants and stuff like that.

TA: Huh

Gla: Cause that's what they did too.

TA: Ya, so did, did they uh did they communicate differently than the Drill Sergeants did in Basic Training?

Gla: Well they communicated like a teacher.

TA: Ya

Gla: I got to the room. But there was no interaction with them afterwards. Before or after. I mean, they just came to work.

TA: Uh huh

Gla: Cause watching the base, I mean they didn't live there you know, we we lived there and it was a, you know, a big room and a bunch of bunks in there and and and uh, once we were out of class, you know, we could play or ride the bus around, go downtown Chicago or whatever and weekends or during the week or whenever. So, you know you never really got a three day pass because you know it was a five day a week deal and so we kinda had to be there to go to school but but uh, you know when school was out at 4:15 in the afternoon or whenever the hell that was you could go down, jump on a bus and go to a ball game if you wanted to. You know, you—we were free to come and go whenever we wanted to go. You just had to be there for class.

TA: Nice

Gla: And and and there must have been some kind of a mess hall there to eat. But I don't remember what that was. Or how that was.

TA: Ya

Gla: Otherwise we were free.

TA: Nice. So uh, did you have any difficulty communicating with other people when you got back from the military?

Gla: When I got back?

TA: Ya. When you got back from Vietnam specifically.

Gla: While I was still in the military?

TA: Ya

Gla: Ya. I didn't fit in back in Ft. Leonard Wood.

TA: Okay.

Gla: Uh uh, there was a veteran clinic there. And the and the vets were nice and you know the regular lieutenant was there and he wasn't a real vet he just got out of the school and went to the Army. And they weren't…you know, the Colonel that was there, he wasn't uh, been there all his life, you know, kinda deal. He wasn't gonna create any problems for anybody you know. He just had to fill out all his paperwork and do what he had to do, you know? Um, but uh, there was no discussion, uh, that I recall, uh, with any of the other vet techs that was there, truthfully that was there, and the vets and whatever else and you know the colonel was there and there was never any discussion about Vietnam and what it was like. Or whatever, but that was—it was never brought up. Uh, not that maybe we didn't want to talk about it or anything like that, it was just never brought up. Don't know why. Never, you know, now you come back and the other guys all want to know what happened. You know? All kind of things and another. And I—I got to know the lieutenant that uh or a captain I guess he was that had our headquarters barracks deal or part of that unit or whatever the hell it was. Uh, and I don't quite know how I got to know him. But I stumbled into a deal where they needed somebody to help with some 4-H projects or something. And I knew something about that so I went to help. It turned out his wife was in charge of it. And uh, and we became friends and I used to go over their place and uh after work and whatever and we'd watch T. V. and (Chuckles) and uh, when I finally got out and uh had to go to college or whatever, I needed to get a suit and uh she helped me get a suit that was the right style and everything and all that. And I and a couple of 4-H agents or whatever soon as I got off base or whatever, I got to go down and be the I went to I went to 4-H camp for

a week and for two weeks or something maybe it coulda been a week I don't know. Anyway, I got, you know, they set it all up so I got a special leave or whatever.

TA: Ya

Gla: And so I'd go do that. So I kinda had fun doing that. It was kinda interesting. But uh, it was something to kill time with. But there was never any discussion.

TA: That's interesting. And then, did anybody try to discuss it with you?

Gla: No

TA: Nobody ever? Just—

Gla: Not that I'm aware of. Not that I remember.

TA: Wow. Alright. What's the spirit of the bayonet?

Gla: I didn't hear you.

TA: What's the spirit of the bayonet?

Gla: The spirit?

TA: Mmm hmm

Gla: I don't know.

TA: Okay, what makes the green grass grow?

Gla: Don't know.

TA: Okay, who is the king of battle?

Gla: Don't know.

TA: Who is the queen of battle?

Gla: I don't know that either.

TA: What is another term for doing push-ups?

Gla: It seems like I know that one but I can't…

TA: Okay, what is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

Gla: I don't know that. Um, now I know that some of that stuff was—it had to be at Basic Training but however, with my memory erased, this data may not necessarily be valid. You gotta kinda be aware of this a little. Because if you wouldn't of been through that you may—some of this stuff you may actually have known. Uh, but because because of circumstances—there's a problem with the data. I wouldn't wanna hang my hat on it.

TA: (Chuckles) What is the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

Gla: That's uh, Navy, Army, uh Marine Corps I think.

TA: Okay, uh, what's a field of fire?

Gla: Well, any place where you could see.

TA: What do you yell out if you're injured?

Gla: Well, for us it was Medic.

TA: Okay, what about if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air?

Gla: Don't know. Didn't want to get into parachutes

TA: (Chuckles) Uh, what is a Blue Falcon?

Gla: Don't know that.

TA: What is a blanket party?

Gla: Don't know that either.

TA: Who is the non-commissioned officer in charge of a platoon or wing?

Gla: Oh, I don't know, a sergeant I suppose.

TA: What is a stick?

Gla: What?

TA: What is a stick?

Gla: Don't know.

TA: Uh, what sort of explosive is in a claymore?

Gla: I don't know. I think it's dynamite, but I don't know.

TA: Okay, what do you do if you smell CS in your AO?

Gla: (bangs on table three times) banging.

TA: Uh, what is the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

Gla: Well AR is for AR-15, but I don't know if that has—that's what it's referring to or what the others are, I have no idea.

TA: Okay, what is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

Gla: Well, the distance between units.

TA: Uh, what is an NCO?

Gla: Non-commissioned officer.

TA: Okay, and what is AIT?

Gla: AIT is advanced infantry training.

Deimos Interview

Deimos is a veteran of the Army from the Vietnam War era. He was enlisted and received the Bronze Star.

TA: So, uh, describe your first day of military training.

DE: (Chuckles) Aww, we went from Portland, at the induction center[88], stayed over night there. I stayed all night in the—in the YMCA. I had breakfast the next morning, went down to the induction center and they swore us in. And they put us on a bus; we went

[88] Now referred to as Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS), the purpose of these stations is to determine physical fitness of recruits, branch them for service, and decide when they will ship to basic training, based upon their assigned or chosen Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Recruits are also sworn in for the first time at this station.

to Fort Lewis. Spent nine weeks there…actually ten. And I remember we were driven—it wasn't that—it ain't that far away but anyway, we ended up getting there about dark and it was about October. September or October. The days were starting to get a little shorter. And—and, uh, we got there and the first thing I heard was a string of cuss words and some guy in a Smoky Bear hat[89] getting on the bus, "get the fuck off ahhhhh!" Everybody piles out of there, you know, and they had us lined up and…and uh, what was it we did? Oh, we had to uh, fill a bunch a paperwork…first few hours we were there, you know? And it was, you know, the the the theory was obviously that they get ya scared and keep ya that way. You know? And the first thing the drill instructor[90] said—he was just a little guy. He wasn't real big. And, uh, had some pretty good size boys where I was in at. One friend of mine, Fred… he was 6'4" 218lbs and he didn't care, you know…but he was pretty smart too. Uh, drill instructor, after screaming and hollering and—and uh—said, "If anyone here can kick my ass, step out now!" Of course, nobody moved, you know?

TA: Right

DE: "Oh shit, guy might be tough…I don't know." Why do I want to do that? Anyway, nobody moves, so and I thought hmm, I've always won, you know…(chuckles). And then they finished chow and I can remember the smell that I had never smelled before. What the hell is that? It's the mess hall[91]. (Chuckles). Oh, it smelled terrible. It was terrible. And I don't know what it was, whether it was SPAM or what it was, that had

[89] Drill Sergeants wear what's known as a "Campaign Hat" to distinguish them from other NCO's. The flat-brimmed, round, symmetrically-pinched hat is similar to those worn by the park service and its famous mascot.
[90] Typically the Army calls its Initial-Entry trainers Drill Sergeants and the Marines call them Drill Instructors, but it is common to hear the terms used interchangeably, except among the instructors themselves.
[91] Mess hall is a typical colloquialism for the "dining facility" (DFAC) term the Army now prefers.

that mess hall and they were loud. And then the mess hall had…I don't know what the deer was—it was like summer sausage and cheese and crackers or some shit. It wasn't nothing cause it was past chow[92]. And they just gave us a little—whatever it was—I don't know what. And then they—then they put us to bed. That was it. Next morning at four in the morning they come crashing into the barracks[93] and—and uh, uh, woke us all up. And aaaaasked us if we'd like to get out of bed. And basically, the guys that didn't get out of bed were—were uh, flailing down the bay in their mattress and whatever they had on. You know, it was—they was beating on their garbage can and screaming—have you ever seen *Full Metal Jacket*[94]?

TA: Uh huh.

DE: Well—like that.

TA: Ya?

DE: A lot like that. And uh, and after that it was go, go, go, run, run, run, run, and—and uh, just, you know, basically…basically you look back on it and say you understand what they did, why they did it. They had nine weeks to teach you how to maybe uh…escape death. And that wasn't guaranteed. And they were trying to teach to start thinking along military lines and—and military terminology…military…military's the wrong word to why way the military way. "And you will do it the military way. Or I'll know why." And, um, we had a couple of drill sergeants and one of em, I'll never forget him, SFC. Holmes. He was an E-7. He had his campaign hat. And he was the kind of guy—get it

92 Colloquialism for regular meal times.
93 The name for any building in which soldiers sleep with a large variety of layouts. The most common layout is four rows of bunkbeds with lockers or footlockers for each bunk. Also known as billets.
94 The film *Full Metal Jacket* is often cited as the most accurate film depiction of military initial entry training. It depicts a Marine Boot Camp in the Vietnam War era.

done or I'll beat you to death, you know? Virtually, that's just how he was. And he wasn't a real big guy. He was average size and just you know what I mean? And I think he wore uh uh under—underwear to stay warm. That's how skinny he was. It didn't make much difference, you know? Skinny guy. And there was another guy named SSG Wilson that was more of a team player, kinda like the coach of a football team type guy. And he was uh more…team effort, team effort. You know, learn to take care of yourself and yer and yer buddy. Cause someday you may have him to to depend on your life and you his. And virtually, that's basically what it was. And uh, that was what he was strong on. And uh, umm, basically, you know, it-it-it was it was brutal. It was rough. Uh, but it—there was a reason for it. And after I left there why I went to Fort Ord, California[95] and—and it was like any other kind of thing, you know, basically.

TA: What was that typical day like once you got to your permanent duty station?

DE: Well, in the morning, well, when I got to a permanent duty station?

TA: Ya

DE: Oh, after I—after I was cadre[96], I stayed right there at Fort Ord for a long time. Um…about a year or so. And it was basically, you know, they sent me to school to be a cook and that's what I was, and I'm thinking, like, thank god, you know?

TA: (Chuckles)

DE: And um, I worked a shift just like a week and weekend. Then I had the next weekend off. I had a permanent pass to go anywhere I want. It didn't matter where it was. I get back in time to report in for Monday morn—err actually, Monday noon form—just to

[95] Now closed, Fort Ord was an Army Base on Monterrey Bay in California. Part of the base was converted to a National Monument by President Obama to protect a native butterfly.
[96] This is a colloquial use of the term cadre, which typically means a military instructor in this context. Here the participant uses the term to denote permanent-party status at the base.

start my, my week, basically. And it was pretty—it was pretty easy duty really, other than the fact that I had to put up with this black[97] son of a bitch a drill serg—err he wasn't a drill sergeant he was a mess sergeant, E-6, finally made E-6. And, what was he…in his thirties? I can't remember. 270 lbs. of asshole, basically. I just didn't like him. He didn't like me. We always used to go round and round. You know, wanting to take me into the store room and beat the shit out of me and I kept telling him you ain't worth it. You know, I don't need to go—I don't need to go to court martial for your black ass. You know? (Chuckles) But we just—finally I got a job going up to battalion bakery and we were working and running that, which was good duty. I mean, I was up there running my own show. Did my own thing. Did my own planning. Ordered everything. All I did is make cookies, cakes, pies, and—and uh pastry. You know? For about six months there, it was sweet. It was kind of a—it was kind of a test thing. Because we always do their—every company used to do their own and they just thought, "well why don't we just have a central thing? And that was all they do." You know, and I got picked for that. Boy, Henderson didn't like it…didn't like it one bit. He would always come up there and harass me. "Time to get a haircut, don't you think?" I says, time to wipe your ass! I say (chuckles) and get outta my, I said, get outta my bakery. You know, this is mine, you know? And he was coming up there and they had—I'll never forget, I had my supervisor, was supervisor over the two shifts, you know, that we had going. And we had, what, six guys per shift, plus KPs[98]. And, uh, so I had, you know, my job is to coordinate everything for what I had to do for my shift

[97] By way of a trigger warning, this participant became more and more comfortable with what might be considered racist language as the interview continued.
[98] KPs are soldiers from other parts of the base who are periodically assigned kitchen duty to assist the cooks in the dirtier jobs like cleaning and washing dishes.

and my people. And keep em busy and and basically supervise them. I didn't do a hell of a lot of work. But (chuckles) my supervisor come down—his buddy that was on the other shift—and he was, he was the lead man on the other shift. He was the guy that was taking care of the other shift—went AWOL[99]. And it really upset him bad, I mean he just I I look back on it and I think what, were they fuck buddies or what? You know? And he come up, one day, he come up and uh he come up to the bakery there and he was drunk off his ass. Just countermind giving orders, countermanding orders, countermanding my orders, you know, it he didn't chew on me too much he just say one thing and turn around and tell me something else. And then, so he left. And I'm thinking I don't want this motherfucker back here, he's gonna fuck up my situation. You know I got shit, I got work, I got product to put out and I got—I know what I want em to do and… so I went up to his buddy's, next door, and mess hall over there. And I sent one of the KPs over and I said ask, ask uh Sgt. Uh Barry to come over and let me talk at him a minute. He knew me, I knew him. He comes over and he's "what's up bud?" I says, your buddy? …is drunk on his ass. If he gets caught on duty, drinking, he's gonna lose all five of them little stripes[100] he's got. And I said plus god knows what else. I said I didn't want to see him get in trouble. But I don't want him here messing with me either. So I said, why don't you go find him, go tell him to sleep it off. And it must of worked cause that's what happened. The next day come in, I never said a word, he never said a word and went on like nothing ever happened. You know?

TA: Mmm hmm

[99] AWOL or Absent Without Official Leave is the status assigned to soldiers whose whereabouts go unreported to her or his supervisor.

[100] The rank of SGT is denoted by three stacked chevrons but as it is the fifth enlisted rank, it is sometimes referred to as having five strips. One extreme non-judicial punishment is to reduce a soldier to the first enlisted rank.

DE: But and then after about six months they they decided that that it was gonna, they were gonna go back to the same thing cause…(tumble in next room) who was that?

TA: (Chuckles)

DE: The mess sergeant was was umm, they were all complaining cause they were short-handed. You know, Henderson wanted me back. And they say they had this other guy there that was OJT[101]. (Chuckles) He was losing equipment. He was screwing things up and had Henderson had to go in there and work and he didn't like that. And he kept coming up, "You're coming back. You're coming back. You're coming back." I said, no I'm not. "No, yes you are. Gotta have you. You're coming back." I'm not coming back. And and (chuckles) what I done is I put in uh a transfer. I mean I hated the fucker that bad. I knew if I stayed there, he and I was gonna get get to it because he was just an asshole. And and he didn't need to be.

TA: Ya

DE: You know, and uh uh it was the day, the very day that it was the last day, I was cleaning up, getting stuff packed up, things going out…and uh, equipment pack to the right people and and um, my orders come down. 30 days delayed transfer: Vietnam.

TA: Huh

DE: I'm thinking cool. You know? So I'm walking down the—walking down the street there between the—between the billets and the mess halls and stuff and he drives up in his car and he says, "I told you you coming back!" I says, no I'm not. I'm gonna go back and clear post asshole. (Chuckles) "Oh my god!" Comes up to the billet, comes over there "stay, you could've stayed," he says "I would have promoted you right up

[101] Here the acronym OJT, or On the Job Training, is used in a derogatory fashion to illustrate the ineptitude of a recruit that had arrived from Army Training with low skill level.

the chain." He says, "I had you in for 5." And I said, I said, uh uh. Not at any price. Not even if you paid me out of your own pocket. You know? So that's—after that I, you know, I—I uh, ya I—30 days delayed transfer I—but I had fun there. We did—you know, I met this guy he was one of the trainees. He had a, he had a a a Mustang, Shelby 350. It was his. And he lived in San Francisco is where he'd been born and raised. We used to go up there and party every weekend, just about, we had off. He knew everybody. And he drank and I'd get to drive the car. It was like that white one up there (points to a model car on wall).

TA: Ya

DE: Loved that car. I wanted that car so bad I could taste it. I didn't make enough money to get it but I wanted—cause he was gonna sell it. He was he was going to 'Nam too. But ah, I would have loved to have that car. But anyway, and then when I got to Vietnam, it was different. They told me they didn't need cooks and they and I was going up North and I was going to be either in the Air Cav or Armor [102]. What are they doing up there? Don't they need any cooks up there? "No, nope, don't need none." And um, that's—spent my time uh, several different jobs. And and, some of em weren't so good and some of em were better. And and it was (phone rings) it it it was just hoping, you know, nothing bad happened to ya. And you make it back to the world cause it was that's what we called it, the world. You know, it was, over there, it wasn't the world, it was hell on earth and nobody wanted to be there. It was hot. It was muggy. It was—insects everywhere or or and the whole country stunk. I remember the first thing when I stepped off that airplane was that smell. Blast furnace hit me in the face. 130 degrees.

[102] The Army refers to its rotor-wing aircraft (helicopter) units as cavalry. The Air Cav is simply a unit of attack and transport helicopters. The Armor is made up of tanks, armored personnel carriers and other support trucks.

And we was there at night so it was about 97 degrees. I'm thinking oh, what in the hell is that smell? "That's the 'Nam, buddy." You know? "Oh, by the way, the bunkers[103] are in the back." You know?

TA: Ya

DE: "Be aware where they're at." You know? And then we, then they we did intake there. And, and uh, went to another place, called Dong Tam[104]. And, um, spent our uh, orientation week there. And that was pretty—I got a sunburn. You know, cause I took my shirt off. "If you ever go out of sick bay, specialist, you're gonna get an Article 15[105]." Ooo…you know…

TA: (Chuckles)

DE: (Chuckles) terrible!

TA: Ya, what is one thing you wish civilians understood about military service in general, or your service in particular?

DE: Well, in the time I was in? Uh… the college kids… not that I got anything against college people, cause I don't. They're children, just like anybody else…umm, they were protesting, against the war. You know, which, you know in retrospect, they should of. But on the end of time, at the time, they weren't giving us, uh, any appreciation for what we were doing and why we were doing it. And and whether it was amoral or

[103] The soldier being quoted here refers to the mortar bunkers that keep soldiers safe on a Vietnam Fire Base, the equivalent to modern FOBs.
[104] A former US Army and Navy base on the Mekong delta in Vietnam. It was used primarily by the 7th and 9th Infantry divisions from 1966 until 1975.
[105] A step above a formal counseling statement by one's supervisor, the Article 15 is a permanent part of a soldier's record that denotes bad behavior on a soldier's part. Drill Sergeants often tell recruits that they can be charged with damaging government property for getting a sunburn. In practice, this is rarely punished, but soldiers in warzones often receive harsher punishments than those in garrison.

whether we were baby killers[106], cause I remember coming back, they threw uh, you know, (scoffs) vegetables, and tomatoes and fruit at us and and calling us baby killers and just basically told us to get off the plane. Change out of your uniforms. If you've got civilians[107], go, get in em, cause we don't recommend you having—cause we can't protect you. So, you know, we got off at—you know, where was it? San—San Francisco. We came in there. And uh, there was a little protesting going on but it wasn't real—really a lot, but yet, you know, I wore my uniform, I was still in my jungle fatigues[108]. You know, I didn't have my class A's[109] or or didn't even draw any until I got to Oakland. But, umm, basically, I wish that we would have been uh, more appreciated. Uh, for, like they're doing now more with the troops.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: It's a different Army now than it used to be. It's a different society now. It's a different uh, attitude, uh with the military. There's a lot of people in the military right now who are there mostly because they can't find jobs. And it's it's something to do and it pays good. Uh, better that it was when I was in, cause I was in Vietnam, I was making $400 a month. And that's well, and then on top of that I got my all I could eat, sleep, and clothes and and anything I needed I wanted, I could get. One way or the other. You know? And uh, so, it, and I can remember coming home on the plane and the pilot

[106] "Baby killer" is a term sometimes used to describe soldiers, especially of the Vietnam era, by those who opposed the war. Its actual use as a slur for soldiers was likely short-lived, but it made an impression on the soldiers, who were nonetheless afraid of being judged this way.
[107] Any non-uniform clothing that did not promote a soldier's affiliation with the military is known as civilian clothes, civvies, or civilians.
[108] The OG-107 and 507 or Olive Green uniform was standard for all military services from 1952 to 1989. Some special units incorporated what might today be considered bladed-leaf camouflage, but the typical uniform was simply plain, olive green, cotton-poly blend utility blouse and cargo pants. This uniform was replaced by the Woodland Camo Battle Dress Uniform (BDU).
[109] The Class A Uniform refers to the Army Dress Uniform of the time with suit jacket, button up shirt, patent leather shoes, and garrison cap.

getting on the horn and saying "well, we're out of rocket range." (Chuckles) Everybody's going "Hey! Cool, man!" And we stopped off at uh, Hawaii, on the way back. And I would have liked to of stayed there but that wasn't happening. We were winding down the war at that time. And I was considering staying if I could of went to helicopter school.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: You know, but they couldn't guarantee us. It was "Well, we're winding down the war and we don't need—we're bring home uh, the 200-250 thousand troops per month, which was a lie. They weren't bringing home that many. They were bringing home about 10 thousand.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: But when I got to the uh the center in Oakland, it was packed. There were more coming in every day. And they averaged about 4-6 thousand people a day. And it took you 3-4 days to process.

TA: So, you already sort of answered this question, uh, how were you treated when you finished your service? So, you said…

DE: After, after uh, my experience was nothing compared to—all I know is is as a veteran who was coming home, nobody wanted to hear about the war.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: Nobody wanted to hear about what you did, where you were, what you are and what, what you did uh in any bar I was ever in. You know? Get up and walk away from you. They didn't want nothing to do with ya. A—and, so you didn't talk about it. You didn't say much. You had to think about if you even wanted people to know you were in.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: And uh, it was that way for a very, very long time. That war was an unpopular war. Uh, and uh, it ain't so much today but it's it's in the p—my generation we're all old men now, in just a very short time, it seems like, you know? It seems like, it seems like yesterday.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: Sometimes…but we were young and stupid.

TA: Ya, I think that about my service.

DE: Ya, ya.

TA: (Chuckles) Umm, are there any unique tools that you used during your service? And if so, how would you explain those tools to a civilian?

DE: What kind of tools you talking?

TA: Like anything that you used on a daily basis on any one of your jobs that…

DE: Oh, there's radios…

TA: Uh huh

DE: Uh, used of course, helicopters. That was a very big deal. Uh, that's the most thing you remember about anything. You hear props[110] and it takes you back to those days when you hear the popping of them props. And and uh, that was a big deal. Umm, aircraft, uh, I suppose the partying, the drinking, the uh uh the uh pot smoking was rampant.

TA: And that was a tool?

DE: It was a coping tool.

TA: Ya.

[110] The propellers of different aircraft have different sounds and can often be distinguished from other aircraft by veterans who served around them for a long time.

DE: That's what it was.

TA: Ya.

DE: And there was other guys on other shit that was much worse than pot ever thought of getting. Opium.

TA: Uh huh

DE: There was guys on pills. There was, there, there, was an issue with that but we—during working hours, you didn't do that.

TA: Uh huh

DE: You did your job. You did what you had to do.

TA: Right

DE: Your life depended on it. You know, I can remember, you know, uh, when I turned 21 I was sleeping in a tree in the jungle and hoping I didn't fall. I had to tie myself in. And just being quiet.

TA: Uh huh.

DE: And listening to the night…the night sounds, which was amazing…

TA: Ya

DE: And thinking to myself, here I am, 21 in Vietnam. You know, am I gonna get out of here? Oh I, you know? And and um, we were moving at night and and uh uh, you know, sss sleeping in the day, when we could get it. We was always tired. Always tired…you sit down for a few minutes, you could sleep. No problem, you know? And we lived…we lived in our tanks and PCs[111] some of the time, when I was doing that.

[111] PCs or APCs are Armored Personnel Carriers used by mechanized infantry and armor units to cover long distances without exposing an easy target.

And when I was, got to be on the bird[112], my job was to make sure—I had a radio, I had my own radio, separate from the chopper[113]. And I was talking to people on the ground making sure that the right ordinance[114], the right supplies, the right people were getting off at the right fire base[115]. And there were fire bases all over. They had, uh, mostly Marines doing that. And then uh, I can remember going out the A Sâu Valley[116]—beautiful valley—just beautiful, green, breeze cool, wasn't the heat. There was, it was, cool and the breeze was blowing. Nice place. Untouched. And we were like ten miles from the Lagos border. Well, we could see with our optical equipment that there were tanks on the borders. And we was wondering if they were ever gonna come across and if they did we knew that there would be battle. And we were hoping they weren't cause we wouldn't have it. And we were sitting there in A Sâu Valley and and uh I can remember inci—there was this one incident I'll never forget if I live to be 100. I got flown out to the field. Our chopper broke down and we were waiting for parts. And we had lost a bunch of hydraulic fluid. They had busted some hoses is what happened. And, uh, because we got shot at. I think that was some of the reasons we was losing pressure. And uh, I was up there helping em, you know, the crew chief and taking those hoses off and getting ready to, you know, get more equipment. And they called us up and told us, uh, it's gonna be—it wouldn't be til next day cause nothing flew at night. And so we were in this valley, you know, just nice and cool and we had took our PCs and tanks and put em in a circle whiles we checked out the grounds and made sure no

112 Colloquial term for helicopter.
113 Another colloquial term for helicopter.
114 Explosives and ammunition.
115 Equivalent to modern FOBs, a fire base was a small outpost meant to defend a specific piece of strategic ground or serve as a base for local missions in Vietnam.
116 A coastal valley near the Vietnamese border with Laos.

spider holes[117] were there. And if there were, we'd investigate em. And cause we had a uh uh a A troop did almost the same thing, only they had spider holes and they just opened up, threw a grenade down and closed em. And and that wasn't enough and they come up in the middle of the night and wiped out the whole entire troop. Uh, burning PCs, dead people everywhere. And so, we learned from that. And we had a pretty good commander. He was uh, he was a new guy. And I can't remember his first name. But Jefferson. He was a West Pointer. And he uh, was captain. He was in helicopters. And to make major he had to have a field command. And that's what he was doing there with us. He didn't necessarily know anything about tanks or PCs or tactics or any of that but he was—he had a good attitude. He come up and, you know, he'd come up just like any other of the rest of us. He'd come up and joke with us and laugh with us and and uh, "good morning, sir[118]," he'd say. Shit like that, you know? And we were shocked to ever hear that from an office—err—captain, you know?

TA: (Chuckles) Ya.

DE: And and the one before that, Captain Pitts, he was he was West Point. He had his shit together pretty good. Anyway, um…I was helping the FO[119]—officer and we were doing the maps and we were setting up uh artillery uh codes to—if we ever got in trouble…overan—we could get on the horn and give em a code and that give em grid

[117] A spider hole was a camouflaged hole used by North Vietnamese troops to move throughout the jungle undetected and surprise ambush enemies.

[118] The typical courtesy is for an enlisted soldier to call an officer mam or sir. By flipping this expectation, the officer was communicating that he did not feel superior to his subordinates. This is a method of command that is sometimes taught in conjunction with study of Henry V. This was also a common tactic for officers in Vietnam to confuse potential enemies about who the leader of a unit was, as NVA troops were trained to kill officers at the outset of any engagement.

[119] The FO or Field Officer was responsible for keeping precise track of the location of the unit for land navigation and artillery grid points.

coordinates[120] and what we wanted and we was doing like airburst[121], you know, uh uh 30 meters up, 50 meters out.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: You know? Uh and getting that set up. And I was always pretty busy doing that. Plus, we had the radar and and I got stuck doing radar duty at night[122], you know. We had 50% guard, so 50 on 50 off[123]. And we had this armor group was our counter-part…tanks, PCs, just like we were…our equipment, basically. And they come out and they were on right next to us. Well, me and the FO and and uh the XO[124] went over and told their commander where we were, where our LPs[125] were, and um, you know, don't fire on em. You know? And alright alright understood. They had their interpreter. And he understood because he point out on the map where we were and all that. And and so we figured they understood. Well, we went back and it was getting dusk. Wind started kicking up and one of the trip flares[126] went off. Their people opened up, everything they had. And we couldn't get em shut down[127]. Their own commander could not get em to shut down. We had to go with .45s[128] put em to their head, tell them to shut down, there's friendlies before we could get em all shut down. Finally we did. The

120 Grid coordinates give specific instructions to artillery about where to fire.
121 An airburst artillery shell would explode before impact in order to spread shrapnel over the heads of enemy troops.
122 In the darkness, radar can be used, especially in jungle humidity, to detect the movement of enemy units outside an established perimeter.
123 At 50% guard, a unit is allowing 50% of its soldiers to rest, while 50% is alert and maintaining a perimeter with intersecting fields of fire.
124 The executive officer (XO) is the assistant to the unit commander.
125 An LP or Listening Post is a small detachment of 2-3 soldiers assigned to listen for radio traffic and enemy activity.
126 A trip wire attached to a flare that could be seen on the perimeter being maintained by the unit.
127 To stop firing or cease an activity.
128 A powerful sidearm weapon.

grass was burning because of all the tracers[129]. And and this one guy gets up and he is fucking livid pissed. He was gonna go over there and—couple guys had to go over there and tackle him, take his weapon away from him, cause he was gonna go over there and shoot some of them fuckers. He was pissed. Scared the shit out of him. Nobody got hit, nobody got hurt, nobody got killed. It was a miracle and he was pissed. They drug him off and calmed him down and oh he was pissed. I couldn't believe it; I thought these guys are crazy. Next morning, we woke and they were gone, thank god. And then we went to another fire base, set up camp, and stayed there another 30 days. And we was in a place called Parche's Garden[130], we called it. And up on the hill, Charlie Brown[131] was up on the hill from us, which was probably about 8 klicks[132]. And there were probably maybe 900 feet above us, maybe more. And [the Army] had a uh a fire base up there. They had 8 inch and they had 175 they flew in[133]. And they were a fire base for the A shop[134] basically. And we were there to support them and the engineers and we also had 8 inch and 5 inch in our base. Artillery. And one night uh, things got hot[135]. You hear em on the radio and they hit them first. The hardest one first. That's the way they think. Hit the hard one first and the rest will be easy. Well, they went up and and assaulted the hill and, uh, the green flares went up. And we knew

[129] Tracer ammo contains a chemical that glows when fired from a weapon. It is designed to help machine gunners follow the path of their rounds and adjust fire closer to their target.
[130] Individual hills in Vietnam were often given numbers that corresponded to artillery grid coordinates. Since soldiers preferred names to numbers, they would often rename numbered hills in honor of their commanders or other important places or people. Parche's Garden appears to be a reference to a commander of the hill, but that could not be verified.
[131] The Viet Cong were often referred to as Victor Charlie, or VC. Charlie was a shortened version of this moniker. Charlie Brown was meant to be more offensive as a reference both to the Viet Cong and the ineptitude of the Charles Schulz comic book character.
[132] Colloquial term for Kilometer.
[133] Reference to a specific types of Howitzer Artillery Guns.
[134] An Ammo reloading and issuing facility.
[135] This refers to combat activity increasing.

then that they uh called fire on their own head cause they were overrun. And uh, I'll never forget that night—that was weird. We were firing on them. Their own, our own people.

TA: Uh huh

DE: And they were uh, I don't know, can't remember how many uh casualties we had over that. But, uh, they flew in new shit the next day. Then so, you know, we survived it and they were policing up the dead and flinging them in a sling and flying em out in the A Sâu and dropping em. You know, wait til we get hit the next day real hard. Cause they were pissed, you know? If you mutilated their body in any way, after death, they wouldn't go to heaven.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: So we—we made sure the bodies were mutilated, you know, to say the least. So, and then after that I got pulled back to the rear, which I was thankful. And um, I got to take care of stuff back there and we were—duty was pretty easy there. We got hit once or twice, just harassment. They come in and set up the rockets and and then they sneak out and they were on timers. And they they would they put a H pattern across the HELO pad and that was about it. You know? Just about every two or three nights they would do that.

TA: So you've answered a lot of my questions but um, uh, what sort of equipment did you carry with you?

DE: I had a personal weapon: a .38[136] I carried underneath my uniform. I had a .45[137]. I had an M-16[138].

TA: The A-1[139]?

DE: Ya. The uh 16 and uh, see, we didn't have—they had just come out with the other one—uh, second generation that had the M-79[140] under it?

TA: Uh huh, the uh um, grenade launcher.

DE: Ya, grenade launcher. We had M-79s, which were just like a shotgun. You opened em up, dropped a round in it…

TA: Ya.

DE: …you go (mimics sound of grenade launcher "poonk") They didn't like that.

TA: (Chuckles)

DE: They heard the poonk, they didn't know where it was coming. And you guys got pretty good with them. They could put a hole in your back pocket if they wanted to.

TA: Mmm hmm

DE: Beehive round, which was like a big shotgun shell, with with umm uhh, some kind of shot, it was about so big around (gestures dime size with fingers) like the size of claymore rounds.

TA: Uh huh

DE: And it had 750 BBs in it. And they weren't BBs, they were ball bearings. And I would go out and help em set up perimeter with claymore, gas, trip flares, that sort of thing.

136 A medium caliber sidearm.
137 A high caliber sidearm.
138 A low-caliber, high velocity assault rifle.
139 An early version of the M-16 with a triangular, plastic grip and exhaust ports at the top for hot gas.
140 Incorrectly attributes the designation of the M-79 handheld grenade launcher to the M-203 under-barrel grenade launcher that attached to the barrel of the M-16A2.

That's where I learned about that: OJT. You know? And I learned how to find mines. And you know, heaven forbid, if you were ever caught in a minefield, you know, it's usually way too late by the time you find that out. There's usually some dead people…or wounded. And you gotta stop where you are and just, you know, crawl forward, just keep poking and hoping. You know, and uh, I got lucky and never ran into one of them. But I had friends that did. And then, then uh, the only real action I seen was uh when I got stuck with the alert patrol, for a while—and most because there wasn't anybody else at the time. And it was "you, you, you, on him." You know? He comes over and says, "You don't need this, and you don't need that, and you don't need that! And this is what we take, this is what we do and we're out 30 days at a time."

TA: What did he have you get rid of?

DE: Well, uh, stuff that, you know, if you had books or if you had, uh, non-essential combat gear.

TA: Uh huh

DE: Basically, you don't need this. You don't need the air mattress. You don't need…that's too much of what you're gonna need. You know, it's not cold. You're not gonna get cold. So you didn't need any extra—alls you need is maybe extra socks. Ya, you made sure you had that. And, and you didn't have any extra uniforms. All you took was your entrenching tool[141], you know, your bayonet, your weapon and ammo. And if you didn't look like you had enough, he'd give you machine gun ammo to carry. You know,

[141] A compact folding shovel used for digging foxholes, trenches, cat holes, and used as an improvised machete.

you're a new back[142] for him. And we had a 81 mortar round[143]. Poor bastard, they had to pack that that plate[144], you know? And you were flown out to an area, you dropped, and your job was to go out and set up ambushes. Uh, report in every so often. Uh, and in probably 27-29 days or if you had wounded, that's the only time you had contact with anybody outside your group, which was um, 12 guys. Usually, in my case, I was lucky. We didn't have any casualties. We didn't lose anybody. Uh, and you would just—you know, I found myself doing jobs that I certainly didn't have the rank for. I was doing an E-5 job. They finally made me E-5. But, um, I was specialist, not hard 5[145], which, I didn't care. Money was the same. You get combat pay[146] and whatever that what was that, 75 bucks? (Chuckles) ridiculous. And then um, uh, I don't know, you just, you just umm—I got a fr—and old friend that calls me ever once in awhile, just out of the blue—we talk, and he's about the only one that does. Umm, ssss, I lost friends, over there, and and it was, it was a ridiculous war. For what it was—war is that way anyways, it's characteristics of war. People lose their lives and their people they're cripples for the rest of their lives, they're they got no legs, they got no arms, uh, they're not, psychologically, ever right after that. And some are, some aren't, some are able to cope, others aren't. I was lucky and was able to cope reasonably well. Um, however, I did go to counseling and I did do that for a while. And uh, it helped. It helped some.

142 A new back is someone who is new to the unit, who may be better fed and in better physical condition to carry extra weight.
143 A small artillery-like shell that is fired by infantrymen. It is nonetheless quite heavy to carry.
144 The tube and plate that enables firing of the mortar round.
145 At some points it becomes necessary for a soldier who has not achieved the fifth enlisted rank (SGT) to nonetheless become an NCO. As a result, the soldier is usually promoted to Corporal which is an NCO rank without being a fifth grade. Essentially, corporal functions as the same rank as Specialist for pay but has a bit more responsibility. This is the transition being described.
146 Extra pay designed to compensate soldiers serving in hazardous situations.

TA: Do you remember having any difficulty communicating with your trainers when you got to training?

DE: No. They were screaming and yelling at you. They didn't have time to communicate with anybody, you know?

TA: (Chuckles) What about communicating with other people when you left?

DE: Civilian-like wise? Well, my situation probably wasn't much different than a lot of them…guys that I'd known anyway. Um, some guys were married and they got the "Dear John" letter[147]. And their spouses divorced them and they found someone else, somebody who was there, you know? And when you look back upon it, it's not to be unexpected. I mean, if you're thinking you've been being a mature human being, which most of us weren't, we were teenage kids running up and down the street, drag racing and the next day we're in the jungle. I try to think what happened, you know? Shit, I'm never gonna, I'm gonna cruise forever when I get out. And when you get out, it's not like that at all. All the people you know are gone. They gone to school, they gone to college, some of em are dead, some of em moved away. You know? It's amazing what a couple of years can do to your life. You know, where you're, the place you grew up in. You know, for me, I come home to a wife that changed her mind. Said, "I don't love you, I never did," and the only reason, in reality, she didn't say it in so many words is cause uh, I think she was about half afraid of me. And um, she left—she married me to get away from mommy and daddy, because she was in a situation where, like we were raised, basically, or I was raised. You know, religious atmosphere and this, that and the other thing, is how it is, and "this way is how it's gonna be as long as you live in my

[147] A story soldiers tell each other speaks of getting the letter that ends the relationship with a loved one back home. The dear John letter is a pretty constant fear for any soldier in a relationship.

house!" …which is fine… but she didn't—couldn't—she was only 18 years old when I married her. We were both about 18. I was 19 I think, I don't remember. But, um, 12 months later, she was a complete different person. She probably, you know she admitted but yet didn't want to make it too clear that she had been with other people and in looking back on it I understand because there she was alone, on her own, fell in with bad companions, whatever you want to call it. And uh, got involved with another life because, basically, I wasn't there. It was like I didn't exist. You know, to me, my my uh uh I guess my expectations were come home and I'm married or come home and get a job and or do whatever cause I had a job. I coulda had a pretty good job. Uh, turned it down twice in my life. And um uh umm, was um um ma… the bomb blew up in my face. And I didn't get over—I wasn't right after that for probably two or three years. Just didn't want to work. Didn't care about working. All I wanted to do was party and and uh, do drugs and stay drunk. I did that for about three years until I got tired of it and said hey, you know, I says hey, enough of this already. You know? And uh, got on with my life. Best way you can, day by day. You know? And uh, met that same woman 25 years later. We still loved each other. Or at least I did. I don't know that she did, but she was ready to—she asked me to marry her again. I told her no. I I I, you know, I don't trust anybody that much. You know, screw me once, shame on you, screw me twice, shame on me. But we did see each other. We did date. She lived with me for a while. But, uh, for me, it wasn't there anymore. You know, you don't, you don't have the trust. You know? But nevertheless, we still…it was still just like the day I left. We were perfectly at ease with each other, you know. Even though she had been married and had a kid and I had been married and had a kid, and uh, but it was I guess

it was just the way, maybe the good lord arranged it so we could forgive each other. Because you're supposed to forgive each other, regardless, cause that's what Jesus done. "Forgive your debtors not, I will not forgive you of yours." Basically, that's what he's saying, he's saying, you gotta forgive those who trespass against you because I forgive you of your trespasses against me. And that's basically what that's about but I look back on it and I think that that's probably that's probably what it was. More than anything, you know.

TA: What's the spirit of the bayonet?

DE: Death

TA: What makes the green grass grow?

DE: Water

TA: Who is the king of battle?

DE: The survivor

TA: Who is the queen of battle?

DE: Don't have one for that one.

TA: What is another term for doing pushups?

DE: Pain

TA: What is forcing someone to do exercise as punishment called?

DE: Discipline

TA: What is the difference between a top, a chief, and a skipper?

DE: Rank

TA: Okay, what is a field of fire?

DE: War

TA: What do you yell out if you're injured or if you're having trouble with a parachute in the air or on the ground?

DE: (Chuckles) Shit. Saying that probably. Ya.

TA: What is a Blue Falcon?

DE: I've heard the term. It's a bird. Um, the Air Force, the F-16 is a Falcon.

TA: Uh huh, what is a blanket party?

DE: Uh, discipline, basically, you're waking somebody up and (mimes punching) you keep fucking us up you're gonna get this more often.

TA: Who is the non-commissioned leader of a platoon or wing?

DE: Uh chief, master, or probably about a E-8/E-9. First Sergeant maybe?

TA: What is a stick?

DE: Short timer stick? I had one of them.

TA: What sort of explosive is in a claymore?

DE: Uh, C-4.

TA: What do you do if you see or smell CS in your AO?

DE: Put your gas mask on and yell gas.

TA: What is the difference between an FM, a TM, and an AR?

DE: Not sure. It's weapons…rifles…uh, AR is for the M-16. FM is gee, it's a radio frequency. I don't remember the other one. I think they're later weapons than I had.

TA: What is an interval as it relates to mobile elements?

DE: And interval? I think it's a radio antenna?

TA: What is an NCO?

DE: Non-commissioned officer.

TA: And what is AIT?

DE: Advanced Infantry Training.

APPENDIX C. WORD MATCHING CORRECT ANSWERS AND RESPONSES

	Correct Answers	Ajax	Boreas	Brizo	Deimos	Dinlas	Eurus	Glaucus	
1	To kill (without mercy)	I	DK	DK	C	DK	C	DK	
2	Blood (Bright Red)	C	DK	DR	IE	C	C	DK	
3	Artillery	I	DK	IE	IE	C	DR	DK	
4	Infantry	I	DK	IE	DK	C	DR	DK	
5	Getting Smoked	C	DR	DR	IE	C	C	DR	
6	Beating your Face	C	DR	DR	C	C	C	DR	
7	Top-1st SGT, Chief-Warrant, Skipper-Captain	C	C	C	C	C	C	IE	
8	Area subject to fire	C	IC	IE	IE	C	C	IE	
9	Medic/Jumpmaster/Rigger	C	C	IE	IE	C	C	C	
10	Buddy Fucker	C	IE	DK	IE	C	DK	DK	
11	Informal punishment	C	C	C	C	C	C	DK	
12	Platoon Sergeant	C	DR	DR	IE	C	C	C	
13	A group of jumpers or side of the aircraft	C	IE	IE	IE	DK	DK	DK	
14	C-4/Ball Bearings	C	C	DK	C	C	C	IE	
15	Yell gas, gas, gas	C	DK	DK	C	C	C	C	
16	Field Manual, Technical Manual, Army Regulation	C	DR	DK	IE	C	C	IE	
17	The distance between two elements of a convoy	C	DK	DK	IE	C	C	C	
18	A non-commissioned officer	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	
19	Advanced Individual training	C	I	DK	C	C	C	IE	
		16 of 19	6 of 19	3 of 19	8 of 19	17 of 19	15 of 19	5 of 19	
	C=Correct, A=Associated Answer, IC=Intuited Correctly								
	IE=Intuited Erroneously, I=incorrect,								
	DR=Doesn't Remember, DK=Doesn't Know								
	4/7 Participants were familiar 50% or more of the terms in the word matching exercise.								
	Of those 4, all were from the Army, from which the terms were originally derived.								
	All Army participants retained at least 26% of term knowledge from the word-matching exercise. 3 out of 5 retained 79% or more.								
	The one Army participant who retained 5 of 19 was subject to Electro-Shock Therapy that caused memory loss.								