

# Entering Nam: A Comparative Study Of The Entrance Experiences Of Volunteer And Drafted Service Members Into The Military During The Vietnam War

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ENTERING NAM:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ENTRANCE EXPERIENCES OF VOLUNTEER AND  
DRAFTED SERVICE MEMBERS INTO THE MILITARY DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Many historians have conducted oral history interviews with Vietnam War veterans in an attempt to offer a more personal perspective to the study of the Vietnam War; however, most historians do not consciously differentiate between drafted and volunteer veterans. Identifying whether a veteran was drafted into service or volunteered is critical because the extent to which this service was voluntary or coerced may affect the way a veteran remembers his military service. By conducting oral histories, one can consciously delineate service members who volunteered as opposed to those who were drafted to determine if the veterans' experiences change based on the nature of their entry into the military. Additionally, examining the implementation of a national draft and its effects on service members' experiences will offer a better understanding of American military history. While much of the attention of scholars has been on drafted soldiers in Vietnam, little research has been conducted on the experience of the volunteer soldier.

This study relies on oral history interviews conducted with volunteer and drafted service members of the Vietnam War to determine if there were differences between draftees and volunteers based on their entrance into the military. The research and oral history interviews with the two veteran groups establishes that the dissent detailed by draft protesters was not always the case and service members, volunteers and draftees alike, more often than not accepted their military service. The interviewed veterans' responses suggest that resistance to military service during the Vietnam War may not have been as great as one might think given the attention that has been placed on the anti-draft movement.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

To many, the Vietnam War occurred during a different era of American military service, one in which most did not volunteer to fight but rather were coerced into service.<sup>1</sup> The radical changes occurring in America throughout the 1960s, such as the Civil Rights Movements and nationwide Vietnam War and draft protests, cause many to overlook the importance of volunteer service members during the Vietnam War. Most scholarship has focused on draft resistance leading many to believe that the Vietnam War was fought mostly by draftees; yet, more than two-thirds of Americans serving in the Vietnam War were volunteer service members.<sup>2</sup> Many historians have conducted oral history interviews with American Vietnam War veterans; although, most do not consciously differentiate between drafted and volunteer service personnel. However, identifying whether a veteran was drafted into service or volunteered is critical. The extent to which this service was voluntary or coerced may affect the way that veterans viewed their military service and how the history and memory of the Vietnam War are interpreted.

The entrance experiences of volunteer service members of the Vietnam War have only been examined minimally. Furthermore, the entrance experiences of volunteer and drafted service members have never been compared. This gap suggested that studying Vietnam War veterans' experiences based on their entry into service might be valuable. *The Vietnam War in American Memory* argues that the modern general public looks back on the Vietnam War as a conflict fought mostly by draftees; additionally, many in the general public overlook or forget

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<sup>1</sup> President Nixon ended the draft and instituted the All-Volunteer Force in 1973.

<sup>2</sup> Allan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 87-89.

American draft service prior to the Vietnam War.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is important to document the differences and similarities of draftees and volunteers and their reasons for service to demonstrate that America's use of draftees did not begin with the Vietnam War nor were draftees the only American service personnel to serve during the Vietnam War.

This study relies on oral history interviews conducted with volunteer and drafted service members of the Vietnam War to determine if there were differences between draftees and volunteers based on their entrance into the military. The research and oral history interviews with the two veteran groups establishes that the dissent detailed by draft protesters was not always the case and service members, volunteers and draftees alike, more often than not accepted their military service. The interviewed veterans' responses suggest that resistance to military service during the Vietnam War may not have been as great as one might think given the attention that has been placed on the anti-draft movement. Therefore, the draft protests of the 1960s and 1970s may have been the response of some citizens to the Vietnam War rather than a broad based rejection of the draft and serving in the military.

Given the immense concentration placed on draft resistance by the American general public and previous scholars, this thesis focuses on the reasons why volunteers joined the United States military during the Vietnam War, a war remembered as one in which people were forced to serve. The volunteers' reasons for enlisting suggest that military service may not have been as unpopular as the protests against the draft suggest. These protests represented one segment of the population and may not reflect the views of a majority of Americans. Instead of finding a

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<sup>3</sup> Patrick Hagopian, *The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the Politics of Healing* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009). For additional arguments about the general public viewing the Vietnam War as strictly one way, examine Meredith Lair's *Armed with Abundance: Consumerism and Soldiering in the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).



significant difference between draftees and volunteers, these veterans had a great deal in common. Draftees and volunteers asserted that their military service, coerced or not, was expected of them as it was of their fathers, veterans of World War II and the Korean War.

### Methodology

As part of this study, I asked questions to shed light on the veterans' entrance into the military, the volunteers' motivation for joining, and the drafted veterans' experiences with the draft process. While these questions reflected the research agenda of the thesis, the best oral history questions are open-ended and draw diverse responses from a similar group of interviewees. The questions resulted in varying reactions depending upon the veterans' lives before, during, and after their military service. Prior to conducting the original interviews with veterans, I researched a number of previously conducted interviews available digitally through The Vietnam Center and Archive at Texas Tech University and The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress. I then identified the previously conducted interviews that explored the reasons a volunteer would join the military or how a draftee felt about being drafted. A wide range of veterans who served at various times during the war effort and those from multiple branches of the U.S. military were interviewed or selected from the archived interviews. For this thesis, twenty-nine interviews were chosen, of which nineteen were conducted with volunteers and ten with draftees. Thirteen Library of Congress interviews, six interviews from Texas Tech University's Vietnam Archive, and ten interviews that I conducted with Vietnam veterans were used as the basis for this thesis. However, prior to conducting the interviews, it was important to research literature surrounding the use of Vietnam veterans in oral histories.

## Historiography

In the years following the end of the Vietnam War, some veterans became interested in the stories and experiences of their fellow service members. These veterans conducted interviews with other American Vietnam War veterans and replicated those interviews in a series of monographs. In some cases, authors focused their compilations on war stories and comradery, while others focused on race and discrimination that one author asserts was prevalent throughout the military during the war. The first monograph to document Vietnam veterans' oral history interviews is *Everything We Had* by Al Santoli. As a Vietnam veteran, Santoli documents the veterans' voices and their combat experiences. Santoli also recounts the attitudes and memories of the soldiers. He additionally sets about to portray the realities of war and detail how the experiences of combat altered a war veteran. *Everything We Had* provides extensive insight surrounding the actions and attitudes of war veterans. Santoli's work also serves as a foundation for researchers examining the effects of the war on veterans.<sup>4</sup> However, it does not identify whether a veteran was a volunteer or a draftee, nor does it explore the impact of military service on a veteran.

Similar to the work of Santoli, Mark Baker also compiles oral history interviews with Vietnam War veterans. Baker presents a well-balanced selection of veteran interviews that adequately detail the experiences and attitudes of most veterans. While Santoli's work incorporates the various experiences of the interviewed veterans into a broad story of the veterans' experiences, Baker's *NAM* is organized around the personal experiences of the veterans in which each veteran's story is told separately. Like Santoli, Baker also explores the impact of

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<sup>4</sup> Al Santoli, *Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Thirty-Three American Soldiers Who Fought It* (New York: Random House, 1981).

the war on the veterans; he examines the physical impact of the war on disabled veterans, while also exploring ideas of the psychological effects such as early forms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Baker's ability to tell each veteran's individual story while incorporating their experiences into a broader understanding of the impact of the war is a method other oral historians should follow because it offers the reader the opportunity to recognize that the war was both an individual's own personal battle with morality as well as the military's war against the enemy. Baker's approach further helps explain the blurred lines between individual memory and a group history.

*Bloods* is another example of properly blending an individual's personal story into a group's history. It is a harrowing account of African American veterans who served in the Vietnam War. The men recount their experiences while serving in Vietnam and their experiences with discrimination within the military and in America before and after their periods of service. Similar to the previous works by Santoli and Baker, Wallace Terry conducts interviews with men who served in the war for a few months to numerous years. Terry incorporates the personal experiences of Vietnam War veterans and ideas of race to create an important study of African Americans in the military. *Bloods* also serves well as a unique study of discrimination within the military during the era of the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>5</sup> However, Terry's study does not compare the experiences of African American draftees and volunteers, nor does he explain if one group of men experienced more or less discrimination based on their entrance into the military; rather, Terry examines the veterans' experiences with discrimination in a much broader view.

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<sup>5</sup> Wallace Terry, *Bloods: An Oral History of the Vietnam War by Black Veterans* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984).

While previous oral history studies focused on veterans of a number of units, Otto Lehrack's *No Shining Armor* focuses solely on the Third Battalion, Third Marines. He combines the voices of the single unit veterans into a collective memory of the group. Rather than creating a history of the individual Marines, Lehrack's creates a collective history of veterans' memories while serving in the Vietnam War. Moreover, Lehrack threads the memories into a single, cohesive experience in which the men revealed a certain bond from surviving the war together. Lehrack creates a novel approach for understanding veterans' memories as a single experience.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, Lehrack's approach offers other oral historians an example for properly using individual memories to create an understanding of a group. Finally, Lehrack's approach reinforces the bond service personnel developed when serving together, a bond similar to other groups of people who shared experiences during the Vietnam War.

Conscientious objectors are one group often forgotten. Surprisingly, many conscientious objectors served in the Vietnam War; however, their service experiences have often been overlooked. Between 1965 and 1973, there were more than seventeen thousand military discharge applications and non-combat status requests by active duty servicemen because of conscientious objection.<sup>7</sup> Gerald Gioglio, author of *Days of Decision*, is a Vietnam War veteran who was discharged in 1969 because he was a conscientious objector. Fifteen years after his discharge, Gioglio arranged to interview twenty-four veterans who were labeled as conscientious objectors during their service. Based on these interviews, Gioglio explores the reasons behind objection to the war in Vietnam as well as the impact that those decisions had on the veterans.

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<sup>6</sup> Otto J. Lehrack, *No Shining Armor: The Marines at War in Vietnam, An Oral History* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Gerald R. Gioglio, *Days of Decision: An Oral History of Conscientious Objectors in the Military During the Vietnam War* (Trenton, NJ: The Broken Rifle Press, 1989).

*Days of Decision* is an important work because it details a number of important issues related to conscientious objection, the military court system, the process of court-martialing, the class bias that existed across national draft boards, and the mindset of career military personnel.<sup>8</sup> *Days of Decision* is the first oral history study to include interviews with veterans who were also conscientious objectors, this is important because many modern monographs concerning the Vietnam War and antiwar sentiment exclude military conscientious objectors and perpetuate myths that dissent did not exist among service members. By using numerous service records, Gioglio fills an important gap and documents the relationship between Vietnam veterans and the antiwar movement.<sup>9</sup> Gioglio's study incorporates the mindset and memories of conscientious objectors; however, he does not examine how the interviewed conscientious objectors entered the military, nor does he compare his findings with the memories of veterans who did not object.

While this study attempts to examine one small segment of the veteran population, *Working-Class War*, historian Christian Appy identifies what he considers the most typical type of Vietnam veteran. He asked a number of different questions including: who fought in Vietnam, how were they chosen, what were their lives like before their time in military service, how were they trained, what were their expectations as they arrived in the combat zone, how were those expectations fulfilled, what was their experience with war, and how did the war affect those who served?<sup>10</sup> Appy states that by analyzing the answers to these questions he could create a better understanding of the impact of the war on both Americans who served as well as its impact on the American country. Appy also creates an analysis of American Vietnam War veterans'

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Christian G. Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

responses to questions about their social status prior to the war. From the veterans' responses he determines how social status affected the veterans' participation during the war and after its conclusion. In an effort to gain a broader understanding of the veterans' experiences, Appy "tried to interview people with a wide-range of experiences and perspectives- draftees and volunteers, combat and rear-echelon, right and left-wing, working and middle-class."<sup>11</sup> However, Appy interviewed nearly one hundred young, non-career draftees and volunteers of the Marine Corps and the Army; most of the veterans are also residents of Massachusetts and the Harvard University area as his book began as a Harvard dissertation.

Appy's incorporation of oral history interviews and research from the Marine Corps Historical Center Archives is the first work to analyze the veterans' responses. Appy makes many assertions similar to the monograph's title; his strongest claim being that the vast majority of those who served in the Vietnam War were children of the American working-class. After a careful consideration of a geographic distribution of casualties, Appy asserts that the death rate was far higher than the national average in thirteen different U.S. cities. He concludes by stating that those thirteen cities "were the sorts of places where most poor or working-class people lived." Appy also attempts to explain the disproportionate drafting of young, African American males. He concludes that most of the Vietnam War's American servicemen were drafted because of a lack of education or economic opportunities. Additionally, he claims that while patriotism was sometimes a factor in the decision to volunteer for Vietnam, the driving engine, behind most, if not all decisions, was socioeconomic.<sup>12</sup> Appy creates the framework for other oral

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., ix.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 9, 15.

historians to conduct oral history interviews with veterans of the Vietnam War. Additionally, he has paved the way for those hoping to examine the veterans' responses and gain a better understanding of the Vietnam War. However, while Appy's study is extremely important, he fails to draw any conclusions about possible differences between drafted and volunteer service personnel.

To understand the draftee and the volunteer experience in Vietnam requires an examination of how America staffed its Army. Since its inception, the United States has raised various armed forces, including both volunteer and conscripted forces. However, Congress has only employed federal drafts four times throughout the nation's history, while volunteer service members have served America throughout U.S. history.<sup>13</sup> Before attempting to understand the complexities of the volunteers' and draftees' entrance into the military and the reasons for the Vietnam War era draft protests, it is best to explore the national drafts implemented before the Vietnam War and examine their effects on the government, its citizens, and the volunteer and drafted soldiers.

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<sup>13</sup> Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!: The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2006), 19.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN DRAFTS**

The debate surrounding the draft during the Vietnam War cannot be fully understood without adequate knowledge of the way America has staffed its Armies. For most of its history, the United States has relied on a combination of coercion and volunteerism. During America's great wars the Civil War, World War I and II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, the draft was used. However, even when there was a draft, men and women volunteered for service. The American Army in peacetime, up to WWII, was staffed solely by volunteers; it was the Cold War that prompted Americans to institute a peacetime draft. The Vietnam era draft represented the culmination of three centuries of American military policy that began more than 350 years before the first draftee set foot on Vietnamese soil.

### Early Militia

Initially, American colonists relied on the militia. Throughout early colonization there were too few white settlers to stop Native American attacks.<sup>14</sup> In order to protect themselves each colony created a militia system, "at the heart of the militia was the principle of universal military obligation for all able-bodied males."<sup>15</sup> The normal ages of men required to serve were 16 to 60; however, this number varied throughout the colonies. The colonies also offered occupational exemptions, though these too were not universal. During the initial use of the militia, when attacks were frequent, men were required to attend training days or pay a fine for their absence. However, once there were enough settlers and only occasional aggressive actions,

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<sup>14</sup> Marvin R. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army 1775-1945* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, No. 20-212, 1955), 5.

<sup>15</sup> Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 3.



the militia became more selective as service was no longer a matter of survival.<sup>16</sup> In fact, colonists, influenced by British Whig ideology, hoped that the militia would be made up of the more middle class citizens. This Whig ideology argued that the militia should be composed of the property classes, who had a personal stake in America's defense. While many would have preferred to rely on such a militia, it was impractical particularly in Europe's dynastic wars that often affected the British colonies in North America. The property class would not serve in overseas service, nor in dangerous and disease ridden locations, if for no other reason than they had property. Instead, these wars, such as the French and Indian War, involved the lower classes, those without property, who volunteered as a way of improving their social and economic status and in some instances, were "volunteered for service."<sup>17</sup> The negative experience of these volunteers with the British regulars will be one of the reasons that led to the Revolutionary War.<sup>18</sup>

### The Revolutionary War

When the revolution came, which was in many ways inspired by Whig ideology, the militia, particularly the property classes, was not as important as the Continental Army, a volunteer organization generally composed of citizens from the lower social orders.<sup>19</sup> Although personally opposed to conscription, on January 29, 1778, George Washington wrote to Congress detailing his various defeats and the necessity of "filling the Regiments by drafts from the

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<sup>16</sup> James Kirby Martin and Mark Edward Lender, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic, 1763-1789* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1982), 6.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 4-10.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>19</sup> Martin and Lender, *A Respectable Army*, 6.

Militia.” Washington believed it was “a disagreeable alternative, but an unavoidable one.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, on February 26, 1778, Congress passed a resolution “extolling the states to revert to coercion if necessary to meet their quotas for the militia to serve with the army.”<sup>21</sup> Washington’s personnel needs encouraged Congress to place more importance on military necessity than on the men’s willingness to serve. The Revolutionary War was won by lower class volunteers of the Continental Army rather than the property owning minute men of the militia. It is important to note Congress’ willingness to use conscription in defense of the nation, an act that occurred repeatedly throughout America’s history, and the continual contributions of the lower class and working class volunteers to America’s war efforts.

Following the victory of the Revolutionary War, Congress discharged the Continental Army on July 2, 1784. In the study, *To Raise an Army*, historian John Whiteclay Chambers argues that, many Americans believed “the United States did not need and would not accept a sizeable standing army,” a belief that continued for many generations and brought about America’s continual reliance on a draft.<sup>22</sup> Although the Constitution clearly authorized a national army, it was much less specific on the means by which the national government could raise such a force. The Uniform Militia Act of 1792 declared that “every free able-bodied white male citizen of the respective states between 18 and 45 should be enrolled in the militia by local militia captains.” However, the call to service fell on deaf ears as the states and regions

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<sup>20</sup> George Washington, “To the Committee of Congress with the Army: Head Quarters, January 29, 1778,” in *The Writings of George Washington From the Original Manuscript Sources*, volume ten, ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-1944), <http://etext.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=WasFi10.xml&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=334&division=div1> (accessed January 31, 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Rostker, *I Want You!*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> John Whiteclay Chambers II, *To Raise an Army: The Draft Comes to Modern America* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1987), 13.

continually argued against a national military obligation.<sup>23</sup> Due to the states' resistance, Congress was unable to create a unified national standard for military service; this forced the United States to rely on volunteer soldiers for the majority of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century; these volunteer armies were raised locally but funded nationally. The volunteer soldiers served and defended America throughout the Indian Wars of the 1790s, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War of 1848, while the militia was of limited use during these wars. The greatest test of American volunteers of the nineteenth century occurred when Americans fought each other.

### The Civil War

Initially, when the Civil War broke out, the Northern and Southern armies were able to meet their wartime requirements with volunteer units. Both Northerners and Southerners were convinced the war would be quick and relatively bloodless and rallied to their respective colors enlisting in volunteer units. The war was neither quick nor bloodless and volunteers became harder to find. The South had the most challenging manpower problems and not surprisingly turned to the draft. The Confederate States of America passed a conscription law that required all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five to serve in the Confederate Army for three years.<sup>24</sup> The Confederate draft also automatically reenlisted the one-year volunteers for two more years.<sup>25</sup> Similar to previous drafts, there were exemptions, for example an occupation, such as being a minister, could exempt one from being drafted. More controversial was the rule that allowed anyone responsible for twenty or more slaves to avoid military service. Historian

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<sup>23</sup> The Uniform Militia Act of 1792, U.S., *Statutes at Large*, I, 271, in John K. Mahon, *The American Militia* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1960), 56-61.

<sup>24</sup> Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 205-206.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Eric Foner suggests that this might have undermined the Southern war effort because it became in some minds “‘a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight’ . . . the result by 1863 was a virtual civil war within the Civil War.” However, others question the effect of this exemption on Southerners, such as historian John Sacher.<sup>26</sup> Sacher argues that while “Confederate conscription ultimately failed to provide enough troops to win the war,” it did not fail to provide men for mobilization, such as substitutes.<sup>27</sup> Sacher and historian Gary Gallagher suggest that Confederate conscription was successful because it mobilized the men needed to serve throughout the war efforts. Although the draft was unpopular in the South, it successfully provided the Confederate Army continual manpower throughout the war. Southern conscription produced “approximately 120,000 draftees and 70,000 substitutes, representing twenty percent of Confederate manpower;” whereas substitutes and draftees compromised only thirteen percent of the Union Army.<sup>28</sup>

While the South relied on coercion to gain soldiers, the North provided bounties and other incentives to encourage volunteers; only a few soldiers were drafted. The coercive nature of the draft was directed toward cities and towns and local government officials, it forced them to give incentives to raise enough volunteers to avoid drafting their citizens. At the onset of the war, President Lincoln called for 75,000 northern volunteers. After two years of war and an immense loss of manpower, a much larger militia was needed and the president enacted the Enrollment Act on March 6, 1863, the first federal draft law.<sup>29</sup> Unlike Congress’ 1778 call for volunteers to strengthen the Continental Army, the Enrollment Act omitted any language

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<sup>26</sup> Gary Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 18.

<sup>27</sup> John M. Sacher, “‘A Very Disagreeable Business’: Confederate Conscription in Louisiana,” *Civil War History* Vol. 53, No. 2 (June 2007): 168.

<sup>28</sup> Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 209.

<sup>29</sup> Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 87.

suggesting a necessity to fill ranks; rather it asserted the federal government's authority to directly draft American male citizens into the national army.<sup>30</sup> Due to the Enrollment Act, close to two million men served in the North's army of which 46,347 were conscripts, 73,607 substitutes, 86,724 paid the commutation fee to avoid service, and the rest served as volunteers.<sup>31</sup>

The draft was viewed as unfair by both northern and southern soldiers; in the North, men could hire substitutes to serve in the Union military, whereas Southerners who owned more than twenty slaves were also exempt from combat.<sup>32</sup> Continuous calls concerning the unfairness of conscription occurred throughout both regions. Riots in Boston and New York provide evidence that the draft may have been as detested in the North as it was in the South. While conscription and the call for draftees ended after the Civil War, it would eventually return.

## World War I

As American involvement in Europe became more imminent, President Woodrow Wilson insisted that "preparation for defense [was] absolutely imperative."<sup>33</sup> On June 3, 1916, Wilson asked Congress to raise the standing army to 175,000 and provide enough men to fill the reserves through the National Defense Act.<sup>34</sup> Under the National Defense Act of 1916, the United States created the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, or ROTC, a college-based, officer commissioning program. While the National Defense Act did not require men attending college

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<sup>30</sup> Kreidberg and Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army*, 105.

<sup>31</sup> Christian B. Keller, "Pennsylvania and Virginia Germans during the Civil War: A Brief History and Comparative Analysis," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 109 (2001), 73.

<sup>32</sup> Richard Halloran, *Serving America: Prospects for the Volunteer Force* (New York, NY: Priority Press Publications, 1988), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (New York: Lowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 33.

<sup>34</sup> John O'Sullivan and Allen M. Meckler, eds., *The Draft and Its Enemies: A Documentary History* (Champaign, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 104.

to participate in ROTC, many major colleges and universities “required compulsory ROTC for all of their male students until the 1960s.”<sup>35</sup> Land grant colleges were charged in their charters with teaching military and ROTC was adopted by all land grant colleges and universities. When the war began, in April 1917, the United States’ regular Army totaled 133,111 and was reinforced by 185,000 National Guardsmen and 17,000 officers and volunteers of the reserve forces established by the National Defense Act of 1916. However, by World War I standards, these numbers were “pitiful.”<sup>36</sup>

Initially, rather than conscription, the president preferred to “depend upon the patriotic feeling of the younger men of the country.”<sup>37</sup> According to Mark Sullivan, Wilson believed that a certain group of young men, “. . .the adventurous, the romantic, those who found their ordinary life dull, those having associations they would be glad to get away from, those without jobs, those who preferred the routine of military life above the self-responsibility of civil life,” would serve voluntarily as the backbone of the American military during World War I.<sup>38</sup> However, when America needed young men to answer the call to duty, the percentage of volunteers was much smaller than those volunteering in previous wars. Many believed the U.S. had no stake in the war. Additionally, there was little economic incentive at a time when American industries were “employing citizens to create munitions and support supplies for the Allies.”<sup>39</sup> The flow of European immigrants had stopped and therefore there were jobs available. With the limited

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, 349.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Mark Sullivan, “Conscription,” in *The Military Draft: Selected Readings on Conscription*, Martin Anderson and Barbara Honegger, eds., 25-33 (Stanford, CA.: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), 25-26.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

number of volunteers, President Wilson would have to think of a new approach to strengthen his military.

Wilson and his committee members would need to persuade the American public to accept the Selective Service Act of 1917. For American citizens to accept the idea of conscription without economic incentives, Wilson needed to sell the draft process as a form of volunteerism. Additionally, it was important that the government not be viewed as forcing young men into service. Wilson attempted to present the Selective Service Act of 1917 as one's patriotic responsibility to serve his country and defeat the Axis powers. President Wilson and Secretary of War Newton Baker were determined that "the direct act of taking young men from their homes would not be done by army officers in uniforms; [instead] the process would be carried out by civilians, so far as possible by neighbors of the conscripted men."<sup>40</sup> Secretary Baker created the idea of having draft age men register at their local voting polls, this act would make draft registration appear as an act of citizen responsibility.<sup>41</sup> The draft process would be governed by local sheriffs and state governors, placing much of the responsibility for the draft on elected officials. On May 18, 1917, Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1917; on June 5, 1917, every American male between the ages of 21 and 30 was required to register, those refusing to register faced legal punishment in the form of imprisonment for one year.<sup>42</sup> The new Selective Service law required that volunteers and draftees serve for the duration of the war, with draft service not ending until four months after the proclamation of peace. While deferments

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>41</sup> Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1931), quoted in Mark Sullivan, "Conscription," in *The Military Draft: Selected Readings on Conscription*, Martin Anderson and Barbara Honegger, eds., 25-33 (Stanford, CA.: Hoover Institution Press, 1982), 27.

<sup>42</sup> Sullivan, "Conscription," in *The Military Draft*, 30

were allowed, Congress would not approve substitutions, thus creating “a better case for equality of sacrifice than the draft had made during the Civil War.”<sup>43</sup> Congress’ attempt to avoid draft inequality generated widespread approval of the newest draft.

President Wilson’s fears of public discontent for the federal draft did not appear; rather, the new draft was widely accepted. Sullivan argues that the introduction of the draft succeeded because “essentially it was a process of causing the mass of the public to move in a direction in which the government wished them to go, a direction which the public, if left alone, would not take.”<sup>44</sup> Keeping with the governmental propaganda, the American public developed specific ideas pertaining to those who served and those who did not; they decided those young men unwilling to serve were “unpatriotic” or “slackers.” However, as soon as the war ended, so did the legitimacy of the draft. Compulsory military training was rejected, the size of the army was reduced from 4,000,000 to 200,000 and the military once again relied solely on volunteers.<sup>45</sup>

Although the American military returned to a volunteer system after World War I, efforts were made to impose universal military training on the nation during peacetime; however, these attempts were rejected by the public and crushed in Congress. As a compromise, Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1920, “which authorized the War Department General Staff to plan for the ‘mobilization of the manhood of the Nation... in an emergency.’”<sup>46</sup> Under the National Defense Act of 1920, the secretaries of War and the Navy created the Joint Army-Navy Selective Service Committee, which eventually became the national headquarters for the newly

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<sup>43</sup> Rostker, *I Want You!*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Sullivan, “Conscription,” in *The Military Draft*, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 252.

<sup>46</sup> Lewis B. Hershey, *Selective Service in Peacetime: A Report to the President* (Washington D.C.: Selective Service System, 1942), 32.



authorized Selective Service System.<sup>47</sup> The American government did not consider reinstating a federal draft until the start of the Second World War in Europe.

## World War II

The outbreak of war in Europe and the unexpected collapse of France in spring of 1940 brought about another federal draft.<sup>48</sup> Prior to America's entrance into World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress "to authorize the nation's first peacetime draft."<sup>49</sup> President Roosevelt and Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, cited the prewar draft "as necessary for the defense of the Western Hemisphere, in the wake of the dramatic shift in the balance of power in Europe."<sup>50</sup> President Roosevelt's request was signed into law on September 16, 1940. The law restricted "the call-up to 900,000 men aged 21 to 36 for one year and stipulating that they could not serve outside the Western hemisphere."<sup>51</sup> During the summer of 1941, Roosevelt asked Congress to extend the draft service beyond twelve months. On August 12, 1941, the House of Representatives approved the draft extension by a single vote; on August 18, President Roosevelt signed the draft extension bill into law.<sup>52</sup>

Similar to the World War I draft, an important principle of the World War II draft was the concept of equal sacrifice. President Roosevelt reiterated the importance of "duties, obligations and responsibilities of equal service" when he signed the 1940 draft law.<sup>53</sup> The preservation of equality set forth the standard for the upcoming national lottery. To ensure equality and less

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<sup>47</sup> Rostker, *I Want You!*, 25.

<sup>48</sup> Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 254.

<sup>49</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 255.

<sup>51</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 6.

<sup>52</sup> "House Vote on Draft Bill," *The New York Times*, August 13, 1941, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973* (Lawrence, KS.: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 2.

reliance on local draft boards, Congress allowed the Selective Service System to begin a national lottery in 1942. The draft offered fewer exemptions; Congress believed the public would view the new draft as more fairly implemented.<sup>54</sup> In general, the draft law was successful because the majority of the nation was united against Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan and focused little attention on the equality of the draft selection. Most Americans supported the war because they viewed it as a necessity of national defense and the survival of democracy.<sup>55</sup> The World War II draft also effectively ensured the flow of men for training and fighting overseas. It facilitated the flow of up to 200,000 men per month to join the Army and the Marine Corps. Additionally, the draft maintained that the home front needs were met. While applying the draft model from World War I, “deferments were provided for government officials and for those ‘employed in industry, agriculture or other occupations or employments’ which were ‘necessary to the maintenance of the public health, interest and safety.’”<sup>56</sup> Conscientious objectors, who opposed the war because of religious beliefs, were offered deferments, although they were required to serve in civilian jobs that were considered of national importance. Although the draft was extended, volunteers were also lining up to serve.

While some young men avoided the draft, the issuance of national conscription served an unforeseen purpose because it encouraged many to volunteer in the hopes of selecting which branch of service they would join. Unlike the lack of volunteers during World War I, numerous young men volunteered to fight in the war effort, especially after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. When the United States entered World War II, nearly 50 million men registered; of those, 12

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<sup>54</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Chambers, *To Raise an Army*, 255.

<sup>56</sup> Hershey, *Selective Service in Peacetime*, 35.

million volunteers and conscripts served at the war's peak.<sup>57</sup> While the World War II draft ensured equality, many Americans wanted national conscription eliminated; however, that was not the view of military officials.

Following both World War I and World War II, there were Congressional debates surrounding the legitimacy of peacetime conscription, "the first debate stressed the undemocratic and compulsory nature of the system, amounting to involuntary servitude; the second pointed out that the draft would give the President the power to engage in overseas military adventures or even to precipitate war without consulting either Congress or the people."<sup>58</sup> Prior to the end of World War II, the American public began calling for the end of national conscription. Conversely, with victory in sight, many top ranking military officials of the United States Army, as well as the American legion and "a coalition of business and financial leaders" called for universal military conscription following the war's end. These groups also called for the conscription and training of labor workers and nurses to be prepared for war and the "manpower shortages" associated with war.<sup>59</sup> Congress sided with the public and urged President Truman to end the wartime draft, which he did on March 31, 1947. However with the threat of communism, the draft would soon return.

#### 1948 Draft Extension and The Korean War

By spring 1948, reinstatement of the draft appeared inevitable; President Truman called for the "temporary reenactment of selective service" because of the communist coup in

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>59</sup> *The Draft: A Report Prepared for the Peace Education Division of the American Friends Service Committee* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1968), 6.

Czechoslovakia in February 1948 and the arising tensions with the Soviet Union.<sup>60</sup> The conscription inductions lasted only three months and were set to end on June 25, 1950; however, on the day before the draft's conclusion, North Korea invaded South Korea. On June 27, 1950, Congress decided to extend the draft and "the Selective Service System operated under the 1948 draft law through the Korean War."<sup>61</sup> Beginning in 1948, the draft became a fact of life for most young men of the 1950s and 1960s, with most accepting the 1950 draft extension with little resistance.<sup>62</sup> With World War II and the Korean War still fresh in their minds and a seemingly fair implementation of the Cold War draft, most young men of the late 1950s lived up to their draft obligations, accepting military service as a fact of life, something one volunteered for or was drafted into after high school or college.<sup>63</sup> In the late 1950s and early 1960s, draft calls were extremely low; so low, in fact, that Lieutenant General Lewis B. Hershey, the Director of Selective Service, said "we deferred practically everybody. If they had a reason, we preferred it."<sup>64</sup> In 1961, the draft call dropped to 113,000 and in 1962, it fell further to 76,000. With the draft call rising to 119,000 in 1963, Congress voted to extend the Cold War draft which President Kennedy signed into law on March 28, 1963.<sup>65</sup> Despite this extension, President Johnson authorized a study of America's use of the draft in 1964.

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<sup>60</sup> Aaron Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 174.

<sup>61</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Male medical students also accepted the draft as an unavoidable future for themselves. The Berry Plan was created in 1954, and formally referred to as the Armed Forces Physician's Appointment and Residency Consideration Program. It served as a deferrable program that allowed male students to complete their medical education prior to entering the military for a period of two years, in which they would serve as commissioned officers and medical physicians. Rather than receiving yearly deferments like other graduate students, Berry Plan recipients were offered "multiyear deferments with the option to apply for a variety of intern and residency options."

<sup>63</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Flynn, *The Draft*, 218.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

## The Draft Studies

Although Congress approved of the draft extension, many in the public started to question the Selective Service System's policy and its partiality when authorizing deferments because of the high deferment numbers.<sup>66</sup> Mounting tensions arose in Congress surrounding the fairness of the draft, and on April 18, 1964, President Johnson announced that he was implementing a comprehensive study of the draft and its necessity.<sup>67</sup> The study was conducted by the Department of Defense, led by William Gorham, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, and conducted by Dr. Walter Oi, a University of Washington professor of economics. According to Oi, the purpose of the study was to "estimate the budgetary cost of shifting from the draft to a voluntary system of manpower procurement."<sup>68</sup> The draft study was completed in June of 1965; the findings were not released for another year because of fears surrounding the group's possible conclusion in favor of an all-volunteer force, which could make meeting the increasing manpower demands of the upcoming Vietnam War impossible.<sup>69</sup> Another fear surrounding the study's release was that a possible conclusion in favor of an all-volunteer force would encourage many in the American public to further question the Selective Service System.

Around the same time as the 1964 draft study, some prominent Americans called for an all-volunteer force. Arizona Republican Senator and 1964 Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater denounced the draft, citing unfair implementation and biased deferments. Another highly vocal proponent of the volunteer force was University of Chicago economist,

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<sup>66</sup> Rostker, *I Want You!*, 28.

<sup>67</sup> Flynn, *The Draft*, 226.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, and Walter Y. Oi, "Historical Perspectives on the All-Volunteer Force: The Rochester Connection," in *Professionals on the Front Line: Two Decades of the All-Volunteer Force*, ed. Curtis L. Gilroy, J. Eric Friedman, Roger D. Little, and W.S. Sellman (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1996), 29.

<sup>69</sup> Rostker, *I Want You!*, 29.

Milton Friedman. Friedman wrote “the present method is inequitable, wasteful, and inconsistent with a free society.” Furthermore, he denied any claims that a volunteer force would threaten a democracy or diminish the strength of the American military. Friedman argued the effectiveness of an all-volunteer force; stating “a volunteer army would be manned by people who had chosen a military career rather than at least partly by reluctant conscripts anxious only to serve out their term.”<sup>70</sup> The increased calls for an all-volunteer force encouraged Congress and the President to thoroughly evaluate the draft study, but their evaluations were conducted separately.

On July 2, 1966, President Johnson created the Presidential Advisory Commission on Selective Service to evaluate the draft study and asked then General Counsel of IBM, Burke Marshall, to serve as the commission’s chair.<sup>71</sup> Six months after Johnson’s creation of the Marshall Commission, Congress agreed that they should create their own committee; retired Army General Mark Clark led the House Armed Services Committee in its own evaluation of the draft study.<sup>72</sup> In his *In Pursuit of Equity?: Who Serves When Not All Serve*, Burke Marshall concluded that an all-volunteer force would be too costly; instead, he offered several changes to the existing Selective Service System. The Marshall Commission determined that the Selective Service System must eliminate most, if not all, educational and occupational deferments, draft younger men first rather than the oldest, institute a standard national lottery, and rely less on local draft boards.<sup>73</sup> Marshall asserted that these changes would further instill equality in draft

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<sup>70</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 9.

<sup>71</sup> Rostker, *I Want You!*, 30. Burke also served as President Kennedy’s Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. The Presidential Advisory Commission on Selective Service would later become known as the Marshall Commission.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* The House Armed Services Committee would later become known as the Clark Panel.

<sup>73</sup> “Should Order of Induction into Military Service Be Determined By Lottery? PRO.,” *Congressional Digest* 46, no. 5 (May 1967): 142-145, <http://web.ebscohost.com.exproxy.lib.ucf.edu/ehost?hid=113&sid=cf5798a1-a9c1->

selection and strengthen the existing military forces. The Clark Panel agreed that an all-volunteer force would be too expensive; however, the Clark Panel opposed the Marshall Commission's assertions pertaining to deferments and a national lottery. While the two evaluation commissions did not agree on their assertions about equalizing the draft, they mutually determined that an all-volunteer force would cost "an additional 2.1 billion and 2.5 billion annually." Additionally, it was determined that an "abrupt change to volunteerism" would cost roughly 3.1 billion dollars, while a three or four year transition, in which voluntarism would operate in conjunction with the draft would cost 0.75 billion dollars.<sup>74</sup> Due to the obvious disagreements between the Marshall Commission and the Clark Panel and the immense cost increase for an all-volunteer force, President Johnson established "a Task Force to review the Marshall and Clark recommendations" on March 6, 1967.<sup>75</sup> However, President Johnson's task force discarded all recommendations offered by both the Marshall Commission and the Clark Panel.

During the fall of 1967, President Johnson's task force rejected all recommended changes, determining "the Selective Service System with its present structure is thoroughly competent to carry out appropriate policy given to it."<sup>76</sup> The task force concluded that any future changes or reorganizations were unnecessary and that the "present structure of the Selective

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<sup>74</sup> S. L. Canby and B. P. Klotz, *The Budget Cost of a Volunteer Military* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1970), iii.

<sup>75</sup> The American Presidency Project, "Lyndon B. Johnson: 92- Special Message to the Congress on Selective Service, March 6, 1967," under "Public Papers of the Presidents,"

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=28685>. (accessed on March 5, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> The American Presidency Project, "Lyndon B. Johnson: 92- Special Message to the Congress on Selective Service, March 6, 1967," under "Public Papers of the Presidents,"

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=28685>. (accessed on March 5, 2011).

Service be retained.”<sup>77</sup> The task force’s refusal to change the draft system would cause more problems as America entered the Vietnam War. In the summer of 1967, President Johnson approached Congress about extending the draft, and his proposal was passed by an overwhelming majority; there were only two opposing votes.<sup>78</sup> In contrast, some Americans began resisting the 1967 draft extension and America’s involvement in the Vietnam War.

Questions arose surrounding the necessity of the war, the reasons for Americans’ involvement, and the growing number of American combat related casualties. The presence of the war on the nightly news meant that all Americans were aware of the horrors of the war in a more visual presentation than previously. They knew what their sons and brothers faced and the reasons for the war were less immediate and clear than in prior wars, such as World War II. As the war continued with no clear victory in sight, the criticisms intensified to include the general use of a draft system. Many considered the draft process corrupt because of the multiple deferments given in cases of personal hardship such as marriage or parenthood and in cases such as those attending college or working in ministry or teaching professions. Additional deferments were offered to conscientious objectors and persons with physical or mental disabilities supported by medical records, which many felt were often times contrived.<sup>79</sup> Many draft resisters resorted to burning their draft cards or vandalizing the local draft boards, while others refused to appear on their draft day or fled the country. A significant number of those within the military

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<sup>77</sup> The American Presidency Project, “Lyndon B. Johnson: 92- Special Message to the Congress on Selective Service, March 6, 1967,” under “Public Papers of the Presidents,” <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=28685>. (accessed on March 5, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Halloran, *Serving America*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



also started to turn against the war in its final years. Those within the military questioned the equality of their service and the reasons why the U.S. was participating in the Vietnam War.<sup>80</sup>

Despite deferments and draft resistance, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs cites 2,594,000 military personnel served within the South Vietnamese borders. Of those serving in South Vietnam, less than twenty-five percent, or 648,500 were draftees, and 1,945,500 were volunteers.<sup>81</sup> However, these statistics do not tell the full story; they do not explain why someone would readily volunteer for the military knowing they might go to war. According to historian Christian Appy answers to “such basic questions remain largely unexamined in spite of the fact that American veterans have been the focus of most public imagery of the Vietnam War since the early 1980s.”<sup>82</sup> Although there have been many studies surrounding the Vietnam War and its veterans, the majority of the studies have removed Vietnam veterans from their own histories. Rather than focusing on the service members’ experiences, historians examining the Vietnam veteran focused on the veteran’s opinions about the war, the response of the Vietnamese people, or American foreign policy. Although there were protests during the Vietnam War, the majority of those serving were volunteers; therefore, interviewing volunteers will help delineate attitudes towards military service more so than focusing on the draft protests. The 29 veterans examined in this study believed that draftees and volunteers accepted their military service. The interviewed veterans also suggested that the American public resisted the Vietnam War and the draft system as more and more men were sent to Vietnam.

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<sup>80</sup> Cincinnatus, *Self-Destruction: The Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army during the Vietnam War* (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1981), 27.

<sup>81</sup> Donald L. Gilmore and D.M. Giangreco, eds., *Eyewitness Vietnam: Firsthand Accounts from Operation Rolling Thunder to the Fall of Saigon* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co. Inc., Inc., 2006), 10.

<sup>82</sup> Appy, *Working-Class War*, 3.

Draftees and volunteers have served vital roles in America's military history; however, it was volunteers who served continually throughout the nation's history and were usually the first to serve in wartime. America's continual reliance upon volunteer service may be the reason why many believe that a federal draft was not used until the Vietnam War; this is an unfortunate oversight in the general public's memory because it minimizes the importance of draftees' service in earlier wars. Additionally, the apparent strength of the 1960's draft resistance led many to believe that the Vietnam War was fought mainly by draftees and the importance of the volunteer service member during the Vietnam War is overshadowed by the memory of draft resistance during the war.

The use of the draft after World War II supported a large standing army in an engagement that was not always as immediately threatening. Hot wars like Korea and Vietnam seemed distant and poorly defined, while periodic "crises" at home, including the "Red Scare" of the 1950s kept Americans nervous, in a generalized fear of communism. However, the cost of transitioning to an all-volunteer force and the increasing engagement in Vietnam made the shift to a volunteer-based military fiscally impossible. Against this backdrop of public fear, congressional debates surrounding an all-volunteer force, and foreign policy goals, the 29 veterans interviewed in this study fought in Vietnam. Their oral histories provide the case studies for this analysis.

## **CHAPTER 3: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF ORAL HISTORY**

### Historiography

The study of memory by psychologists has concentrated largely on short-term memory rather than on the brain's ability to recall a lifetime worth of memories. While the study of short-term memories does not help explain the process of remembering one's life, it does confirm that many individuals have the ability to speak with "uncanny preciseness" about events far in the past, even if they show obvious signs of senility.<sup>83</sup> The gerontologist Robert Butler explains that "the past marches in review, permitting the elderly to survey and reflect especially on moments of unresolved conflict."<sup>84</sup> Oral history is the process of asking questions and recording one's memories with the hope of preserving them for future generations. Oral history interviewees are not strictly limited to the elderly, rather oral history narrators include anyone "who has forged or witnessed events in history."<sup>85</sup> Oral historians recognize the effects of memory, both in those with senility and those without, and conduct preliminary research to create questions that will guide the interviewee to specific topics.

The decision to conduct oral history interviews or use already existing oral histories needs to be made in the early stages of research. Often times the information provided in oral history interviews fills the gaps of quantitative or qualitative history, while other times traditional

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<sup>83</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 31.

<sup>84</sup> Robert N. Butler, "The Life in Review: An Interpretation of Reminiscence in the Aged," in *Thoughts on Old Age*, ed. Robert Kastenbaum (New York: Springer, 1964), 265-280.

<sup>85</sup> Anthony Seldon and Joanna Pappworth, *By Word of Mouth: 'Elite' Oral History* (New York: Methuen, 1983), viii.

written records may better serve a researcher.<sup>86</sup> According to the authors of *By Word of Mouth*, Anthony Seldon and Joanna Pappworth, oral history interviews “are usually best confined to those areas where primary written evidence is either unavailable- as for the contemporary or recent historian-or is nonexistent, as is often the case for the biographer and social historian.”<sup>87</sup> Therefore, it would appear that oral histories prove most important when a researcher is in need of specific knowledge of recent events or wants to give a voice to those marginalized throughout history.

The Oral History Association’s website notes that “oral history is one of the oldest and newest forms of historical inquiry – the oldest because it was the only means of dispersing historical tradition before the development of writing systems, and the newest because it has embraced technology since the tape recorder was made readily available.”<sup>88</sup> However, oral history was not considered a valid form of historical research until the mid-twentieth century. Historian and journalist, Allan Nevins encouraged the creation of Columbia University’s Oral History Project in 1948, the nation’s first university to establish an oral history program.<sup>89</sup> While the project initially limited itself to a “top-down” approach, interviewing only New York’s elite; it served as a catalyst for the conception of the Oral History Association in 1966.<sup>90</sup> The Oral History Association has become the leading organization for the dissemination of proper interview techniques and interpretation of oral history interviews and projects.

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<sup>86</sup> Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (New York: Altamira, 2005), 5-7.

<sup>87</sup> Seldon and Pappworth, *By Word of Mouth*, 57.

<sup>88</sup> Oral History Association, <http://www.oralhistory.org/> (accessed January 26, 2012).

<sup>89</sup> Ray Allen Billington, ed., *Allan Nevins on History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1975), xxiv.

<sup>90</sup> Oral History Association, <http://www.oralhistory.org/> (accessed January 26, 2012).

One of the Oral History Association's founding members, Willa Baum, led the way for oral history's development by creating standards for the practice. Baum served as the director of the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California at Berkeley.<sup>91</sup> While Nevins was the first to implement an oral history program, Baum was the first to standardize methodology and interview techniques that met professional standards. In 1969, Baum published *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*; it was intended for local historians and provided an outline for starting an oral history project, as well as establishing proper protocol and adhering to ethical standards.<sup>92</sup> Baum's work became the standard for procedures and ethical issues implemented by the Oral History Association.

In 1977 Baum published *Transcribing and Editing Oral History*, which supplements her 1969 work because it focuses on the steps to take after the set-up of the oral history project. According to Baum, conducting and creating a proper oral history interview is a four-step process that includes creating, processing, curating, and using oral histories.<sup>93</sup> Baum answers most of the common questions about the details within the processing realm and does so with specific examples.<sup>94</sup> Baum also recommends editing a transcript and preparing it for a narrator's review, and offers advice on constructing legal agreements and restricting access to transcripts and audiotapes. Finally, Baum emphasizes the importance of timeliness to an oral history project, suggesting that one should properly index materials, label them immediately, and determine

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<sup>91</sup> Obituary for Willa K. Baum, "Oral history pioneer Willa Baum dies at 79," UC Berkeley News, [http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2006/05/31\\_baum.shtml](http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2006/05/31_baum.shtml) (accessed January 26, 2012).

<sup>92</sup> Willa K. Baum, *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York, Altamira Press, 1995), 1-8.

<sup>93</sup> Willa K. Baum, *Transcribing and Editing Oral History* (Nashville, American Association for State and Local History, 1977), 5.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-5.

which interviews will be transcribed.<sup>95</sup> Baum does not discuss theory in this work; rather it serves as a how-to manual for those working with oral history projects.

Following Nevins and Baum, Paul Thompson also published a work that emphasizes the importance of oral histories. *A Voice of the Past: Oral History* traces the decline and ascent of the oral tradition in the Western world. Thompson justifies the existence and integrity of oral history in the late twentieth century asserting that newspapers and other written sources contain as much bias as oral interviews. To further strengthen his position, Thompson includes quantitative data from psychological research on memory, which argues the validity of chronological memory, or one's ability to properly recall aspects of his or her life from childhood to becoming an adult.<sup>96</sup> Thompson views oral history as an important part of historical scholarship because it challenges convention and includes the general populace.

Barbara Allen and William Lynwood Montell also champion oral history interviews as an opportunity to include the memories of the general public in *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research*. Allen and Montell explain how oral history interviews can be used to define cultures and examine how these cultures have changed over time; they also describe the relevance of oral history interviews to local history.<sup>97</sup> The authors believe that oral history interviews fill the gaps of written history; however, they encourage oral historians to always verify information discussed during an oral history interview with written documents and to pay close attention to how information is conveyed by an interview subject.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 10-14.

<sup>96</sup> Paul Richard Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1988), 1-9, 15, 101-105.

<sup>97</sup> Barbara Allen and William Lynwood Montell, *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 3-6.

Allen and Montell argue that a thorough understanding of the research subject is only as strong as the researcher's analytical skills and ability to interpret the impact of a narrator's feelings and attitudes on the project.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to understanding the techniques of an oral history interview, Valerie Raleigh Yow explains that it is important to also understand the various methods of oral histories. Yow has written a detailed reference book and includes an extensive bibliography for a wide range of scholars in *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. She states that there is no single method for interviewing in all academic disciplines. Rather, she insists scholars borrow from different academic areas; to strengthen her argument she includes examples of narratives used in medicine, anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Like Thompson, Yow also reviews psychological research about memory. She finds that men and women do not recall or recount the same type of memories, she also found that certain mentally-sound senior citizens can describe their past as well as, if not better than, some younger adults. Yow writes this book from the standpoint of a scholar who must adhere to Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards and the concept of the narrator as a human subject in the interview process, in which she fully describes the processes of IRB and the importance of selecting the correct target group for project interviews. One distinct point not drawn by other oral historians is that Yow recognizes that an interviewee's gender, race, or social standing affects the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, as well as how the interviewee answers questions.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.,47-52, 90.

<sup>99</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 8, 14-16, 35-58, 121-128, 178.

## Methodology

Personal bias from the interviewer can also affect how a question is answered. The information contributed during an oral history interview is greatly affected by how a question is asked. While oral history interview questions should serve as a guide for an interviewee and hopefully answer gaps in the historical research, they should never dictate how to answer a question. Questions should always be thought out and created before the interview takes place. A more informative and successful interview will contain questions that have been created using one of three approaches, which include the questionnaire approach, questions created for each individual interviewee, and an informal approach. In the questionnaire approach, a researcher creates a certain number of specific questions that are introduced to each interview subject; this method allows a researcher to gain a better understanding of the attitudes of a group of people toward a specific event. Additionally, the questionnaire approach offers researchers the opportunity to create a comparative analysis of the interview subjects' responses.<sup>100</sup> The researcher should also be willing to ask follow-up questions to gain a greater understanding of the interviewee's personal perspective. While similar to the approach that creates specific questions for individual interviewees, follow-up questions offer interviewees the opportunity to expand upon personal views while also allowing the interviewer to gain a broader view based on group responses.

The approach in which a researcher creates specific questions for each individual benefits the researcher and interviewee alike. The specialized questions offer interviewees comfort because they are asked questions specific to their knowledge. Creating specific questions for

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<sup>100</sup> Seldon and Pappworth, *By Word of Mouth*, 73-75.



individuals allows researchers the opportunity to ask questions about various topics. However, it is important to point out that specialized questions require detailed research to prepare the questions for each individual interview. Thorough research also means that researchers can maximize the effectiveness of both their questions and the interview. On the other hand, thorough research does not always benefit the researcher because she may unintentionally lead interview candidates to answers. The last interview approach, an informal interview, avoids the dangers of a fixed interview, in which interviewees often feel they cannot develop their own points because they are responding to the posed questions. However, an informal interview can come across as ill-prepared. While each interview method presents its own challenges, it is best for a researcher to adopt a formula that mixes the approaches together to create an atmosphere that elicits comprehensive answers without the formalities of a set question list.<sup>101</sup>

In order to produce the most accurate understanding of veteran's entrance experiences, it was imperative to ask the appropriate questions. The following questions were intended to shed light on the veterans' entrance into the military, the volunteers' motivation for joining, as well as the veterans' experiences with the draft process. Moreover, the veterans' varying responses also presented the opportunity to ask follow up questions concerning the selection process of the draft as well as the attitudes held within the American military during the 1960s and 1970s.

#### Interview Questions:

1. What was your life like before your military service?
2. What did you know about the military prior to your service?

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

3. What do you recall was going on in Vietnam and in this country at the time prior to your military service?
4. What were you told about the reasons for the war and by whom?
5. Before your service, what did you think about the war?
6. How did you enter the military, were you drafted or did you volunteer?
  - a. Draftee Questions:
    - i. How old were you when you were drafted for military service?
    - ii. How did you feel about being drafted?
    - iii. How did people respond to you being drafted?
    - iv. Do you feel your entrance into the military was similar or different from someone who volunteered?
  - b. Volunteer Questions:
    - i. How old were you when you volunteered for military service?
    - ii. What motivated you to volunteer?
    - iii. How did you feel about volunteering?
    - iv. How did people respond to you volunteering for the military?
    - v. Do you feel your entrance into the military was similar or different from someone who was drafted?
7. Describe your experiences during Basic and initial training.
8. What military jobs did you perform?
9. What kind of experiences did you have after your training?
10. Where were you stationed?
11. What kind of jobs did you do there?
12. Describe your time in the military.
13. How did you feel about you service in \_\_\_\_\_ (military branch)?

14. What are your most positive memories of your military service?
15. What are your most negative memories of your military service?
16. How do you feel about your military experience in retrospect?
17. How do you feel about the Vietnam War in retrospect?
18. How did the war or your military service affect your later life?

In addition to relying solely on local veterans' responses to the interview questions, numerous previously-conducted interviews available digitally through The Vietnam Center and Archive at Texas Tech University and The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress offered supplemental information as to the reasons why a volunteer would join the military or how a draftee felt about being drafted. The interviewees selected served at various times and locations during the war. The interviewed veterans' ages range from 17 to 36 during their periods of service while in Vietnam. Of the twenty-nine selected interviewees, ten men lived in Central Florida before, during, or after their military service; the nineteen other men lived elsewhere in the United States. Nineteen men enlisted for service, of those eight were Commissioned Officers; the other ten interviewed veterans were draftees. All of the draftees, four Commissioned Officers and five enlistees served in the United States Army, one Commissioned Officer and two enlistees men served in the United States Navy, two Commissioned Officers and one enlistee served in the United States Marine Corps, and one Commissioned Officer and three enlistees served in the United States Air Force. All of the draftees, two Commissioned Officers and two enlistees served for the length of their contracts, two to four years depending on their status as a draftee or volunteer, respectively; one Commissioned Officer and two enlistees reenlisted to extend their service for more than four years, while five Commissioned Officers and seven enlistees served more than twenty years of service, the amount of years required prior to retiring from the

military. Six draftees were African American and four were Caucasian, three Commissioned Officers were African American and five were Caucasian, and four enlistees were African American and seven were Caucasian. The details offer a portrait of the interviewed veterans; however, unavoidable issues such as class, education and regional biases undoubtedly affected the veteran's experiences and their responses to the interview questions.

## **CHAPTER 4: ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS WITH VIETNAM WAR VETERANS**

The veterans' responses offer insight into the implementation of the draft during the Vietnam War era and the military service member's response to the draft system. Through their responses, the interviewed veterans of each group provide information concerning their family's military history, their feelings when entering the military, their thoughts about the military after their service, and their reasons for being drafted or volunteering to serve in the military. The veterans' responses illuminate the military's impact on one's life. The responses demonstrate the veterans' opinions that military service was not as resisted during the 1960s and 1970s as it is often portrayed, rather they suggest that it may have been the Vietnam War that ignited draft resistance. Finally, the responses propose that the decision to join the military was as complex as the decision to protest the war and the draft.

By its basic definition, a draftee of the American military is an American male of a certain age range who is obligated to join the military and serve for a specific length of time; therefore, it would appear that all draftees would accept their service because it was a federal obligation. However, that was not the case; many young men chose to resist their service and burn their draft cards or move out of the country, other men chose to remain in college and receive an educational deferment, while others accepted military service but enlisted so they could choose their branch of service or occupation. Yet, there were also draftees who readily accepted their call of duty because they had a desire to fulfill the federal obligation. Based upon the modern perception of the Vietnam War draftee and the draft protests, it was initially thought that there would be a difference between the two veteran groups based on their entrance into the military; however, all of the interviewed men willingly accepted their military service. Rather the

difference between the two groups is visible when examining the veteran's mindsets when accepting their military service. The interviewed volunteers firmly believed they had control over their destiny. Additionally, they felt they maintained the ability to avoid the draft by extending their military contract by two years. Unlike draftees, volunteers were often given the opportunity to choose their occupation and military branch of service. The volunteers insisted that they chose their own service experience because they were able to choose what occupation they would have and what military branch they would enter. Conversely, the interviewed draftees stated they accepted their draft assignment because they believed it was inevitable. The most striking revelation was that both draftees and volunteers felt obliged to accept military service because the men of generations before them had accepted their military duty. Fathers, uncles, and neighbors of Vietnam veterans were the heroes of World War II and the Korean War. Therefore, those serving during the Vietnam War felt encouraged to do so because military service was a nationally-accepted fact of an American young man's life. The veterans' responses make it appear that the obligation of military service was not questioned until the war the young men were serving in was brought into question. As such, these interviews suggest that the Vietnam War was the stimulus of resistance and not the use of the draft nor military service.

The volunteers often expressed similar reasons for enlisting, a similarity not often discussed in relation to the draft. The spectrum of reasons for volunteering based upon the veterans' responses detail the many ways the draft impacted those other than draftees. Many volunteer veterans were swayed to join the military to avoid the draft. Some joined because they had already received their draft assignment and did not want to join the branch they were assigned. Several interviewed volunteers mentioned that they chose to join for a military career;

other veterans relied on the military to help them escape their dead end jobs. A handful of veterans volunteered to gain an education. The interviewed volunteers stated their three main reasons for enlisting were to maintain control, to begin a career, or to attain an education. The veterans' responses offer a better understanding as to why someone would voluntarily serve during the Vietnam War.

Maintaining control was one of the most common themes among the volunteer veterans' responses. The volunteers spoke of gaining a sense of control when enlisting, a feeling they did not believe they would have experienced had they been drafted. Additionally, the drafted interviewees did not speak of control; it would seem that maintaining a sense of control over one's military service was a luxury afforded only to volunteer service personnel. The various forms of control that the volunteers expressed included choosing which branch one would serve in and enlisting to avoid a previous draft notice.

Many interviewed veterans cited the opportunity to choose which branch of the military they would join as one of the primary motivations for volunteering. During his fifth year in college, Larry Foster received his draft notice to join the U.S. Army; in the hopes of completing his degree, Foster petitioned the draft board to extend his educational deferment until after he graduated. After receiving a deferment extension, Foster graduated from the University of Texas and enlisted with the United States Air Force because "I knew that I did not want to be in the infantry, I just knew I did not want to go into the Army." Although Foster's male family members served in the military during World War II, he does not consider himself coming from a family with strong military ties, and he "had never thought of a military career." However, after receiving his draft notice and deferment extension, he began considering joining the Air

Force because he “had always had a love of flying and a love of airplanes.”<sup>102</sup> William Whitmire joined the United States Navy after graduating from Auburn University. Whitmire cites his desire to have a choice in which service he would join as his reason for volunteering for the United States Navy, stating “I wanted to have a choice between being a soldier or sailor or Marine or whatever.”<sup>103</sup> Other interviewed volunteer veterans cited their impending draft call as a reason to volunteer.

The volunteer veterans stated that enlisting for military service was one of their greatest bargaining chips with the United States military. Reginald Green received his draft assignment prior to his enlistment. Green was initially drafted to be a cook in the U.S. Army, but since Green “didn’t like cooking” he began considering enlisting with a different branch of the military. Green explained his decision to join the Air Force, “well, I didn't want to be a cook. And the Army and the Marines offered me a culinary assignment. And I didn't think I liked water enough to be in the Navy, so I joined the Air Force. And I always liked airplanes.”<sup>104</sup> Green enjoyed his service and retired as a Chief Master Sergeant after serving thirty years in the Air Force. Other veterans enlisted because they did not want to join their assigned branch of service.

Often volunteer veterans commented that they had received their draft notice prior to their enlistment; one such case is Cecil Bass, III. Initially, Bass “thought about joining the Army but had reservations about a four year enlistment.” While considering his enlistment options,

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<sup>102</sup> Larry Foster, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, April 1, 2011 00:21:00; 00:22:10; 00:22:30; 00:43:09.

<sup>103</sup> William Whitmire, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 29, 2011, 00:15:20; 00:20:20; 00:26:05; 00:26:50.

<sup>104</sup> Reginald Ellsworth Green, interviewed by Jennifer A. Ewing, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/20851, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.20851/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).



Bass received his draft assignment; he claims he made the decision to “enlist with the Army, only because I was drafted.” Bass’ brother also received a draft letter which encouraged him to enlist with the United States Air Force. Although Bass cites enlisting solely because he was drafted, he believes the military “gives you a different outlook on life; it makes you realize there is a cost to how we live in this country. It gives you a stronger outlook on what freedom is and what life is actually about.”<sup>105</sup> Robert Morgan stated that he knew his “draft number was coming up the next year” so he thought it was best if he enlist with the Army rather than wait for his draft number to be called.<sup>106</sup> Unlike Bass and Morgan, Bill Franklin did not know if his draft number would be called; however, he enlisted with the Marine Corps to avoid the possibility of being drafted. Franklin stated “the Vietnam War was starting to crank up and the draft was out there, so I pre-empted those guys and went ahead and joined the Marine Corps.” Franklin also said that he “comes from a Navy family” which he thinks “made a big difference in my decision [to join the Marine Corps] instead of wait around to be drafted.”<sup>107</sup> These interviewed volunteers’ responses illuminate the fact that many young men of the Vietnam War knew they could use enlistment to their advantage, especially those who already had received their draft assignment and knew they would have to serve whether they chose to enlist or not. Additionally, a few of the enlistees entered the military after graduating college which meant they would have entered with a higher rank and more authority, another way of maintaining individual control.

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<sup>105</sup> Cecil Edward Bass, III, interviewed by Kinika Bass, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/57009, April 2, 2008, 00:01:44; 00:03:45; 00:03:54; 00:04:50, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.57009/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

<sup>106</sup> Robert (Rusty) Morgan, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 26, 2011, 00:06:36; 00:07:55; 00:11:13; 00:51:04.

<sup>107</sup> Bill Franklin, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 22, 2011, 00:02:20; 00:03:00; 00:43:15; 00:43:53.

While some men chose to enlist to maintain a sense of control over their military service, others volunteered for a career.

The volunteers often attributed their decision to enlist to their desire for a military career. Others volunteered as a career move because they did not have a job or did not enjoy their previous employment. Unlike other veterans who enlisted to begin a career, the Berry Plan required graduating male physicians who accepted the plan to serve in the military prior to starting their medical career. While graduating physicians were required to join the military under the Berry Plan, volunteer veterans with other college degrees joined the military because they wanted to go to Officer Candidate School and become a military professional. These veterans' responses demonstrate that many volunteered for military service because of the career opportunities and would have done so whether or not the Vietnam War was occurring.

Many college educated volunteers viewed the military as an entrance into a career. George Dunn graduated from college and enlisted into the United States Army with the intent of going on to Officer Candidate School and making the military a profession. Prior to entering college, Dunn had already determined that he wanted a career with the armed forces because of his childhood, in which he and his mother would visit his uncle, a career soldier, at Fort Bragg in North Carolina. Retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel after twenty-four years of military service, Dunn "walked away personally feeling like I had been successful in my career."<sup>108</sup> Daniel Mullally, Jr. knew from a young age that he wanted to go into the military; he stated "I had chosen to go into the military when I was probably twelve years old, it was something I had

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<sup>108</sup> George E. Dunn, interviewed by Philip A. Shaull, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/9178, August 12, 2003, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.09178/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

looked forward to.” After graduating from college, Mullally accepted his commission with the United States Marine Corps because he knew he “was going to be a professional Marine forever.” He also attributes his acceptance of his Marine Corps commission to his desire “to get out of North Carolina” which he considered “a very backward and deceiving world.”<sup>109</sup> Dunn and Mullally joined the military because they desired a military career; similarly, Barial and Morgan willingly chose to join the military because they did not enjoy their civilian jobs.

Often during their interviews, volunteers cited employment, or lack thereof, as a reason for joining the military. Robert Barial retired from the Army as a Sergeant First Class after twenty-two years of service; however, before joining the military Barial states “I worked in Mississippi on what we called a Pogy plant [fishery and perfume factory], which is Pogy fish. They make perfume, and we offloaded the ships, and I did that for about half a year, and after doing that for half a year I decided to join the military.” Due to his disdain for his job, Barial chose to join the United States Army because he thought he “could join the Army and get fast promotion.”<sup>110</sup> Robert Morgan stated that since he “didn’t have a real career job or anything” and because he feared becoming an infantry soldier he “went ahead and joined the U.S. Army for the guarantee that I could go to aviation and be with the aircrafts.”<sup>111</sup> These men chose to enlist with the military because they did not like or did not have a civilian job.

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<sup>109</sup> Daniel Edward Mullally, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 24, 2011, 00:09:48; 00:18:06; 00:53:05; 01:13:24.

<sup>110</sup> Robert Tyrell Barial, interviewed by Debbie P. Jones, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/11509, September 13, 2003, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.11509/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

<sup>111</sup> Robert (Rusty) Morgan, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 26, 2011, 00:06:36; 00:07:55; 00:11:13; 00:51:04.

Conversely, graduating male medical students entered the military with the hopes of completing their service and later acquiring a civilian job in the medical field. The Berry Plan influenced male graduates to enlist with the various military branches because of their medical degrees. Robert Rankin initially participated in the Army ROTC at the University of Arkansas and he did not enjoy the experience, as such he did not want to enlist with the military after he finished his degree. However, due to the enactment of the Berry Plan in 1954, Rankin enlisted with the United States Navy in 1964. Rankin viewed his decision to join the Navy as very simple when considering his other options, the Army and the Air Force; he explained “I had already had an Army experience in ROTC. I knew I didn’t want that. The Air Force was determined to put me in planes. I didn’t want that. The Navy was going to put me on ships, was going to send me to exotic ports, was going to show me wonderful parts of the world I would never otherwise see so I went down to the Navy recruiter and joined.”<sup>112</sup> As a graduating physician, James Evans was assigned to the United States Army as required by the Berry Plan. During his interview, Evans explained that he initially registered with Selective Service when he was eighteen and he received various student and medical deferments until he finished his medical school internship. Soon after completing the internship, Evans remembers receiving a letter in the mail stating he had been assigned to the Army. Although, he would have preferred to serve in the U.S. Air Force, Evans accepted his assignment and appreciates the additional medical training he learned

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<sup>112</sup> Robert Rankin, interviewed by Laura M. Calkins, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0370, May 4, 2004, <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0370> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

during his military service.<sup>113</sup> The responses from the veterans who gained a career by enlisting suggest that there was a certain group of young men during the Vietnam War who would have volunteered no matter what because of their desire for a military profession. However, this is not to suggest that those men who enlisted because of their medical degrees would have done so without the encouragement of the Berry Plan. Rather, based on the interviewed medical doctors' responses it would appear that the Berry Plan was similar to the draft because both required young men to serve but allowed those volunteering to choose which branch of service they would join. Many male medical students were able to complete their education and attain a degree prior to enlisting; other volunteers joined the armed services in the hopes of gaining a higher education.

Quite a few of the interviewed volunteers acknowledged that they chose to enlist or extend their ROTC commitment because of the benefits they knew they would receive, such as an education. Some volunteers, such as Joseph Breton, stated they knew they initially did not have the opportunity to go to college, so they decided to join the military to gain an education. Breton cited volunteering for the United States Air Force because he “did not want to be a ground pounder” instead he “wanted an education and wanted to leave his hometown.” While the military afforded Breton the opportunity to gain an education, it also “changed me in a lot of ways”, it helped him grow up, respect his parents' knowledge, and appreciate the American

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<sup>113</sup> James B. Evans, interviewed by Laura M. Calkins, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0366, April 12, 13, 26, June 1, 2004, <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0366> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

flag.<sup>114</sup> Another veteran who joined the military to receive an education was Marshall. After his high school graduation, Marion Marshall applied and was accepted into the Air Force Academy in 1964, which was made possible by a congressional letter of support from Congressman Sickles. Although Congressman Carlton Sickles helped Marshall gain his Air Force Academy appointment, Marshall contends that there was stiff competition to gain his appointment; “Carlton Sickles, who was Congressman at large, offered me a chance to come in and interview and I went in for the interview and was overwhelmed because there were, I think, 120 people there and it was a two day session so there were roughly 200 to 250 people that I was competing against.”<sup>115</sup> Marshall graduated from the Air Force Academy and served in the United States Air Force between 1968 and 1990; he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. While many veterans seeking an education volunteered for the military immediately following their high school graduation, others accepted extended ROTC scholarships to have their college educations funded.

Although commissioned officers volunteer to join the military, much like enlistees, there are several pathways to becoming a commissioned officer (CO). Many commissioned officers possess college degrees prior to their entrance into the military; these veterans enter through one of the Officer Candidate Schools and are commissioned upon graduation from OCS. Other COs participate in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at a service academy or civilian college and must complete the requirements for a bachelor’s degree prior to receiving their

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<sup>114</sup> Joseph Breton, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 28, 2011, 00:13:11; 00:14:30; 00:15:42; 00:17:24; 00:25:39.

<sup>115</sup> Marion Anthony (Tony) Marshall, interviewed by David A. Taylor, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/10760, 00:04:20; 00:05:25; 00:09:50, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.10760/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

commission.<sup>116</sup> Frederick Black graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. on June 7, 1968. Black explained that prior to graduating college he served in the Army ROTC; he credits his education to the Army. While Black was attending college, Howard University required that all male freshmen and sophomore students, excluding veterans and anyone with a disability, participate in ROTC. Black detailed the process of extending his college ROTC requirement, “so I took my four semesters of ROTC and just about the end of my sophomore year the Army came up with a scholarship program and this was as the war was starting to increase in intensity in 1966 and the scholarship was for tuition, fees, books, and \$100 a month stipend, that was pretty good money back then in 1966.”<sup>117</sup> After accepting the Army ROTC scholarship and graduating from Howard University, Black was offered a regular Army commission that he accepted. After his college graduation Black reported for active duty with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; he served in the United States Army from 1968 to 1994 and retired as a colonel. Ken Gray graduated from West Virginia State University after participating in ROTC for four years. Gray’s ROTC extension is very similar to Black’s description, Gray stated that “at the time I started college the first two years of ROTC were mandatory and then I had to take a test to go into what we call advanced ROTC, and I just decided that I enjoyed the first two years, had friends who had gone on and stayed in ROTC for

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<sup>116</sup> “Commissioned Officer”, <http://www.usmilitary.com/officerorenlisted.html>, (accessed on June 19, 2011).

<sup>117</sup> Frederick Harold Black, Sr., interviewed by Melissa Carter, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/64047, November 10, 2008, 00:01:02; 00:01:53; 00:02:40; 00:02:58; 00:03:55, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.64047/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

advanced and gone in the Army as officers and I decided that I wanted to do that.”<sup>118</sup> Following his graduation Gray was commissioned into the United States Army; he served in the Judge Advocate General’s Corps of the United States Army between 1966 and 1997; he retired as a general. Many interviewed volunteer veterans enjoyed the benefits of an education paid for by the military. The interview responses demonstrate that the military often offered its service personnel an education, whether it be during one’s service, offering a commissioned position after a four year, ROTC college degree, or the G.I. Bill to cover educational costs after a veteran’s service. Surprisingly, many volunteers went to land grant universities or participated in ROTC to have their educations paid for, only to enter the military and retire after a long service career. The responses also suggest that maintaining control was extremely important to those interviewed veterans who were motivated to enlist because of the draft, while obtaining a career or an education was important to those less influenced by the draft.

While many volunteers cited various reasons for enlisting with the military, such as to maintain a sense of control, to gain a career or to obtain an education, Todd Watt cited an entirely different reason. Todd Watt believes he joined the military because of his patriotic nature. Watt served in the United States Marine Corps after graduating from Jacksonville College. Watt claims his only reason for joining the military was the simple fact that he “was a patriot.” He also thinks his service “was predestined,” he believes this “because I didn’t have to go, I had cartilage damage, I had these other histories of serious leg problems, I played soccer for

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<sup>118</sup> Kenneth D. Gray, interviewed by Matthew Patrick Gallagher, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/23960, October 8, 2003, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.23960/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).



four years, so my knees were screwed up from that.”<sup>119</sup> The veterans’ reasons for enlisting helped illuminate the differences between the volunteers and draftees because they demonstrated that there were a certain group of interviewed volunteers who enlisted to avoid the draft or control their entrance experience, while there was also another group of enlistees who seemingly would have joined the military to gain a career and education whether or not there was a draft, and there were others who were motivated by patriotism. Additionally, the men who explained volunteering because of the advancements, benefits, or education share a similar mindset with the veterans who enlist with the all-volunteer force, which further explains that there should always be a portion of the American public that willingly chose a life of military service.

Most of the interviewed draftees claimed they knew they would be drafted prior to receiving their draft notice. Those draftees also spoke of willingly accepting their draft assignment. Many of the draftees believed they accepted their draft assignment because they felt their military service was out of their control. Unlike the volunteers, when speaking of their entrance into the military, the draftees appear to believe that their draft assignment and time in the military was a fact of life that they could not avoid. Some of the draftees mentioned that they considered enlisting prior to accepting their draft assignment, a few mentioned regretting their decision not to enlist. The responses also reveal that some draftees were more than willing to accept a draft assignment; however, the assignment had to be with certain branches of the military. Finally, many drafted veterans’ acceptance of their draft assignment was attributed to prior generations’ acceptance of draft calls.

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<sup>119</sup> Todd Watt, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 24, 2011, 01:43:47.

All of the interviewed draftees, excluding Michael McGregor whose career soldier father died at Omaha Beach on D-Day, willingly accepted their call to duty. While each of the draftees accepted their draft call, a few of the veterans wished they had enter the military branch of their choice rather than awaiting their draft assignment. Morris chose to await his draft call, a decision he often regretted because prior to receiving his draft letter he considered joining the Navy but did not because he was uncertain if he would enjoy a four year contract. Van Dan explained that he had wanted to enlist with the Air Force but the Air Force recruiting office was closed so he volunteered to be drafted. The interviewed draftees stated that in hindsight they wished they would have enlisted rather than waiting for their draft notice. Other interviewed veterans knew they would never enlist but stated they were content accepting their draft notice if called upon. However, a few of those willing to accept their draft calls had reservations about being a draftee for a few of the military branches.<sup>120</sup> Although Timothy Vail's father served on submarines in the United States Navy for twenty-three years, Vail had no intention of enlisting with the military rather he awaited his draft into the U.S. Army. While Vail chose not to enlist, he believed "getting drafted was fine. It was part of what had to happen. It was like a steamroller, just inevitable." However, his acceptance of the draft did not include being drafted into the U.S. Marine Corps, Vail claims "being drafted in the Marines was not in my mind. You know, just being a draftee in the Army was one thing, but telling your Marine drill instructor that you were a draftee and didn't want to be there, that just didn't work. It wouldn't work. I got lucky."<sup>121</sup> The

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<sup>120</sup> It is important to note that the Marine Corps received a percentage of U.S. Navy draftees during the Vietnam War.

<sup>121</sup> Timothy Vail, interviewed by Richard B. Verrone, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0370, October 6, 21, 28, 31, November 1, 16, December 5, 6, 2005.

Marine Corps was mentioned more often than any other branch as the one draftees did not want to enter. Other interviewed veterans spoke of accepting their draft notice after losing a deferment.

Many veterans, such as Harry T. Ingle, were drafted because they lost their college deferments. Ingle lost his college deferment as a result of leaving college to work and save money to pay for future college semesters. Many other young men, similar to Ingle, lost their college deferments by not maintaining continual enrollment. Although Ingle lost his college deferment, he “did not have any problems” with being drafted; rather he viewed it as “just the luck of the draw.”<sup>122</sup> Ingle’s father served in World War II so Ingle viewed military service as an alternative to college education. The interviewed draftees stated they willingly accepted their draft assignments, however, when remembering why they accepted being drafted a few mentioned regretting not enlisting, others mentioned they would not have willingly accepted being drafted if it was with a branch of service they did not want to enter, while others blamed themselves for losing their deferments and accepted their draft call as their only other option. Most of those drafted willingly accepted their draft service because they felt military service was an obligation. Many of those also spoke of the benefits they experienced immediately following their entrance into the military. A few draftees stated that the military offered them the opportunity to travel to exotic locations.

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<http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0445> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

<sup>122</sup> Harry T. Ingle, interviewed by Larry R.P. Patterson, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/63158, April 25, 2007, 00:03:30; 00:05:57; 00:08:02, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.63158/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

Isaac Holmes, Jr. claims he had no control over being drafted, rather he believed during that time “you had to” accept one’s draft assignment. However, Holmes eventually accepted his draft assignment and now feels that his military service affected him “for the good.” He also admits that his time in the military offered personal benefits, such as “teaching me how to grow up, how to become a man and how to accept responsibility.” Additionally, the military offered Holmes the opportunity to “travel to places I never would have gone.”<sup>123</sup> Wayne Austin McGee also eventually enjoyed his military service after accepting his draft assignment. McGee claims he accepted his draft assignment because if you were “born as a male child there was a duty to serve in the service, if called upon to serve your country.” Similar to Holmes, McGee also believes the military provided life lessons such as instilling discipline and dependability. As a professional musician today, McGee greatly appreciates his service with the Army Band, where he honed his musical skills for a career after the military.<sup>124</sup> Many of the interviewed draftees stated they accepted their draft assignment because they believed military service was a social norm, accepted by young men who served in American wars prior to the Vietnam War. Furthermore, these veterans’ responses suggest that many draftees willingly accepted their service because they felt it was what was expected of the males of their generation.

The interviewed veterans’ different reasons for volunteering or willingly accepting one’s draft assignment reveal interesting commonalities. Certain interviewed volunteers explained

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<sup>123</sup> Isaac Holmes, Jr., interviewed by Monet Holmes, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/3515, September 27, 2002, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.03515/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

<sup>124</sup> Wayne Austin McGee, interviewed by Robin Williams, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/51835, June 8, 2007, 00:01:30, 00:05:20, 00:06:25, 00:07:15, 00:18:36, 00:19:20, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.51835/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

enlisting to gain a sense of control, whether to avoid the draft or to select a different assignment than the one given in their draft notice. While some interviewed draftees mentioned in retrospect regretting their decision to await their draft call because they felt they lost control by not choosing to enlist. Other interviewed volunteers clearly expressed that they would have enlisted with or without the Vietnam War occurring because they wanted a military career or education. Similarly, many interviewed draftees admitted that they would have willingly accepted their draft assignment whether or not they were being sent to the Vietnam War because they felt it was their obligation as males and the sons of veterans of World War II and the Korean War. Although interviewed volunteers and draftees stated different reasons for volunteering or willingly accepting their draft assignment, two main constants appeared. These parallels suggest that veterans will always want to maintain a sense of control over their military service or they will regret not feeling like they had control of their experiences in hindsight. Additionally, a certain group of men will always willingly serve, whether it be voluntarily or as a draftee, because they either want to make the military a profession, want to have their college education funded, or because they feel it is their duty as male American citizens. In addition to the two main constants that appeared in the interviewed veterans' different responses, two main ideas also appeared in the veterans' similar responses.

The veterans of each group had more in common than one might think. Some of the similarities that veterans of both groups spoke of included a general appreciation for military service only acknowledged in retrospect, and a family history of military service. Retrospect is a key oral history idea, in which an individual reinterprets an event or experience based on what has happened later in his or her life; most of the interviewed veterans stated appreciating their

service in retrospect. Many veterans, volunteers and draftees alike, stated that the military positively impacted their lives after their service. In hindsight, most of the interviewed veterans view their military service as extremely beneficial to the rest of their lives. While Bill Franklin does not believe the military is for everyone, he thinks his service “worked out really well and pretty much set me up for everything else.”<sup>125</sup> Many volunteers claimed they would choose to serve again if given the opportunity. While Thomas Kosiorek thinks war is a “nasty, terrible thing that only causes heartache” he claims his abhorrence of combat would not hinder him “from doing it all over again in a heartbeat.”<sup>126</sup> Other volunteers such as Larry Foster thoroughly enjoyed their experience but stated they have not missed the military life since their discharge; Foster stated “I have a very positive view of my time in the Air Force. I retired in June 1992 and I look back and I say ‘I really, really enjoyed my military career and I had a lot of different jobs, which I enjoyed, and I had a lot of experience and I met a lot of great people but I have not missed it a day.’”<sup>127</sup> While the above veterans feel their service positively impacted their later lives they did not suggest that others enter the military; however, other veterans appreciated their service so much they believe others should also join.

In addition to appreciating their service, many veterans believed others should also join to gain the experience the military has to offer. Ken Gray greatly enjoyed his military service and believes “everyone should have an opportunity to serve his or her country.” He “thoroughly enjoyed” his military experience and believes “it gave me the foundation to be successful in my

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<sup>125</sup> Bill Franklin, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 22, 2011, 00:02:20; 00:03:00; 00:43:15; 00:43:53.

<sup>126</sup> Thomas Kosiorek, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 23, 2011, 00:01:00; 00:02:55; 00:21:48; 00:32:20; 00:32:47.

<sup>127</sup> Larry Foster, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, April 1, 2011 00:21:00; 00:22:10; 00:22:30; 00:43:09.

life” and for that he “will always be grateful.”<sup>128</sup> William Lyons believed his military service made him “incredibly employable,” especially “as a commissioned officer with the kind of management experience you get under fire. When I came back, I went to work at one of the big banks in the country in their management training program.” Lyons also believes the military helped him to grow personally. Lyons further believes the military “certainly never hurt me. You learn to take responsibility for stuff in a hurry. And there’s no excuses, because people die if you make a mistake.”<sup>129</sup> While most veterans expressed appreciation for their service when looking back on it and some even suggested that other should also join, one veteran appreciated his service enough to re-enlist after having been honorably discharged.

William Whitmire’s appreciation for his military service is different from other veterans because he re-enlisted with the military after his naval contract ended. While other veterans re-enlisted while still serving, Whitmire volunteered after having been discharged for a few years. Prior to his enlistment, William Whitmire believed “when you sign up on the dotted line, you are writing a check to Uncle Sam for anything up to and including your life;” so he decided to volunteer with the United States Navy in the hopes of having control over his military service. Whitmire served in the United States Navy between 1959 and 1962, he reinstated for active service between 1965 and 1968; he was honorably discharged as a Lieutenant. Whitmire’s decision to join positively impacted the rest of his life, he claimed “I certainly do not regret it [his military service] because both tours were educational” and “they were great experiences, in

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<sup>128</sup> Kenneth D. Gray, interviewed by Matthew Patrick Gallagher, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/23960, October 8, 2003, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.23960/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

<sup>129</sup> William Lyons, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 22, 2011, 00:17:00; 00:18:00; 00:21:24; 00:27:37; 00:35:26; 00:35:55.

which I learned a lot and I grew up pretty much.”<sup>130</sup> Unlike Whitmire, many draftees did not appreciate their military draft assignment immediately following their service, rather it took quite some time for them to realize they appreciated being in the military.

Many drafted veterans expressed appreciation for their successful military service which they attributed to their draft assignment. However, it is important to note that the interviewees explained that they felt a sense of appreciation for their service in retrospect, when considering how their service positively impacted their later lives; most interviewed draftees did not speak of expressing appreciation for their draft assignments while they were serving. In hindsight, Joseph Givance viewed his service as both a success as well as an opportunity to travel. When asked how he felt about being drafted, Givance responded that he “was okay with it because I felt being drafted would give me a chance to go places I never had a chance to go on my own.” Since Givance believes he benefitted from his draft service, he “hates to see them stop the draft because I think it was a good a thing. It prepared young men for the job world, it taught them how to take care of themselves, it taught them responsibility. I think it was very good.”<sup>131</sup> Givance thinks so highly of his service that he is disappointed the draft was replaced by the All-Volunteer Force. Givance felt the draft gave those unwilling to consider joining the military, the opportunity to receive the military’s benefits and consider the military as a profession. Many draftees expressed that they had the desire to have extended their military service or make the military a career, however, this desire was only realized after being discharged.

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<sup>130</sup> William Whitmire, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 29, 2011, 00:15:20; 00:20:20; 00:26:05; 00:26:50.

<sup>131</sup> Joseph Givance, interviewed by Sharhonda Daniels, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/66706, November 30, 2008, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.66706/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).



Many interviewed veterans spoke of military contracts, those who chose to make the military a career explained the process of extending one's contract, volunteer William Whitmire described re-enlisting a few years after his discharge, and draftees often detailed counting down the days to the end of their two year contract. However, once removed from the military setting and thinking back on their service, many draftees expressed frustration with not having served longer. Interviewed draftee Lee was disappointed he did not choose to extend his contract when his two year draft assignment came to an end. He believes that "if it wasn't for my time in the Vietnam War I probably would have made it longer, I probably would have made a career out of it because I liked the military, it was interesting. I wish I would have put more time into it and got to see more of the world, you know to see other cultures, other people and how they live." Although Lee expressed a desire to have stayed in the service longer, he does not believe his two year military experience impacted the rest of his life, instead he considers his service "just another incident, a part of my life, just something that happened."<sup>132</sup> In some cases, the positive impact was clear, such as when men accepted their military service to avoid jail time.

Many men facing judicial conviction during the Vietnam War were offered the opportunity to be drafted into the United States Army. Arthur Lee Elliott was offered the option of entering the United States Army to avoid conviction of assault and robbery; he served in the military until his two year contract ended. Elliott's entrance into the military is not uncommon, although it is not often discussed. According to Elliott, "before I left to go to Vietnam I was sitting in jail. I was in Brooklyn House of Detention and I was pending charges on assault and

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<sup>132</sup> Claude Lee, Jr., interviewed by Lee D. Matthews, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/38477, October 25, 2005, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.38477/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

robbery and the government officials, the military officials, came to Brooklyn House of Detention and they got me out of my cell and we filled out all of the applications for my draft into the military in the event that I was not convicted of the charges that I was accused of.”<sup>133</sup> A juvenile justice judge told William Brown, a troubled youth, that he would be sent to the Florida Reformatory School if he entered the judge’s courtroom again. In order to avoid any further trouble, Brown, with the help of his older brother and a friend, forged his birth certificate to make himself older so he could enlist into the United States Army. According to Brown, the military “was the only out I saw at the time.” He believes the military “turned [his] life around and saved me from a fate worse than death.” Brown continued his praise for the military, asserting that “I would not have been here, I probably would have been in prison or someplace had it not been for the military. The military saved me quite literally and I will be forever grateful.”<sup>134</sup> While there are many veterans similar to Elliott and Brown who are grateful for their service experience, one veteran resented his military service.

While most drafted veterans exclaimed appreciation for their military experience, VanDan’s feelings differ greatly. Alan VanDan anticipated his draft call, as a result he decided he would joined the Air Force to work as a helicopter mechanic. However, when he went to volunteer, the military recruitment offices were closed, so he decided to go to the draft office and volunteer to be drafted immediately into the United States Army. VanDan is the only interviewed veteran who volunteered to be drafted, he is also the only draftee to speak

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<sup>133</sup> Arthur Lee Elliott, interviewed by Holly Morganelli, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/74217, 00:01:07, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.74217/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

<sup>134</sup> William Brown, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 23, 2011, 00:07:01; 00:08:50; 00:09:34; 00:20:21.

unfavorably of his time in the military, considering his military service a “waste.” Although VanDan willingly volunteered for the draft, he feels his military service “was just a waste of time and I didn’t really accomplish anything out of it.”<sup>135</sup> Unlike VanDan, most veterans expressed appreciation for the opportunities afforded to them by the military, while some also expressed a sense of pride for because of their service.

In addition to the appreciation the interviewed veterans had for their military service, others associated a sense of pride with having served in the military. Many draftees and volunteers stated they were proud of their military experiences. One draftee, Timothy Vail, exclaimed “oh, I’m very proud of my service. I’m proud to have been associated with the people that I served with, most of all, and proud to have survived combat.”<sup>136</sup> The pride exhibited by Vail occurred in many other interviews, including Breton who exclaimed “I am so proud I volunteered to give my life for my country.”<sup>137</sup> The sense of appreciation and pride exhibited by both volunteers and draftees suggests that many veterans in retrospect felt that their military service had a positive impact on their later lives; however, this is not to imply that military service is always beneficial. Rather it appears that being forty years removed from the Vietnam War and the draft protests, the military’s benefits outweigh the negative experiences of war in some veterans’ memories. Another memory that apparently had a tremendous impact on the

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<sup>135</sup> Alan VanDan, interviewed by Richard Burks Verrone, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0229, October 22, 2002, <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0229> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

<sup>136</sup> Timothy Vail, interviewed by Richard B. Verrone, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0370, October 6, 21, 28, 31, November 1, 16, December 5, 6, 2005. <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0445> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

<sup>137</sup> Joseph Breton, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 28, 2011, 00:13:11; 00:14:30; 00:15:42; 00:17:24; 00:25:39.

interviewed veterans was that of another male in their family who served in the military before them.

Whether it was their fathers, uncles, or older brothers, many veterans admitted being influenced to join the military or accept their draft assignment because of a male family member. Of the nineteen interviewed volunteer veterans, eleven had some type of familial connection to the military. Many of the volunteer veterans attributed their desire to join the military to the fact that their fathers served. Thomas Kosiorek knew from an early age he would follow in his father's footsteps and join the U.S. Navy. Kosiorek stated that his father "had a big influence on me going into the Navy because he was in the Navy and he was my hero."<sup>138</sup> Like Kosiorek, other volunteers enlisted because of their family history of military service.

Black, Lyons, and Franklin claimed that coming from a military family had an enormous impact on their decision to join the military, these men stated they would never have chanced being drafted. While attending Howard University, Frederick Black accepted an Army ROTC scholarship that included all costs associated with obtaining a degree in exchange for participating in ROTC for four years. Black claims the scholarship was easy to accept because he was an "army brat" whose "grandfather, father, uncles, and older brother had already served in the Army."<sup>139</sup> William Lyons also participated in ROTC throughout his four years of college; he claims "there was no question that I was going to do ROTC." Upon graduation, he joined the Quartermaster Corps, a sustainment branch of the United States Army. He didn't want to be a

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<sup>138</sup> Thomas Kosiorek, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 23, 2011, 00:01:00; 00:02:55; 00:21:48; 00:32:20; 00:32:47.

<sup>139</sup> Frederick Harold Black, Sr., interviewed by Melissa Carter, Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, The Library of Congress, Collection Number: AFC/2001/001/64047, November 10, 2008, 00:01:02; 00:01:53; 00:02:40; 00:02:58; 00:03:55, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.64047/> (Accessed on June 1, 2011).

Marine because of his father's military experiences and the Navy did not appeal to him because "I get seasick."<sup>140</sup> Lyons stated that since he came from a family with "a long line of commissioned officers, when my time came, I wasn't going to get drafted." Another veteran whose family's military history contributed to his decision to enlist was Bill Franklin. He cited his deep familial connection to the Navy as a motivating factor to "join the Navy, well the Marine Corps branch of it." Additionally, Franklin did not consider the draft, he stated he would rather volunteer because of his family's military history.<sup>141</sup> Other veterans also cited familial connections to the military as a reason for joining, often even if their family did not approve of their decision to volunteer for military service.

Robert Morgan decided to enlist to avoid his impending draft number and to follow in his father's footsteps. Morgan's father served as a Drill Instructor in the United States Marine Corps and because of his experience he did not want his son joining the Marines. Morgan's father was extremely adamant about this, claiming "he would rather shoot his own son than see him in a Marine uniform." However, Robert Morgan wanted to volunteer for the military; yet, he still tried to respect his father's wishes, therefore he enlisted with the United States Army instead of the Marine Corps.<sup>142</sup> Draftees were also influenced by their family members who had served in the military.

Among the interviewed draftees four of the ten men's fathers served in the military, each of these men served in World War II. Michael Morris' father served in an infantry unit during

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<sup>140</sup>William Lyons, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 22, 2011, 00:17:00; 00:18:00; 00:21:24; 00:27:37; 00:35:26; 00:35:55.

<sup>141</sup> Bill Franklin, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 22, 2011, 00:02:20; 00:03:00; 00:43:15; 00:43:53.

<sup>142</sup> Robert (Rusty) Morgan, interviewed by Ashley Wilt, University of Central Florida Community Veterans History Project, University of Central Florida, March 26, 2011, 00:06:36; 00:07:55; 00:11:13; 00:51:04.

World War II, “he was very seriously wounded on Okinawa towards the end of the war, in which he lost the fingers of his left hand.” Morris stated he “was always in awe of [his father] because of that experience.” Although he was inspired by his father’s experience, Morris did not choose to join the military and follow in his father’s footsteps, instead he was a draftee. However, during his interview Morris expressed regret for choosing to be drafted rather than volunteering for the Navy. Although Morris was drafted into the military, he was the only son of five to enter the military, “after I went in and before my next youngest brother, they instituted the lottery system. Although all of my brothers had different numbers in the lottery, they all escaped being called up.” While Morris associated some regret with his entrance into the military, he also expressed appreciation for his service because the military improved his relationship with his father and encouraged him to grow up, he said “when I came home my father and I were pals. We had a shared experience. I grew up a lot. In fact I grew up an enormous amount when I was in Vietnam.”<sup>143</sup>

Draftee Michael McGregor tried to avoid the military at all costs because of his father’s military experience. While some veterans chose to serve because of their family’s history with military service, McGregor had a vastly different view of military service and its impact on a family. McGregor’s father served as a career soldier in the United States Army; he was subsequently killed on D-Day at Omaha Beach in 1944. Years following their father’s death, McGregor’s brother enlisted in the Marine Corps prior to McGregor being drafted into the Army. Initially, McGregor did not want to serve in the military, stating “it was the furthest thing from

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<sup>143</sup> Michael Morris, interviewed by Steve Maxner, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0329, December 16, 2003, <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0329> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

my mind and I tried everything not to go.” McGregor’s attempt to avoid the draft also impacted his future wife; he said they “were originally going to get married on August 21st of 1965 and I think it was in late June or July, Johnson came out and said, ‘Anybody who is married before August 14th, won’t get drafted.’ So, we pushed our date up to August 7th.” Although McGregor changed his wedding date, he was eventually drafted because President Johnson’s statement did not prevent the draft boards from drafting more men; it is important to note that the draft system was incredibly unpredictable and often times did not coincide with draft exemptions. Prior to receiving his draft letter, McGregor considered the idea of enlisting in order to avoid the draft, “but I didn’t want to do four years [of military service].” In the end, when he received his draft notice, McGregor accepted his responsibility to serve his country; he recalls telling his wife “my county is calling. I don’t like it, I wish I could get out of it, but you know, this is what I got to do.”<sup>144</sup> McGregor’s resistance to serve and his eventual acceptance of his draft assignment is another example of an interviewed veteran’s entrance into the military being influenced by their family’s military history. While it is hard to generalize, many of the volunteers in this study attributed wanting to enlist to their family’s history with military service, however, some of the men who chose to await their draft calls had fathers who suffered terrible injury or death because of their military service. The veterans’ responses suggest that the experiences of a family’s military service impacts a future service personnel’s decision to willingly volunteer for service or wait until one is called upon. It is also important to note the influence that a familial connection to military had on veteran’s decision. Interviewed veterans from families with commissioned

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<sup>144</sup> Michael McGregor, interviewed by Laura M. Calkins, Oral History Project, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Collection Number: OH0263, January 21, 2003, <http://www.virtualarchive.vietnam.ttu.edu/starweb/virtual/virtual/servlet.starweb?path=virtual/virtual/materials%5Fnew.web&search1=ONUMN%3DOH0263> (Accessed on June 2, 2011).

officers stated that they would not let themselves be drafted and that they would follow the role of the men before them, suggesting that military service whether it was voluntary or coerced was valued because it reflected their notions of masculinity. Whereas, draftees whose fathers were severely injured or absent as a result of the military did not consider the experience to be one in which all young men must accept. These men understood the real consequences of military service and may have been less positive about military service than men whose relatives had served and not been injured or killed.

The veterans' responses show that there were a variety of reasons for service and that these interviewed service members did not reject military service during the Vietnam War era. The veterans also explained how they were swayed to accept their draft assignment or enlist because of their family's connection to the military. Other interviewed service personnel explained entering the military for the benefits that they knew they would be afforded, such as an education or a career. Additionally, the responses, both from draftees and volunteers, argued that entering the military was not an option; rather these men clearly explained how prior generations of servicemen imposed the belief that military service was a fact of life for young men during that time and the only option provided was whether one would enlist or await his draft assignment.

The antiwar movement of the 1960s and nationwide draft protests caused many to overlook the importance of volunteer service members during the Vietnam War. As Americans' involvement in Southeast Asia increased in the beginning of 1966, so did the general opposition to the war, U.S. combat involvement, and the use of coerced young men. It would seem that the public's criticism did not truly concern the use of the draft during the war, but rather the



community disagreed with the system's unfair implementation. While this study does not examine the general public's view of the war or the reasons for draft protest, the men most affected by the draft, draftees, seem to accept the draft as a fact of life, service they owed the nation as men. Given that most Vietnam veterans were volunteers and that many draftees did not resist their service, military service may not have been the issues resisted; instead it may have been the war itself. As the war continued with no clear victory in sight, the veterans' interview responses make it appear that the criticisms intensified to include the general use of the draft system. Once the war ended, it should be no surprise that despite initial fears, the all-volunteer force succeeded. Many American young men and women accepted military service, and volunteered to serve for the same reason that Vietnam era volunteers served, such as to gain a career or an education. Finally, it may be that the U.S. tradition of military service, which affected so many generations of Americans, has only been reinforced by U.S. involvement in the many wars of the twentieth century. This more than anything else may explain the success of the volunteer Army in the twenty-first century.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

Veteran and author of *Loon*, Jack McLean attended the prestigious Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, with classmate George W. Bush. McLean claims that “kids like me didn’t go to Vietnam;” however, after graduation he was eager for change so he enlisted with the United States Marine Corps.<sup>145</sup> After a tumultuous military service, McLean returned to the United States and entered Harvard University as the first veteran of the Vietnam War to attend the university. The veterans included in both *Bloods* and *Everything We Had* often times cited reasons similar to those of McLean and the interviewees. The interviewed veterans’ wide ranging reasons for those who served in the military during the Vietnam War suggests that the draft acted as both a catalyst for those who wanted control over their own destiny as well as a civic responsibility for those who felt it was an unavoidable fact of life. McLean’s statement of wanting to enter the military for a change of scenery and the interviewed veterans responses suggest that the young men of the 1960s and 1970s felt an obligation to serve in their country’s military. The interviewees’ responses suggest that the volunteers’ entrance was not always as voluntary as one would expect because many of them were aware of the draft and its potential impact on their lives, while the draftees were not as coerced as expected because many accepted their service as an obligation of a young American male.

America’s use of conscription and a draft throughout its history further helps to explain the fact that military service may have been fundamentally accepted, even during the Vietnam War era. The problem during that time is that many Americans conscientiously objected to America’s presence in Vietnam, including Americans serving in country. Thus the dissension

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<sup>145</sup> Jack McLean, *Loon: A Marine’s Story* (New York: NY: Presidio Press, 2009), 3.

during the late 1960s and 1970s may have been in response to the war itself, rather than towards entering the military. The interviewee's responses propose that military service was not resisted as often suggested by those who opposed the draft, rather military service was often willingly accepted and viewed as an opportunity to better one's life. The volunteers explained that they chose their service for various reasons such as the opportunity to maintain control over one's military service, to gain an education, or to obtain a career. The interviewed draftees said they willingly accepted their draft assignment because they considered their military service inevitable. It seems plausible that the reason both volunteers and drafts accepted their military service during such a tumultuous time is attributed to the fact that more than half of the men interviewed had a family member serve in World War II or the Korean War prior to their service. These interviewees' responses demonstrates that the generation of draft age men during the Vietnam War followed the footsteps of their fathers, uncles, and neighbors and accepted military service as a civic responsibility and unavoidable fact of life.

The interviewed men who had family members who served in the military explained that entering the military was a form of initiation or a way of becoming a man. These responses suggest that notions of masculinity affectively encouraged young men to enlist with the military during the Vietnam War. While this form of motivation may still influence some young men to enlist with the all-volunteer force, it does not effectively encourage young women to enter. Instead, today's military attempts to encourage young people to enlist include widely publicizing the benefits of the GI Bill and appealing to both genders with the Army Strong campaigns. The interviewed veterans' responses and the successful transition to the all-volunteer force suggest that there is an eternal appeal of military service that will continual encourage a particular group

of young Americans to join the military, especially those, similar to the interviewed volunteers, hoping to take control of their lives and take advantage of the benefits the military offers them.

### Future Areas of Research

While these responses and further interviews with similar conclusions could provide new insights surrounding Vietnam War veterans' entrance experiences, there are many areas concerning American veterans that still need to be explored. As the All-Volunteer Force was created following the Vietnam War further research is needed to determine what reasons influence modern service members to join the All-Volunteer Force. Additionally, it is important to determine if there are similar reasons for joining the military between modern day service members and those suggested by the interviewed volunteers of the Vietnam War. Since the draft only included young American males, another study should explore the use of women in the modern All-Volunteer Force to determine if women and men cite the same reasons for enlisting.

Another area of research needing further exploration is the impact of the draft. Future areas of research pertaining to the draft and its impact on young American males could include a comparative study examining the experiences of drafted veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The interviewees suggested the draft influenced those young men in the military during the Vietnam War era; it may have also encouraged many young men to attain graduate and doctorate degrees as a legal avenue to avoid military service. The exploration of the draft's influence on one continuing with an advanced college degree would also broaden the overall understanding of the draft's possible motivational attributes. Finally, another avenue of research could assess the correlation between volunteer veterans and the likelihood of making

the military a career, as many of the interviewed volunteers chose to continue beyond their contracts and retire after more than twenty years of military service.

**APPENDIX:  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

From : **UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To : Ashley Wilt

Date : January 26, 2011

Dear Researcher:

Thank you for sending the description of your proposed research concerning oral histories with Vietnam veterans to the IRB office. After reviewing this information and discussing your plans on the phone, the IRB determined that the following proposed activity is not human research as defined by DHHS regulations at 45 CFR 46 or FDA regulations at 21 CFR 50/56:

Type of Review: Not Human Research Determination  
Project: Community Veterans History Program, RICHES  
Investigator: Ashley Wilt  
Research ID: N/A

University of Central Florida IRB review and approval is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are to be made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human subjects, please contact the IRB office to discuss the proposed changes.

On behalf of the IRB Chair, Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, this letter is signed by:

Joanne Muratori  
IRB Coordinator

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