

## Brooklyn College Vietnam Oral History Project Questions

*The questions on this list are for informational purposes only, and give a sense of the kinds of questions that the project intends to address. Some of these questions may not be asked in an individual interview, and others not on the sheet could be included. Indeed, the list of possible questions could be extended indefinitely.*

Where were you born?  
When?

Tell about your neighborhood  
Growing up  
Ethnic mix  
Class background  
What did the other parents in the neighborhood do?

What did other kids want to do?  
What did they do?  
Were you different/the same as the other kids in this?

What did you do for entertainment?  
What did you play? Why?

What was the area like physically?  
How did your home compare to other homes in the neighborhood?

What was schooling like?  
Where did you go to school?  
What was your attitude toward school?  
Did they teach patriotism (?)  
Did you take it seriously?  
Were you patriotic?  
Why?

### Parent's generation

Any parents WWII vets? (or other wars)  
What did they tell you about that war?  
Did your dad or mom take any lessons from that war?  
Did they apply those lessons to their analysis of Vietnam?  
How did they react to your actions/behaviors/beliefs about the war?  
Was the generation gap a reality in your house?  
Why/why not?

What were your ideas about WWII?  
What did you think of war generally?  
What influenced your thinking about war?

Movies? John Wayne?

What was our relationship with your parents like?

What values did you learn from your parents?

Is there a connection between the values they taught you and your actions regarding VN?

Can you tell me about the central ideas and beliefs that drove your thinking and actions with regard to the war?

How common were these ideas?

Did many in your group hold them?

Tell about your parents politics?

Politically active? Unions?

Did you discuss political issues in the house?

Did you learn your politics from them?

How did your own personal politics form?

What were the most important influences on your political views? Why?

### Veterans

Do you remember when you first heard about VN

How did you enter the service?

What was the experience of being drafted like

Did you remember getting your raft notice

Were other kids getting their notices at the same time

Was your reaction similar to or different from that of others

Did you ever think of going to Canada

What did you think of those who made that choice

What was the experience of Whitehall street like

Describe the experience for me

where did you go to boot camp

What was that like

What was the most memorable experience of camp

Do you remember the other men you went to boot camp with

How did you get through it?

After boot camp, where did you go?

What was your MOS

How did you get to VN

Can you describe the experience of arriving in VN for me

How did you stay in touch with your family?  
What was the food like?  
Did you have plenty of supplies?  
Did you feel pressure or stress?  
Was there something special you did for "good luck"?  
How did people entertain themselves?  
Were there entertainers?  
What did you do when on leave?  
Where did you travel while in the service?  
Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?  
What were some of the pranks that you or others would pull?  
Do you have photographs?  
Who are the people in the photographs?  
What did you think of officers or fellow soldiers?  
Did you keep a personal diary?

What was it like to come home?

What kind of a reception did you get?

How do you explain that reception?

What caused people to reject you and veterans generally?

How did your family react to you?

What made them react in that way?

### Children

How have your children been affected by the war  
What have you told them about your experiences  
Have you used your experience in any way to shape the way you elect to raise your children  
Has your relationship with your children been affected by the war?  
If we had a war of similar scale now, would you urge them to serve?  
Why, why not?

### Remembering

How did you feel about the war in Vietnam? Did you support it or not? Why?  
Was the war justified?  
Why do you think this nation got involved there?  
Was it worth the sacrifice?  
Would you fight again?

How did/do you feel about the people who did not support the war?

Did you succeed or fail as a soldier?

Do you think this country behaved in a proper way in Vietnam?

How has your life been changed by the VN experience

Did your neighborhood change

Do you think Brooklyn changed

Did the city change?

How?

What was the moral significance of the war?

What was its political significance?

What do you do to remember those events? (attend memorials, etc.?)

How should this country act with respect to Vietnam? The war? The veterans?