

Veterans' Peace Videos

A Community Based Peace Studies Project

What are "peace studies?"

Reference <https://kroc.nd.edu/about-us/what-is-peace-studies/>

"Peace studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that draws on political science, sociology, history, anthropology, theology, psychology, philosophy, and other fields to: understand the causes of armed conflict; develop ways to prevent and resolve war, genocide, terrorism, gross violations of human rights; and build peaceful and just systems and societies.

Rationale:

A veterans' peace studies project would give veterans with moral injury 1) an opportunity to promote values which they feel were violated by what they had to do or did accidentally in the line of duty. 2) an opportunity to find camaraderie with a group of veterans who, in their work of peace building, are finding a new purpose for their lives. **At the IVW website we say that we welcome veterans home to share their warrior wisdom for peace building. This project would facilitate that mission.**

Across the U.S. peace studies are mostly offered at the university level. There is a lack of ongoing peace studies at the level of small cities and towns. I have not been able to find any ongoing peace studies program at any institution of higher learning in Delaware. So, Delaware would appear to be a promising development area for peace studies, and **especially at the community level.**

There are many communities of faith and not-for-profit agencies in Delaware dedicated to promoting peace and justice. Very few are already producing their own videos. This project aims to teach basic film making skills so that community groups can use video for publishing their peace building stories. These are the steps involved:

1. Train volunteers from the Interfaith Veterans' Workgroup to be teachers of basic photography and video skills, using cell phones and inexpensive point and shoot cameras.
2. Send these IVW instructors to communities of faith and not-for-profit agencies to impart those basic skills so that their members can provide good photos and video clips going forward.
3. Teach basic video editing skills to the community members who learned the basic capturing skills in step 2.
4. Teach the organizations that are now producing their own videos how to deploy them in social networks and embed them on web pages.
5. Organize the participating organizations in order to review their work via case studies, sharing tips about how to improve their videos.
6. The participating organizations now collaborate to produce peace studies videos, telling the world about what we learned at the local level via this project.

A veterans' peace studies program could work cooperatively with active duty military personnel. One wouldn't need to become a pacifist to join this effort. I quote from the "What is Peace Studies" page, <https://kroc.nd.edu/about-us/what-is-peace-studies/>:

"Some peace scholars and educators are absolute pacifists (opposing the use of military force in all circumstances), but many are not, and there is no litmus test for one's place in the field. Scholars and peacebuilders are united not by ideology, but by a commitment to finding nonviolent solutions rooted in justice. Many see themselves as contributing to a body of knowledge and practice that historically has been neglected in favor of the study and practice of war. But peace studies is not "anti-military." Many peace scholars are in conversation with the military, and many in the military are supportive of peace studies."

Why video?

Video is the way that most young people learn these days, and if we want to change the values of our society toward peace building, we need to reach young people especially, because they will be tomorrow's leaders. Also, a lot of the funds spent on peace studies at the university level go toward maintaining buildings as venues for learning. Distance education is a cheaper way of getting a message across, and it tends to reach a wider and more diverse audience.

Some Local Resources: The following not-for-profits and other volunteer agencies could provide video content for this project. (This is not an exhaustive list. Wilmington has many organizations working on some aspect of building peace).

Delaware Pacem in Terris, a leading peace organization on the east coast with almost 50 years of experience

Interfaith Veterans' Workgroup, a recently certified 501C3, helping veterans come home and use their warrior wisdom for peace building.

Non-Violent Wilmington, a new coalition of peace builders from diverse faith communities, dedicated to reversing Wilmington's reputation as "murderville USA".

The Interfaith Leaders' Group--Convened by Jo and Ed Klinge, Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the Wilmington area who are working on peace at the neighborhood level.

302 Guns Down, a not-for profit addressing the problem of gun violence in Delaware.

The Wilmington Peacekeepers--An interfaith and racially integrated group of volunteers who visit neighborhoods where there has been a recent injury or death due to gun violence, to comfort grieving families and friends and strengthen neighborhood leadership.

Serviam Media--the not-for-profit arm of Teleduction, a professional video production company in Wilmington. Serviam Media has empowered youth for decades to shoot and edit videos that promote social justice and peace. Serviam media has the technical expertise to train volunteers for this project; and one of the staff persons and a filmmaker, Dan Collins has extensive experience working with veterans recovering from PTSD and moral injury. He produced the documentary film, "From War to Wisdom."

Startup Funding:

For his work as a Commissioned Interfaith Peacemaker, Tom Davis, is likely to receive a credit line of \$1000 for 2019 from New Castle Presbytery, which covers all of Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

The Synod of the Mid Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church USA has grant monies available for peacemaking projects.

Interfaith Veterans' Workgroup, a recently certified 501C3, can solicit public donations and act as a fiscal agent for the project.