Senior Project Proposal

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**The Problem**

At the height of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) twenty-two veterans per day were committing suicide (Kemp & Bossarte, 2012). This unprecedented societal, civil, religious, and political failure of the United States to care for veteran mental health was appalling and unacceptable. As GWOT comes to an end, veteran suicide has fallen significantly. Factors such as the strategy in the Middle East, risk-adverse political administrations, and increased resiliency over time have all contributed to the reduction in deaths much more than increased mental health funding for the VA has. Self determination theory asserts that humans need three things in order to be content, “they need to feel competent at what they do; they need to feel authentic in their lives; and they need to feel connected to others.” (Junger, 2016 p. 22). How can veterans feel connected to others when nearly the entirety of American society has no idea what being in the military is like, much less, seeing combat? My project aims to assist society in helping combat veterans with “feeling connected,” by releasing my own memoirs with the intent of helping society to better understand combat, veterans to better understand their own experiences, and increasing the ability for Christians to deal with these relationships on an intimate level.

Ideally, not only service members, but society also, would be equipped to deal with the stress of a nation at war. Funding mental health care is important and is already being done largely by the government; however, providing society, religious organizations, and the individual veterans with the knowledge and means to be more resilient and understanding of the endeavors which they have faced, are facing, or will face, is of vital importance to prepare the nation for the next major conflict, as well as heal from the GWOT era. My project will help solve this problem by providing an emotionally charged, biblically explained, and historically accurate text-based visual novel of my own experiences in training, Afghanistan, and my transition out of the military, to better assist veterans in all stages of their service. Through providing the public with a clear lens of what veterans endure in combat and when they return home, this visual novel with game elements will help to provide society with the sense of connection which is lacking upon veterans’ returns from theater.

**Project Description**

The project will be implemented in C++ using Simple Direct Media Layer (SDL) and released on Itch.io. Keyboard, mouse, monitor, and Itch.io account will be the only peripherals required. My personal motivation for this project is to share my own war memoirs and lessons learned from belief in God throughout such dark and arduous circumstances to better prepare the nation for what we may face soon in the future. It will help to teach me game theory, statistics, game development, and creative writing. The deliverables will include RNG functions to help run the game’s various chance mechanics, a plot which would stand on its own as a literary work, aesthetics to assist with text visualization – music and supplementary graphics, publishing the game for download, and surveying the player base for emotional affect and cultural relevance as it pertains to equipping veterans and society to feel connected to one another.

**Project Schedule**

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| Date | Task | Description |
| 1/8/2024 | Proposal | Full project proposal complete. |
| 1/8/2024 | Requirements Doc | Requirements document complete. |
| 1/21/2024 | Text Complete | Storyline/plot writing complete. |
| 2/4/2024 | Game Outline | Outline RNG functions, choices, compilation of choices, and interaction of the user and the game. |
| 2/4/2024 | Tutorial | Tutorial complete. |
| 2/18/2024 | Games Functions | RNG functions and all game theory completed pending testing. |
| 3/3/2024 | Game Flow | Game flow added. Player should be able to go through the main story and read the plot. |
| 3/17/2024 | Secondary Game Flow | Health, sanity, and choices are added. Choices are tracked to determine end case. |
| 3/17/2024 | Test Cases | Choice results and impacts and health and sanity are mapped for difficulty and possibility to ensure that players can complete the game. Theory functions, health, sanity, and choice weight values are adjusted accordingly. |
| 3/17/2024 | Survey | Complete the survey and begin polling |
| 3/31/2024 | Aesthetics | Graphics and music complete. |
| 4/14/2024 | Testing | Complete game testing based on test cases. |
| 4/14/2024 | Polling | Polling complete, results compiled into readable format to present for defense. |
| 4/30/2024 | Final Adjustments/Edits | Last minute adjustments and edits complete. |
| 4/30/2024 | Project Completion | Final project published to itch.io |

**References**

Junger, S. (2016). *Tribe: On homecoming and belonging*. Twelve.

Kemp, J., & Bossarte, R. (2012). (rep.). Suicide Data Report, 2012. Department of Veterans Affairs.