

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with David Risley

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember-War on Terror Oral History project

Interview # VRT-V-L-2015-032

David Risley, Judicial Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Egypt from late 2010 through early 2014, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember-War on Terror* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Dates: Aug 26, Sep 2 & Sep 15, 2015 Location: IL Information Service Studio-
CMS, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital video – HD Wide Screen

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc.): Mark Suszko, Tony Bateman and Greg Lipe, IIS
Videographers

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

**Transcript
being processed**

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:48 + 1:50 + 1:57 / 1.8 + 1.83 + 1.95 = 5.58 hrs.

Session 1: Counter-terrorism work in Springfield U.S. Attorney's office and
background to Risley's year in Egypt

Session 2: Egyptian revolution of 2012 and early Mohamed Morsi rule

Session 3: Mohamed Morsi and Egyptian judiciary, and 2013 Egyptian revolution

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 1, 2016.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

Abstract

David Risley, *Veterans Remember*, VRT-V-L-2015-032

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: David S. Risley was born on January 10th, 1952 in Springfield, Illinois, and attended the University of Illinois before receiving his law degree from Brigham Young University. David was interviewed in 2007 about his work in 2004 on Saddam Hussein's war crimes trial. This interview starts with David's years from 2005 through mid-2010 when he worked as the Assistant U.S. Attorney at the Central District of Illinois office, specifically as the Anti-Terrorism Coordinator.

The interview primarily covers Risley's four and a half years when he worked as the judicial attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt from September 2010 through early 2015. His wife Eileen accompanied David to Cairo, where they lived in the city. During this period, Egypt went through two revolutions, in 2011 and 2013. Risley provided a detailed description of the nuances and complexities of Egyptian society, with special attention on the country's judicial system. He noted the multi-dimensional nature of the judiciary, and pointed out that it was one of several centers of power in Egypt, rivaling other institutions of power, including the executive, the military and religious leaders. In January, 2011 there were mass protests in Tahrir Square, near the U.S. Embassy, that led to Hosni Mubarak stepping down as president. During this time, David and Eileen returned to the United States, coming back to Egypt when the situation stabilized. David described in detail the friction that grew to intolerable levels between the country's new president, Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the judiciary, which helped spark the second revolution in July, 2013. Eileen once again returned to the states, but David remained in Egypt and observed yet another transformation in the Egyptian government and society at large. He returned to the U.S. in early 2015 and retired.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Egyptian revolution of 2011; Egyptian revolution of 2013; Hosni Mubarak; Mohamed Morsi; Egyptian judicial system; U.S. Embassy in Egypt during the Egyptian revolutions; Abdul Fatah al-Sisi; Ali al-Marri; Michael Finton (Talim Islam); Ruth Bader Ginsberg; Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi; Muslim Brotherhood; Coptic Christians in Egypt; EgyptJustice.com; demonstrations in Tahrir Square; violence/massacre in Rabaa Adawiya Square

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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