

# The *Art* of Reintegration:

Veterans and the Silences of War



# Project Goals

- Create space for safe, open and deep dialogue about military experiences.
- Provide tools, language and practice for participants to discuss military experiences (that they can use in their own personal lives outside of our discussions).
- Expose people to more art (literature and visual) about the military experiences
- Utilize art (literature and visual) to deepen and personalize understanding of the military experiences.
- Build leadership skills of both discussion leaders and participants.
- Acknowledge the disconnect between and help to bridge that gap between veteran and civilian populations.



# Project Design

- The program arc took place over the course of two years, featuring two distinct cycles of discussion groups.
- Groups met monthly to discuss seven topics and themes, led by trained discussion leaders who would guide the sessions and conversations through analysis of archival material and works of written and visual art.

## DISCUSSION THEMES

- HEROISM
- HOMECOMING
- ANTI-WAR PROTEST
- WORLD WAR I
- VIETNAM
- THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR
- SUFFERING

The following slides feature a selection of various works and material used during the discussion groups, organized by theme. These sources do not represent a comprehensive list of all media discussed or used during the discussions. Along with the accompanying questions, the materials will provide an overview of issues explored.

These materials and accompanying questions deal with sensitive subject matter, some of which may be triggering to certain individuals.

**Please, practice self-care as you proceed.**

*Heroism*



Questions to consider:

- What definition comes to mind when you think of the word “hero”?
- How does the public view heroism during wartime? During peacetime?
- What purpose does the portrayal of heroism serve?
- What forms does heroism take outside the service in wartime? Consider, for example: Conscientious objectors, family of servicemembers, activists.

*From the Archives:*

[Heroes All!](#)

[National League for Womens Service, 1918](#)

*Writing:*

[Writing a Decade](#) by Lovella Calica

[Ode in Memory of the American Volunteers Fallen for France](#) by Alan Seeger

*Visual Media:*

[Helping a Wounded Ally](#) (1918) by Harry Townsend

[War Veteran](#) by Amber Stone

*Homecoming*



Questions to consider:

- How does the dream of home during conflict clash with the reality of returning?
- What are the similarities surrounding the idea of “homecoming” across the years and conflicts? The differences?



*From the Archives:*

[The Floyd A. Brotzman Papers](#)

[Edward James Baker Letters](#)

*Music:*

[Keep the Homefires Burning](#)  
(1914) by John McCormick

[Coming Home](#) (2006) by John Legend

*Poetry:*

[The Monster I Became](#) by Robyn Murray



*Anti-War Protest*

## Questions to Consider:

- What different groups were involved in protest movements? Did they have the same reason for protesting? Consider for example: pacifists, women, socialists, and students.
- What shape did protests take on the battlefield? What about when veterans returned home?
- How do veterans receive protests?

### *From the Archives:*

[What Price, Vietnam? Women Strike for Peace Pamphlet](#)

[Open letter to President Johnson on Vietnam](#)

### *Music:*

[Ohio](#) by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young

[Machine Gun](#) by Jimmi Hendrix

### *Printed Media:*

[The Masses](#) (1911-1917)



*World War I*



### Questions to Consider:

- World War I is also known as “The Great War,” and “WWI” was only applied *after* World War II. What does this name impart on the war itself?
- What role does propaganda play in our perception of WWI? How might it have affected those living or fighting during the conflict?
- What lessons can we learn from looking at WWI propaganda versus the lived experiences of the soldiers and veterans? Do we see these same mistakes being made in other conflicts? In the present?

### *From the Archives:*

[Stephen H. Noyes War Pictures photograph album, 1918-1919](#)

[John H. Gibbon Letter to Marjorie Young Gibbon, 1918](#)

[War Posters Collection](#)

*Vietnam*



*From the Archives:*

Questions to Consider:

- How do the themes of “loss” and “homecoming” resonate throughout discussions and media about Vietnam? What about the theme of “the other”?
- Experiences during the Vietnam War are often portrayed in film and television—are these portrayals accurate? Is there truly a “common” experience across all veterans?

[Nguyen Family Papers](#)

[PFC Edward Woods Vietnam Correspondence](#)

*Poetry and Writing:*

[A Common Language](#) by W.D. Ehrhart

[Her Life Runs Like a Red Silk Flag](#) by Bruce Weigl

*The Global War on Terror*



### Questions to Consider:

- How does military training prepare you for the war experience?
- How does the media (in particular, embedded journalism) impact a soldier's experience of the war? A civilian's?
- What does its length do to our perception of and interest in this conflict?

### *Poetry:*

[\*Army Values, Translated\*](#) by Maggie Martin

[\*How to Make a Combat Paper Book\*](#) by Nathan Lewis

[\*Home from Iraq, Barking Spider Tavern\*](#) by Hugh Martin

### *Visual Media and Art:*

[\*"Suicide Hotline—Cheaper than Healthcare"\*](#) by Jesse Albrecht

[\*"Zero Target Data"\*](#) by Amber Hoy

[\*"They're Biting"\*](#) by David Keefe

*Suffering*



### Questions to Consider:

- How do veterans suffer? What does it look like?
- Does suffering look the same across all conflicts and eras?
- What have the responses of communities and civilians been to such suffering? What more can be done?

### *From the Archives:*

[Ward W. Pearson Diary](#)

[Edith Madeira Scrapbook](#)

### *Poetry and Art:*

["Burn Pit Cancer"](#) by Aaron Hughes

[Beautiful Wreckage](#) by WD Ehrhart

