

VETERANS IN SOCIETY CONFERENCE 2014

Humanizing the Discourse



April 27–28, 2014
Hotel Roanoke (Roanoke, VA)

Presented by the VT Veterans Studies Group;
Hosted by the Center for the
Study of Rhetoric in Society, Dept. of English

 **VirginiaTech**
Invent the Future®

WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to the 2nd Veterans in Society Conference. For those of us on the planning committee, this event is a labor of love and a commitment to continuing our academic and civic work in support of the men and women who serve our country and in support of their families who hold them up and sustain them during and after that service.

Several of us on the planning committee are veterans; several are married to or are children of veterans; and several are close friends of veterans. Because of our experiences and relationships, all of us have come to understand something intimate and important about the costs of service that veterans and their families pay. Our hope is that this event will help to build a community of individuals from all ranks of society who are unified by a vision linked to an ethic of and call to service.

As we envisioned this event, we were emboldened by our belief that the university, and specifically, the humanities and social sciences, offer in the words of Robert Coles, “a special kind of clarifying” value in our quest to understand the complexity of the veteran experience. We brought together a wide range of activities related to the arts and humanities, believing that they will provide windows into that veteran experience. Our goal is not to paint verbal pictures or elicit emotions for emotions’ sake; rather we want to share works and ideas that provide “realism for promise, admonition, solace, vengeance, foretelling, [and] instruction.” As a retired officer and a humanist, I know how stories and poems and songs help me better understand the human condition and what Coles calls its “vicissitudes, victories, and defeats.” I offer a few quotations below from works I sought out as I contemplated writing this welcome.

“The Latin word *finis* has two meaning: the end or finish, and a goal to reach.”

—Viktor Frankel, *Man’s Search for Meaning*

“Each morning, despite the unknowns, they made their legs move. They endured. They kept hump-ing. They did not submit to the obvious alternative, which was simply to close their eyes and fall.”

—Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*

“Performance during battle is like the tip of an iceberg. It requires a whole lot of support—under the surface, behind the scenes—before the first round is fired.”

—Col. Dandridge M. Malone,
Small Unit Leadership: A Commonsense Approach

“The words of a dead man / Are modified in the guts of the living.”

—W. H. Auden, “In Memory of W. B. Yeats”

“We must gather from the whole store of things such as make most for the use of life.”

—Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*

“When [Odysseus] arrives on Ithaca with his treasure he does not recognize the place, and no one recognizes him—no one but his dog. This, the poet tells us, is a contrivance of the goddess Athena, but how could it be otherwise after so long an absence? Any veteran knows.”

—Paul Woodruff, *Reverence*

I share these particular quotations because they help me frame my understanding of this conference. During the next day and a half, you will hear words from those who are living as well as words from the dead. You will be shown or told about some of the many mornings of endurance, as well as the contemplations and, to everyone’s loss, the enactments of what O’Brien called the “obvious alternative.” As many of us have come to know, these enactments most often happen post-deployment when veterans, for whatever reason, cannot quite see past that first definition of *finis*, when whatever goal they may have envisioned pre-deployment has been obscured or seems no longer reachable or no longer clear. You will learn about some of the means of support, particularly those behind the scenes. And, by the end, we expect some modification in your guts, hearts, and minds will have occurred.

Our hope is that, as a community, we will gather from these things we see, hear, and feel “such as to make most for the use of life.” Our goal is to advance learning, to create a framework for such learning, and to use what we learn in support of our brothers and sisters and their families—to help them during and after their return from deployment, and to help prepare a well-deserved place called home for them.

Thank you for joining with us.

Jim Dubinsky

HOSTED BY THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF RHETORIC IN SOCIETY

We are especially grateful to the CSRS, and particularly to Director Kelly Belanger and Research Assistant Heidi Nobles, for their generosity in time, funding, and staff support throughout the development and execution of this conference. Thank you!

About the CSRS:

The Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society examines communications in public, nonprofit, academic, corporate, and governmental settings to better understand language in use.

How does language inspire people to action? How does writing change society, and why? The CSRS searches for answers by studying everything from the communication strategies of a national social change movement to “everyday rhetorics” that often go unnoticed or unexamined.

All of the center’s research and creative projects combine research methods developed in rhetoric and writing studies with methods across the disciplines. Through externally funded research and outreach, the CSRS seeks to translate analysis into action.

The CSRS welcomes collaboration and partnerships with other academic units, community organizations, corporations, scholars, and activists in Virginia, the United States, and internationally. Please contact them to learn more. Their website is <http://www.rhetoric.english.vt.edu/>.

Mission:

Our mission is to restore the arts of rhetoric to a meaningful place in education and civic life.

Vision:

Our vision is to empower speakers and writers to foster problem-solving rhetoric, challenge unethical discourse, and sustain positive, productive communication in professional and public contexts.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SUNDAY—APRIL 27

1600–1800	Screening of <i>Where Soldiers Come From</i>	4–6 pm
1700–1900	Registration (Lower Conference Foyer)	5–7 pm
1800–1900	Opening Reception (Lower Lounge; hors d'oeuvres served)	6–7 pm
1930–2130	Outside the Wire performance (Washington Lecture Hall) <i>Welcome remarks by</i> Conference Chair James M. Dubinsky <i>Special Guest:</i> Bryan Doerries, artistic director, OTW <i>Introduced by</i> Rev. Dr. J. Wesley Smith, St. John's Episcopal Church, Roanoke, VA <i>Performers:</i> Sanam Hashemi and Matthew Schott, Virginia Tech <i>Panelists:</i> Andrew Hawks, Chloe Tunze, Felta Virginia, Travis Stevens	7:30–9:30 pm

MONDAY—APRIL 28

0730–0900	Registration	7:30–9 am
0800–0900	Breakfast (Lower Lounge)	8–9 am
0900–1015	“Growing Up Military” (Washington Lecture Hall) <i>Introductory remarks by</i> Conference Vice Chair Heidi Nobles <i>Special Guest:</i> Donna Musil, writer and director	9–10:15 am
1030–1130	Panel Session 1: Speaking as Civilians, Speaking as Veterans (Washington Lecture Hall) <i>Moderator:</i> John Burton, Virginia Tech “Where Soldiers Come From and Where Veterans Go” Kevin Stoy, George Mason University, and Heather Courtney, independent filmmaker, with Dominic Fredianelli, independent artist “Bridging a Gap Between Knowledge and Experience: Civilian Views of Military Service” Phil Hayek, Virginia Tech	10:30–11:30 am

1135–1235

Panel Session 2

11:35 am–
12:35 pm

2A: Veterans across Cultures (Wilson)

Moderator: Irene Leech, Virginia Tech

“Veterans as a Stabilising Factor in Politics:
West Africa as a Case Study”

Lt. Kehinde Olaoluwatomi Oshigbo,
African Maritime Academy (read by proxy)

“The Contributions of Veterans in Business and
Economy: Africa as a Case Study”

Lt. Taiwo Oluwaseyi Oshigbo,
African Maritime Academy (read by proxy)

“Veterans as Intercultural Educators”

Luke McClees, Eastern Kentucky

2B: Writing and Preserving Veterans’ Words

(Monroe)

Moderator: David Cline, Virginia Tech

“How Do Military Veteran Students Write?:
Exploring the Effectiveness of Current Writing
Pedagogy”

Meredith Singleton, Northern Kentucky

“Writing War from the Inside Out:
Multimedia Narratives of Veterans
in the Composition Classroom”

Jennifer Orth-Veillon,
Georgia Institute of Technology

“The Role of Military Archives in the
Conversation on Veterans in Society”

James Ginther, Library of the Marine Corps

1245–1400

Lunch (Crystal Ballroom)

Introductory remarks by Bruce Pencek, Virginia Tech

Guest Speakers: Wendy Lang,
Operation College Promise, and
Rod Davis, Veterans Support Office, TAMU

12:45–2
pm

1415–1515

Panel Session 3

2:15–3:15
pm

**3A: “How to Tell a Woman’s War Story:
Gender, Service, Support, and Storytelling”
(Wilson)**

Moderator: Barbara Weimerskirch, Virginia Tech

Mariana Christina Grohowski, Bowling Green State
University; D. Alexis Hart, Allegheny College; and
Kathryn Broyles, American Military University

3B: Medicine and Policy (Monroe)

Moderator: Kathleen Jones, Virginia Tech

“Examining the Differences in Veterans and
Non-Veterans at the
Chronic Pain Management Unit”
Alisha Jiwani, Adler Graduate School

“Understanding and Building Effective
Narrative on Veteran Experiences to Compel
Program and Policy Action”
Mary Beth Dunkenberger and Suzanne Lo,
Virginia Tech

“The Changing Face of War”
Nancy S. Short, Program Manager,
Salem VA Medical Center

1515–1615

**Featured Panel: “Support the Troops?
A Community in Dialogue”**

(Washington Lecture Hall)

Moderator: Eric Hodges, Virginia Tech

Invited Speakers: Col. John Montgomery,
Prof. Steven Salaita, and Rev. Gil Ott

3:15–4:15
pm

1630–1730

**Closing Discussion:
“The Future of Veterans Studies”**

(Washington Lecture Hall)

Panel Members: James M. Dubinsky, Bruce Pencek,
Eric Hodges, Barbara Weimerskirch, David Cline

4:30–5:30
pm

1800–2000

**Screening of *Brats: Our Journey Home*
(Washington Lecture Hall)**

6–8 pm

*Additionally, artwork by Dominic Fredianelli will be displayed
throughout the conference for open viewing.

FEATURED SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

(listed in order of scheduled appearance)

Screening of *Where Soldiers Come From*

Dominic Fredianelli will be present to screen the Emmy award-winning documentary, *Where Soldiers Come From*, which follows him and his peers, and to talk to viewers afterward and during the conference.

About the Film

From a snowy small town in Northern Michigan to the mountains of Afghanistan and back, *Where Soldiers Come From* follows the four-year journey of childhood friends, forever changed by a faraway war.

A film about growing up, *Where Soldiers Come From* is an intimate look at the young men who fight our wars and the families and town they come from. Returning to her hometown, Director Heather Courtney gains extraordinary access following these young men as they grow and change from reckless teenagers, to soldiers looking for roadside bombs in Afghanistan, to twenty-three-year-old veterans dealing with the silent war wounds of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and PTSD.

Enticed by a twenty thousand dollar signing bonus and the college tuition support, best friends Dominic and Cole join the National Guard after graduating from their rural high school. Soon their group of friends joins them, and eventually the young men are sent to Afghanistan, where they spend their days sweeping for Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). By the time their deployment ends, they are no longer the carefree group of friends they were before enlisting; repeated bombs blowing up around their convoys have led to TBI symptoms, and they have all become increasingly disillusioned about their mission.

The challenges really begin to surface when they return to their families and communities in Michigan. *Where Soldiers Come From* looks beyond the guns and policies of an ongoing war to tell a human story about family, friendship, and community and how they all change when young people go off to fight.

Where Soldiers Come From also won the 2012 Independent Spirit Truer Than Fiction Award and is a co-production of Quincy Hill Films and ITVS, in association with American Documentary | POV. The film had its national broadcast premiere in Fall 2011 on PBS's award-winning documentary series POV, and has been chosen as an encore broadcast in September 2012.

* * *

You can also hear Director Heather Courtney's joint presentation with poet Kevin Stoy on Monday at 1030/10:30 ("Where Soldiers Come From and Where Veterans Go").

Outside the Wire performance

Special Guest: Bryan Doerries, Artistic Director

Performers: Sanam Hashemi and Matthew Schott, Virginia Tech

Panelists: Andrew Hawks, Chloe Tunze, Felta Virginia, Travis Stevens

Outside the Wire is a social impact company that uses theater and a variety of other media to address pressing public health and social issues, such as combat-related psychological injury. Their Theater of War (ToW) presents readings of Sophocles' *Ajax* as a catalyst for a facilitated town hall discussion about suicide, combat stress, alcohol and substance abuse, and the impact of war on families. For the past three years, this groundbreaking initiative has been a catalyst for powerful dialogue at military installations worldwide, as well as at colleges, universities, and regional theaters. More than one hundred acclaimed actors have participated, including Blythe Danner, Paul Giamatti, Charles S. Dutton, Terrence Howard, David Strathairn, Debra Winger, and Dianne Wiest.

For our conference, Artistic Director Brian Doerries will be partnering with actors local to the New River Valley in a distinctive performance, and will moderate interactive discussion afterward in what is sure to be a compelling event.

“Growing Up Military”

Special Guest: Donna Musil, Writer and Director

We are glad to have with us Donna Musil, the founder of the nonprofit Brats Without Borders, who wrote and directed the award-winning film *Brats: Our Journey Home* (www.bratsourjourneyhome.com). This film documented the “hidden American subculture” of more than fifteen million people raised in the military system.

In this session, Donna Musil will screen key scenes from the film and discuss her experiences working with military brats of all ages, including considerations of the ways in which today's young (~eighteen and under) military kids—having grown up in a decade of war—might also be seen as veterans.

* * *

You can also watch the full-length film and talk with Donna Musil afterward on Monday evening at 1800/6:30.

Lunch

Guest Speakers: Wendy Lang, Director, Operation College Promise, and Rod Davis, Director, Veterans Support Office, TAMU

College campuses are increasingly supportive environments for a military-affiliated population and a haven for bridging the civilian-military divide. Today, we see the pride of wearing the uniform and the support of civilian students, faculty, and administrators. Veterans and servicemembers on our campuses are now stewards in their service and take deserved pride in their service to our nation. They are respected for their real-life experiences and skills acquired through them.

There was a time when student veterans were not believed to have strong potential in academia. That has changed. In fact, new research from Operation College Promise (OCP) and others argues just the opposite. At campuses across the country student veterans are moving toward their degree as efficiently as their traditional counterparts, and in many cases more so. Highly disciplined, motivated and task oriented, these student veterans address their school work with the same determination they learned in the military. And unlike most previous generations of veterans, the post 9-11 veterans are proving the success-benefit of the support that campuses are offering. These include maximizing entitlements for tuition, housing, healthcare and other expenses related to their education. Today's student veterans are mission-oriented and well aware that there they must use their benefits wisely, efficiently and within deadlines.

Today's GI Bill is generous – the most generous since WWII. Its potential to be a game-changer for higher education is more evident than ever. As did the eight million servicemembers who took advantage of that original GI bill, some two million veterans of the post-9/11 conflicts are taking advantage of what is available to them now. The results are predictable, and positive, for our veterans and our country. These students will be using higher education as both a reintegration mechanism and opportunity that will lead to higher lifelong learning and expanded opportunities to change and improve America.

It is crucial that the progress made thus far continues, as a million more servicemembers return to civilian life over the next five years.

This presentation by OCP Director Wendy Lang will focus on the findings of the OCP's newest "Completing the Mission" report to show strong, positive data regarding vet success at a number of campuses across the country where strong veterans support programs are in place. The findings suggest a kind of blue print for what to do to create a successful environment for our military and veteran students and their families.

Joining Lang will be Rod Davis, director of the Veterans Support Office for The Texas A&M University System, where a data-gathering project among the System's thirteen campuses provides a case-study of how positive campus support programs can be measured and implemented.

Featured Panel: “Support the Troops? A Community in Dialogue”
**Invited Speakers: Col. John Montgomery, Prof. Steven Salaita,
and Rev. Gil Ott**

In August 2013, a Virginia Tech professor published a controversial op-ed piece with Salon.com on why he objects to corporate fundraising campaigns that use the phrase “support our troops.” In the weeks that followed, community members participated in wide-ranging discussions responding to the article and language choices surrounding the military in society. This panel will include representatives from both military and civilian perspectives: Panelists Col. John Montgomery, Prof. Steven Salaita, and Rev. Gil Ott will address strategies for making conversations across ideological differences more productive.

Closing Discussion: “The Future of Veterans Studies”

**Panel members: James M. Dubinsky, Bruce Pencek, Barbara Weimerskirch,
David Cline**

Representatives of the conference planning committee will reflect on the presentations and dialogue, the emerging field of veterans studies, and areas needing additional study in the near future. Microphones and comment cards will be available to encourage audience participation as attendees feel most comfortable.

Screening of *Brats: Our Journey Home*

Donna Musil will join us to screen her trailblazing film and talk with audience members afterward. *Brats: Our Journey Home* has won numerous awards and been screened in over 100 locations around the country, including almost 2 dozen film festivals. The film was featured on CNN’s “This Week at War” and NPR’s “All Things Considered,” and has been broadcast on Armed Forces Network Television in 178 countries around the world.

(see next page for film description)

About the Film

It's hard to imagine a military brat's childhood. Moving from base to base around the world, they are at home everywhere—and nowhere. There are two million children being raised in the military today. An estimated fifteen million Americans are former brats. They include singers Pink and Lionel Richie, author Suzanne Collins (of the *Hunger Games*), basketball star Shaquille O'Neal, and Heisman Trophy winner, Robert Griffin III, actors Julianne Moore, Robert Duvall, and Neil Patrick Harris, and many more.

Brats is the first cinematic glimpse into a global subculture whose journey to adulthood is a high-octane mixture of incredible excitement and enormous pain. Make no mistake—*Brats* is not about the U.S. military—it's about their children, who grow up in a paradox that is idealistic and authoritarian, privileged and perilous, supportive and stifling—all at the same time. Their passports say “United States,” but they're really citizens of the world.

Singer/songwriter and Air Force brat Kris Kristofferson leads us through the heart of their experiences, sharing intimate memories with fellow brats, including General Norman Schwarzkopf and author Mary Edwards Wertsch, whose groundbreaking book, *Military Brats: Legacies of Childhood Inside the Fortress*, was one of the seminal inspirations for this film. Their stories reveal the peculiar landscape of their childhood, the culture that binds them together, and the power it exerts over their adult lives.

A seven-year work of passion by independent filmmaker Donna Musil, *Brats* features rare archival footage, home movies, and private photographs from post-war Japan, Germany, and Vietnam.

* * *

You can also hear Donna Musil's presentation on the making of the film and her work with brats around the globe on Monday morning at 0900/9:00.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES—INVITED GUESTS

Rod Davis is director of The Texas A&M University System's first Veterans Support Office, created in 2011 by the A&M System Board of Regents.

An award-winning novelist and writer, Davis is the recipient of the fiction award in the inaugural PEN Southwest Book Awards in 2005 for *Corina's Way* (NewSouth Books, 2003). The novel is described by Kirkus Reviews as "a spicy bouillabaisse, New Orleans-set, in the tradition of Flannery O'Connor or John Kennedy Toole: a welcome romp, told with traditional Southern charm."



His newest novel, *South, America* (NewSouth Books), was released in April and has been compared to the works of Mickey Spillane and James M. Cain.

He also is author of *American Voodoo: Journey into a Hidden World* (UNT Press, 1998, paperback, January 2000), a study of West African religion in the United States. It was selected as one of the "Exceptional Books of 1998" by *Bookman Book Review Syndicate*.

A six-part series on the Texas-Mexico border, "A Rio Runs Through It," appears in *Best American Travel Writing 2002*, the annual anthology from Houghton-Mifflin. His PEN/Texas award-winning essay, "The Fate of the Texas Writer," is included in *Fifty Years of the Texas Observer* (Trinity University Press, 2004). His PEN/Texas award-winning essay, "The Fate of the Texas Writer," is included in *Fifty Years of the Texas Observer* (Trinity University Press, 2004), and his *Texas Monthly* story, "Wal-Mart's Across Texas," is included in *True Stories* by David Byrne.

He is a member of the Texas Institute of Letters, PEN Center USA, and the National Book Critics Circle. National professional honors have included a fellowship at the Yaddo Colony, a Eugene V. Debs Award for investigative reporting, a Lowell Thomas Award (Bronze) for personal commentary on post-Katrina New Orleans, and Gold and Silver Awards for feature writing from the City/Regional Magazine Association (CRMA).

Davis served as executive editor at *Cooking Light*, a Time, Inc. magazine, and is a former editor of the critically acclaimed *The Texas Observer* and also a former editor of *American Way*, the magazine of American Airlines. He has been a senior editor at *Houston City* and *D Magazine*, a reporter for *The Rocky Mountain News*, and an editor at *The Associated Press*, as well as associate director of the Texas Film Commission and travel editor at the *San Antonio Express-News*. He is a former managing editor of the Teaching Tolerance project at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

He received an MA in government from Louisiana State University and studied further at the University of Virginia before joining the Army in 1970, serving as a first lieutenant in South Korea. He has taught writing at the University of Texas at Austin and Southern Methodist University in Dallas.



Bryan Doerries is a New York-based writer, translator, director, and educator. He is the founder of Theater of War, a project that presents readings of ancient Greek plays to service members, veterans, caregivers, and families as a catalyst for town hall discussions about the challenges faced by military communities today. He is also the co-founder of Outside the Wire, a social impact company that uses theater and a variety of other media to address pressing public health issues, such as combat-related psychological injury, end of life care, prison reform, political violence and torture, and the de-stigmatization of the treatment of substance abuse and addiction. He is a self-described “evangelist” for classical literature and its relevance to our lives today. In addition to his work in the theater, Bryan lectures on his work at colleges and universities.



Sanam Hashemi is an Iranian-American stage actor from Northern Virginia. As a product of two cultures, she strives to bridge the gap between people—in life and on stage. She wants to investigate relationships on a personal level and on a global one as well. As a full-time student at Virginia Tech pursuing dual degrees in theatre & cinema and international studies, she is exploring these interests each day.



Prior to joining NJASCU in the fall of 2007, **Wendy Lang** worked in state government for ten years, including serving as Senator John H. Ewing's Chief of Staff, managing both the Senate Education and Women's Issues Committee, and later, filling an appointment as Governor Christie Todd Whitman's education policy advisor. She owned and managed an independent consulting firm specializing in K-12 education and public relations from 2000-2006.

In her current position, Wendy is responsible for policy research and initiation, as well as managing annual state budget responsibilities. Since founding Operation College Promise (OCP) in 2008, she has also served as the director, managing programming, outreach, public relations, and partnership development. Operation College Promise (OCP) is a national policy, research, and education program based in Trenton, New Jersey, which supports the transition and postsecondary advancement of our nation's veterans. The program's mission is to support student veterans "To, Through and Beyond" the attainment of their higher education objectives. Founded in 2008 as a web-based resource, the project was initiated by the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities (NJASCU) to centralize transition information for servicemembers on a comprehensive website. Today, the program has reached more than five hundred professionals from thirty states through its signature training—the Certificate for Veterans' Service Providers (CVSP) program—and is a national leader in research efforts on student veterans' progress toward degree and employment, as well as in the development of innovative degree plans for military students.

Wendy currently serves on the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's Veterans Advisory Board, and has contributed to numerous grant review boards, facilitated for the American Council on Education's inaugural "Veterans' Success" jam and participated in the US Department of Labor's "American Heroes at Work" think tank. She regularly presents at state and national conferences focusing on veterans' reintegration issues and education.

In her spare time, Wendy is a lifelong competitive equestrian who has ridden extensively on the national circuit.



Col. John P. “Bama” Montgomery is the commander of Det. 875 Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps and professor of aerospace studies at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State College in Blacksburg, Virginia. He commands an AFROTC unit that administers a college-level officer training program to shape the next generation of commissioned officers. In addition, he chairs the Department of Aerospace Studies with university status of full professor and instructs a curriculum covering foundations of the USAF, Air Force history, leadership, and national security. Before assuming his current position, he served as the last 98th Range wing commander at Nellis AFB, responsible for the Air Force’s most important operating space—the Nevada Test and Training Range.

Colonel Montgomery entered the Air Force in 1986 as a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. A command pilot, he has served as a T-38 and F-16 instructor pilot, flight commander, weapons and tactics officer, and chief of standardization and evaluations. He is a 1995 graduate of the USAF Weapons Instructor Course, and a 1998 graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College. Colonel Montgomery has also served as the Advanced Programs flight commander for the 28th Test Squadron, Eglin AFB, FL. In 2001, he arrived at the 55th Fighter Squadron, where he would become the commander. After graduating from the National War College, Colonel Montgomery served as the executive officer to the commander, Component Command Air Izmir (NATO), Izmir, Turkey. Following his overseas tour, Colonel Montgomery reported to Creech AFB, Las Vegas, Nev., and became the first 432nd vice wing commander. The 432nd is the Air Force’s first front-line remotely piloted aircraft wing.

Donna Musil currently serves as the executive director of Brats Without Borders, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization that produced the *Brats* film and continues to conduct research and develop programs that raise the awareness of military “brats” and other “third culture kids” and improve the quality of their lives.

Donna Musil’s work includes feature screenplay *Cypress Gardens* (Best Feature Drama and second place overall in the Gimme Credit International Screenplay Contest); *Ananse* (currently in development with Visionex/Ghana and Melendez Films/London); and *To Kingdom Come* (which she co-directed as a staged reading with Producer Judith Pearlman in NY Women in Film &



TV’s Screenplay Reading Series, representing “some of the best developing women screenwriters”). Other credits include *Rebuilding America’s Communities*, a Carter Center documentary (PBS, 1997 WorldFest Int’l Film Festival Silver Award), and dozens of educational and industrial films for Coca-Cola, BellSouth, and M&M Mars/Snickers. Donna was on the board of directors for Women in Film/Atlanta and has been awarded Hambidge Center (GA), Fundacion Valparaiso (Spain), Helene Wurlitzer Foundation (Taos), and Centrum Arts (Port Townsend, Washington) writer’s fellowships.

Prior to her writing career, Donna worked as an attorney with the AFL-CIO and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, helping organize unions throughout the South. She has a BA in journalism (magna cum laude) and a JD from the University of Georgia and is a member of the State Bar of Georgia. Donna was raised an Army brat and has lived and worked in Germany, Korea, Ireland, Copenhagen, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and France. As a child, she moved twelve times in sixteen years. Her father was a JAG officer and military judge. When she was sixteen, her father died, and two weeks later, her family moved to Columbus, Georgia, where she finished high school.

For the next twenty years, Donna moved nineteen times, graduated college, and worked in a variety of jobs, but always felt “different” from her fellow Americans. In 1997, she learned that she was not alone. While surfing the Internet, Donna discovered a website for her Taegu, Korea, high school. A few weeks later, she attended an impromptu reunion in Washington, DC. It was revelatory. For the first time, Donna felt like she “belonged” somewhere, and thus began her journey “home.”



Gil Ott is a retired pastor and college chaplain holding credentials in both the United Methodist and Reformed Church in America. He was also a senior administrator at Cornell University for fifteen years. Prior to that, he worked in both industry and government. He completed his graduate work at Yale University, earning both MDIV and STM (Master of Theology) degrees.

He served in the United States Army from 1968–70, including twelve months in Vietnam as an infantryman with the 101st Airborne Division, where he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for “distinguishing himself in close ground combat” and the Bronze Star for “meritorious service.”



Steven Salaita is an associate professor of English at Virginia Tech. He is the author of six books and writes frequently about Arab Americans, Palestine, Indigenous Peoples, and decolonization. His current book project is entitled *Images of Arabs and Muslims in the Age of Obama*.

Steven grew up in Bluefield, Virginia, to a mother from Nicaragua (by way of Palestine) and a father from Madaba, Jordan. He now lives in Blacksburg, Virginia, with his wife, bichon frise, and orange tabby.



Matthew Schott is soon to have his BA in theatre arts from Virginia Tech. Over the course of his acting career, he has played roles such as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Walker/Ned in *Three Days of Rain*, and The Narrator in *The Pavilion*. This summer, he will be touring an original solo performance piece produced by Critical Point Theatre called *Refresh*, which will head to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland in August.

PAPER ABSTRACTS

(listed in alphabetical order by paper title)

“Bridging a Gap Between Knowledge and Experience: Civilian Views of Military Service”

Phil Hayek, Virginia Tech

Assume that knowledge can never exceed experience. In the case of studying the military and veterans’ issues, then, how much can a civilian understand, or how much credibility might a civilian have to leverage when making claims about ideology, motives, or identity concerning veterans? Are the experiences of veterans insulated from the public in a way that deflects any possible judgment from outsiders, from civilians? Consider the value judgments concerning the military that reveal a certain binary opposition: I support the troops (read: thank god it’s not me) or I’m anti-military (read: I wouldn’t go if you paid me). Both positions have no hope of catching alive the idea of being a part of that military institution. Can anyone outside of the realm of experience observe, or “know,” and therefore form value judgments about veterans?

In this paper, Enlightenment- and Progressive-era rhetoricians like Hugh Blair, Richard Whately, and Wayne Booth, among others, offer insights into how the attitude of the American public and the common sense we share plays a role in defining the tastefulness, or appropriateness, of discourse about veterans. A change in society’s common understanding of what is tasteful will not only limit how ideas are formed, but these boundaries will disqualify any ideas or discourse outside of what is accepted as tasteful. The articulation of our nation’s sentiment surrounding veterans is constricted not only by what is considered tasteful but also by a perceived and actual distance between civilians and military personnel. The burden of proof for arguments concerning the military and veterans rests on civilians who will never have access to the knowledge that experience places in the hands of veterans. Rhetorically, veterans share a common sense language that is removed from the general population, and therefore from popular opinion. Insights from rhetorical theory can be a productive starting point from which to study how veterans as a population resist any value judgments from civilians that fall outside the binary opposition of for or against.

“The Changing Face of War”

**Nancy S. Short, Program Manager, and Chloe Tunze, MST,
Salem VA Medical Center**

Society has views of warfighters, who they are and the battles they fight. Recently a new group of warfighters have been brought into our consciousness; however, it is necessary to examine how we are influenced by the media, as well as our values and beliefs.

Discussion will involve common issues females in the military face, recommendations for future research, and available resources.

“The Contributions of Veterans in Business and Economy: Africa as a Case Study”

**Lt. Taiwo Oluwaseyi Oshigbo, African Maritime Academy
(read by proxy)**

This paper discusses the growing influence retired military men and women are now exacting in African society based on their business franchises, which cut across telecoms, agriculture, mining, shipping, oil and gas, broadcasting, small medium enterprise, and more. These are mass-oriented and beneficial investments not only to the society but to the economic growth of their respective nations, which will be advantageous to the collective development of the society and the continent at large. This paper shows a relationship between the period spent as service members and in business careers after retirement, which is a positive indicator and a palliative to stem the idea of young military officers nursing the nocturnal ambition of coup d'état, since life after service years are no longer an armageddon.

This paper takes a periscopic view of how these veterans' impacts and successes in their new chosen careers have positively affected their immediate communities and beyond in the areas of youth employment and empowerment; capacity building; and re-focusing, re-engineering, and social development indicative of a transformation that underscores a paradigm shift in people's perception of the men and women in khaki.

“Examining the Differences in Veterans and Non-Veterans at the Chronic Pain Management Unit”

Alisha Jiwani, Adler Graduate School

The CPMU consists of both veterans and non-veterans who exhibit a wide range of chronic pain problems. In this study, it is hypothesized that veterans and non-veterans will score better at discharge than at admission, based on expected trends. In addition, due to their combat exposure, it is predicted that veterans will score differently than non-veterans on a variety of pain-related measures. It is predicted that veterans will exhibit more anxiety and fear-related symptoms than non-veterans.

Patient information was extracted from the CPMU database in order to obtain demographics, program evaluation scores, and MMPI-2 scores. Fifteen veterans were matched with fifteen non-veterans based on age, gender, time of admission, and pain duration. A two-way ANOVA with repeated measures on one factor was conducted on each of the measures at admission and discharge for veterans and non-veterans. Paired t-tests were used for MMPI-2 scores and discharge only variables to assess any differences between veterans and non-veterans.

Intuitively, many of the significant results illustrated that upon discharge, most subjects performed better on measures that were encouraged by multidisciplinary treatment programs. Results also indicated that scores on the Pain Catastrophizing Scale (PCS), and on both task persistence and seeking social support dimensions of the Chronic Pain Coping Inventory (CPCI) were different for veterans and non-veterans depending on when they completed the questionnaires. Veteran scores were consistent with our hypothesis across measures that detected significant group by session interactions. Further studies need to be conducted to gain a better understanding of the differences between veteran and non-veteran profiles.

“How Do Military Veteran Students Write? Exploring the Effectiveness of Current Writing Pedagogy”

Meredith Singleton, Northern Kentucky

Through Post-911 GI Bill benefits, military veterans are flooding college admissions offices and writing classes at rates not seen since the World War II era. According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, over 1 million veterans attended colleges and universities between 2009 and 2013; and 53.6 percent of veteran students using benefits applied them toward completing undergraduate work at a college or vocational/technical school (“Annual Benefits Report,” 2011). Clearly,

many writing instructors will likely encounter a military veteran in their classes in the near future. Unlike the majority of first-year and undergraduate writing students, these students bring with them deeply engrained professional training that starkly contrasts with current writing pedagogy.

Contemporary writing curricula teach and engage traditional students in communal writing practices focused on self-exploration and personal meaning-making. However, for the returning military veteran, these strategies may prove problematic. Through training in highly structured environments, they learn to do as instructed, not ask questions, and successfully complete the tasks assigned, with little room for error or personal adaptation. In an incredible culture shock, and in direct contrast with their previous superiors, writing instructors encourage these students to determine strategies that work based on personal preferences, actively avoiding prescriptive writing instruction and shunning the idea of presenting writing as a successive, inflexible process. College writing instructors, therefore, need to ask whether or not current writing pedagogy meets the needs of military veteran students and employs their professional training. Furthermore, what can instructors do to better assist these students as they transition from military to academic training? Thus, this substantial shift in the writing student profile presents an opportunity to re-evaluate current teaching strategies to determine approaches that will more directly tap in to these students' highly developed skills.

This paper responds to Hart and Thompson's call to action (2013) to writing programs and instructors to begin exploring their veteran populations. Seeking a better understanding of the military veteran student's unique training, this paper contrasts current military training materials with practices and approaches in the writing classroom. This paper addresses the assumption that entry-level writing students succeed in an environment where they are free to explore flexible writing strategies and methods, an assumption that may leave veteran students at a distinct disadvantage. The results of this analysis call into question the effectiveness of current writing pedagogy for this particular audience, suggesting rather a composition pedagogy that returns to cognitivist theories of composing (Flower, 1989; Flower & Hayes, 1981) and recognizes that these students have learned to succeed in very prescriptive, rigid environments. This paper suggests that it may benefit these students to learn the academic writing process through their prior frame of reference, rather than through the less structured one of current pedagogy. Expanding on an initial case study of one military veteran college writer, the ultimate goal of this research is to explore alternative, effective pedagogies that better intersect with the military training these students possess.

“How to Tell a Woman’s War Story: Gender, Service, Support, and Storytelling”

Mariana Christina Grohowski, Bowling Green State University; D. Alexis Hart, Allegheny College; and Kathryn Broyles, American Military University

Heeding Adrienne Rich’s insight, “When a woman tells the truth she is creating the possibility for more truth around her,” this panel elucidates key discourses surrounding the contributions and constraints servicewomen and female veterans have both fostered and fought. Panelists explore how discourses subsequently “create alienation” (Barthes 1972, pp. 156–7) for servicewomen and female veterans; panelists also offer implications and complications relevant not only for instructors of student veterans, but for all civilians in whose name wars are fought. We are particularly interested in engaging conference attendees around how these discourses manifest themselves and how, even in the digital universe, women veterans proactively manage, resist, and embrace them.

Speaker 1—“Reinscribing and Resisting Gender Norms”

Women veterans not infrequently report the forced iconic characterizations of “bitch,” “whore,” or “dike” forced upon them by their fellow servicemembers, superiors, and the larger culture both during and after their military service. As a result, they experience a kind of cognitive dissonance. Speaker 1 challenges the connections made between identity, gender norms, and the wedding of nationalism and masculinity when they serve to reject servicewomen by challenging their identities as in sufficiently feminine/female, or when they inscribe upon the female soldier a pseudo-masculinity, concurrently denying her masculine privilege.

Speaker 2—“Standing Up To Be Counted: Female Military Personnel and Online Mentoring”

Women working in male-dominated fields such as science and the military often encounter challenges fitting into their workplace communities, feeling cast into the roles of “weak and powerless [and less intelligent] foreigners.” The problems connected to gendered stereotypes do not end once female military personnel leave the military service. As a result, female veterans often downplay their skills and accomplishments and do not identify themselves with the veteran moniker. Speaker 2 examines how several online communities for military women strategically use Web 2.0 technologies to enable them to mentor each other in relatively safe electronic spaces to support the professional and personal growth of participants and to articulate personally and publicly the reasons why women, too, “count” as veterans.

Speaker 3—“Performing for the camera’ [?]: A discursive analysis of video-recorded oral history interviews of female military-service personnel”

Speaker 3 examines the discourse female military-service personnel use to describe their military service. Using video-recorded oral history interviews available online from the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, Speaker 3 tests the claim of filmmaker Marcia Rock (*Service: When Women Come Marching Home*) that the video camera “makes the story important,” compelling interviewees to share more because of the camera (Rock). Female military-service personnel’s contributions and accomplishments have historically been redacted or omitted from military and national histories, compelling these women to hide/neglect their military service (Ryan, 2009; Benedict, 2009). Comparing oral history interviews that were not video recorded, which Speaker 3 collected, as well as those available online from the Betty Carter Women Veterans Historical Project; Speaker 3 offers future research and deliverables on the affordances of various modalities for collecting military service-personnel’s oral histories.

**“The Role of Military Archives in the Conversation on Veterans in Society”
James Ginther, Library of the Marine Corps**

Military archives, particularly the nation’s service archives, are without question one of the nation’s vital resources on military operations, doctrine, and policy. While primarily maintained for the benefit of the service branches that fund and operate them, these facilities can, and do, play a significant role in helping the nation help understand its veteran population. For nearly one hundred years, the archival resources of the Archives and Special Collections Branch of the Library of the Marine Corps and its predecessors have not only documented the history of the Marine Corps and its record of combat achievement but also helped the nation to understand its Marines both who they are and what they do and support efforts to ensure that their needs are met. This multi-media program will attempt in a brief way to present the many and varied ways the Branch enters the conversation and provides services that care for Marine Corps veterans long after they take off the uniform for the last time.

During the course of this presentation, we will examine how the Archives Branch of the Library of the Marine Corps aids and fosters conversations about its veteran community. We’ll cover the more obvious ways the archives records get used, such as to validate claims for veterans’ benefits, to aid historians in telling the nation about their experiences in combat and their role in executing national policy, or to provide the basis for trips down memory lane for reunion groups. But there are less obvious yet perhaps far more significant ways the archive enters and shapes the conversation.

For instance, archives preserve the individual stories of veterans through the personal papers programs, providing a means of leaving to future generations of Marines the benefit of their hard-earned expertise through knowledge management; helping to re-define the term veteran by recognizing and documenting the sacrifices of the families of veterans; documenting veterans’ contributions to society at large through the struggle for equality for women and minorities; exploring the relationship of the uniformed community to the civilians who support them; and providing the often-therapeutic effect of oral history. Finally, archives and archivists nationwide connect veterans, families, and researchers through outreach programs aimed at raising the consciousness not just of sacrifices made in conflict but the issues that linger long after their service is over.

We ask our veterans to train, fight, and endure the inconceivable, through voluntary acts of self-sacrifice, which largely leave the general population untouched and unaware. We owe it to them to ask this only in situations where we fully understand not only the desired outcome, but the nature of that request and its cost. By documenting this service and connecting those seeking to learn from that experience, archives play a vital role in the conversation about veterans and our society.

“Understanding and Building Effective Narrative on Veteran Experiences to Compel Program and Policy Action”

Mary Beth Dunkenberger and Suzanne Lo, Virginia Tech

Virginia has the third highest per capita population of veterans, and the seventh highest in total population. Many of these veterans are faced with wide-ranging and complex health issues, which vary greatly depending on their age, time of service, and location of residence. Virginia’s geographic and socio-economic diversity provide for varied and unique characteristics among its general and veteran populations. Those conditions yield a rich research environment, but also a heightened need to translate and disseminate findings to varied populations and individuals. A growing body of veterans’ assessment and clinical research is aimed at improving health services for military service men and woman returning from deployment. Concurrently, military and veterans advocates are calling for improved connections between community health providers and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as integrated care provision among physical, mental, and behavioral health specialists.

The Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance conducted the 2010 Veterans Needs Assessment, which asked the broad questions of “what are the needs and experiences of Virginia veterans, particularly needs and experiences related to veterans’ health and wellbeing?” and “how do the needs and experiences of veterans differ based on key characteristics of the veteran?” Subcategories of health and well-being questions included the following topics: physical health, with emphasis on traumatic brain injury, hearing loss, orthopedic conditions, chronic disease, access and utilization, mental and behavioral health, which included PTSD, depression, substance use, family relationships, access and utilization, education and employment measures, and life status satisfaction. Characteristic categories for the assessment included stratification by region of residence, era served, branch of service, age, type of service and deployments. In order to obtain representative results across characteristics, the research team surveyed over two thousand veterans. Additionally, researchers were able to add texture to the data through conducting focus groups with veterans and service providers throughout the state to consider the needs and experiences identified in the survey and to determine strategies for meeting unaddressed needs and improving services.

To update and build on this 2010 Veterans Needs Assessment, the Institute will strive to do so in a manner that will most fully benefit veterans, inform agencies and providers in Virginia who serve veterans, and set a national standard for conducting veteran population needs assessment. Considerations for updating the 2010 Virginia Veterans Needs Assessment in 2015 will require the development of a methodology to not only update the assessment, but allow for continued nuancing and texturing of the veteran’s story through interviews and focus groups. The “Veterans in Society: Humanizing the Discourse” conference will provide an opportunity for the research team to present their methodology for the revised mixed methods approach, focusing on methods to help build narrative on the experiences of military personnel and veterans and their place in society that will compel program and policy action.

“Veterans as Intercultural Educators”

Luke McClees, Eastern Kentucky

Recently there has been a shift in the language teaching community to organize and better teach culture competency. The current focus does not include many who might be good candidates and leaders for teaching cultural competency in the foreign language classroom. Military veterans tend to be overlooked for their skills and their application of these skills in the classroom. The majority of Americans assume they understand veterans experiences and opinions on world cultures. Sadly, this is a short-sided assumption that could potentially discount a great resource for education.

Student diversity and the need for global cultural competency are rapidly changing in classrooms. More than ever, students are interacting with people from a wide range of origins, both inside and outside of the classroom. Language skills and knowledge of cultures are moving from being attributes to becoming a necessity. This is a fact that the United States military has noticed and has widely acted upon. All troops receive basic cultural training based upon their upcoming orders and exposure. Specialty units and linguist however, are introduced to these concepts through rigorous and in-depth military curriculum. This curriculum, coupled with the real-world experience of military veterans, could serve as a great attribute for increasing effective approaches to culture/intercultural aspects in the foreign language classroom.

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To reveal how the experiences of military veterans in training, deployment, and military leave can help improve cultural competency in the foreign language classroom.
2. To exhibit the diverse work environment experienced by military veterans and how it directly correlates to the needs of today’s classrooms in understanding cultural competency.
3. To compare and showcase how military veterans can better relay cultural competency as compared to a teacher with only academic training and teacher experience.

Veterans of the U.S. military employed in the foreign language classrooms have much to offer students and learning standards alike. Students can only benefit from a population that has experienced the application and interactions of true cultural competency. Currently, the United States lags behind many other countries in regards to educating linguistically and culturally literate students. Military veterans serving in foreign language education roles can be instrumental in making today's students, tomorrow's leaders.

“Veterans as a Stabilising Factor in Politics: West Africa as a Case Study”

**Lt. Kehinde Olaoluwatomi Oshigbo, African Maritime Academy
(read by proxy)**

This paper discusses civil-military relations in Africa with an emphasis on regional instabilities as they affect the economic, socio-cultural, and political settings of the people. It observes the involvement of war veterans in civil rule as becoming a norm and underscores the interface between the veterans and the professional politicians in government. This research is intended to bring to light the enormous influence veterans hold and have the potential to wield in the political landscape in Africa.

The further work of this paper is to explore germane issues such as, who are the likely beneficiaries of veterans in politics? why must veterans embrace politics? and, in whose interest will the veterans' involvement in politics be protected? Veterans, especially those who retire with high military ranks, have built knowledge of and relationships with politicians at every level of governance and also occupy high status position notably because of their military background and perceived affluence, materially and otherwise. Such circumstances have produced a president, senate president, executive governors, local government chairmen, and others in Nigeria. Despite the existence of clearly defined checks and balances, trust for the veterans continues to be elusive and shrouded in fear, distrust, annoyance, and hate. However, this author stands with those who believe that veterans as political leaders have brought stability and peace, and serve as a unification point between extremists, thereby fostering peace and unity and a rare form of democratic rule that is not only unique but evolving.

“Where Soldiers Come From and Where Veterans Go”

Kevin Stoy, George Mason University, and Heather Courtney, independent filmmaker, with Dominic Fredianelli, independent artist

The arts play a crucial role in addressing difficult issues faced by veterans and their families. In this presentation, a poet and filmmaker will focus on how they have used their respective crafts to depict military and civilian experiences, and how they came together as fellow artists last fall on 9/11 for a day of service on the George Mason University campus.

Recognizing the worth of an individual veteran’s narrative is only a starting point for rendering the complexities of veterans’ experiences abroad and their transitions back to civil society. Because there is no single veteran experience, Stoy’s poetry moves the reader from one perspective to another in order to position the audience as active and engaged listeners. Whether over a family dinner, on a public bus, or while walking along a creek in southeastern Michigan, Stoy’s poems detail one veteran’s experience—his brother’s—by demanding it be witnessed. In this way, his craft empowers the veteran’s voice to demonstrate the tension between duty to family and duty to country, between the private and the public.

In a way that only film can, Courtney’s film captures in great detail the transformation of teenaged boys to soldiers in Afghanistan, to 23-year-old combat veterans dealing with PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) upon their return. One of the veterans profiled in the film, Dominic, uses art to deal with the PTSD symptoms he does not understand, painting a large outdoor mural depicting his change from carefree kid to combat veteran. Dominic will be present at the conference for discussion, as well.

By situating itself with other contemporary poetry and film grappling with war, this presentation aims to demonstrate how difficult and therefore necessary it is to acknowledge a family or community member’s experiences abroad. Rather than marginalizing them as citizens with needs upon their return, it is important to engage with veterans as powerful sources of knowledge and insight on how we can move toward a more just and civil society.

Both artists hope that by sharing where a few of these veterans currently are in their own lives, this presentation will ultimately generate a productive dialogue on the complex range of veteran challenges and experiences occurring today.

* * *

You can also watch Courtney’s full-length film and talk afterward with veteran and artist Dominic Fredianelli on Sunday afternoon at 0400/4:00.

“Writing War from the Inside Out: Multimedia Narratives of Veterans in the Composition Classroom”

Jennifer Orth-Veillon, Georgia Institute of Technology

Gabe Hudson, the author of *Dear Mr. President*, a book about the Persian Gulf War, in a recent email to Dr. Christine Leche, a creative writing professor at Austin Community College, who helps veterans write their memoirs, stated that “Writing war fiction is nearly impossible. The word ‘war’ is primordial—it’s stitched into our DNA—and no matter what you think of war, the word itself is somehow sacred.” Despite the wide news media coverage of recent and current wars, it is only the soldier who can give us the real story of what happens on and off the battlefield. Just as they have the duty to fight for our country, they also feel a duty to tell the truth about that experience in their memoirs. But what happens if that “truth” cannot appear in a logical, linear, or journalistic style? What if dreams or fiction tell their story more “truthfully” than nonfiction? This paper will present the findings from a course I taught for four semesters that examined these very questions. ENG 1101-1102, “American Veterans and Non-traditional Memoirs,” looked at memoirs, fiction, and poetry written by soldiers from WWI to Iraq and how they manipulated language, history, style, and image to render a true telling from inside their war experience.

I will talk about the ways we in those classes also studied the war experience from the outside. Through phenomena like rationing and “Support the Troops” campaigns, it became clear to the students that war does not just belong to soldiers. As citizens, we elect officials, whom we trust to take us to war, and pay taxes to support the military. War belongs to a whole society and, whether we know it or not, we are responsible not only for what happens in combat but also for what happens when soldiers come home. While it’s true that only a soldier can give us the true experience, this has not stopped civilian writers and artists from creating stories of war and its aftermath. In an attempt to understand the way civilians view war and how it compares to the soldier’s view, we also studied material about war written by those who have never seen combat.

For the final project, the students worked in groups to write their own multi-media memoir of a veteran, all chosen from alumni at our university, who had served in wars ranging from WWII to Iraq. Following a filmed interview with each veteran and extensive research, the students worked with the veterans to compile stories of their lives that encompassed not only war, but also the way that the soldiers lived as veterans, in their own post-war worlds. In my presentation, I will also give highlights of these projects, which reflect upon the unique ways in which civilians and veterans come together to comprise one story.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES—RESEARCH PRESENTERS

Kathryn A. Broyles is an associate professor of English, philosophy, and religion and former director of general education for American Public University System (American Military University). Her work and research concerning online learning and nontraditional students is particularly focused on supporting the success of veterans and their families. She has pursued clinical pastoral education at the Veterans Administration hospital in Durham, NC, and currently volunteers with Military Experience and the Arts.

Heather Courtney won an Emmy, an Independent Spirit Award, and a SXSW Jury Award for her film *Where Soldiers Come From*. The film won awards at festivals around the country and was broadcast nationally on the PBS program POV. Several of Heather's other films have been broadcast on PBS, including award-winners *Letters from the Other Side* and *Los Trabajadores*. Her work has been supported by many grants and fellowships including from ITVS, the Sundance Documentary Fund, the United States Artists Fellowship, the Sundance Edit and Story Lab, the Fulbright Fellowship, and the Austin Film Society. Heather is from the beautiful Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and is proud to call herself a Yooper.

Mary Beth Dunkenberger, senior program director at Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance, provides leadership in aligning research and outreach capabilities with public agency and nonprofit organizational needs. Since 2009, she has led research and technical assistance projects to advance design and implementation of Veteran support programs on behalf of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, the Virginia Department of Veterans Services, and the Virginia Center for Innovative Technology. Ms. Dunkenberger received a bachelor of science in commerce from University of Virginia and a masters of business administration from George Washington University, and is a PhD candidate with Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance.

Dominic Fredianelli joined the Michigan National guard under the 1431st Engineer Company (Sapper) in 2005 and, in 2009, was deployed to Eastern Afghanistan, Khowt province, during which time he appeared in the film *Where Soldiers Come From*. After the film, he attended Finlandia University to study graphic design and then spent a year off traveling and creating murals around the U.S., including one at the National Veterans Art Museum in Chicago and one at the University of Santa Barbra California. He then transferred to the Corcoran School of Art and Design in Washington D.C. after attending a workshop there put on by the Combat Paper Project. He is currently majoring in studio arts and is still doing digital work on the side.

James Ginther received his PhD in naval/military history from Texas Tech University in December 1999. He is currently employed as an archival team leader with the Archives and Special Collections Branch, Library of the Marine Corps, responsible for the archive's reference and outreach programs. He also serves as the vice chair of the Military Archives Roundtable of the Society of American Archivists. Prior to joining the Branch, he served Southwest Collections/Special Collections Library at Texas Tech University as both the senior archivist of the Vietnam Archive and as the archivist of the Southwest Collection.

Mariana Grohowski is a doctoral candidate in rhetoric and writing at Bowling Green State University. Her dissertation research explores the multimodal literate practices female veterans use for personal and collective advocacy. She is the vice president for the nonprofit organization Military Experience and the Arts and has taught courses in intermediate and first-year writing.

Felta Virginia Hall is a professional artist and art director at Campus Automotive. She has been connected to the military her whole life; first as an Army brat, then as a Chinese linguist in the U.S. Army, and for fourteen years was the wife of an Airborne Ranger— so she is the unique position of having seen all three sides to military life. Homes have been made in exotic and questionably beautiful places that begin with the word “Fort” from one end of the country to the other, over oceans and back. College was completed between military tours using her GI Bill to earn degrees in painting and Mandarin Chinese. Today, Felta is comfortably settled with her two children in Blacksburg, Virginia, and is, for the first time ever, putting down roots.

D. Alexis Hart is an associate professor of English and the director of writing at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania. A U.S. Navy veteran, Hart has published several articles related to the U.S. military and veterans' issues. She was the co-recipient, with Roger Thompson, of a Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Research Grant to study veterans returning to college writing classrooms, serves as co-chair of the CCCC Task Force on Student Veterans, and is co-director of research for the volunteer organization Military Experience and the Arts.

Andrew G. Hawks enlisted in the U.S. Army in November 2007 as an 88M (truck driver). While enlisted, he was stationed in Fairbanks, Alaska, at Fort Wainwright with the 25th infantry division. His unit was sent to Iraq in September 2008 through September 2009, where he was on a fast team. While there, he was a gun truck driver and a .50 cal gunner. In addition, he was called upon to help with recovery and support for the infantry. While deployed, he thankfully survived two IED explosions, which have resulted in his suffering from a seizure disorder, TBI, and PTSD, and becoming a disabled vet. In 2011, he was honorably discharged from the Army. In 2012, he and his wife Courtney moved back home to Virginia where they live today.

Before coming to Virginia Tech, **Phil Hayek** was teaching basic writing courses at DePaul University and Truman College in Chicago. Hayek received his BA in English and MA in writing, rhetoric and discourse from DePaul University. He is interested in studying discourses that take military actions as their topic in order to understand militaries, and particularly the United States military, as a rhetorical narrative. He is also interested in how the rhetoric of military discourses influences public, private, and political discourses. He believes that these different discourses are constitutive in the sense that the military finds its subject position within political and social rhetoric while simultaneously providing justification for these rhetorics. He would like to look at how rhetorical strategies and tactics function within and through the military, and how the presence of the military itself functions rhetorically in discourse.

Alisha Jiwani received her honours bachelor of arts degree in psychology, neuroscience and behaviour from McMaster University. She conducted her undergraduate research with Dr. Eleni Hapidou, PhD, C. Psych., psychologist, at Chedoke Hospital's Chronic Pain Management Unit in Hamilton, Ontario, which offers exemplary interdisciplinary treatment of individuals in chronic pain. Specifically, they examined the differences between veterans and non-veterans who had completed this program. Moreover, Ms. Jiwani has mental health and stress management experience working with various populations. At present, she is completing her master of psychology in clinical psychology at Adler Graduate School in Toronto, Ontario, concurrently with a certificate in psychometric assessments.

Suzanne Lo, a research faculty member with Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance, is an established public health researcher. Her areas of expertise include bridging basic, clinical, public health, and communications research and methodologies to effectively address public health issues. She is currently working on a project on veterans' healthcare and broadband access in Virginia, and its implications for healthcare planning and policy. She holds a bachelor of arts in psychology from Marist College and a master of public health from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health.

Ernest Luke McClees Jr. is a tenure-track faculty member at Eastern Kentucky University where he teaches both Spanish and arts & humanities at the Model Laboratory school. He also serves as an instructor for the Veterans Studies Program. Eastern Kentucky University was recently recognized for its veteran focus by Michelle Obama, and named Most Veteran Friendly University two years in a row by *G.I. Jobs* magazine. Mr. McClees is a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department at Eastern Kentucky University. His areas of research include intercultural competency, veterans in education, comparative education, and critical education.

Lt. Kehinde Olaluwatomi Oshigbo is an officer of the Merchant Navy with a PhD in education administration & management, professional PGD/masters in transport administration, and several other professional certificates; a member of the Institute of Transport Administration of Nigeria and the Nigeria Institute of Shipping; and a fellow of the Port & Terminal Academy. He co-authored several books with his twin. He is a researcher and has been working at African Maritime Academy, the largest privately owned academy in west Africa in the last ten years. He served as the academy's registrar for eight years and now serves as rector.

Lt. Taiwo Oluwaseyi Oshigbo is presently the P.A. to the D.O.S/Planning/CEO, HOD foreign affairs & provost, NIDs (National Innovative Diploma School) in African Maritime Academy, as well as a coordinator/member of the Nigeria Institute of Shipping & Institute of Transport Administration (IOTA), and a fellow of Ports & Terminal Management Institute and other professional institutes. His academic background includes a focus in shipping & transport management; a professional diploma in marine engineering, a higher diploma in maritime studies (shipping & logistics), a professional PGD/masters in transport management, and a PhD in education management. He has delivered countless papers/speeches and co-authored multiple books, one of which is *Merits of Seafarers*.

Jennifer Orth-Veillon holds a PhD in comparative literature from Emory University and specializes in traumatic narratives and testimony. A Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, she teaches first-year literature and writing classes on war and human rights. She is a translator of French writer Bernard Marie Koltès' plays, which have been performed in Atlanta. Her creative and scholarly work has appeared in *Lunch Ticket*, *Techstyle*, and *Les cahiers du judaïsme*. She also leads the first creative writing workshop for student veterans at Georgia Tech.

Nancy Short, LCSW, graduated from James Madison University with a degree in psychology; she then obtained a master of social work from the University of Kentucky. She has served returning combat Veterans at the Salem VA Medical Center for the last five years, first as the Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn clinical case manager, and now as the OEF/OIF/OND program manager. She also spent ten years working as a police officer and then at Catawba Hospital as a clinical social worker. She provides veteran-centric care while assisting recently returning veterans with navigating the Department of Veterans Affairs, addressing needs such as benefits, healthcare, post-deployment readjustment issues, employment issues, mental health concerns, housing, and financial assistance. She also serves as the point of contact for the Salem Veteran Community Partnership.

Meredith Singleton is a professional writing lecturer in the English department at Northern Kentucky University. She also teaches composition and technical and professional writing at the University of Cincinnati while working toward her PhD in composition and rhetoric. Her dissertation work focuses on understanding how military veteran students write to allow instructors to better access the skills and assets these students already possess. Her goal is to help faculty tap in to the military veteran student's previous training and experience and bring those traits to the academic writing classroom, which can present opportunities to better engage these students in the composition process.

Travis R. Stevens-White enlisted into the National Guard in 2007 as an infantryman. In 2009, he deployed to Iraq with the 56th Stryker Brigade (PA Guard) and in 2010 to Afghanistan with the 86th Infantry Brigade (Mountain) out of the Vermont Guard. During both tours, he was a M249 SAW gunner. He recently changed MOS's (aka 'jobs') within the Guard to military intelligence systems integrator & maintainer and currently serves in a Special Forces support company in the West Virginia Guard. He spent the last year or so on active duty at Ft. Huachuca, AZ. He is also a student at Virginia Tech, studying geography.

Kevin Stoy's poems have most recently appeared in *Cobalt Review*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *42opus*, and *Boxcar Poetry Review*, among others. He read from his work at the 2012 Split This Rock Poetry Festival in Washington, D.C.; at an off-site event during 2011's AWP conference; and in 2010 at the War, Literature and the Arts Conference at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He earned his MFA from George Mason University, where he now teaches and serves as the living learning coordinator for the school's Honors College.

Chloe Tunze, PhD, graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in psychology. She then earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. She completed her postdoctoral training in trauma and PTSD at the VA San Diego Healthcare System and is currently a staff psychologist in the Center for Traumatic Stress at the Salem VA Medical Center. She provides veterans from all eras with evidence-based care, primarily targeting PTSD and trauma-related symptoms, including prolonged exposure, cognitive processing therapy, and dialectical behavior therapy. She is involved in research with a primary interest in trauma-related shame. She is also the military sexual trauma (MST) coordinator for the Salem VAMC, and in this role, she helps facilitate access and availability of care for veterans with a history of MST.

ABOUT THE VETERANS STUDIES GROUP AT VIRGINIA TECH

Overview

The Veterans Studies group at Virginia Tech is committed to researching and engaging the enduring questions raised by military veterans, including questions of identity, role in society, and how past veterans' experiences can inform today's policies and action.

We are comprised of faculty, staff, and students; we include veterans, military family members, and community members, all committed to the important work of exploring veterans issues in contemporary society.

Our work is grounded in the humanities and social sciences, seeking to contextualize and make connections among the experiences of veterans of different eras, locations, and modes of service. We value rich scholarship with meaningful connections to the world beyond academia.

Mission Statement

The Veterans Studies group calls attention to the rich diversity and experiences of veterans and military families. We encourage new ways of thinking that promote both inclusive communities and inclusive scholarship that takes seriously veterans as a category of analysis.

* * *

Conference Planning Committee Members

Chair—Dr. James M. Dubinsky is associate professor of rhetoric and writing in the Department of English at Virginia Tech (VT) where he directs the Undergraduate Studies program. From 1998 until 2007, Jim was the founding director of the Professional Writing program, and from 2008–11, he served as founding director of VT's Center for Student Engagement and Community Partnerships (CSECP), now VT-ENGAGE. Jim is also a veteran, having served in the U.S. Army from 1977–1992 on active duty and from 1992–2004 in the reserves before retiring as a lieutenant colonel.

Vice Chair—Heidi Nobles is a writer and editor. She is also a research assistant with the Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society and a long-time military brat. She earned her MA in English literature from Baylor University and her MFA in Writing (Nonfiction) from the University of South Carolina and is currently a doctoral student in rhetoric and writing at Virginia Tech. Her first book, *Hidden Histories: Stories Military Brats Lived When No One Was Watching*, is due out in Fall 2015.

Dr. Kelly Belanger is an associate professor of English at Virginia Tech, where she directs the Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society. She is coauthor of *Second Shift: Teaching Writing to Working Adults* and author of a recently completed book on communication strategies related to Title IX, institutional change, and college sports. She has been part of a military family for more than twenty-five years.

Dr. Eric Hodges recently completed his PhD in government and international Affairs. Eric is also a veteran, serving in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1998–2002. His dissertation research focused on how military training might contribute to community engagement. Eric recently presented some of his findings at the 2013 TEDxVirginiaTech event, held at the VT Center for the Arts, in a talk titled “The Moral Injury of War.”

Dr. Bruce Pencek is one of the founding organizers of the Veterans in Society Conference and has been Virginia Tech’s librarian for social science and history since 2001. In that capacity, he manages collections and provides research instruction and consultations to the university’s ROTC detachments, the Departments of Political Science/International Studies and History, and the School of Public and International Affairs, among others. He received his PhD in government from Cornell University and his MS in library and information science from the University of Illinois.

Daniel Pierce-Parra is a Marine Corp Veteran and current student at Virginia Tech. He is the Vice-President of Veterans@VT, Virginia Tech’s Student Veterans of America chapter. He currently works in the Office of Veterans Services on campus and is preparing to go to Officer Candidate School for the Marine Corps this summer.

Barbara Weimerskirch is the associate director of the Student Success Center at Virginia Tech. Barb serves on the university’s Veterans Support Initiative team and provides transition and academic support services for veteran and military students at Virginia Tech. Barb also works closely with Veterans@VT, the student veterans’ organization at Virginia Tech. Barbara received her undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Virginia, a masters in health administration from the Medical College of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University, and a masters in counselor education from Radford University. Barb has deep family ties with the Navy and is a Navy brat, spouse, and parent.

Collaborators

Dr. David Cline is assistant professor in the History Department at Virginia Tech, where he teaches courses in public history, oral history, museum studies, and historical research methods. Dr. Cline's public history work has included museum exhibits, contributions to radio and film documentaries, and large-scale oral history projects with the Library of Congress and others. He is currently writing a book about the African American experience during the Korean War.

Susanna Rinehart is associate professor and chair of Theatre & Cinema at Virginia Tech's School of Performing Arts. Prior to her 1999 arrival at VT, she was on the theatre faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a resident actor at PlayMakers Repertory Company for more than a decade. A few of her many Virginia directing credits are *The Shape of Things*, *Proof*, *The Laramie Project*, and *The Vagina Monologues*; performances include *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Wit*, *A Little Night Music*, and countless others. She has received numerous teaching awards, most recently named a Diggs Teaching Scholar, and currently she is directing the sold-out Virginia Tech production of *Spring Awakening: The Musical*.

With additional thanks for all your assistance to:

Cheryl Jones	Patricia Morse
Jeneen Preston	Robyn Smyth
Bridget Szersynski	Sally Wieringa

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Armstrong Family Foundation
Brittain Mallow, COL, US Army, ret.
Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement
Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
College of Engineering
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
College of Natural Resources and Environment
Department of Communication
Department of English
Department of History
Department of Science and Technology in Society
Office of the Provost
Office of the Vice President for Administrative Services
Office of the Vice President for Alumni Affairs
Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion
Office of the Vice President for Graduate Education
Office of the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs
Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs
Office of the Associate Vice President for Student Success
Office of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources
Pamplin College of Business
Peter Weimerskirch, M.D.
Salem VA Medical Center
School of Performing Arts and Cinema, Department of Theater
Stonewall Jackson Chapter of the Association
of the United States Army
Veterans at VT
Virginia Foundation for the Humanities
VT Center for the Arts
VT Institute for Policy and Governance

PLEASE NOTE

The full proceedings from this conference will be available via open access through VTechWorks at the Virginia Tech Library by the August 2014. We hope you will follow our group on social media for updates about proceedings availability, ongoing research, and future events:

- Web:** <http://veteransinsociety.wordpress.com/>
- Facebook:** Veterans Studies Conference
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/212944562158203/>
- LinkedIn:** Veterans Studies Conference Group
https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=4960715&trk=anet_ug_hm
- Twitter:** @VetStudiesVT
Watch for #veteranstudies2014

*The ideas expressed through this conference represent the positions of the presenters and not necessarily the Veterans Studies Group, Virginia Tech, or any of our sponsors. The Veterans Studies Group supports collaborative engagement of complicated issues through open dialogue.