



Telling War
Anthology
2017-2019

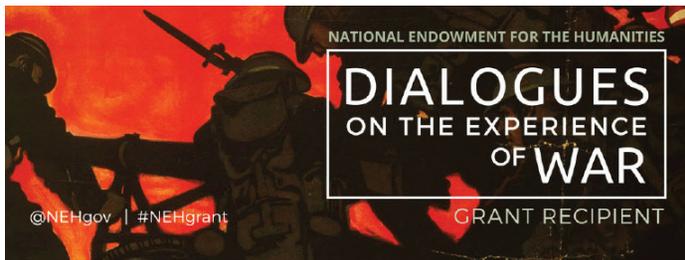
TELLING WAR

War cannot be heard unless it is told.

Telling War's purpose is to engage and support the veteran voice through a variety of story forms.

The **Telling War Anthology** is a collection of work created in conjunction with the NEH Dialogues on the Experience of War Funded Telling War initiative in Spokane, WA. The work in this collection is printed with the permission of the writers and artists and should not be duplicated without expressed written permission. Contact Telling War directors with any inquiries: tellingwar@gmail.com.
<http://www.gonzaga.edu/tellingwar>

Telling War Directors:
Lisa Silvestri, PhD and Rebekah Wilkins-Pepiton, MEd.



Cover Art:

Front: *Peace Bomb* | Rebekah Wilkins-Pepiton, 2016

Back: *Blood Ribbon* | Jacob Lindholm, 2017

Telling War Anthology 2017-2019

Poetry

Sarah Burruss
Mike Casey
Jacob Lindholm

Prose

L.M. Plager

Six Word Stories

Multiple Authors

Visual Art

Jacob Lindholm
Mike Schaefer
Telling War Facilitation Seminar

Comics

Multiple Artists



The Observer by Jacob Lindholm

POETRY

I AM ON THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER

by SARAH BURRUSS

I am on the Aircraft Carrier

I smell the boat, wearing an old flight suit I slept in, wrinkled in all the soft bends of joints.

I have not slept for thoughts of my dead friends.

The thrum of the ship, that constant background hum punctuated by the loud clash of metal on metal as the jets land above my head while briefing the wing commander.

I grab my helmet and dress myself in 30 pounds of survival gear that did my friends no good.

The wing commander and I don our helmets and cross the screaming aircraft shifting on deck in a coordinated stacking and scattering.

We get in our aircraft, the rotors spinning and the deck standing, stilling.

They load the bodies wafting the scent of death into the side door of the helo.

The cabin door slams shut and I call for takeoff.

We transport our smell of tropical death to Iwo Jima where the remains will continue their journey.

It takes less than two minutes for the bodies to unload, but their silence remains.

We return to the carrier to hand off the helicopter to the next crew, the next mission.

The wing commander takes a half-hearted step at praising my composure.

I go to dinner in my rumpled flight suit. The cooking smells make no impression on the smell of death surrounding me.

I go sit in my state room and cannot smell the ship, the jet fuel, my roommates dirty gym bag.

I smell only death.

I undress to take a shower, stuffing the old flight suit deep in my net laundry bag after I wrap the terry cloth robe against my naked skin.

My body is washed clean but the smell remains. I pull out a laundered flight suit. Unable to sit still, I begin to wander the deck's racetrack loops over knee-knockers in the reddish light of darken-ship.

My legs do not ache, but my head cannot think.

I thump my heavy boots to the fo'c'sle to peer out the open porthole at the dark waves below.

Sea air in my face and exhaustion in my head, I can still only smell death.

Airman _____ loudly wanders through. I am so still, he does not notice me until we are less than 5 feet apart. He is carrying a plastic plate from the kitchens. Without hesitation, he squats down to thrust the plate and his smile in my face.

“Chocolate chip cookie?” he asks

They are hot from the oven. The sugar, the butter, the chocolate jab into my consciousness and allow me relief, release, a deflating of the tension.

I take the cookie, hot in my hand, and hold it to my lips. My nose allows the scent in.

Airmen _____ moves on. I clutch my cookie until it is cold.

THIS IS WHERE THE TITLE GOES BY MIKE CASEY

When I arrived at my artillery unit on the Korean DMZ
in June, 1974, my Commanding Officer said:

“Lieutenant, when the balloon goes up, our mission is
to race across the Imjin River bridge with our artillery,
and if we make it across, fire all our ammo, spike our
guns, blow up our trucks, assume the role of infantry,
and try to get to back to the river. If we make it there,
engineers with outboard motor rubber rafts, if they’re
still alive, are supposed be there to help us back
across, where we continue to fight as best we can.”

“Sir, that’s a suicide mission.”

“Lieutenant, you have a fine grasp of the obvious.”

“Yes, Sir.”

THE ACRONYM SOLDIER

BY JACOB LINDHOLM

FOB's and COP's
PCI's and PCC's
MRE's and 203's
IED's and EOD



A SERIES OF UNTITLED HAIKU

BY JACOB LINDHOLM

Where am I?
Palm trees and sand in view.
The difference is in the breeze.

A well placed shot
Can counter any trained soldier
But he who reloads last wins.

Impacts, like branches snapping
Almost like a knocking
Death knocking at our door.

The fiercest warriors welcome death,
While conquerors strive for immortality.

Hands tied by orders.
An ally delivers the blade
That cuts the deepest



Between Two Worlds by Jacob Lindholm

PROSE



Telling War Session 3: Papermaking and Bookbinding



HELICOPTER ASSAULT FROM NAVAL SHIP, 1969

BY L.M. PLAGER

The USS Vancouver(LPD-2) slices through the waters of the South China Sea off the coast of Vietnam, preparing for the arrival of helicopters and the start of our combat assault. I and the rest of the Marines in our company, line the passage way leading up to the flight deck. I'm 18, a little over five foot eleven, weigh all of 140 pounds and carry half my body weight in gear on my back and shoulders. Our new combat operation begins today.

The choppers begin to arrive and as they land a number of Marines climb the ladder to the flight deck, run across to the choppers and enter. The chopper's ramp goes up, the engine volume and the speed of the rotors increase, they lift off the deck, turn and rise into the sky.

Like an accordion, our line moves up, closer to the flight deck.

A few guys talk from time to time, but most of us are quiet. I'm sure most of us wonder if it will be a hot LZ.

Ahead of me I hear a commotion. One of our guys sustained an injury.

He's helped out of his gear and two guys support him and head for Sick Bay to check out his injury. A rumor going around says he's done this before. Gets hurt and misses a combat assault. As he moves further down the line and into the ship, someone mutters, "Fuckin' coward."

I know I'm scared. Vietnam can kill a guy, you know. I think of friends who have already been killed. Of the guys I enlisted with from Spokane, two are dead and three have been wounded and sent home. Two others I know from the west side of our state, also dead. I wonder when it will be my turn to be mourned.

But I do my job. The war is a very small one for us. I don't think many of us think of fighting communism or stopping dominos from falling. The guys in my fire team and squad, Shorty, Wolfman, Chicago and the others, I've got their back. And they've got my back. We take care of each other, even though we're scared.

Our group loads next. The choppers set down on the deck and we climb up the ladder and run toward them. I think to myself: You know what scares me more than getting killed? Being called a fuckin' coward by my fellow Marines.

WAITING AT HOME

BY L.M. PLAGER



In Memoriam, 2017
Gonzaga U. First Year Seminar Students

I heard the doorbell and immediately thought the worst thing imaginable. It was April, 2003 and the Iraq invasion flooded the news. My youngest son, 23 years old and a Marine, was in Iraq and probably on the road to Baghdad. I walked to the front door, my heart racing and tears starting to form in my eyes. Holding my breath, I peered through the peep hole, expecting someone in uniform on my front porch to tell me our son was dead.

A delivery guy, holding a package, stood on the porch. With a deep sigh of relief, I opened the door and signed for the package.

I closed the door, walked to the dining room, sat down and started to calm down. We hardly ever have unannounced visitors. Hearing an unexpected doorbell ring, I fear who might be at the door and the horrible news they've come to deliver.

I remember another Marine and a different war. In June of 1969, I was the Marine and Vietnam the war. After several months of combat operations, our unit patrolled out of a base across the river from a little town called Nam. The base, surrounded by razor wire, sandbagged towers and bunkers, contained some luxuries we were not accustomed to: gravity fed showers,

outhouses and wood framed tents with canvas cots to sleep on. These luxuries made this a great place to be, other than being in Vietnam.

Lying on my cot, a Marine stuck his head inside the tent and said, “Plager! The Lieutenant wants to see you!” I looked over to him and asked, “What for?”

“I don’t know, but he sounds pissed off.”

I got up and headed to the Platoon Command Post thinking, “What the hell did I do?” and couldn’t think of anything.

Reporting to the Lieutenant, he asked me, “Plager, when’s the last time you wrote home?”

“It’s been a while, Sir.”

“Your mother has been worried about you and contacted the Marine Corps, to see if you are okay. This inquiry has traveled through the entire Marine Corps chain of command until it reached me. I’ve been told to take care of it. God Dammit, Plager! Write your mother! I don’t ever want to hear that you’re not writing again! Do you understand?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Get out of here, Plager!”

“Aye aye, Sir.”

I left and wrote a letter to my mother.

I stopped writing because I didn’t have anything to say. I always made stuff up in my letters: A nice fan keeps me cool. The club here is pretty good. Everything is okay. None of these things were true. The letter today, like my other letters, never mentioned what my life was

really like, with its hardships and dangers. I never wrote about how close I’ve come to being killed, though she probably knows. There was nothing to say in a letter home. My only reality – just another day in Nam.

Not wanting to be on the Lieutenant’s shit list or having my mom worry more than she already did, I continued writing home: Everything is okay.

Now, with a son in a similar situation, I wait at home, like my mother waited for me. I now understand what my mother went through and cry at the pain she suffered while I fought in Vietnam and didn’t write home.

Mr. Plager, born and raised in Spokane, joined the Marine Corps in 1968 as a member of the Evergreen State Platoon 3041. The platoon consisted of 80 enlistees from Washington State. He served as a Grunt in Vietnam from January, 1969 to January, 1970. Mr. Plager donated his personal collection of Vietnam War Books to Gonzaga University’s Foley Library Center in gratitude to The Telling War Project.



SIX WORD STORIES

Telling War Global Map of Service

Using the color key below participants added the location(s) of their service.

Army: Green
Navy: Blue
Air Force: Sky blue
Marines: Dark Red
Coast Guard: Gold



Three Parts Shell, 2017
Telling War Facilitation Seminar

Even now, my heart still mourns.

Lost a friend, took fifty years.

Lyndon Johnson: "Come to my Party"



Thanks for your service. Empty words

House to house. Flash of Red.

Fallujah. Shock and Awe. No Winners.

Worst Job Ever? Light the shitter.

Met her in Germany, quickly divorced.

Had to see for myself...I did.

My uncle, a shiny black wall.

Absurdity and Clarity in NVG Green.

Branching soon - what's in the cards?

No one kicks ass without tanker gas.

the King said in French. "But I take it seriously. One who doesn't know the Afghan soil could never understand the Afghan people. "Only recently have the traditional nations begun to change, as our industries begin to grow. It is not enough just to keep up with the changing times. We must keep ahead of them—to encourage our people to learn and to accept new responsibilities."

In 1964 Mohammed Zahir Shah promulgated the new constitution that gave real power to Afghanistan's parliament.

...cover of the country's tribal people, the King said. "Afghans, with their natural spirit of freedom, will find a difficult man to command and a harder man to lead."

In Blast Proclaims Midday

Kabul, more than a mile high, is a section of two valleys. A brisk wind inside gave me a spectacular view of the city below (pages 304-5). The walls of stone and mud were 30 feet high and 12 feet thick, a fifth-century. Small wonder I thought. From these heights I stopped in surprise. On the way, an old man was leading a

missed a day in 35 years," he said, "umping black powder and raising a razzle with an eight-foot bamboo pole. I named Aminan climbs due to the way they

fire the top-*to-blast*. The prisoners were strapped to the canon's mouth and blown to bits. Nowadays the four merely changed since my beard was black."

They have on summer said, sweeping his arms across the panorama of busy streets to the south. "When I first climbed this hill, that whole valley was green with fields and orchards and vineyards."

Glancing at his silver Swiss pocket watch, the old man stuffed wads of cotton into his



Scarlet Shreds, 2017
Telling War Facilitation Seminar

INTERVIEWS



“I’m smokin’ a cigarette and say to myself, ‘Wow Sanford, you don’t have to shoot any body, but look at all these bombs we’re dropping on all these people.’”

-David Sanford [Telling War Tapes, 8:00]

Excerpts from interviews conducted February 2019 with award-winning documentary filmmaker, Ron Osgood, at CMTV Studios.



“I was standing between the pilot and co-pilot and ask,
‘Sir, what’s that down there?’
‘That’s a B-52 round, son.’
The whole mountain range covered with that,
yea.”

-Tom Ritchie [Telling War Tapes, 12:30]



“The only thought in my head was ‘What the fuck have I done to myself?’ It was dark... open the door and the oppressive humidity; even in the dark”

-Larry Plager [Telling War Tapes, 6:34]



COMICS

Whispering of Fields Half-Sown, 2017
Telling War Facilitation Seminar



Comics created during the Telling War workshop with creator of Terminal Lance and USMC Veteran, Maximilian Uriarte.

Photo: M. Uriarte leading Veteran workshop





Telling War Event Posters
2017-19

STORY INTO SONG

A SONGWRITING WORKSHOP WITH

jeffrey martin & anna tivel



Monday, August 28 at 7p

Washington Cracker Building | 304 W. Pacific | Free

TELLING WAR
A MILITARY VETERANS INITIATIVE

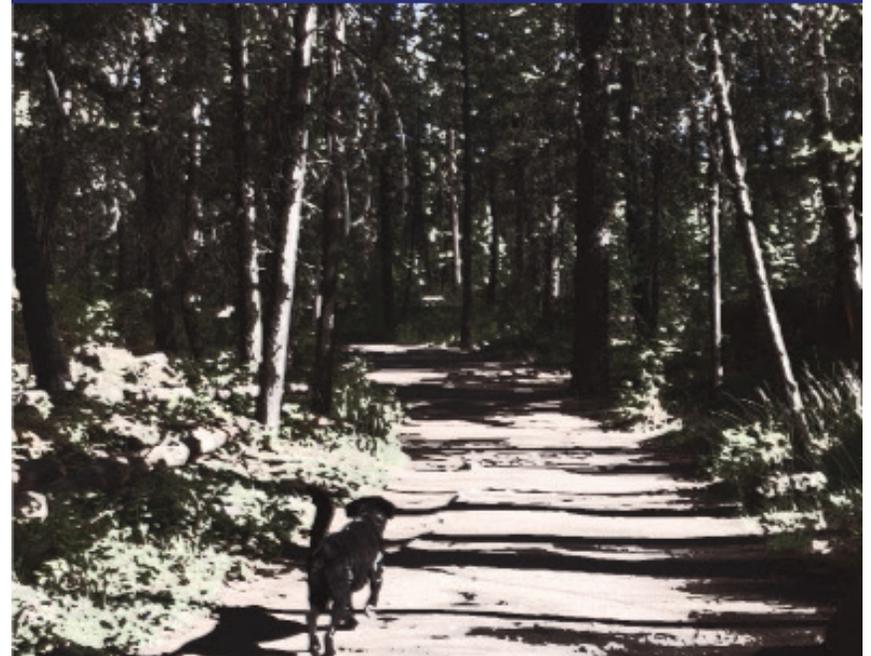


Terrain

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

Veterans Day at the Park

Papermaking, Lunch & S'mores



Saturday, November 11 | 11a-3p | FREE
Riverside State Park | Bowl & Pitcher Shelter

Discover Pass Free Day

Questions?
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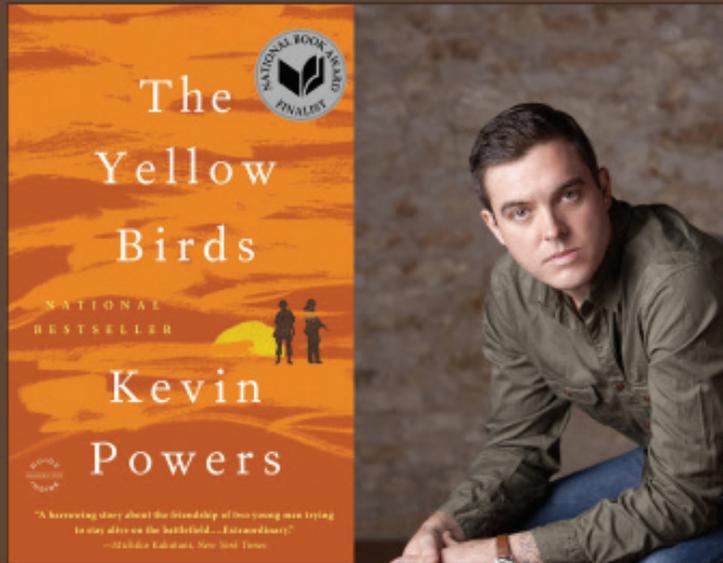
TELLING WAR

 Humanities

 GONZAGA
UNIVERSITY

Kevin Powers

Author | Poet | Iraq War Veteran



February 2018

Writing War, Monday 2/26 @ 7p
Gonzaga's Cataldo Globe Room, Free

Poetry Workshop, Tuesday 2/27 @ 930a
SCC's Hagan Center, Bldg 16, 2nd fl (Library), Free

Telling War Session 1, Tuesday 2/27 @ 7p
Gonzaga's Hemmingson Center, Free*

*Free & Open to all Veterans & Active Military - Pre-registration Required-www.gonzaga.edu/tellingwar

Bard Breakfast, Wednesday 2/28 @ 830a
Gonzaga's Hemmingson Center Jundt Lounge, Free

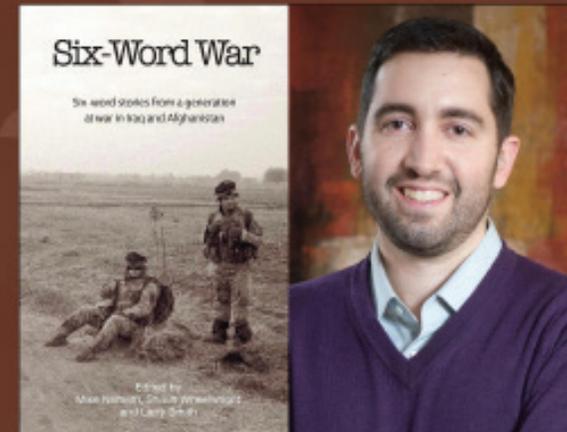
TELLING WAR

HAGAN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES AT SPOKANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Where People and Ideas Connect

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Questions? email- tellingwar@gmail.com

What's Your Six?



Mike Nemeth

US Army Veteran | Entrepreneur | Author

March 2018

What's Your Six?, Tuesday, 3/27 @ 1210p - 110p
Gonzaga's Wolff Auditorium, Free

Telling War Session 2, Tuesday 3/27 @ 7p
Gonzaga's Hemmingson Center, Free*

*Free & Open to all Veterans & Active Military
Pre-registration Required-www.gonzaga.edu/tellingwar

TELLING WAR

Questions?
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gonzaga.edu/tellingwar

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

Telling War presents

pedal powered
papermaking



Mon, April 23, 9a-3p
Gonzaga's Bulldog Alley
Free & Open to Everyone!
transforming military uniforms into paper

Telling War Presents

JUST LIKE ME

The Vietnam War | The American War



www.vietnamwarstories.org

Tuesday, February 26 | 7:00p | Magic Lantern

TELLING WAR PRESENTS
MAXIMILIAN URIATE
"TERMINAL LANCE"



MON, APRIL 1 @ 7P | ARTIST TALK
GONZAGA'S CATALDO GLOBE ROOM

TUES, APRIL 2 @ 6-8P | VETERAN WORKSHOP
GONZAGA'S HUMANITIES BUILDING, COLLEGE COMMON (1ST FL, SOUTH SIDE)

TERMINAL LANCE
THE WHITE DONKEY

Updates: @tellingwar on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram
Tellingwar@gmail.com | gonzaga.edu/tellingwar

