



# Dialogues on the Experience of War: A National Program for Veterans

Through *Dialogues on the Experience of War*, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) brings together veterans and civilians to reflect upon powerful literature and art.

The NEH has funded 62 *Dialogues* programs in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Many of these involve multiple sites, further extending the program’s impact and reaching underserved communities.

“ For forty years I have been looking for words to describe my experience and I finally found them right here in this ancient book [*The Odyssey*].”

- VETERAN PARTICIPANT

*Dialogues* programs help veterans gain new insight into their military experience by engaging rich humanities resources.

- Veterans bond through collective reflection around novels, memoirs, poetry, art, music, and films that illuminate common patterns of deployment and homecoming across centuries, continents, and cultures.
- In a survey across five programs, 96 percent of participants indicated that the humanities materials helped them better understand their experiences.





“ The support I received from staff and classmates

when I was having a hard time allowed me to know it was OK and not keep on shutting down and shutting out.”

- VETERAN PARTICIPANT

“ As someone who has never been involved in the armed forces,

I think it was important to see this play/hear these stories to ‘understand’ these struggles better.”

- PUBLIC PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

**Dialogues programs help veterans combat isolation and form networks of support.**

- Respondents to the 2017 Wounded Warrior Project survey reported significantly higher levels of social isolation than the general population.
- In a survey of five programs, 100 percent of respondents reported a desire to “keep in touch with some of the people [they] met through the program.”

**Dialogues programs meaningfully bridge the divide between veterans and their communities.**

- Plays, lectures, and panels foster deeper understanding of veterans’ experiences.
- At public programs held by Ohio University, 85 percent of respondents agreed that the “program gave [them] opportunities to see connections between those who have served and those who have not.” Ninety-seven percent felt “more confident about taking part in thoughtful discussions about war.”

**Dialogues programs reach underserved veterans.**

- Programs hosted by the Clemente Course have reached female veterans and veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Auburn University’s program reached rural communities and imprisoned veterans.

**79%** of survey respondents agreed that their *Dialogues* program made them “more likely to ask for help if [they] need it.”

