



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WAR COMES HOME

What is War Comes Home?

War Comes Home is a multi-year initiative designed to foster a statewide conversation about how we welcome back veterans home after over a dozen years of war, and how to build bridges of understanding between those who have served in the military and those who have not.

How can the public participate?

In 2014-15, Cal Humanities is supporting more than 800 events throughout California. All are invited to participate in public conversations, book discussion groups, story collection events, workshops, volunteer projects, or attend an author talk, exhibition, or film screening. These events will bring the public together—veterans, their families, scholars, writers, historians, artists, activists, and other interested community members to explore how our country's engagements in war effect all of us.

Why are you doing this?

California has the largest population of veterans than any other state (almost 10% of the nation's 21+ million veterans). By understanding veterans better, we can begin to reknit the fabric of our communities and respond more wisely to the returning service men and women. When they return, veterans can bring professionalism, skills, and perspectives gained only through service, as well as carry with them the wounds of war. What can we learn from them and each other about the scope of what it means to be human?

How are veterans involved in War Comes Home?

We invite veterans to speak about their experiences and perspectives at the hundreds of events taking place this year. Karl Marlantes, a Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, will tour the state giving talks in conjunction with the statewide reading of his book *What It Is Like To Go To War*. Veterans will be speakers at major forums this summer.

Veterans' voices will be featured in the touring exhibit to launch this fall. We have consulted with veterans to create and curate the programs of this initiative and continue to welcome their input.

What sorts of subjects will you be focusing on?

War Comes Home will focus on several questions to help communities understand veterans' experiences. What obligations do we have to those who serve in the name of our national defense? What lessons from previous veterans can we learn from to understand the challenges of today's returning service men and women? What is it like to go to war? How can we all welcome veterans home in a way that is helpful and meaningful to all of us? Cal Humanities and its partners will explore these questions to accomplish a greater understanding of the momentous societal changes that are occurring as thousands of veterans resume civilian life.

Is *War Comes Home* only about Iraq and Afghanistan veterans?

No. Although the largest group of recently returned vets are from those wars, *War Comes Home* embraces the experience of all veterans. From the first-hand accounts of living veterans, to the memoirs and letters of veterans, to books, movies, and photographs by veterans and authors, filmmakers, and artists, this project will address the coming home experience throughout our history. There is no one "veterans' experience," and we hope to explore the common as well as the individual experience of return.

What are the "humanities"?

The humanities explore what it means to be human. Whether through history, literature, or philosophy, the humanities are how we engage the wisdom of our cultures, the experiences of individuals, and the values that define and guide us. The humanities invite us to examine the world through different perspectives—and to discuss what matters to all of us.

What are the different programs related to the initiative?

California Reads

Californians will read *What it is Like to Go to War*, by Vietnam Marine Sergeant and Rhodes Scholar, Karl Marlantes, who will do a statewide speaking tour in fall of 2014. With the support of California Reads grants, 43 different library systems and hundreds of branches will present more than 800 public programs for veterans and communities throughout California. (A partnership with the [California Center for the Book](#))

[See the list of libraries participating in this statewide read!](#)

Public Conversations

Cal Humanities is creating five public forums focusing on themes, from the traumas of war to Hollywood and mythmaking to the changing faces of veterans. Conversations will take place in Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Riverside, and Los Angeles in summer 2014. (A partnership with the [University of California Humanities Research Institute](#) and the [California State Library](#))

Community Stories

This Cal Humanities program has been supporting community-based projects across California related to veterans, ranging from oral histories of the first African American Marines to an online exhibit of veterans' tattoos.

[Find out more about these projects](#)

In Schools

Cal Humanities is sponsoring a year-long teacher professional development program on how students can learn about U.S. history and government through the eyes of veterans. (A partnership with the [California History-Social Science Project](#))

[Register now for the CHSSP teacher professional development program](#)

Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Healthcare

Can reading a poem by Thomas Hardy help a nurse understand better the journey that brought a soldier to her hospital? The Literature & Medicine program's answer is "yes." This program helps VA healthcare workers build more understanding and empathy for their patients and provide more compassionate care. We are partnering with major VA medical centers in California.

[See how literature can make a difference to hospitals](#)

Veterans' Voices (working title)

Veterans' Voices is a banner exhibit that will bring to light veterans' perspectives throughout history through their letters and journals. Available in fall 2014, the exhibit will be easy to install and travel, and available for libraries, colleges, small museums, cultural centers, and more. (A partnership with [Exhibit Envoy](#))