Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Dialogues on the Experience of War guidelines at http://www.neh.gov/grants/education/dialogues-the-experience-war for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Education Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: National Endowment for the Humanities Dialogues on The Experience of War
Institution: University of Florida
Project Director: Alice Freifeld
Grant Program: Dialogues on the Experience of War
Intellectual justification for the program and Overview

Significance of reading and discussion programs:

“Everytime I get to share my story with someone, I come home a little bit more.”
- Frank Silverhawk, Vietnam Veteran and Member of the Cherokee Nation

The Center for European Studies (CES) at the University of Florida proposes to conduct a two-part program under the auspices of the NEH Dialogues on the Experiences of War grant. The program, which will recruit and train graduate student veterans to conduct discussion groups with local veterans, will explore ways in which wars intersect with everyday life of combatants on and off battlefields through five central themes: “Women and War,” “Soldiers and Civilians,” “War and Media,” “Brothers in Arms,” and “Coming Home.” In the U.S., in particular, ever more distant theatres of war and their increasingly mediated nature have altered citizens’ affective engagements with warfare: wars have, at once, become more visible and more invisible, thus complicating public conversations about America’s military engagements abroad and reintegration of veterans into civilian life. Through the proposed publicity and recruitment campaign, the numerous discussion groups, and a graduate seminar specifically designed for graduate student veterans, our project seeks to draw attention to our local veterans and once again make war, and the experiences of those whose lives are intersected by it, visible.

The discussion sessions will focus on five wars: the Crimean War, World War I, World War II, the Soviet-Afghanistan War, and the Bosnian Wars of the 1990s. This program will take advantage of the rich body of poetry, novels, films, and art in European Studies. Our themes build around the wartime experience of our veterans and the expertise of our faculty. We believe that our veterans will find that discussions centered around the engagements of the past will offer meaningful and relevant comparisons to their own more contemporary experiences. Focusing on
European wars and sources has the additional benefit of allowing veterans of Vietnam or recent actions in the Middle East to explore the experience of war through a less personal lens, and one that might make reflecting on these experiences easier.

**Proposed Readings & Humanities Sources for Discussion Groups**

I. “Women and War” will seek to address historical roles that women have played in war, and the ways in which those roles have changed and are continuing to change as we see increasingly large numbers of female veterans. Women have and continue to experience war as combatants, observers, caretakers, and victims, and are oftentimes considered the literal spoils for the victors to take. The goal of this group is to explore the complexity of women’s wartime experiences and the fluidity of their roles in times of conflict. Participants in the discussion group will watch *Under Fire: Soviet Women Combat Veterans*, WWII, which focuses on the 800,000 women and girls mobilized by the Soviet Union during WWII and includes first-person accounts from five decorated Soviet female soldiers. As a counter to the “official” experience of recognized Soviet soldiers, participants will also listen to an excerpt of Faye Schulman’s oral history and view some of her wartime photographs. Schulman was a member of a Jewish partisan troupe and wartime photographer.

War and combat have challenged traditional notions of gender relations, but also made war on women’s bodies. On the victimization of women and difficulties encountered by women during wartime because of their gender, this group will read excerpts from *S: A Novel About the Balkans* by Slavenka Drakulic. *S* is written in the form of a series of interviews with a Bosnian woman who was imprisoned during the war and raped repeatedly. While Drakulic's novel demonstrates in very graphic manner the inhumane treatment that S received at the hands of her captors, she does not simply present S as a victim, but demonstrates her agency and position as a
combatant in the fight for her nation as well. S, along with the documentary on Soviet female combatants and excerpts from Schulman's oral history, will allow the discussion leader to pose the question of where the line between combatant and victim should be drawn for women in warfare and if this line is different for men than it is women. He or she might also ask whether or not the contributions of women are valued and valorized as much as those of men? What must women accomplish in war to be considered heroes and are these standards higher or lower than they are for their male counterparts?

II. “Soldiers and Civilians” will focus on WWII and the Soviet war in Afghanistan to address the encounters between soldiers, often as occupying or invading forces, and the citizens that they must police, contain, subdue, assist, or educate depending on the wartime context. This discussion will follow Primo Levi’s travel through the Russian and American zones in 1945. His nuanced account in The Reawakening will open up discussion of the occupying forces transition to liberators and caregivers. Given the recent US actions in Afghanistan where soldiers have had to pivot from occupation to reconstruction, this discussion should have resonance and be directly applicable to many local area veterans. Excerpts from Vladislav Tamarov’s 2001 Afghanistan: A Russian Soldier's Story, an account of Soviet soldiers from the Soviet-Afghan war will also be included the discussion. Based upon these works, the discussion leader might ask what difficulties soldiers face as they transition from occupying force to a force present for aid and protection? How might their actions be interpreted by the local population? How can a soldier maintain his/her position of authority and at the same time express empathy or sympathy?

III. “War and the Media” will explore the impact of war reporting. We will focus on the experience of the Crimean War as the first “media war,” and hope to find resonance in these discussions with Vietnam veterans, since media coverage of the Vietnam War had significant
impact on public opinion. For this discussion, participants will view the Crimean War photography of Roger Fenton and read excerpts from Lev Tolstoy’s *Sevastopol Sketches* (1855), Alfred Lord Tennyson’s poem “The Charge of the Light Brigade” (1854), and excerpts from William Howard Russell’s *Dispatches on the Crimean War*. Russell’s reportage brought great attention to the terrible conditions faced by British soldiers in the war. Tolstoy’s work connects the reader to individual soldiers who experienced the war and the harsh realities they faced. It does not romanticize or glorify their efforts in the manner that Tennyson’s work does. Taken together, these sources offer multiple viewpoints of the war and demonstrate the ways in which opinion of the war could be shaped by their dissemination. For instance the discussion leader could ask how these materials present the soldiers differently in the war? Are the soldiers in Tolstoy’s account heroes, even when they are victims of so-called ‘friendly fire’? Are the soldiers of Tennyson’s account, who do in fact appear heroic and legendary but are presented as dying in vain, nonetheless, heroes? How could these accounts, including the journalistic accounts of William Howard Russell, affect public opinion of the war and of the soldiers? How might the reception of such accounts influence governmental decisions allowing or prohibiting coverage of ongoing conflicts?

IV. “Brothers in Arms” seeks to explore the universality of the wartime experience and the sense of camaraderie and understanding felt between those who have experienced warfare. Many soldiers, such as those who experienced the trench warfare of WWI, have more in common with one another than the civilians they encounter upon their return home. The discussion session will rely on WWI and the 1929 bitter autobiography by Robert Graves, *Good-bye to All of That*. It will be complemented by John Keegan’s 1976 work, *The Face of Battle*, which refocused the course of military histories to consider the plight of soldiers as they
experienced battle. Participants will also listen to Sebastian Junger’s TED talk entitled “Why Veterans Miss War.” This combination of sources, that of a soldier-poet, historian, and embedded journalist, will enable the veterans and discussion leader to consider the experience of warfare on multiple levels. The groups might consider whether or not it is possible to have a positive experience in war? Can the experience of war ever truly be conveyed or understood by one who has not experienced it? Is there value in sharing the experience with civilians?

V. “Coming Home” will in many ways connect with the previously mentioned themes and readings. For instance media depictions, as well as interactions between civilians and soldiers, have the ability to influence public opinion of a given military action and the soldiers involved in the action, and thus can influence the reception that those soldiers receive once they return home. Coming home generally suspends the comraderie of the close encounters in war replacing it often with the familiar settings of home or country. However, the rhythms of home are different than on the front. The soldier can be surrounded by the familiar and yet even friends and loved ones are not intimately familiar with his/her experience. The war was followed on media at home and yet it was far away, the experience of war was largely invisible even to loved ones or friends. For this discussion we have chosen to focus on two humanities sources, Homer’s *Iliad* and the 1997 Russian film *Brother*, directed by Aleksei Balabanov. These sources address the difficulties that returning soldiers face, both as a result of their war experience and the changes that took place in their absence. Combining a literary classic with a film that is somewhat of a cult classic in Russian popular culture will emphasize the universality of the difficulties of reception and reintegration. Among the questions this session will explore are: What are the difficulties encountered by soldiers when they return home? How are these difficulties affected by the public perception of the war? Can one ever truly “return” home?
Describe the scope, organization, & setting of the proposed discussion programs and the institutional resources available to support them:

The proposed discussion programs will take place throughout the course of the Spring 2017 semester and will be organized and coordinated by CES staff. Each session will be led by two graduate discussion leaders, who will have successfully completed the preparatory program in the previous semester. Each session will include approximately 10 – 12 participating veterans from the local community. We propose to host all discussion sessions, which will run for approximately 2 hours each, on campus in the newly remodeled Visualization Conference Room of the UF Marston Science Library. Conveniently located next to a café, this room is ideal for small group discussions and features a full video wall comprised of six touch screens that will be perfect for displaying wartime photography or discussion points. Hosting the discussions regularly in the same space will help to create a sense of continuity and community among our veteran participants. This room is available free of charge for university-related activities.

In certain cases such as the sessions that address “Women and War” and “War in the Public Memory,” it will be necessary to host film screenings in addition to the regularly scheduled discussion session. In those instances we will host the screenings at the Hippodrome State Theater in downtown Gainesville. Although the Hippodrome does charge for space rental, these screenings will be free and open to the public and will thus serve to further advertise our program and reach out to local veterans who may wish to participate in our discussions.

Design, content, & Implementation – Preparatory Program for NEH Discussion leaders.

Because graduate seminars lend themselves particularly well to source-based discussion, the proposed preparatory program will take the form of a semester long, 3 credit hour graduate seminar led by UF faculty. The faculty who will lead the course, Associate Professor of History
Alice Freifeld, Associate Professor of Political Science Aida Hozic, and Associate Professor of History Paul Ortiz, all have extensive experience teaching and designing graduate seminars. Hozic and Freifeld each are specialists on the contemporary period in European studies and thus are extremely familiar with the wars and humanities sources under consideration. Ortiz, in addition to being a veteran and an oral historian, has extensive experience working with local area veterans and collecting their oral histories. The course will also draw upon the expertise of affiliated faculty, such as Laura Sjoberg, a political scientist who specializes on gender and warfare and Galina Rylkova, a Slavic Studies specialist with extensive knowledge of the art, literature, and films of Eastern Europe in the modern period. Additionally, our project will benefit from the contribution of Lisa Powers-Tricomi, who is the theater director for the Tampa Bay Telling Project and an art therapist who specializes in working with veterans. She will meet with the graduate seminar students and faculty to ensure that the interests, needs, and perspectives of veterans are addressed.

The syllabus for the course is divided into the same five themes as the afore-mentioned discussion groups and students will be provided with course packs that include the same humanities sources as used in the discussion groups. Secondary source material will be assigned as well. The secondary sources, for instance Errol Morris's 2011 Believing is Seeing: Observations on the Mysteries of Photography and Norman Naimark’s 1997 work, Russians in Germany, will provide a background to the wars under consideration and will also serve to provide a methodological and critical foundation. Sources will be included that expose students, who we expect to come from a multitude of different disciplines, to the different ways humanities sources can be used and “read,” such as Susan Sontag's 2004 work Regarding the Pain of Others.
Three weeks will be dedicated to each theme, during which students will become familiar with the humanities and secondary sources for that particular theme and the various issues suggested by the sources. Faculty will lead the graduate students in each seminar session through a discussion of the relevant humanities sources to deepen their understanding of the material and to explore its relevancy to veterans. To further practice their skills as discussion leaders the graduate students will lead discussion sections in an adjoining undergraduate course at the end of each 3-week period. Graduate students will be evaluated based on their ability to lead discussions throughout the course and a 20-page analytical paper addressing one of the core themes of the semester in greater detail and suggesting further humanities sources relevant to that particular theme. The undergraduate course, because it will meet only five times for three-hour segments during the semester, will be worth only one credit and not require additional assignments.

The participants in both the preparatory graduate seminar and in the undergraduate seminar will be self-selected with the proviso that they be current UF students. The graduate seminar and the larger program will be specifically advertised to UF graduate students who are veterans. There are currently 355 registered veteran graduate and professional students and 428 registered undergraduate students on campus. We will work with the UF Veterans’ Collegiate Success Center to advertise our program and ensure that veterans on campus are advised of the program. The course will be promoted as specifically tailored to veteran students, but will be open to any student from any discipline interested in the course topic. At the conclusion of the preparatory course, ten graduate students will be selected to serve as NEH Discussion Leaders for the public discussion groups. The students will be selected based upon their performance in the graduate seminar. Faculty leaders will take into consideration each individual's aptitude for
discussion leading, depth of understanding, and commitment to the course material. As the course will be specifically tailored for, and targeted to veterans, it is our intention that the discussion leaders be veterans themselves, as this will assist them in establishing a meaningful dialogue with the veterans in the public discussion groups.

**Design, content, & implementation – discussion groups for military veterans and others – structure of discussion groups, number and length of session, & size, publicized, recruited, locations, etc.**

Discussion groups will be led by two discussion leaders and will consist of approximately 10 – 12 participants from the local veteran community. These sessions will last 2 hours each and will be held on campus in the Visualization Conference Room of the UF Marston Science Library, with the exception of those themes that include film screenings as part of the material under consideration. For themes that include film screenings, the screenings will be held at the Hippodrome State Theater in downtown Gainesville no more than one week prior to the discussion session. To aid the following discussions and assist participant’s recall of central details and themes, participants will be provided with discussion questions and points for consideration at the screenings.

The discussion groups will be moderated by the discussion leaders, who will begin each session with a brief overview of the humanities sources under consideration, including where possible, the social, historical, and cultural significance of each source. Our program proposes to use journalistic accounts, memoirs, literature, poetry, photography, audio recordings, and films as sources. These various materials will serve as primary sources for each discussion group and the discussion leaders will center the discussions in and around these materials. Discussion leaders will guide the sessions by posing specific questions about each text in a way that leads to further
questioning and sharing. Participants will be encouraged to share how the texts relate to their own experiences.

Discussion materials will be made available to participants prior to the discussion sessions and will be available on the CES website under a separate heading entitled “NEH Dialogues on the Experience of War.” In addition to the humanities resources assigned for each session, a discussion guide with possible discussion questions and a short summary detailing each war, including information on additional sources of information, will be made available. For those individuals who are unable to access the materials online or who do not wish to rely on electronic versions, we will provide course packs containing all necessary material that can either be picked up, or alternatively, materials will be mailed to them prior to the discussion session.

Publicity for the program and participant recruitment will be conducted by CES staff, who have extensive experience publicizing events through traditional and social media outlets. In addition to announcing the NEH award, the graduate preparatory program, and the discussion sessions on our social media sites, we will also take advantage of certain high profile events that are likely to attract the attention of local area veterans. The Harn Museum of Art will open the photography exhibition “Aftermath: The Fallout of War – America and the Middle East” on August 16, 2016, which runs through January 1, 2017, and we propose to use this opening as a means to garner attention for local veterans and the NEH Dialogues on the Experience of War program. The sizable exhibit features 95 photographs and 3 videos and captures the physical and emotional conditions of civilian populations caught in the wake of war. Paul Ortiz, one of the faculty leaders of the preparatory program, will provide the opening remarks at this exhibit and we will use grant funds to advertise Ortiz’s talk and the NEH program on 3 key radio stations in the Alachua County area. Radio advertising will ensure that our program is announced to
individuals who may not be avid users of Facebook and other social media. Furthermore, we will advertise the event at local VFW chapters and veteran’s associations in the Alachua County area. The Harn Museum will advertise this exhibit expertly, targeting veterans groups as well.

We also propose to bring members of the Veteran’s Telling Project of Tampa Bay to Gainesville for a live performance at the Hippodrome State Theater at the beginning of the Spring 2017 semester. The performance will be free and open to the public and will feature a Q&A session with the actors and director at the conclusion. The Telling Project has proven to be a very successful means to reach out to veterans in the local community and would provide an ideal event to announce our program and recruit potential discussion participants. The performance will be advertised and announced on our social media sites, and as with the aforementioned art exhibit, we will advertise it on 3 local radio stations and at local veteran’s associations. CES staff and our participating faculty members will be on hand at the performance to talk to potential discussion participants about the program and to offer further information.

Project Faculty & Staff

CES, and the faculty responsible for our preparatory program, are not only committed to the importance of humanities, but have a real and vested interest in this particular project and the ways in which the experience of war affects society and individuals alike. The faculty who have come forward to design and implement this project have themselves been deeply and profoundly touched by the effects of warfare. This experience and personal history has left an indelible mark on their research, areas of expertise, and professional associations.

Dr. Alice Freifeld, CES Director and an Associate Professor of History will serve as director of the project as well as one of the leaders of the preparatory program. Her work on displaced persons and refugees in the immediate post-WWII period is motivated by the
experience of her parents as displaced persons during that same period and has led to an expansive examination of archival sources and wartime memoirs. Soldiers figure prominently in these memoirs, as they provided a crucial link for refugees to the outside war.

The project and the preparatory program will also benefit from the contributions of Aida Hozic, an Associate Professor of Political Science with a specialization in International Relations. Inspired by her life experience in the conflict zones of former-Yugoslavia, she is currently researching and teaching on “Art and War,” looking at the depictions of war through art, popular culture, and everyday artifacts. She is particularly interested in whether art and artifacts of everyday life created from experiences of war retain their connections to and meanings of war. Paul Ortiz, Director of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program, is himself a veteran and has extensive ties among the veteran community in Gainesville. He has initiated a number of significant oral history collections capturing the life experience of veterans. He has worked diligently to ensure that all veterans, including minorities and those frequently forgotten such as African-Americans, are memorialized along with their white comrades.

CES staff will provide the relevant institutional support for the project as a whole. Lisa Booth, Executive Director of CES, will serve as liaison between CES and the NEH, in addition to managing and implementing the budget, completing all necessary NEH reports, and overseeing the evaluation of the project. She will also act as the liaison between NEH and the Center. Kokila Mendis, the Outreach Coordinator of CES, will be responsible for the recruitment of project participants and discussion leaders, for the dissemination of information about the project to the wider on-campus and off-campus regional community as well as for the creation of all publicity materials for each of the project’s events. The three faculty and two institutional
support staff listed above all have extensive experience designing and implementing grant
programming, as is reflected in their résumés.

**Institutional context**

The University of Florida is the preeminent university in the Florida public university
system. Due to the highly diverse population of the state of Florida, the fourth largest state in the
union, we have a particularly diverse and competitive student body. Our tuition is among the
lowest in the country for a Research-1 institution, which draws talent from a larger stratum,
including veterans and children of military families. UF has a significant veteran population,
including 373 graduate and professional, and 428 undergraduate students. There are also
numerous veterans in the broader Gainesville and Central Florida communities. Gainesville is
home to the Malcolm Randall VA Medical Center, one of two VAMCs in the North Florida/South
Georgia Veterans Health System. In addition to the veteran population, UF has an Army, Navy
and Air Force ROTC detachment, all of which are currently collaborating with the Center for
European Studies on a Department of Defense scholarship designed to give ROTC students
access to language learning and study abroad opportunities.

CES enjoys strong university support and generous funding from the UF Division of
Sponsored Programs, the Office of the Provost, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
CES is one of eight West Europe Centers in the US awarded Department of Education Title VI
funding (2014-18) through its Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) program. CES has
extensive experience managing and administering federal funds both for outreach and graduate
fellowships and training as we have received Title VI grants from the US Department of
Education in 2006, 2010, and again for 2014-18, in addition to two outreach grants from the
European Union Delegation to the United States.
CES is committed to providing a high quality education for both undergraduate and graduate students in European Studies across numerous disciplines. As a Center with a strong outreach focus, we are also committed to opening up university resources and providing educational programming and events to the broader Gainesville and Central Florida communities. CES houses thirteen faculty members in six different disciplines ranging from History, to Sociology to Political Science.

As an interdisciplinary center in the university’s largest college (The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), CES has numerous resources that range from access to a variety of event and meeting spaces, extensive library and archive collections as well as a diverse range of student organizations. In addition to Center resources, Dr. Ortiz and Samuel Proctor Oral History Program are providing access to a large archive of veteran interviews as well as several veterans groups located in the community. The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program is a foremost oral history program in the United States, which, since its establishment in 1967, has conducted nearly 7,000 interviews and produced more than 150,000 pages of transcribed material that is available to the public in digital archives. The Gainesville veteran groups that we will be recruiting participants from include residents of the VA hospital and care home, the Gainesville Veterans for Peace, the UF Collegiate Veterans' Success Center, the Iwo Trio Group, and the Veterans Oral History Project participants.

**Evaluation**

CES has extensive experience collecting survey data for other federally funded grant projects and implementing the findings of that data in future programming. The evaluation for this project will include two surveys for the veteran graduate student discussion leaders and one survey for the participants of the discussion groups. The veteran graduate students will complete
a survey at the start of the graduate training course to self-evaluate their discussion leading abilities and comfort discussing themes of war both prior to training. They will complete a survey at the end of the course re-evaluating their abilities, evaluating the faculty instructors, the course material and the overall quality of the seminar.

The survey for participants will include questions as to how well the event was planned and executed, how well the material was presented in an understandable and accessible way, how well the discussion leaders facilitated discussion, the quality of the syllabi material and the event room, as well as the quality of CES’s implementation of the event, including ease of travel and parking, dissemination of information, and advertising. The graduate student surveys will be dispersed and collected online using Qualtrics, a sophisticated survey program. The surveys for participants will be distributed and collected both in person and online depending on the preference of the participant. The data from both sets of surveys will be used to generate useful reports that can be applied to future graduate seminar and training programs. We hope by training graduate student veterans as discussion leaders and making all the humanities literature available online and in re-printable course packets that this project design will provide the impetus to continue these discussions beyond the grant cycle.
Syllabus – Preparatory Graduate Seminar

This program will take advantage of the rich body of poetry, novels, films and art in European Studies. The preparatory course includes primary sources as well as secondary sources, which will provide a framework with which to contextualize humanities sources. These secondary sources will also provide the basic background of the wars themselves, which will aid in the creation of the accompanying discussion study guides for the public discussion groups. This course will conclude with a 20 page research paper that relates to the material covered on this syllabus, with a specific focus on one of the five themes.

Part I: Women & War
August 16 – Sept. 10, 2016
• August 16: Opening of Harn Exhibit “Aftermath: The Fallout of War – American and the Middle East”, talk by Paul Ortiz
• September 9: undergraduate discussion
Sources:
• No Job for a Woman. Dir. Michele Midori Fillion. Hurry Up Sister Productions, 2011. Film.

Part II: Soldiers & Civilians
September 11-30, 2016
• September 13: Visit from Lisa Powers, Theatre Director, Tampa Bay Telling Project: art therapist who specializes in working with veterans
Sources:

Part III: War in the Media
October 1- 22, 2016
• October 21: Undergraduate discussion

Sources:

Part IV: Brothers in Arms
October 23 – November 12
• November 11: Undergraduate discussion

Sources:

Part V: Coming Home
November 13 – December 7
• December 2: Undergraduate discussion

Sources:
Syllabi – Discussion Groups

The discussion groups will be held in the evenings on weekdays and in the early afternoon on weekends. All material for the discussion groups will be made available to participants prior to the meetings on the CES website under a separate heading entitled “NEH Dialogues on the Experiences of War.” For individuals unable to access the materials online or who would prefer hard copies, we will provide course packs containing all necessary material that will either mailed to the participants or available for pick up.

In addition to the humanities resources assigned for each session, a discussion guide with possible discussion questions and a short summary detailing each war will be made available.

Women & War
Monday, February 20th, 2017 – George Washington’s Birthday

• Yugoslavian Civil War study guide

Soldiers & Civilians
Thursday, April 13th, 2017

• Afghanistan and World War II study guide

War in the Media
Wednesday, June 14th, 2017 – Flag Day

• Crimean War study guide
• "Fenton Crimean War Photographs." Prints & Photographs Online Catalog. Library of Congress.

**Brothers in Arms**  
**Monday, September 11th, 2017 – 9/11 Memorial Day**

• World War One study guide  

**Coming Home**  
**Sunday, November 12th, 2017 – Day after Veterans Day**