



# Editor's Introduction

MARIANA GROHOWSKI 

COLLECTION:  
CONVERSATIONS IN  
VETERANS STUDIES

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## ABSTRACT

An introduction, by the editor, announcing the special collection “Conversations in Veterans Studies.”

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One of the reasons I created the *Journal of Veterans Studies* in 2016 was to support and sustain community. For some, this may seem like an odd reason to create a journal. For others familiar with Kenneth Burke (1941), they might recall his “parlor” metaphor used to incite how ideas are formed and understand my rationale. To paraphrase Burke, ideas are formed as part of an “interminable,” “unending conversation” (p. 111) that started long before we were tuned in and will continue without us. What may be Burke’s most famous words (from this essay) include, “You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar” (p. 110).

The conversation that began the journal (in 2015–2016), which I explained recently in a *podcast*, has inevitably changed, but more importantly, the conversation continues and the community still exists. In 2021, the conversation elicited that the community needed to connect beyond the pages of the journal. Though we were less isolated from our local communities in 2021 with the lifting of certain lockdown procedures brought on by the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the veterans studies academic community was still separated and reeling from the necessary cancelation of the 2020 Veterans in Society Conference. Thus, key conference stakeholders developed an opportunity to safely connect at a much-needed online synchronous symposia. Corrine Hinton suggested the fitting title of “Conversations in Veterans Studies,” signaling directly and simply that the community needed connection.

In May, 100 participants attended the opening remarks, keynote presentation. Anyone can watch the *opening remarks and keynote*, but only Veterans Studies Association members can watch the breakouts. (You can become a member by visiting the *association’s website*.) At the event, a call for papers was issued for a special collection in the *Journal of Veterans Studies*. The call was another way to create and engage the veterans studies community in conversation by offering an extension to that conversation and a method of community engagement. The call asked for short, argumentative, video or written submissions addressing the most common conversations in veterans studies, conversations the community should be having, and conversations that have been overemphasized by the community and/or may now be outdated. In short, an invitation for authors to “add [their] oar” (Burke, 1941, p. 110) to the conversation.

The articles submitted and selected for the special collection, presented here, create new and necessary conversations in veterans studies regarding veteran health care, and contribute to existing conversations on identity and representation. The contributing authors and I hope readers will see our effort to intellectually support and sustain the veterans studies community. May the authors’ ideas encourage you to form new or rekindle old connections—be they intellectual or social. Truly, may this special collection foster reconnection—to both community and to your own curiosity and creativity. May this work inspire and compel you to find ways to contribute to the veterans studies community (e.g., submitting an article, becoming a reviewer or copyeditor, promoting the journal, financially supporting the journal or the Veterans Studies Association).

With our increased reliance on digital means during the pandemic, the journal is more important than ever in continuing conversations about veterans studies. And upon realizing the responsibility I hold as editor in keeping that conversation and community going, I am humbled and grateful to keep the “parlor” open (Burke, 1941, p. 110). I only ask that you join me from time to time by “adding your oar” (Burke, 1941, p. 110).

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author is the founder and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Veterans Studies* and is president (and co-founder) of the Veterans Studies Association.

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