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Veterans’ Writing Group

**Writing assignment #1:**
Part 1: Make a vocabulary list, defining some of the words and phrases you used exclusively in the military. Try to come with at least 10 words/phrases.

Part 2: Review your list and choose one word/phrase as the starting point for a story you want to tell. You could contemplate your first encounter with the term, reflect on another memory involving the use/misuse/abuse of this word/phrase, or simply let the word/phrase act as a memory trigger, and write whatever comes.

**Writing Assignment #2: Six Word Memoir**

Write a six word memoir. For more on what a six word memoir is, see the attached overview about what it is, how this exercise has spread across the Internet. If you want, you can focus your six word memoir on your military experiences or you can broaden to include the whole of your life. You decide.

You can also view tweeted six word memoirs at [http://www.smithmag.net](http://www.smithmag.net) and send in yours.

Feel free to write different versions of your six word memoir. Choose the one you like the best, bring it next month to our meeting, and share it. From there, make a list of ideas about how your six word memoir might shape future writing you do.


“Legend has it that Hemingway was once challenged to write a story in only six words. His response? “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.” In November 2006, SMITH Magazine re-ignited the *recountre* by asking our readers for their own Six-Word Memoirs. They sent in short life stories in droves, from the bittersweet (“Cursed with cancer, blessed with friends’) and poignant (“I still make coffee for two”) to the inspirational (“Business school? Bah! Pop music? Hurrah”) and hilarious (“I like big butts, can’t lie”).

Since then, Six-Word Memoir project has become a global phenomenon and a bestselling book series. Six-Word Memoirs have been featured in hundreds of media outlets from NPR to *The New Yorker*, covered on tens of thousands of blogs, and, as of Summer 2010, can be found inside 1 million Honest Tea bottle caps.

Hundreds of thousands of people have shared their own short life story at smithmag.net, as well as in classrooms, churches, and at live Six-Word “slams” across the world. The
Six-Word Memoir exemplifies the best of SMITH Magazine’s storytelling mission: populist, participatory, inspirational, and addictive. From speed dating to parlor games, to conferences and staff retreats, Six-Word Memoirs have become a powerful tool to inspire conversation around a big idea, and a simple way for individuals to break the ice.

Anticipating the microblogging explosion, SMITH originally launched Six-Word Memoirs in November 2006 as a simple online challenge asking: “Can you tell your life story in six words?”

In a partnership with Twitter (among the company’s first outside projects), SMITH’s followers were sent one six-word story a day. Within weeks, the blogosphere was buzzing about the challenge. The rest is history…

For some six word memoirs:


*Six-Word Memoirs on Love & Heartbreak*

*Six-Word Memoirs by Teens* (Sept. 2009)


There is a link for six word memoirs about war for those coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, see http://www.smithmag.net/iava Here are a few: on the website:

Folded Flag, he’s finally at peace.

I’d kill for peace this year.

The battlefield is inside my head.

ONE war ended, many more continue.

Why are undeclared wars never won?