Syracuse Veterans’ Writing Group, July 2013

Announcements:

• Recap Cazenovia Counterpoint reading

• Opportunity to submit work to The Soldier’s Pen, a local literary art exhibit in Shippensburg, PA, headed up by Beck Metzbower, scheduled to run from Sept. 1-13. The exhibit will showcase literary works of current, former, and deceased military men and women. Metzbower is accepting all forms of literary writing: poems, short stories, personal accounts, letters, etc.

***Eileen will be accepting submissions from members of our group and then forwarding the pool of submissions collectively. Please submit work by Aug. 15.***

• Aug. 14: reading and Q&A session at Ft. Drum with active duty soldiers who are interested in joining a writing group on the base

Writing Prompts:

1. Write about the ways that military service altered your body and physical conditioning. Think about your transition into the military—boot camp, drills, bad food, and daily exercise regimes. Think about the weight of the “things you carried” and how that changed your body, the particular aches and irritations. Think about your feet, how they blistered and calloused, toenails you lost, the threat of trench foot, etc. Think about times when your body was exposed to harsh weather and climate conditions, what that felt like, and how it took a toll on you. Try to recall one time in particular when your body was challenged to its limit. How were you changed by the experience, both physically and mentally, and what significance does this memory have for you now?

2. Military Timelines
   Make a timeline of your military service. Plot out the day you were recruited or drafted, the day you were discharged, and other important milestones along the way. Mark off major events, encounters, battles, promotions, relocations, etc., and any other occurrences that changed your lived experience or perception of the military. Think about non-traditional milestones as well: new arrivals of people that were to become friends or adversaries, changes in policy/procedure that altered the substance of your days, an argument or other memorable encounter, significant birthdays/holidays, etc. We’ll start this exercise together as a group, and share some of the items that you mark on your timeline. Between now and next month, fill in the gaps in your timeline and begin thinking about which milestones you might like to write about. If you wish, you might transcribe your timeline onto a piece of poster board or larger paper. Try doing a freewrite on one or more of the milestones on your timeline, and then see if you can turn your freewrite into a longer essay.