

# Delve Deeper into *Of Men and War*

A film by Laurent Bécue-Renard

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Penny L. Talbert, MLIS and Rebecca Lawrence of Ephrata Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Of Men and War*.

*The warriors in **Of Men and War** have come home, but their minds remain on the battlefield. Veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, consumed by anger and traumatic memories long after their return, often resort to drugs or suicide to end their suffering. But at The Pathway Home in California, a first-of-its-kind PTSD treatment center, soldiers resolve to stop the damage. Their therapist helps them forge meaning from their trauma. Over five years, the film follows the men and their families on their grueling paths to recovery as they attempt to make peace with their pasts, their loved ones and themselves.*

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## ADULT NONFICTION

**Bannerman, Stacy.** *Homefront 911: How Families of Veterans are Wounded by Our Wars.* New York: Arcade Publishing, 2015. Expanding upon her *Homefront 911* performance outside of the U.S. Capitol, Bannerman combines her personal experience with narratives from other military families to describe the varied, tumultuous legacy of war.

**Bouvard, Marguerite Guzman.** *The Invisible Wounds of War: Coming Home From Iraq and Afghanistan.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2012. Bouvard evokes and recognizes the societal, psychological and spiritual wounds of war through emotional detail. Graphic narratives of veterans' struggle to adapt to civilian life following the Afghanistan and Iraq wars are presented to reveal the wounds once not visible within civilian society.

**Carroll, Andrew.** *Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families.* New York: Random House, 2006. From riveting combat accounts to profound reflections on warfare and the pride troops feel for one another, *Operation Homecoming* offers an unflinching and intensely revealing look into the lives of extraordinary men and women. Their words represent the stories that have yet to be told and the voices that have yet to be heard.

**Castner, Brian.** *The Long Walk: A Story of War and The Life That Follows.* New York: Doubleday, 2013. Brian Castner served three tours of duty in the Middle East, two of them in Iraq as the head of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit. Whenever IEDs were discovered, he and his men would lead the way in either disarming the deadly devices or searching through rubble and remains for clues to the bomb-makers' identities. When Brian returned stateside to his wife and family, he entered an equally inexorable struggle against the enemy within, which he comes to call the "Crazy."

**Finkel, David.** *Thank You for Your Service.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2013. By immersing readers into the daily lives of soldiers and their families, Finkel shows how veterans who suffer from psychological and physical ailments struggle to adjust to home life. His characters often view home as more disorienting than war itself, and their stories reveal the ugly reality of war's aftermath on communities.

**Finley, Erin P.** *Fields of Combat: Understanding PTSD Among Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.* Ithaca: ILR Press, 2011. Rooted in an ethnographic approach, Finley shares experiences of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, their emerging and available

treatment options, and the debate over compensation and quality of care Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans receive.

**Tick, Edward.** *War and the Soul: Healing our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.* Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books, 2005. Presenting the case that PTSD is a disorder of the identity and soul, a case of moral injury, psychotherapist Tick shares the unending journeys of emotional holistic healing from war trauma. The book binds historical and psychological context including Western and non-Western warrior traditions to provide understanding for healing today's wounded soul.

**Williams, Kayla.** *Plenty of Time When We Get Home: Love and Recovery in the Aftermath of War.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2014. When SPC Kayla Williams and SGT Brian McGough met at a mountain outpost in Iraq in 2003, only their verbal sparring could have betrayed a hint of attraction. Neither could have predicted the sequence of events that would shape their lives. Lacking essential support for returning veterans from the military and the VA, Kayla and Brian suffered through posttraumatic stress, amplified by his violent mood swings, her struggles to reintegrate into a country still oblivious to women veterans, and what seemed the callous, consumerist indifference of civilian society at large.

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## ADULT FICTION

**Fallon, Siobhan.** *You Know When The Men Are Gone* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2011. There is an army of women waiting for their men to return in Fort Hood, Texas. Through a series of loosely interconnected stories, Siobhan Fallon takes readers onto the base, inside the homes, into the marriages and families—intimate places not seen in



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newspaper articles or politicians' speeches.

**Goolsby, Jesse. *I'd Walk With My Friends If I Could Find Them*. Boston:**

**Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.** In this powerful debut novel, three American soldiers haunted by their actions in Afghanistan search for absolution and human connection in family and civilian life.

**O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.** Vietnam War veteran Tim O'Brien blurs the lines between non-fiction and fiction accounts of infantrymen through the physical and abstract jungles of Vietnam. By addressing issues like the pressure to adhere to community standards of duty and patriotism to the loss of innocence, O'Brien's novel is a tool for understanding the historical tensions and the legacy of the Vietnam era.

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## NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Andrews, Beth, and Katherine Kirkland. *Why Are You So Scared?: A Child's Book About Parents With PTSD*. Washington, D.C.; Magination Press, 2012.**

Children that have a parent with post-traumatic stress disorder can often feel confused, scared, or helpless. *Why Are You So Scared?* explains the disorder and its symptoms in nonthreatening, child-friendly language and is full of questions and exercises that children and parents can work through together.

**Ellis, Deborah. *Off To War: Voices of Soldiers' Children*. Toronto; Berkeley: Groundwood Books, 2008.**

Confusion, resistance, acceptance, and loyalty are some of the many feelings and experiences of the youngest members of military families of the Afghanistan and Iraq war. Ellis' collection of interviews with children in the United

States and Canada are paired with a glossary and list of resources to understand the lives of children with parents in active military conflicts.

**Maxwell, Shannon. *Big Boss Brain: Learning About Traumatic Brain Injuries*. Washington, D.C.; Magination Press, 2012.** By exposing the effects of traumatic brain injury through a child's perspective, Maxwell guides readers through a consideration of the impact of traumatic brain injury on families and loved ones. *Big Boss Brain* provides children with an accessible way of understanding the often invisible effects of the injury.

**Sherman, Michelle D. and DeAnne M. *Finding My Way: A Teen's Guide to Living With A Parent Who Has Experienced Trauma*. Woodbury, MN: Seeds of Hope Books, 2005.** This roadmap for teen readers provides definitions, coping strategies, and opportunities for readers to identify and understand their own varied emotions as they live with parents that struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder. Notes for professionals and caregivers are provided.

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## FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Anderson, Laurie Halse. *The Impossible Knife of Memory*. New York: Viking, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA), 2014.** A high school senior named Hailey struggles with everyday life with her father, an Afghanistan and Iraq war veteran. Anderson confronts the unique experiences teens face with parents that struggle with PTSD in this novel of teen fragility, love, graphic memory and search for stability.

**Kastle, Seth, and Julia Kastle. *Why Is Mom So Mad?: A Book About PTSD and Military Families*. Hays, Kansas: Tall Tale Press, 2015.** This picture book

illustrates one child's relationship with her mother who has returned from war and is struggling to post-traumatic stress disorder. It provides an accessible way for children to understand their loved ones' suffering while also representing the struggles of women veterans.

**Reinhardt, Dana. *The Things a Brother Knows*. New York: Wendy Lamb Books, 2010.** A middle class Israeli-American family struggles with their identity after the eldest son Boaz returns from a war in the Middle East. Levi, the youngest brother, narrates a story of reconciliation, truth and loyalty as he is challenged to make sense of their lives.

**Walters, Eric. *Wounded*. Pearson, Can.; Penguin Canada, 2010.** Marcus and his sister are counting down the days until their father comes home from Afghanistan. When the big day arrives, the family is overcome by happiness and relief that he is safe, but as the days pass Marcus begins to feel that there is something different about his father. Barely sleeping, obsessed with news from Afghanistan, and overly aggressive, his dad refuses to seek counseling. Marcus knows post-traumatic stress disorder affects many soldiers, and he needs to get his dad some help before it is too late.

**Williams, Suzanne. *Bull Rider*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2009.** Cam O'Mara makes a bet with his eldest brother, an Iraq war veteran, to accept the family tradition of bull riding if his brother will commit to recover from his traumatic brain injury and confront his war related trauma. Family identity, hardship, healing and personal commitment generated by Cam's brother's experiences of war are explored in Williams' first work of fiction.

