



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**
BONUS Episode: Memorial Day Episode

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Participants:

Trevor Parry-Giles
Steve Wilson
William Howe
Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas

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Trevor Parry-Giles:

Welcome to *Communication Matters, the NCA Podcast*. I'm Trevor Parry-Giles, the Executive Director of the National Communication Association. The National Communication Association is the preeminent scholarly association devoted to the study and teaching of communication. Founded in 1914, NCA is a thriving group of thousands from across the nation and around the world who are committed to a collective mission to advance communication as an academic discipline. In keeping with NCA's mission to advance the discipline of communication, NCA has developed this podcast series to expand the reach of our member scholars' work and perspectives.

Introduction:

This is *Communication Matters, The NCA Podcast*.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

Welcome again to *Communication Matters, The NCA Podcast*. In this Memorial Day bonus episode of *Communication Matters*, I'm speaking with Steve Wilson, professor in the Department of Communication at the University of South Florida, Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas, associate professor of communication at Georgia Southern University and William Howe, a recent doctoral graduate of the Department of Communication at the University of Oklahoma and an incoming assistant professor at the University of Kentucky. On today's episode of *Communication Matters*, will be discussing NCA's newest division, The Communication and Military Division.

But before we get started, I'd like to share a little bit more about today's guests, In addition to working at USF, Professor Wilson is also affiliated with the Military Family Research Institute at Purdue University and his military communication research focuses on family communication related to seeking help for mental health issues, deployment and reintegration and other challenges. Professor Howe served as a combat medic in the U.S. Army during Operation Iraqi Freedom and researches organizational and intercultural communication and has examined military veterans' communication in classroom contexts. And Professor Desnoyers-Colas is a retired U.S. Air Force Major that researches African Americans in the military and is the author



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of *Marching as to War: Personal Narratives of African-American Women's Experiences in the Gulf Wars*. Welcome everybody to Communication Matters. I'm really glad you could join me today.

William Howe:

Thank you. Good to be here.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

I want to start our conversation with the discussion of this new division, the new Communication and Military Division at NCA. Your proposal for the division highlighted the numerous ways that communication scholars work on military connected projects such as rhetoric, critical cultural studies, family communication, elsewhere across the discipline. You all have different areas of focus as well and I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about the variety of research areas covered by this new and exciting division for NCA's research mission.

Steve Wilson:

I can start and take a crack at that. And then let Liz and William jump in. So, really the division, the purpose of the division is to promote research, teaching activities and community engagement around messages. So, highlighting and critiquing messages and discourses within and about the military and that's a broad tent. So, there is a lot of work currently going on within various parts of NCA that fits that mission and that's I think one of the exciting parts of the division is that it is bringing together people from a wide variety of perspectives in terms of meta theory and method and it's connecting people that have shared interests that didn't necessarily know each other. I was thinking about it in preparing for this that I did not know Liz or William prior to initiating kind of the groundwork for this and I've met lots of people across the association that have some shared interests. And so, that's again I think one of the things that represents a potential strength of the division.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

Is there a reason why you think the division might be particularly important right now?

Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas:

I do. I think that the division is especially important because I think one of the basic components people fail to realize is the things that we study, we study people who are like us. We study particularly when we're looking at the health issue of the pandemic, our first-line responders are a lot of military people who are used to going out and doing humanitarian missions and working in hospitals and doing infectious disease research like they've done with Gulf War illness and Agent Orange and all the rest of these things. So, this is an area that is especially important to have the military in. And also too, the changes that we see in the military with the recent allowing women to be a part of combat. Women can go into combat zones. Women can serve in combat. We've had our first woman who passed the Seal training. It's no longer just Demi Moore and her Seals training in the movie. We actually have had women do that, Special Forces Rangers. So, we have a broader expanse of the things that we do in our communities. We find more and more women in particular and people of color doing them in the military. And so, I think it's an exciting time to be a part of what we're doing.



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Trevor Parry-Giles:

The reference to Demi Moore was for a movie called I think GI Jane.

Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas:

Right. It was GI Jane and I mention it because it was on TV. I saw it a couple of weeks ago and usually during this month because this is Military Appreciation Month, they bring out movies like that. So, when I first saw it, it was absolutely ridiculous thinking the prospect of women actually going through that particular type of training. Now I realize that women have actually gone through that training and will be going through that training. So, yeah.

William Howe:

I just think that, as you mentioned with my research, sometimes there's an overlap between organizational communication and intercultural communication and maybe it's not organizational enough to be in the organizational division or intercultural enough to be in the intercultural division and I think a lot of us studying the military, we see these connections in our work. And so, I think that that's another reason, a practical reason that this division makes sense right now is not only does it connect scholars from all these different areas, but it also provides another avenue for this research to be presented.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

Well, along those same lines, I'm wondering if you might have some thoughts about how communication in particular is unique. So, there are a lot of fields that might discuss or research dimensions of military life, military service. I could envision studies in sociology, in psychology, in American studies and the like. What's the unique communication perspective to understanding the military and service in the military in particular?

William Howe:

Well, I think for me I went through basic training back in 2007 and it was amazing to me that drill sergeants now cannot use physical violence or any sort of—all they can use is communication to take an individual that's 18 to 23 years old and make them into somebody that's willing to sacrifice themselves on behalf of the team. So, the military is grounded in communication. That's how your identity is formed is through communication. And so, I've been using recently the communication theory of identity and I think that that really works well for military because military training is based in communication and also one of the pillars of military combat training is to shoot, move and then communicate. So, I think communication scholars can investigate some of the discussions that are had not only within the military context, also in between veterans after they leave and also portrayals about the military and what those portrayals in the media whether mass or consumer media say about military life and how that builds images of the military in the minds of the American people.

Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas:

I would add this really quickly is there's two big areas right now. I was a public affairs officer when I was in the military. So, all of the things that we do as scholars and we learn as scholars as far as public speaking, dealing with different cultures, a lot of that research has come from what the military has learned and how we put it back in. We have a lot of military scholars that put a lot of



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that communication information back into academia. In fact, that's how I actually got interested in becoming a scholar because of some of the things we do and how we impact our society scholarly as well as professionally as well as personally. But one really big thing right now is health communication and I said that earlier. But as the field of and our discipline as health communication has developed, so has the talking about the different things in health. Now we're talking more about Gulf War illness for both the Gulf Wars. Now we're talking more about how serving in the military impacts women. Some of the studies that we did showed us that the uniforms that women were wearing, for example, were designed for men. And so, they had to redesign uniforms for female pilots, battle dress uniforms had to be reconfigured and designed a certain way because they couldn't just be how they had been for men. So, just some of the practical things as far as scholarship, we've been able to use in the military and will be some great research I think that will come out of those who are going to be discussing military issues.

Steve Wilson:

Going to add to both what William and Liz said and in terms of your last two questions, why now and why communication, another thing that I've been thinking a lot about in recent years, there has spent a lot of writing in the last decade about a growing military-civilian divide and that comes from a variety of sources. I mean the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq are the first time that we as a country have fought a two-front war with an all-volunteer force. And that's changed the relationships that people have with the military in some way. So, there are fewer and fewer people, especially younger people, that have immediate family connections to the military. The Pew Center did a poll on this issue and they defined immediate family connections as a spouse, a parent, a sibling or a child that's served. And people that are 50 and older, 75% of those people in that age cohort, they have an immediate family connection to the military. People in their 20s and early 30s, it's about a third.

So, what that has done is that means that most of where people are getting their information about the military for a large segment of the younger parts of the U.S. public is the media. And there's good information there but there's lots of misrepresentation there too. And so, I think that's created a sense among a lot of service members and veterans that they know that the public appreciates their service but they don't think that the public understands what the burdens of serving have been, how a small percentage of the U.S. public, less than 1% of the public has served in these conflicts which again is different than prior large conflicts. So, there's a sense of the public doesn't understand. They have a lot of misperceptions. Everybody who served must have PTSD. That's a common one. There's those issues. And so, I think communication is being uniquely situated to help with some of this to try to figure out how do you create more productive conversations between military and civilian communities. People will say thank you for your service and they don't know what to say beyond that. So, how do you create situations where people who are military connected and who are not can have productive conversations around a lot of the issues that William and Liz have talked about.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

I'm struck as you all spoke about the ways in which talking about communication in the military is important, that in a way you're sort of unique as a division—I'm hard-pressed to think of another one—where you really do cross cut across a whole range of the NCA sort of domains or the



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subfields. Right? So, there's intercultural, there's board comm, there's health comm, there's political comm, rhetoric, media. All of this is working within this particular context and it seems to me that that's really interesting. The applied, the public affairs and the sort of therapeutic I guess, applied dimensions of communication here is also fascinating. I'm hard pressed to think of another division at NCA that is similarly focused on particular contexts. That's interesting. I think really speaks for some interesting avenues for investigating communication in the future. Do you anticipate any kind of impact I guess on communication more broadly emanating from this study of communication in the military?

Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas:

I've been thinking a lot about again the new role that women in general have on our discipline and how we communicate and what we communicate. It's interesting. I'm in several veterans groups and invariably you will have female veterans and actually women who are on active duty talk about the fact that people don't understand their role or will automatically assume that they can't be in the military because they're a woman or, for example, if they go to a military appreciation dinner, they'll say thank you for your service to the man when it's actually the woman who's actually the one who has served. So, I think there's a wide belief that women, their service is either not valued or it's not recognized. So, I see a lot more articles talking about the uniqueness of roles that women serve in but also the fact that they do serve. When I went into the military in 1980, only 5% of the Air Force was female. By the time I got out in 1995, it was 11%. I think it's like about 14%. Now so that's still not really a significant number of people if you really think about it. But the interesting thing about that is I have been the chair of the feminist women studies division. I'm currently the chair of the women's caucus and still I find myself in conversations with people when I go to conferences about oh, you really have women who do this? You really have women who do that? And it's still a fascinating thing. And when I go out to speak to people, it's still the same thing. There's still this fascination and a lack of knowledge about what women do. It's getting better but I think the more scholarship that's out there and we take our scholarship and put it out into the general community, I think that we'll have a lot more information about women out there. You look at our discipline, we have a lot of movement in our discipline. Look at our classrooms. I'm getting more and more female veterans in my classroom. So, what are some of the things I'm teaching these scholars as they go out and they go out and teach in the communities. So, I'm kind of excited about that aspect.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

Well, we do know that about two-thirds of the individuals receiving communication doctorates are women. I think that the sex and gender dimension to all of this is fascinating. That is one impact I can envision from communication and military having us rethink how we understand within a particular context communication as it relates to gender and communication as it relates to sex and sexual orientation and you name it. Are there other areas where I think a focus on the military, where you think it might have a real impact on communication research? Is there something particular about military communication or the communication in the military that could more broadly influence how we see communication research more generally?

William Howe:



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Yeah. So, quickly, I think the applied aspects of communication and the military, focusing on that is very important to note as well. And so, first one I'm thinking of is psychologists have done a great job looking at post-traumatic stress and anxiety and depression and things maybe after the fact. But I think from a communication perspective, there may be a way—and actually this is what my dissertation is about—to look at communication and how people are communicating and possibly predict whether or not they're going to be able to communicate with civilians when they get out of the military and whether they're going to be able to reintegrate. And if we can determine who might be most at risk of unsuccessful reintegration, then we could possibly intervene earlier before they have the more extreme issues of post-traumatic stress and anxiety and depression. So, that's one applied. The second applied issue that I see is being able to help military learners in the classroom and bringing awareness to student veterans. And student veterans are on the rise with how many are using their GI Bill benefits and understanding what not to say and what to say to student veterans in the classroom I think helps as well. But to your question about overall, I think that the moralization of the military and the fact that the military is so based in values and morality could help us understand the communication. We measure trade a lot, we measure state a lot but perhaps looking at the ethical and moral dimensions of communication could help us understand communication as a whole more deeply. And I think the military is an extreme case of that where you have a group that's been very value inculcated.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

If you could expand a little bit more on the impact that your service as a combat medic for three years and all of that influences that classroom piece that you talked about, the ways by which your experiences can help all of us think about better classroom practices, more classroom sensitivity, greater instructional practices that could aid these veterans who we find amongst our student body?

William Howe:

Yeah. Sure. So, like you mentioned, I was a combat medic, but I was attached to a cavalry scout unit. So, I was the only medic with all these cavalry scouts kind of on the frontlines of Iraq, building bases, building forts. So, that context makes it a little bit different for me maybe that I was more embedded and more entrenched than others may have been especially those that haven't deployed. And so, my experience may be different but when I came back, I found myself—I should also say I was at Fort Hood during the Fort Hood shooting and all that. So, I left the military in April after that and I was actually medically retired. And I started at TCU in August, Texas Christian University in August of 2010 and I went to school basically because the GI Bill is going to pay me to go to school. So, it was like well, that's a good reason. But I was sitting in the back of the classroom with my back to the wall and it was because of post-traumatic stress and things like this. I didn't want people behind me. I didn't like to hear people talking and I wanted to focus on the professor. But then I had a professor kind of take me aside and say you're doing really well but why do you sit in the back and seem disinterested. And I was like I'm not disinterested just because I'm sitting in the back of the classroom. I just don't like people behind me. So, I think maybe veterans, if you think about it—and again I'm using myself here but I'm not speaking for everybody; I'm speaking just for myself—that if they saw me in the back of the class maybe with my arms folded, thinking I'm not paying attention when really I am, I'm just hyper focused, you



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have that stigma triggers for other students and you put that on veterans when veterans may have a different experience.

And then also thinking about veterans in the classroom are very respectful of authority for the most part and when I was in class, I never spoke while the teacher was speaking and I wasn't going to talk with my classmate or text or email or get on Facebook or any like this. And when I saw students do that, it really made me upset with the students and even if I didn't say anything—we talk about this in that piece that you're referencing—even though I didn't say anything, it built to a point and for some veterans it builds the point that they have this emotional outburst and they just turn around and finally say would you please just be quiet to use nice words so I can hear the teacher talking. And that's what the student sees is this explosion, not that it was simmering for a whole semester under the surface. So, I think that that's one way that I can help explain the classroom and my knowledge that you're supposed to respect authority and all of this, that maybe is not as, as Steve mentioned, is along those military-civilian divides that we see just different value structures that people in the military may carry into the classroom.

Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas:

That's funny because as a retired military officer, I'm third generation military, and my students can tell that I still keep with me some of the values and the training that I had as a military person when I walk into my classroom, maybe the way I set up my syllabus, getting students to pay attention to me and engaging with my students. So, I find myself partly doing what you're saying resonating with those veterans that I know who have either recently been deployed. Some of my active-duty people because I'm near Fort Stewart, Georgia which is I think the largest army installation on the East Coast, they'll be deployed four or five or six times some of them. And just watching them in the classroom, making comfortable spaces for them in the classroom and understanding and letting them understand it's okay for them to bring their dogs to class or to be able to sit in the back of the class or a lot of times I might make them leader of a group because I know that they have natural organizational skills to be able to do that. But also, as a professor, I'm very mindful of the skills that I use as a retired military woman. When I first got out of the military, I had the hardest time figuring out what the heck I should wear for a whole year, just trying to figure out what type of clothes to wear because you have your uniforms and all that. But what should I wear? How should I dress? Talking about some of your military experiences when people would say well, tell me what it was like when you were in the military. Like do you really want to know that I was on a humanitarian mission in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and almost got killed? I mean what type of stuff do you talk about with your students and with your colleagues so that they actually can understand the organizational structure of the military?

Now one more small thing. I will say this, when the military has to make big societal changes, they get it right. When the military decided that they had to back in 1972, that they had to deal with racism and those types of things and equality and when they set up under the auspices of the President this is how we're going to treat military people. We're going to have equality in the military. We're going to have it. Boom. They set up a whole system to be able to do it and the military is probably lauded for having one of the best systems as far as dealing with sexism, racism and all the rest of that. When we had same-sex marriage in the military, when they had to make that decision back I believe in 2017. When the President said we're going to do this, DoD said



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okay, here's how we're going to do it. Now they're doing it that way and there are laws and there are rules and there are things that they have to do that while other segments in society workplace are still struggling with that, the military says the law says you have to do A, B, C and D and that's exactly what we're going to do. So, those are two extra things that I think that the military has done well.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

I'm so glad that you and William both have reflected on the perceptions I guess of both student veterans but also colleagues and the like who may have served in the military. Because from my perspective at NCA, I've always hoped that your division in particular would go a long way and I think you've already done that to a large degree to expand the perceptions of those of us who did not serve in the military both as it affects our research and communication understanding generally but also our relationships with our students and our colleagues. And I think that could be really important. Steve, some of your research deals with deployment and reintegration. I'm wondering how family support works to shape veterans and as they seek behavioral healthcare on a sort of broader societal level outside of the classroom and the like, what have you learned? What have you discovered about family communication and its relationships to communication in the military?

Steve Wilson:

Yeah. So, I think this also goes back to maybe somewhat comm folks bring to this to some extent is that we haven't—I'm not an expert in PTSD or mental health issues per se—but what I did see happening through personal experience and then through also the research that we've done is that some of the reintegration issues that William and Liz have talked about, they become issues that impact not just service members or veterans but their families. And so, that plays out in a number of ways. So, there are several things I was going to say here. One again is just in terms of making sure to recognize an important issue while not reinforcing stereotypes is. The best data we have is maybe 20% to 25% of post-9/11 veterans have tested positive at some point or screened positive for PTS symptoms and that means 75% haven't. So, it's an issue in terms of it's a significant number of service members and veterans but it's by no means the majority. It's a range of issues. So, it's mental health but it's not just mental health. It's often just being apart for 12 months—and William can probably talk about this—in a very different environment than your spouse is in, right? And then suddenly coming back together, just getting the routines back or recreating new routines, that often is a challenge for those first few months. There are career issues both with—so, again, you have to decide at various points of time am I going to stay in, am I going to get out, are we going to be moved. Spouses often have career issues. So, all this sort of comes into a mix that sometimes can get fairly stressful.

So, this work we've done has been trying to understand the dynamics of those conversations, what makes this a challenging topic for spouses or parents, for example, to talk about with service members or veterans if they have some concerns about those sorts of reintegration issues or post-deployment adjustment sorts of issues. So, we've done some work. For example, I think my favorite piece is a piece we have in health comm where we look at some of the dilemmas about bringing this up. So, often the conversation is something like I'm a little worried because you're not acting in some ways like you acted before. So, like what I'm



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seeing here, I'm not sure if it's entirely normal but if somebody's been to a very different place and had a set of experiences that you've had, it would be entirely normal for that to take some time to readjust to this very different environment that you're now back into, right? So, there's this tension between simultaneously communicating you're normal and you're not normal and that's a hard one for families to navigate sometimes. And we've also learned some I think good things about what more or less helpful ways of trying to navigate those tensions and this comes from interviews and surveys with veterans as well as the spouses and parents. So, things like when to talk.

So, there's a fine line between expressing concerns and being perceived as nagging and what does that look like. How to talk so making sure that you're expressing appreciation, approval. Respecting autonomy, saying look, I have these concerns but ultimately you're the one that has to decide what to do. If you were to seek help and you're not committed to it, you're not going to stick with it. It's ultimately you have to make this choice and I will support what you do, what your choices are. So, that's really important. How to frame it. There's a huge literature on framing across various parts of our field. And so, framing it, for example, is something that we might do as a couple or a family as opposed to something I'm trying to get you to do can make a difference because one's an invitation in a sense and another one is that attempt to persuade or control or at least in that way even though maybe I'm ultimately trying to get to the same place. And how to reach out to the larger network. So, sometimes that can just be talking with other military connected people about like how have you been, what are seeing around this or what resources are out there or what advice do you have for me or sometimes it's getting military peers to talk to that service member or veteran because they see a shared bond and may be more or less likely to listen to them.

So, maybe one other point I'll say is that that project I described came out of our conference, an interdisciplinary conference I went to where I saw a presentation by research scientists at the U UPenn VA and he was talking about a program that he was building out at that point called Coaching into Care. And this was a support service, a telephone support service that family members could call if they had tried to broach this issue and the conversation had not gone well. And I talked with him afterwards about like how much do you know about what these conversations actually look like? And he said well, we sort of have one side of it because we do collect some information when people call in so we're beginning to kind of study that. But I thought well, it might help to know a little bit more about what dynamics of those conversations look like and that's something that people in interpersonal and family communication do a lot of. So, that was a chance to buy some expertise and to collaborate back and forth about what we were learning, about what they were doing, about how they were adjusting the telephone support service. That ended up being something that was a national program.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

Wow. That's really interesting. I like the interdisciplinary focus. I think a lot of our best work recognizes the interdisciplinary nature what it is we do. I'm wondering in this time of COVID-19, Memorial Day is going to take on a different dimension and how does that influence how it is you all see Memorial Day, the process of memorializing, the difficulties and the benefits I guess



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that people experience with Memorial Day, the unique perspective of the communication and military division? And Liz and William as veterans, I'm curious your thoughts about the relationships here and the ways in which we communicate memory and memorializing and all of that.

Elizabeth Desnoyers-Colas:

I think for me since I grew up as a third generation of military then, of course, having gone to the military and retired, I've always looked at Memorial Day as we would go out to a military post or base, be a part of a parade. All of our memories were always visual. There were always activities. They were either activities of participation or activities of service. When I was in the military, I used to go out to the community and do speeches. But a lot of the things that we do too we talk about Memorial Day is remember those who have gone on before us and those people who have actually paid a price to keep our country I suppose free in the sense where we don't have to worry about things. We can uphold the oath that we take to uphold and defend the Constitution, all the esoteric abstract things that people talk about during course of the day. But what we do is we take those activities and make them boots on the ground things. We'll go to the Vietnam Memorial and lay our flowers and teddy bears and things. It's a very personal intimate time but it's also a time of good reflection because these people have paid a price. And so, as they have paid the price, then we start thinking about what price they paid.

For African Americans who served in the military, a lot of the research that I do is I look at why African Americans became a part of the military in the first place. A lot of it was to get their freedom. African American women, for example, and men have served in this country in our conflicts since the Revolutionary War. It was always to show that they were part of this country and that they wanted to make sure that everything in this country was okay. Now it's more of a looking at this is what we've done, this is what we're doing. When you say thank you for my service, this is what you're thanking me for. On this particular day, this is what you're thanking me for. You're not just saying it. Let me show you exactly what you're thanking me for. So, the memorization of what we've done since this whole month is Military Appreciation Month, you actually look at the things that people appreciate about us. And so, I feel a little less nervous or a little less kind of weird when people say thank you for your service. In this month I can say on Memorial Day remember, this is what you're thanking us for.

William Howe:

Yeah. I agree with a lot of what's been said. And then also I think in the military, we're hyper aware of the different days that are set aside to honor the different portions of military service members. So, Armed Forces Day is for those that are currently serving, Veterans Day is for those that have served and Memorial Day I think sometimes gets convoluted with Veterans Day for some people. And the combat unit I was in at Ford Hood was very—if somebody told you Happy Memorial Day while you were in service, it was like a curse on your next deployment. But a lot of civilians just don't know. And then just the whole Happy Memorial Day, to me there's nothing happy about it. Like I don't go out and barbecue and I was one when I got out of posting all of the memes of it's Memorial Day, not national barbecue day and all this stuff and I've tried to become instead of just posting that online, trying to have more conversations with people to raise awareness of what Memorial Day actually is. And so, as you brought up, this year with them when



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not being able to go to the big picnics and big barbecues, I'm hoping maybe people will reflect on what Memorial Day actually means and that it's not actually about barbecue and this or that and going out on the lake with friends in the beginning of summer. It's actually about remembering those that have given the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom or for our country.

So, the way I recommend to a lot of people to do that, there's a website called iCasualties.org that actually lists all the service members that have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I tell people click on Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Afghanistan and then you can sort by city, you can sort by a state. You can see who from your immediate area and then it becomes real to you the people that live around me have perished in this war. For instance, on March 11th, there were three service members killed in Iraq, two U.S. forces and one UK force and one of them is actually from Oklahoma about two hours from here. So, if people from my city knew that, it may make it more real that we're still losing service members in Iraq and Afghanistan and they're actually our neighbors or they were before they went over. And so, I think that that helps it make it more personal and when it becomes more personal, then you start to care a little bit more as opposed to just this abstract number of how many people have perished.

Steve Wilson:

Just maybe a quick story in terms of I mentioned that I've met a lot of people while working on this. And, I don't know, more than a year ago, I got an email from a professor at Penn State Mont Alto called David Seitz. He's an associate professor there and he just sent me an email out of the blue and said saw somewhere that you were working on this. Really happy you're doing it. And here's a PDF to my 2018 book that just came out. The book was called *World War I: Mass Death and the Birth of the Modern U.S. Soldier*. And among other things, it looks at the public debate and controversy about the creation of overseas cemeteries at the end of World War I and some of the historical and rhetorical implications of that debate. And again, it struck me about how people from so many areas of the field have something to contribute to this. It's obviously relevant to Memorial Day but it's relevant to the broad reach of the division as well.

Trevor Parry-Giles:

And that's a great place to conclude and to thank you all so much for joining me today on this discussion. I think it's timely, certainly relevant and important both for the future of NCA, the future of the research and the teaching that you all are doing and for the communication discipline more generally. So, thanks again for joining us. And listeners, I hope that you enjoyed this timely Memorial Day discussion about this growing area of research within the communication discipline. And as always, thanks for joining us on *Communication Matters, The NCA Podcast*.

And listeners, I hope you'll tune in for the next episode of *Communication Matters* which features Robert B. Townsend, director of The Humanities Indicators Project and the director of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Washington office. Rob Townsend will discuss the latest humanities indicators data and the humanities departmental survey. So, tune in for an insightful conversation about current trends in the humanities and in the discipline of communication.

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BONUS Episode: Memorial Day Episode

your podcasts to listen in as we discuss emerging scholarship, establish theory and new applications, all exploring just how much communication matters in our classrooms, in our communities and in our world. See you next time.

Conclusion:

Communication Matters is hosted by NCA Executive Director Trevor Parry-Giles and is recorded in our national office in downtown Washington DC. The podcast is recorded and produced by Assistant Director for Digital Strategies Chelsea Bowes with writing support from Director of External Affairs and Publications Wendy Fernando and Content Development Specialist Grace Hébert. Thank you for listening.

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