In Service to the Nation:
Arts and Crafts and the Military

Tara Leigh Tappert, Ph.D.
Copyright © Tara Leigh Tappert, 2012

• Slide #1 – Title Slide

This research on how the U.S. military embraced arts and crafts as service missions for soldiers and veterans has developed from various projects I have worked on for the past twenty years. A contract with a small hospital in Michigan introduced me to the Society for the Arts in Healthcare and to the good work they do using arts in myriad healthcare facilities. At the same time, I also became aware of Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, a DC based visionary alternative health organization that uses the arts to help people on cancer journeys. About two years ago Smith Farm’s director asked me to develop a PowerPoint for their artists in residence on the history of the arts and the military as they were beginning to offer arts programs to the wounded at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Additionally, the research I’ve done
for the craft series sponsored by the Museum of Arts and Design has given me tremendous awareness of the therapeutic and recreational value of craft making. In writing hundreds of biographies on American craft artisans I discovered that many spent time in the military. For some, the impetus for their art career was fueled by their war service. While the focus of this research project is on how arts and crafts have been used by the military since WWI as an occupational therapy tool for rehabilitation and vocational training and since WWII as a form of recreation that encouraged well being and helped soldiers focus and develop useful hand skills, the topic has engaged me so that I have also become involved in art projects developed by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, particularly the Combat Paper Project, about which I will say more later.

I begin with a brief story of a friend of mine whose life and that of her husband may well have been comforted and eased if programs such as I will describe in my presentation were well in place during their lifetimes.

- Slide #2 – Title Slide – An Introduction: Vietnam P.O.W. and Military Wife – U.S.A.F. Captain Edward Alan Brudno (1940-1973) and Deborah (Gitenstein) Brudno (1944-2010)

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Debby Brudno and I were friends. While I knew she was a military widow, I did not know the details of her husband’s life and death. Recently, I had a vivid memory of her, and thought to call her. I found her number, called, and found the line had been disconnected. I then began an internet search and discovered that she had died this past July. Reading her obituary opened the door to a bigger and more poignant story – one that suggests that art making in all its forms has a crucial role in healing.

- Slide #3 -- Remembering Alan and Debby Brudno
  - Alan and Debby Brudno’s wedding
  - Air Force Captain Edward Alan Brudno
In 1965 Debby married Alan Brudno, an MIT graduate in aerospace engineering, who had joined the Air Force to become an astronaut. Pilots like Brudno who were destined for the Space Program needed to log combat hours before returning to Edwards Air Force Base for flight tests. In September, just four months after Debby and Alan were married, Alan left for Vietnam.

- Slide #4 – Remembering Alan and Debby Brudno
  - Fighter Pilot Alan Brudno
  - A potion of Alan Brudno’s 1000 line poem written while a P.O.W. captive
  - P.O.W. Alan Brudno returned to the U.S. on February 12, 1973

In less than two months in Southeast Asia Alan clocked 34 missions, but on his 35th something hit the back of the plane and it went down. For the next 7 ½ years he was held as a P.O.W. He was forced to read prepared statements on Radio Hanoi. He was paraded in front of angry crowds. And he was tortured. Yet despite bouts of depression, mood swings, and an agitated and overwhelmed state of mind, Alan survived the P.O.W. camps. He learned French from a fellow inmate, he designed a dream home right down to the floor joists, and he wrote a 1,000 line poem that he memorized and could fully recite in 40 minutes. The following is one small segment from his poem:

**Being chained to a spot – being tied in a knot –**
**So bent, so crushed, so twisted…**
**In such terrible pain that could drive one insane,**
**Few mortals could long have resisted.**
**Against horrors so chilling, the spirit was willing –**
**But the flesh was too weak to withstand.**
**Was it really a sin for a man to give in?**
**Could I better resist each demand?**
Because of faith in his country, love of his wife and family, and a belief that he had made a sacrifice for something politically significant, Alan Brudno survived until his release on February 12, 1973. Yet the America that he returned to was very different than the one he had left in 1965. His dream of becoming an astronaut has passed him by, anti-war sentiments ruled the day, and the soldiers who had served in Vietnam were often held in low regard. Furthermore, within military culture soldiers with emotional problems as a result of their war service were stigmatized. Alan Brudno needed the best help this country could provide him, but very little was available then. Four months after his hero’s welcome return, he killed himself just one day before his 33rd birthday. All the intuitively creative ways in which Alan used to survive his years as a P.O.W. – learning a new language, writing poetry, designing a dream home – were now used up, and he ended his life to relieve the pain he could no longer escape. The two-line note, written in French, that he left behind, stated “There is no reason for my existence . . . my life is valueless.” Alan Brudno was the first Vietnam P.O.W. to die by his own hand and his death became a wake up call for the armed services with regard to veterans and psychological problems.

- Slide #5 – Remembering Alan and Debby Brudno
  - Robert Brudno has been a tireless advocate for his brother
  - Alan’s letters to Debby are included in this book and video
  - When teacher Michelle Paquet was in high school she wore a P.O.W. bracelet for Alan Brudno

Robert Brudno, who served in the Navy, has been a tireless advocate for his brother’s honor and memory. Video clips of Alan during his captivity are included in the 1987 video, *Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam* and portions of his letters to his wife Debby are included in the companion book. In 2006 Signature Theater in Washington, DC did a play based on the
book called *One Red Flower*. Debby Brundo supported the production. Around that same time, Robert Brudno paid a surprise visit to the classroom of Mt. Morris, MI teacher Michlele Paquet, who had worn a P.O.W. bracelet for Alan when she was in high school. Paquet had told her students about Alan Brudno, had them write letters and poems as a thank you for his war service, and then sent them to Robert Brudno.

- **Slide #6 – Remembering Alan and Debby Brudno**
  - Debby Brudno at the Vietnam Memorial in 2004 when her husband’s name was added to the Wall
  - Alan Brudno is now Burial in Arlington Cemetery
  - Debby and Bob at a Quincy, MA Veterans Day ceremony remembering Alan
  - Joe McCain looks at plaque for Alan Brudno in the North Quincy H.S. where he graduated in 1958

A seven year campaign by both Robert and Debby Brudno to have Alan’s name added to the Vietnam Memorial succeeded in 2004. Thanks to the efforts of his brother, Alan is now buried in Arlington Cemetery. He is also honored in his hometown of Quincy, MA, with a plaque in the North Quincy High School where he graduated in 1958, and on a granite marker in front of City Hall.

- **Slide #7 – Title Slide – The Research Project – Arts and Crafts and the Military for Rehabilitation and Recreation – WWI to the present**

We now begin with an historical introduction to arts and crafts and the military.

- **Slide #8 – Title Slide – Historical Perspective for Rehabilitation**
  - Arts and Crafts Movement and Occupational Therapy
  - World War I
  - Red Cross
  - World War II
  - Vietnam Conflict and Beyond
  - Current Day
This story begins with the Arts and Crafts Movement and the beginnings of the Occupational Therapy profession, and continues to the present day with the incorporation of art therapy as one of the many healing modalities used to treat our wounded warriors today.

Rehabilitation

- Slide #9– Rehabilitation
  - Toy making in a Psychiatric Hospital during the WWI era
  - Weaving gives work for elbow, wrist and forearm, New York Reconstruction Hospital, 1930s
  - Board weaving to strengthen arthritic wrists and fingers

Occupational therapy emerged as a health care profession in the first decades of the 20th century and it blossomed during the First World War. Grounded in Progressive Era and Arts and Crafts Movement social outreach ideals, the notion that engaging a patient’s mind and body quickened convalescence, and the certainty that impaired persons could function in their communities despite disabilities, were core beliefs of the profession. Craft making was regarded as a useful occupation. For example, weaving was thought to strengthen muscles, to increase motion, and to relieve arthritis. Additionally, when no longer needed for purposes of healing the skill might become a vocation or avocation.

- Slide #10 Marblehead Pottery
  - Marblehead Pottery Shop
  - Gustav Stickley Shelf with Marblehead Pottery
  - Devereaux Mansion also sold threaded looms for convalescence

Two well-documented but short-lived experiments in occupational therapy helped launch this healing arts discipline. In 1904, Dr. Herbert James Hall, an early president of the American Occupational Therapy Association, opened the Devereux sanatorium in Marblehead, Massachusetts. Shortly thereafter he began an occupational therapy handicrafts
program as a treatment for mental illness and nervous disorders. Patients were taught ceramics and performed simple manual tasks for Marblehead Pottery. When the process proved too stressful for the patients, the pottery quickly evolved into a business that supported the sanatorium’s work.

- Slide #11 Ariquipa Pottery
- Ariquipa Sanatorium
- Ariquipa Sanatorium patients lying in beds in the sun
- San Francisco orphanage boys prepared the pottery clay
- Young women working in the pottery
- Examples of the finished work
- A flared bowl created in collaboration with Frederick Rhead

Inspired by the accomplishment of Dr. Hall, in 1911 Dr. Philip King Brown founded Arequipa Sanatorium in rural Marin County, California. At this retreat for San Francisco female factory workers recuperating from tuberculosis, bed rest and handicrafts were considered curative and therapeutic. Brown hired British ceramist Frederick H. Rhead to integrate occupational therapy with pottery production. During Rhead’s tenure and that of subsequent directors, master potters created the ceramic shapes which were then surface decorated by the patients. Always a marginal operation with turnover of both staff and patients, Ariquipa Pottery closed in 1918 during the First World War.

- Slide #12 - Occupational Therapy Training
- Bulletin of the St. Louis School of Occupational Therapy
- Occupational therapists at the St. Louis City Hospital, ca. 1920

The demand for workers to aid in the physical and mental rehabilitation of soldiers disabled during the First World War prompted the founding of programs and schools to train primarily women and a few men as both occupational and physical therapists. With training that typically included design and craftsman courses, these “reconstruction aides”
became invaluable members of the war effort, working in military hospitals both abroad and at home. The lines between occupational therapy and vocational training were sometimes blurred – a hazy division particularly evident in the treatment of wounded World War I soldiers, both during and after service.

- Slide #13 –WWI – Trench Art for Recreation and Rehabilitation
- During a lull in battle activity WWI soldiers are transforming shell casings into artwork
- There were vast quantities of shell casings available for art making
- A crafted aeroplane and decorated shell casings

On the front, WWI soldiers often filled their time making decorative or souvenir objects from the detritus that accumulated in the trenches. This work, commonly referred to as “trench art,” were sometimes made in the trenches, but were also created at a distance from the battles either by soldiers ‘at rest’ behind the front lines, by skilled artisans among the civilian population, by prisoners of war, or by soldiers convalescing from wounds as handicraft therapy.

- Slide #14 –WWI – Tea Set – Table Cover and Detail of Embroidery
- Table cover
- Detail of the embroidery

Other crafts, such as cross stitch embroidery, were also plied by convalescing soldiers. In this case, French soldiers in hospital during WWI. This beautiful table cover, executed on aeroplane linen, is one piece in a 25 piece tea set that depicts French, British, and American soldiers.

- Slide #15 –WWI – Tea Set – Napkins with Insignias
- 12 napkins

In addition to the beautiful table cover, the soldiers also completed a set of 12 napkins with insignias,
12 napkins
and a set of 12 glass coasters with pennants. If anyone can help identify the insignias and pennants, I would be most grateful.

Slide #17 – Marion Abbott – WW I era Actress and Singer
Photo of Marion Abbott
Marion Abbott as “The Tavern Wife”
Marion Abbott as Miranda Talbot in “The Vinegar Buyer”

The tea set was given to actress and singer, Marion Abbott, who traveled to France during the First World War to entertain the wounded. The gift was given by the soldier in grateful appreciation for her service. In her late 40s then, Marion Abbott, who had been born in Danville, Kentucky, spent her career in New York City singing and acting on Broadway. Two of the photos show her in Broadway productions – The Tavern Wife and The Vinegar Buyer. Marion Abbott gave this set many years ago to the family that currently owns it. The tea set will soon be donated to the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, MO.

Slide #18 – Ft. McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland
Entrance to Ft. McHenry, Baltimore, MD
View showing old guns, Star Fort, and Red Cross House at Ft. McHenry, General Hospital #2
Original Non-Commissioned Officers of the Ft. McHenry Base Hospital

One of the first serious attempts to give disabled American veterans employment opportunities after the First World War was the occupational therapy program at Ft. McHenry, U.S. Army Hospital #2, in Baltimore, MD.

Slide #19 – Ft. McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland
One of the Wards at Ft. McHenry, General Hospital #2
Basketry work by OT patients at Ft. McHenry, General Hospital #2
The Trouble Buster, anniversary cover
There the men were taught new job skills that could be used once they were dismissed from the hospital. Among the subjects taught in the fort’s vocational school included metal work, basketry, commercial art, carpentry, upholstery, auto repair, and knitting. The classes were offered to keep the wounded occupied and provide them with a possible means of livelihood. The spirit of the hospital’s rehabilitation program was best depicted in an illustration of a recovering soldier on the anniversary cover of *The Trouble Buster* – Fort McHenry’s own magazine printed on its own presses by patients.

- Slide #20 – Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D.C.
- Walter Reed General Hospital, September, 1919
- American soldiers who lost limbs during battle recovered at Walter Reed
- Soldiers disabled in battle received artificial limbs and brace, as well as OT as part of reconstruction programs

The medical programs at Walter Reed General Hospital were as vigorous as those at Ft. McHenry. During the First World War the number of wounded in residence climbed to 2,500, and they were treated for battle injuries from gunfire, mustard gas, and burns.

- Slide #21 – Occupational Therapy at Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D.C.
- Occupational therapy and workshop activities for recovering soldiers in 1918
- Woodworking as an OT for amputees
- Wounded soldiers doing OT with weaving and sewing in 1918
- Wounded soldiers doing OT with weaving and basket making in 1918
- Bedridden wounded knit to help pass the time

These images of the wounded at Walter Reed show soldiers in a large occupational therapy workshop, the bedridden are knitting, amputees are doing woodworking, and the wounded are weaving, sewing, and making baskets.
Crafts-based occupational therapy assistance for veterans was also offered through social service organizations throughout the country. Greenwich House in New York City – an important social services organization founded in 1902 to improve the living conditions of the immigrant population then living in Greenwich Village – established a pottery in 1909 that used clay to meet the occupational therapy needs of WWI veterans. Some of the soldiers they worked with were blind and they designed miniature clay versions of “Miss Liberty” that Greenwich House potters glazed and fired for the men.

William Waldo Dodge, Jr., a silversmith and architect, demonstrates how war experience and convalescence played a role in the development of an art career. Dodge returned from the war in 1919 and spent the next four years in military hospitals and tuberculosis sanatoriums. Dodge began his journey into silversmithing recuperating at the Gaylord Farm Sanatorium in Wallingford, Connecticut; there he learned the basics from Margaret Wheeler Robinson, who he married in 1921. Together, Dodge and his wife established a silversmithing workshop – Gaylord Silvercraft – which became a part of the vocational training and occupational therapy for sanatorium patients. The Dodges’ developed many of the designed produced by the workshop – such as the money clip, cufflinks, pin, and two bracelets.
Horace Pippin was a self-taught African-American painter who went to France in 1917 with the 369th Infantry. Badly injured during the First World War, Pippin lost full use of his right arm and was no longer able to lift it past his shoulder. Pippin returned home, married, and settled in Pennsylvania, but because of his injury he worked odd jobs and barely made a living. At the age of forty Pippin found a way—even with his crippled right hand—to draw on wood using a hot poker. He made many burnt-wood art panels. Pippin then decided to try painting with oil. He used his "good" left hand to guide his crippled right hand, which held the paintbrush, across the canvas. It took him three years to finish his first painting. Pippin went on to paint his memories of soldiers and war, and scenes from his childhood. He said, "The pictures . . . come to me in my mind and if to me it is a worthwhile picture I paint it . . . I do over the picture several times in my mind and when I am ready to paint it I have all the details I need." Pippin kept a journal while he was in France, and his 1945 painting, *The Barracks*, suggests one of the notes from his journal – "I didn't know if they had sun there or not. I have not seen the sun in more than a month."
While an early craft initiative of the American Red Cross was a campaign directed to civilians to knit socks for WWI soldiers, by the Second World War craft making projects organized by the Red Cross would benefit thousands and thousands of wounded soldiers. Yet it was during the First World War that the Red Cross for the first time dealt on a massive scale with the specific needs of persons with disabilities. In 1917 the Red Cross opened an Institute for Crippled and Disabled Men in New York City that is thought to be the first specialized trade school in the country to treat adults with disabilities. Its purpose was to rehabilitate disabled men and to provide them with training to become economically self-sufficient. The Institute conducted studies, held public forums, and published a magazine, Carry On, focusing on issues of vocational rehabilitation.

Between the wars occupational therapy continued to grow and to establish itself as a medical profession. Embracing the beliefs of 19th c. German physician Rudolph Virchow occupational therapists believed in treating the man rather than the disease. As a result their prescribed treatments ranged from arts and crafts to recreational activities such as games, dramatics, reading, travel, and collecting. Occupational therapy students learned what occupations were suitable for bedside or workshop, and what crafts were adaptable, inadaptable, simple, or complicated – and which activities best dealt with physical and mental problems.
Additionally, the profession began to address confusion with vocational rehabilitation. While they sometimes overlapped, occupational therapy was considered a curative while vocational rehabilitation was aimed to train a patient with a crafts skill that might allow him to earn a living. The confusion between these professions continued well into the Second World War.

- Slide #27 – Occupational Training -- WWII
- Crafts class, Washington University Department of Occupational Therapy, ca. 1947
- An OT shop of the 120th Station Hospital Convalescent Center
- Miniature model building in occupational therapy
- Glen Lukens and a ceramic bowl made by him

Despite growth within the profession, at the outbreak of the Second World War there were only eight qualified occupational therapists on duty in five army hospitals. By V-J Day, in August, 1945, 899 occupational therapists and apprentices were working in 76 U.S. hospitals. Under the auspices of the Occupational Therapy Branch of the Surgeon General’s Office, a War Emergency Course helped shorten professional training. Among the prerequisite skills was a college degree in arts and crafts, industrial art, home economics, or applied arts. In addition to occupational therapy training through the Surgeon General’s Office and through programs connected to medical schools, art department such as the University of Southern California, where ceramist Glen Lukens was a professor also concentrated its efforts to train occupational therapists for service during the war. The USC program emphasized ceramics and weaving.

- Slide #28 – U.S. Army Hospital Ship Emily H. M. Weder
- A Ward on the U.S. Army Hospital Ship Emily H. M. Weder
- Poster for an OT exhibit aboard the Emily H. M. Weder
- Articles made of leather in the Arts and Crafts exhibition
While the medical aspects of occupational therapy began to strengthen during the Second World War, arts and crafts were still a well recognized therapy tool and were still used extensively to treat the injured in military hospitals throughout the world. For example, wounded soldiers on the U.S. Army Hospital Ship *Emily H. M. Weder* proudly exhibited leather goods created during occupational therapy sessions onboard ship, a project undoubtedly completed from craft kits distributed by the military.

During World War II the Red Cross once again responded to the needs of the injured, and served the military in many capacities. While their nursing role was limited to the recruitment of nurses to serve in the military, many social services programs developed and became an integral part of the treatment of war wounded hospital patients.

One of the new programs begun by the Red Cross was the Arts and Skills Service, a unit of the voluntary Hospital and Recreation Corps. Founded in 1943, this fascinating endeavor, described as a “triple alliance” between the Red Cross, American museums, and artists and craftsmen was tremendously successful. But it was also a program that
highlighted growing confusion regarding the role of crafts making as a curative, as a vocational pursuit, and as an avocational activity. During the program’s peak popularity its advocates routinely recorded stories of all three purposes.

- Slide #31 – Dorothy Wright Liebes and Jane Canfield
- Dorothy Wright Liebes
- Jane Canfield

Heading the program were internationally known weaver and textile designer Dorothy Wright Liebes and American sculptress Jane (Sage) Canfield. Liebes served as the National Art Director and Canfield as the National Director.

- Slide #32 – Dorothy Wright Liebes Promotes Arts and Skills
- Dorothy Wright Liebes – newspaper clipping
- “Arts and Crafts Report for War Duty” – newspaper clipping

Liebes brought contacts with artists throughout the world from her organizational work for the 1939 Golden Gate and New York International Expositions. When war broke out artists contacted her wishing to assist with the war effort. As the public face of Arts and Skills, Liebes crossed the country lecturing and promoting the project. Initially in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, the program spread across the country and attracted thousands of volunteer artists and craftsmen who offered instruction in arts and crafts to the war injured in military and domestic hospitals. In 1945, toward the end of the war, art work produced under the Red Cross Arts and Skills New York program by wounded veterans in area military hospitals was on display at The Women’s International Exposition in Madison Square Garden. This was just one of many exhibits organized by volunteers with Arts and Skills.

- Slide #33 – Arts and Skills Corps Newsletter
- The covers of two newsletters – 1945 and 1946
The breadth of accomplishments was documented in the Arts and Skills newsletters.

- Slide #34 – Arts and Skills Demonstration
- Arts and Skills Demonstration in Portland

In addition to the hospital work with wounded soldiers, the project also sponsored demonstrations and exhibitions.

- Slide #35 – Arts and Skills Leather Exhibit
- Leather exhibition including work by Dorothy Wright Liebes

Media specific exhibits, such as this one of leather goods, circulated in museums and hospitals, offering the public a glimpse of work by artists and veterans, and providing the wounded with specific examples of crafts they could execute while recuperating. This exhibit included two woven bags made of wool and leather strips by Dorothy Wright Liebes.

- Slide #36 – Arts and Skills Metalsmithing Exhibits
- 2 images – Metal work produced at the Dallas Arts and Skills program at Ashburn General Hospital. Work by instructors and patients were exhibited at a Dallas jewelry store.
- Bracelet and brooch inspired by Hungarian bronze jewelry of 2000 BC; the necklace was made by a bed patient at Halloran General Hospital. All three pieces were included in a Handy & Harman jewelry exhibit that traveled to hospital throughout the country

Metalsmithing was considered an important craft for rehabilitation. It required focus and concentration, attention to detail, flexion of muscles, and dexterity. The work shown here was exhibited in a jewelry store in Dallas and in a traveling exhibition organized by the metal refining company, Handy and Harman.

- Slide #37 – Art for the Soldiers’ Sake
- Amputee learning a new skill – photography
- O’Reilly General Hospital, Springfield, MO – Weaving exhibition, occupational therapy department, Red Cross Auditorium, July 9, 1946
- Arts and Skills Worker with a group of men in the shop at the U.S. Naval Hospital at Great Lakes
- Finger painting by a patient at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, CA
- Modeling, carving and other handicrafts bring out latent talents when convalescing in military and naval hospitals

Rigorous training through Arts and Skills and with occupational therapists at the military and naval hospitals prepared artists and craftsmen capable of working with disabled soldiers under such exacting conditions. More than thirty hands-on arts and crafts skills were taught to convalescing GIs. Photography, finger painting, modeling, and carving are some of the skills seen here.

- Slide #38 – The Wounded Respond to Craft Making
- A merchant seaman stains a belt he made
- A patient begins to make a billfold
- Skilled direction helps a wounded soldier to use his hands

While the skills acquired were invaluable, even more remarkable were stories of craft making impacting the lives of the young men in hospital. Many accounts were documented in the newsletter. An amputee in a San Francisco hospital was watching an Arts and Skills weaver teach another patient how to weave. He smiled at her and she said, “Well, you can’t weave in that position, I’m afraid.” His answer was prompt: “I’m to be turned over in an hour; will you come back then?” When she returned some time later he said he thought he could not do much but he’d like to try, as it would keep him from thinking. When she returned several days later she reported that his was one of the most beautiful pieces of weaving she had seen in this hospital.

- Slide #39 – Alexander Calder – Jeweler and Sculptor
- Alexander Calder
- Wire brooch
Among the nearly 25,000 artists and craftsmen who volunteered with Arts and Skills were many who, as Liebes noted, were “names” of the day. In her unpublished autobiography she listed Alexander Calder, Grant Wood, and industrial designer Henry Dreyfuss as among those who came to the hospitals. Others, such as Cranbrook ceramist Maija Grotell, created exhibitions, and violinist Jascha Heifetz played for recovering GIs at Mare Island Hospital in California. In the February, 1946 Arts and Skills newsletter Alexander Calder’s demonstration at Halloran Hospital showed the men how to make toys and Christmas decorations from tin cans and old glass jewelry.

- Slide #40 – WWII – Handy & Harman Hospital Arts Program
- Margret Craver sketching out a design, 1946
- Major General Norman T. Kirk, Surgeon General of the United States
- Margaret Craver silversmithing with an open flame

Another crafts based therapeutic project for returning vets that well complemented the Red Cross Arts and Skills Service was the Hospital Services Program developed by metalsmith Margret Craver, who joined forces with metal refining company Handy & Harmon to create the program. Under the watchful eyes of Major General Norman T. Kirk, Surgeon General of the United States Army and Chief Occupational Therapist she established a small metals workshop in the furnace room at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

- Slide #41 – WWII – Handy & Harman Hospital Arts Program
- Handy & Harman sterling silver flat wire
- Coiled wire brooch by Margaret Craver made in 1945
- Margaret Craver made this silver cigarette case during the summer of 1946 at a conference organized by the Goldsmiths Company and held at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London
Keeping in mind the physical motion needs of patients she devised projects that could be carried out with simple tools and inexpensive materials. Craver discovered that coiling projects, using inexpensive 18-gauge silver wire, resulted in attractive brooches and ornaments – stylistically similar to the work of Alexander Calder – which satisfied the patients’ rehabilitation needs as well as their sense of aesthetic accomplishment. Craver was soon training other health care workers, and her program spread to each of the Army’s 13 hospital facilities. The program at Walter Reed was so successful that in 1946 Craver was invited to present at a conference organized by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, held at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. Her ideas were well received by the ministries in charge of veterans’ affairs, and subsequent to the conference the Goldsmiths Company became involved with occupational therapy in England.

- Slide #42 – WWII – Ronald Hayes Pearson – Silversmith
- WWII Merchant Marine poster
- Working as his anvil

Many veterans turned to crafts making after service in the Second World War. Chief among their reasons for choosing to work with their hands was a level of disillusionment with a complex industry-driven society that largely promoted mass production. While such thinking factored into the initial career decisions of metalsmith and jeweler Ronald Hayes Pearson, other things helped boost his career. Pearson served in the Merchant Marines during the Second World War.

- Slide #43 – WWII – Ronald Hayes Pearson – Silversmith
- At the lathe, spinning bronze, in Alfred, NY, 1949-51
- Brass Bowl, ca. 1949
- Bronze Bowl, ca. 1950
- Sterling Silver Cufflinks, 1970s
- His hallmark
During the early years of his career, Pearson benefitted from the interest in metalsmithing as an occupational training tool, popularized by Margret Craver during the years she ran the Hospital Arts Program for Handy & Harman, as well as the workshops that helped launch metalsmithing program in colleges and universities in the 1950s.

- Slide #44 – WWII – Otto Heino -- Ceramist
- Otto Heino in his WWII uniform
- A photo of him with his parents during WWII
- Heino with his WWII plane, “Old Crow”
- Otto and his wife Vivika worked as a team, signing their pots Vivika + Otto no matter who made it. This is a picture of them from the 1950s or 1960s
- Black glazed stoneware
- Blue and white textured vessel
- In his studio
- In his studio

Well-regarded studio ceramist Otto Heino served five years of active duty as a T/Sgt. in the USAAF, working briefly on engines at a Rolls-Royce factory in England, and serving with the 357th Fighter Group in Leiston, Suffolk. There he was the personal crew chief of Bud Anderson’s P-51 Mustangs, all of which were named “Old Crow.” Heino first discovered his interest in ceramics while stationed in England. He saw Bernard Leach’s studio and the pottery of a farming family in the German countryside. From these experiences he made of his mind to take up pottery when he returned from the war. Back in the States Heino used his GI Bill to take a formal pottery class at the League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts where he fell in love with his instructor, Vivika, whom he soon married. The couple forged a distinct blend of traditional Asian glazes and Scandinavian minimalism in the work they jointly produced, and when they moved to Ojai, California it was just a matter of time before they began to shape the blossoming mid-twentieth-century California Arts and Crafts movement.
Use of arts and crafts as occupational therapy tools continued beyond the Second World War, but the focus for rehabilitation largely shifted to the use of craft kits. One of the biggest promoters of crafts kits after the Vietnam War was Help Hospitalized Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1971. Marine recuperating at Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego, California found the endless hours in a hospital bed harder to taken than combat, and they wanted something to do with their hands. Help Hospitalized Veterans soon became the largest supplier of all therapeutic arts and crafts kits – provided free of charge – in VA and military facilities that care for hospitalized veterans and active-duty military. Unfortunately, a few years ago HHV came under Congressional scrutiny for misappropriation of funds. This seriously hurt their mission and has undermined the value of hand work for recuperating soldiers and veterans.

During the Vietnam era and beyond some of the earlier more creative crafts based initiatives traditionally used in occupational therapy continued in the VA hospitals – particularly for the permanently injured.
Today, there is an ever growing awareness of the effects of war on the young men and women who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan – the longest military conflict in American history. Many of these young people are returning from service with Traumatic Brain Injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders, and an alarming number of young veterans – about 18 a day – are committing suicide. Many standard and alternative mental health programs are now being developed to address this issue, and among them are a number of art therapy initiatives. Two examples highlight such treatment.

Spc. Joseph Zabinski, 29, who served in Iraq from Oct. 2006 until Dec. 2007, participated in an 11-week course in 2010 at the Pikes Peak Behavioral Health Group in Colorado Springs, called “Military Creative Expressions.” This program, taught by Kim Nguyen, who had received a master’s degree in Art Therapy in October 2009, offered veterans the opportunity to experiment with different techniques and approaches to painting. Soldiers participating in the course were enthusiastic about the therapeutic value of art, discussing the subconscious implications of their paintings with the instructor. “When I get into it everything just disappears and I can just focus on the art. All my troubles just float away,” Zabinski said. The work was on display from March through June, 2010 in an exhibit titled Conflict/Resolution – Wounded Warriors Exhibition at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Zabinski took his parents through the exhibition, and show them the watercolor he had submitted for the show. For him, it represented “the undefined enemy.” Later, America Ferrera,
star of “Ugly Betty,” purchased Zabinski’s painting and spoke about the exhibition on “The View.”

In January, 2010 the Roycroft Campus Corporation teamed up with the Arts in Education Institute of Western New York and the Buffalo Vets Center and developed a Veterans Art Therapy Program that helped local service members. The program included sessions in theater, music, spoken word, painting, video, and drawing. The program was developed in collaboration with Roycroft Director of Development, Daniel Frontera, with classes taught by certified art therapists and Institute trained professional Teaching Artists. In May, 2010, during military appreciation month, an exhibition of work produced by the vets who had participated in the program was held in the Copper Shop Gallery on the Historic Roycroft Campus. Frontera organized the exhibition, noting, "This is a great opportunity for the Roycroft community to embrace our veterans and help them with their experiences through our artisans. Any opportunity that we have to give back to our veterans and help them work through their experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan or Vietnam truly embodies the spirit of Roycroft." Roycroft is best known as a turn-of-the-twentieth-century Arts and Crafts community.

- Slide #48 – Title Slide – Historical Perspective for Recreation
- WWII – Arts and Crafts
- Arts and the Military Today

[Pause for a transition between sections]

Recreation

- Slide #49 – Recreation
- The Clay Club, Greenwich Village, formed special sculpture classes for member of the armed forces.

Art centers throughout the country during the Second World War created classes specifically for veterans. Soldiers on leave
in 1943 were given “expert instruction” in special sculpture classes specifically formed for them at the Clay Club in Greenwich Village in New York City.

- Slide #50 – Building Morale through Arts and Crafts
- Soldiers photographing sites in Europe in the 1950s

Interest in soldier morale through creative expression also found its way into the military during the Second World War. Arts and crafts programs were developed by the military, with the genesis of these programs directly connecting with other craft initiatives that began to flourish during the World War II years.

- Slide #51 – An Emerging Modern Craft Movement
- Aileen Osborn Webb
- WWII Booklet – Veterans Prepare Your Future Through Educational Training – Contact Your Nearest Office of the Veterans Administration
- Craft Horizons, August, 1945
- Display of an American Crafts Council sponsored show

Institutions that continue today as bedrocks of support for studio craft were established from the 1940s to the 1960s by philanthropist and heiress Aileen Osborn Webb. She used a copper mining fortune inherited from an aunt to launch the American Craft Council, its retail outlet America House, the magazine Craft Horizons, the School for American Craftsmen, the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, regional conferences, and the World Craft Council. Her groundbreaking work helped bring vitality to an emerging modern craft movement, making it possible for craftsmen such as Ronald Hayes Pearson, and Otto Heino to develop lifelong craft careers.

- Slide #52 – WWII – Bringing Arts & Crafts to Soldiers and Families
- Aileen Osborn Webb
- Frederick Henry Osborn
- Major Nathaniel Saltonstall
Webb’s passionate promotion of craft work also found its way into the military. In 1941, during the Second World War, Webb’s brother, Frederick H. Osborn, was appointed chairman of the War Department Committee on Education, Recreation, and Community Service. When he became a brigadier general he became concerned that few soldiers were using the recreation areas then available to them. With his sister as an early advocate, Osborn and War Department leaders established an off-duty arts and crafts recreation program on the premise that efficiency is directly correlated with morale. By 1945, with a broad-based mission to “fulfill the natural human desire to create, provide opportunities for self-expression, and to serve old skills and develop new ones, “Major Nathaniel Saltonstall took charge of the Handicraft Branch of Army Service Forces and supplied handicraft kits and opened workshops in overseas theaters and on troop transports. The success of the Handicraft Program was such that by 1951 it was recognized as an essential Army recreation activity and the name changed to the Army Crafts Program.

- Slide #53 – Army Arts and Crafts Directors
- A 1949 meeting with Arts and Crafts instructors with Cpt. Joseph Burrows
- Mrs. Ruth Dunn, Bremerhaven Post Director, teaching finger painting at Radio City Service Club

To develop job descriptions for Arts and Crafts Directors, the Army turned to State Certification requirements for high school art instructors. The Army established its own standards and required a four-year college degree with a major in arts and crafts, plus experience in accordance with responsibilities of the assignment. In an article from 1954 in the College Art Journal, Charles C. Furman advertised the program and solicited applicants, describing the ideal Crafts Director as someone who is “not an artist in the restricted
sense, but also a craftsman – one who is equally proficient in and content with working with power tools or demonstrating how to enlarge pictures.” By the early 1960s there were more than 200 Army Crafts Directors serving throughout the world.

- Slide #54 – The Basic Seven Program
- Drawing class for WACS at an overseas post, early 1950s
- Fort Dix Arts and Crafts Center – Soldiers at work in the lapidary, jewelry and enameling section of the Crafts Shop, 1961
- An exhibit at the Fort Bragg crafts facility, 1992
- Fort Dix Arts and Crafts Center – Lounge area with exhibits and periodicals, 1961

Taking a broad-based approach to the idea of arts and crafts, the military’s arts mission developed from careful instructions on how to set up arts and crafts facilities to the creation of a “Basic Seven Program.” Launched in the 1950s, the program included drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, metalwork, leather crafts, model building, photography, and woodworking. Later in the decade automotive crafts were added to the mix. The military promoted craft making for the betterment of those in service, believing that it was mentally stimulating, physically therapeutic; it promoted well-being, enhanced skills, and encouraged self-reliance. The military’s broad definition of arts and crafts included all forms of art and design and all forms of applied technology.

- Slide #55 – Arts Contests for the Military
- Seaman Edward Benker and Seaman Jack O’Brien finish woodworking project – a table and a whatnot
- A sailor and WAVE making crafts from seashells
- A woodcut included in the 3rd All-Army Art Contest in the early 1960s
- Seaman James Bean of Lido Separation Center saws legs for an end table
- At the Long Beach, L.I., USO club, where all these handicrafts were photographed, WAVE Elizabeth Price, starts work on the cover of a cigarette box
During the Second World War arts and crafts contests were often sponsored for military personnel. In 1946 *Popular Science Monthly* promoted the GI Handicraft Contest. Backed by the USO, servicemen and women and veterans were given access to tools and materials in its thousands of stateside clubs and overseas facilities, and these men and women competed for $3,300 in prize money. Undoubtedly, the popularity of such contests as this one spurred the military to also offer arts contests. The first All Army Crafts Contest was held in 1949 and the All Army Art Contest began ten years later.

- Slide #56 – Arts and Crafts and the Military Today
- The kiln in the Fort Bragg, NC kiln shop
- Mira Reeves, civilian spouse, listens as Mike Quantrell, master carpenter at the Kelley Woodshop, advises her on adding edges to a night stand. The woodshop helped the USAG Stuttgart’s FMWR Arts and Crafts program to win the award for best program in the Army for the third year in a row
- Weaving at a military crafts facility
- USAF Arts and Crafts Service – I Love My Chain Saw Wooden Bowl
- USAF Arts and Crafts Service – Purple Heart and Cocobolo wooden vase
- Army MWR Photography Contest, 2007

These contests continue today, and the Army and Air Force still have dynamic arts and crafts programs for soldiers and their families. The Army sponsors a number of annual arts contests through the Moral, Welfare, and Recreation Division of the service.

- Slide #57 – Military-focused Museum Exhibitions and Programs
- National Gallery of Art – Exterior and Interior
- Metropolitan Museum of Art – Exterior and Interior
- Museum of Modern Art – Exterior and Interior (Good Design ‘51)

During and after the Second World War, art work by veterans began to be exhibited at such institutions as the Metropolitan
Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art. But it was the Museum of Modern Art that was at the forefront of programmatic military-focused museum initiatives. In 1942 James Soby was appointed director of the museum’s Armed Services Program, a combination of occupational therapy, exhibitions, and morale-sustaining activities.

- Slide #58 – Readjusting to Civilian Life after WWII
- It won’t be much fun for us to be civilians again – we aren’t supposed to have battle fatigue or neuroses”

Soldiers were invited to sketch, paint, or model under the guidance of skilled artists and craftsmen. When one fellow was asked why he had taken up art, he responded by saying, “Well, I just came back from destroying everything. I made up my mind that if I ever got out of the Army and out of the war, I was never going to destroy another thing in my life, and I decided that art was the thing that I would do.” Another man commented that “Art is like a good night’s sleep. You come away refreshed and at peace.”

- Slide #59 – Title Slide – Arts and Crafts and the Military – Reorientation and Social Action – Vietnam to the Present Day

[Pause for a transition between sections]

Reorientation
- Slide #60 – Reorientation
- Sky David
- Ehren Tool at his wheel
- Rob Bates and Mike Fay – The Joe Bonham Project
- Drew Cameron and Drew Matott – Combat Paper Project

With the war in Iraq and Afghanistan as now the longest military conflict in American history, our soldiers and veterans are experiencing unprecedented effects of continuing military service. From physical wounds to the mental distress of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), today’s soldiers and
veterans are using an unprecedented number of alternative therapies, including arts therapies and creative expression to rebalance and reorient. Artists who have been soldiers bring a unique perspective to art making after war service.

This last section of the presentation is a brief introduction to several veteran-artists. Sky David served in Vietnam, Ehren Tool and Mike Fay were in the Gulf War and Desert Storm, Rob Bates was in Afghanistan, and Drew Cameron was in Iraq. Each one has a desire to artistically process their experiences of war – individually and collectively through such initiatives as The Joe Bonham Project and Combat Paper Project. The work they produce well reflects the comments of former Marine and now ceramist, Ehren Tool, who notes, “Once a person has witnessed a war, they are forever changed.”

- Slide #61 – “Sky” David Presuzkiwanie – Vietnam War
- “Sky” David Presuzkiwanie as a young soldier at Fort Hood in Kileen, TX in 1965, just before he deployed to Vietnam
- In combat in 1968, just after taking Hill 875 in Vietnam

Deployed to Vietnam from Fort Hood in 1965, Sky David’s war experiences remain with him to this day.

- Slide #62 – “Sky” David’s Friend John
- A drawing of his friend and combat comrade, John Sickles, made in 2005.
- Sky wrote a poem about John Sickles, who was KIA June 16, 1967

Sky David and John Sickles met in Junior High School in Texas, played sports together, and reworked cars as a first business venture. When they were called to military service they were also in Vietnam together. While Sky David survived hand-to-hand combat with the 17th N.V.A. Regiment, helping
take Hill 875, his friend John was not as lucky. Killed in action on June 16, 1967, John’s death was a blow to Sky David. When he returned to Texas after the war and closed the joint bank account for the business with John, he had a “lump in his throat” that he still recalls to this day. In 2005, 38 years after John’s untimely passing, Sky David made a drawing of John and wrote a poem to him. The last few lines read – June 16: John crossed the “thin red line” / I can always touch John / And I can touch Him at the National Memorial in Washington, D.C. / The Wall. / Touch John on PANEL 21 EAST, LINE 116. He recalled him again in 2011 when he created Ghost Soldiers, a book created to remember and honor all those with whom he fought in Vietnam, but did not survive.

- Slide #63 – Warrior Artist – Self Portraits
- Re-Insertion Self-Portrait: Taking Hill 875 After Close Contact Hand-to-Hand with the 17th N.V.A. Regiment, made in 2005
- Re-Insertion Self Portrait,: Into the Jungle with John – 2005
- Portrait of a Man Split Apart -- 2005

An exhibition of his work at the Klaudia Marr Gallery in Santa Fe in 2003 opened a creative vein for Sky David around his Vietnam experiences. Over the next few years he created many, many paintings and drawings recalling his experiences in Vietnam. These three self-portraits address the trauma of battle in taking Hill 875, include a remembrance of his friend John in the jungle, and depict a man split apart – all poignant visuals of how events nearly 40 years earlier were internalized and now creatively expressed.

- Slide #64– Ehren Tool – Gulf War Veteran

That sense of collective experiences of war is also evident in the ceramic cups and bowls created by former U.S. Marine and
Gulf War veteran Ehren Tool, who was trained as a ceramist by the late Funk artist, ceramist, and sculptor Ken Price at University of California at Berkeley in 2004.

- Slide #65 – From Jarhead to Ceramist
- Untitled, 2004
- Untitled, (Detail of Alpha Company), 2006
- Untitled, 2004
- Self portrait on cup, n.d.
- Ehren Tool at his potter’s wheel
- Humble Occupation – on exhibit at Slogan, 2012
- 1 CBU 87 over DVC, 2007 – on exhibit at Diablo Valley College Art Gallery, 2008

Less concerned with our position on war than with making sure that all non-veterans are made aware of its consequences, Ehren Tool’s vehicle for achieving this end is thousands upon thousand of clay cups thrown, decorated, fired, exhibited, and often given away. For more than a decade the simple, utilitarian cup has been transformed by Tool into objects intended to raise collective awareness. As he notes – *There are so many veterans and refugees who've seen war firsthand, but then they don't talk about it when they get back to the States. So what regular people know about war tends to come from toys and pornography and video games. I give away the cups because, it's like, 'Drink out of the cup with skulls on it. Drink out of the cup with bombs on it.' We don't have money for schools; we don't have money to make the corrections system a corrections system instead of a penal system . . . But we do have money for million-dollar Tomahawk missiles and $13,000 cluster bombs. And every single one of us is part of that system whether we act like we know it or not.*

- Slide #66 – From Jarhead to Ceramist
The Joe Bonham Project, based on the central character in Dalton Trumbo’s 1938 novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*, was a WWI doughboy horribly wounded by an artillery round blast at the Western Front. All that remained of Joe was his conscious humanity, and the absolute minimum of bodily functions to support awareness. He had no face, eyes, ears, mouth, arms, legs or genitalia. Joe simply *was*. Through the pages of *Johnny Got His Gun* Joe became aware of the extent of his injuries, grappled with the pure existential horror of these realizations and miraculously began to reach back out into the world of his fellow man. Dalton Trumbo's Joe Bonham moves from denial to acceptance.

Conceived as a group initiative in 2011 by retired Marine Warrant Officer and former combat artist Michael D. Fay, the Joe Bonham Project is witness or reportage art documenting today’s battle-wounded service members. The project’s purpose is to keep the dedication, sacrifices and indomitable spirit of our wounded warriors present and accounted for.

- Slide #67 – Sketching Wounded Warriors at Military Hospitals
- Corporal Matthew Bowman by Robert William Bates
- Lance Corporal Tyler Huffman by Michael D. Fay
- Corporal Stephen Farrell by Victor Charles Juhasz

During the spring and summer of 2011, Lance Corporal Marine and artist Rob Bates, Michael Fay, and Society of Illustrators artist Victor Charles Juhasz were given access to wounded service members at the Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, MD and the McGuire VA Hospital in Richmond, VA. While these images document the wounds sustained, they are also images of rehabilitation and resilience. As Mike Fay notes, these are battle wounded service members who are *still in the fight*, and our role as artists is to visually record their courage and sacrifice. Through the Joe Bonham Project we keep these fellow Americans visible and their experiences
viable. Our aim is to be neither pro-war nor anti-war. We are not here to politicize the service members we are portraying. We are here to humanize them and give them a presence beyond the walls of their hospital rooms and therapeutic clinics.

- **Slide #68 – Michael D. Fay and Kyle Carpenter**

Indeed, over the past year, the drawings and sketches made by the Joe Bonham Project team at military hospitals have been shown in multiple exhibition venues, and often with the person sketched in attend. Kyle Carpenter was severed burned during his service as a Marine, but was well enough to attend the opening at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton, VA in July, 2011.

- **Slide #69 – Victor Charles Juhasz and Sgt. Jason Ross**

Sgt. Jason Ross lost both legs to an I.E.D. Victor made multiple sketches of him while Jason was being treated at the Walter Reed Medical Center. On September 11, 2011, he too was well enough to attend the opening reception for *Ten Years After 9/11* at the Pepco Edison Place Gallery in Washington, DC.

- **Slide #70 – Combat Paper Project**

Arts and crafts making has a long and honorable history in the rehabilitation and well being of our soldiers and veterans. The Combat Paper Project traverses arts for healing and arts for well being by offering papermaking workshops for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans that address experiences of war.

- **Slide #71 – Warrior Writers & Iraq Veterans Against the War**

The genesis of Combat Paper Project was the war experiences of Drew Cameron. His years in the military left him with a great desire to seek and live in peace. The time he spent in Iraq left him with festering memories, anxiety, and depression.
Like so many others, Drew was profoundly affected by his experiences in Iraq.

In an effort to come to terms with his military experiences and find ways to move on with his life, Drew became involved with Iraq Veteran’s Against the War, a group organized in July, 2004 at the annual convention of Veterans for Peace, held in Boston. The group gave a voice to the large number of active duty service people and veterans against the war. It was there he met Lovella Calica, an artist and writer. Drew and Lovella connected with many of the other artists and writers in the group and they began to share their work with each other.

- Slide #72 – Workshops for Veterans at the Green Door Studio

For Drew Cameron, the deliberate and transformative process of altering plants or rags into handmade paper carried a sense of calming. For three years after returning from Iraq the Green Door Studio in Burlington, VT was his quiet space for reflection, experimentation, discovery, and peace. He also noted that “somehow the methods of the [papermaking] process began to carry a deeper, rehabilitative effect of making sense, or re-making sense of who I was after such an experience.”

In February 2007 Drew Cameron attending the inaugural workshop for Warrior Writers, and that spring when Warrior Writers celebrated the release of its first publication, *Move, Shoot and Communicate*, Drew Cameron hosted a weekend retreat for veterans at the Green Door Studio. The weekend included a writing workshop, a performance, an exhibit, and a paper-making workshop.

- Slide #73 – Launching Combat Paper Project
For Drew Cameron, the power of the collaborative workshop with Warrior Writers at the Green Door Studio in the spring of 2007, found him planning once again to share papermaking with fellow veterans. Just one month after the workshop, under the leadership of Drew Cameron and Drew Matott Combat Paper Project was born. The project has grown into a multifaceted collaboration between artists, veterans, and civilian communities, offering veterans and other the opportunity to address their experiences of war.

The Combat Paper Project mission statement reads: “The story of the soldier, the Marine, the men and the women and the journeys within the military service in a time of war is the basis for this project. The goal is to utilize art as a means to help veterans reconcile their personal experiences as well as broaden the traditional narrative surrounding service, honor and the military culture.”

- Slide #74– Writing on the Wall –Noepe Series --2007

One of the earliest actions of the Combat Paper Project combined Drew Matott’s interest in social action street performance and Drew Cameron’s desire to transform his war experiences into something that made sense to him.

- Slide #75– From the Series –You Are Not My Enemy -- 2007

Donning the full uniform he worn in Iraq, Drew Cameron systematically cut it off his body until all that remained was a pile of cut fabric. Drew Matott carefully photographed every stage of the event. The cut fabric was then pulped and transformed into handmade paper. Drew Cameron notes – “the literal attrition of my guilt and memories were becoming exposed and reinterpreted through the process.”
The action he took that day reflected both the anger of his past and the hope for his future. His artistic voice is both that of a papermaker and a poet.

- Slide #76– *Breaking Rank* -- 2008

Over the next several years Drew Cameron and Drew Matott fully explored themes of transformation for wartime experiences.

- Slide #77 – The Combat Paper Making Process

The papermaking process became their medium. Through collaborations with civilians and veterans the Combat Paper Project generated much-needed conversations regarding our responsibilities to returning veterans and an understanding of the dehumanizing effects of warfare.

Papermaking workshops on college campus and at art studios have assisted veterans in reconciling their personal experiences and broadening the traditional narratives surrounding service and military culture. Veterans use the uniforms they wore in combat to create cathartic works of art. The uniforms are cut up, beat and formed into sheets of paper. Veterans use the transformative process of papermaking to reclaim their uniform as art and begin to embrace their experiences as a soldier in war.

- Slide #78– Residencies, Workshops, and Exhibitions

Between 2008 and 2011 Drew Cameron and Drew Matott jointly pursued artist residencies across the country, offered workshops at colleges, universities, and arts centers, and sent work to exhibition in the U.S. and abroad. They have also been successful in placing work in institutions throughout the world – the Library of Congress, Harvard University, and the Bavarian State Library, in Munich, Germany, among them.
Work produced by Combat Paper Project is also collected by the Archives at University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign.

- Slide #79 C.P.P. Residencies for Artists – West Tisbury Grange Hall, Martha’s Vineyard – July, 2008
- Jen Pacanowski
- Nate Lewis
- Nate and Jen making Peace
- Peace (2008)

One of the earliest workshops – again in collaboration with Warrior Writers – was on Martha’s Vineyard in the summer of 2008. The workshop drew many young veterans, including Nate Lewis and Jen Pacanowski – both had served in the Army. Also attending was Dick Iacovello, a Vietnam medic. The combination of papermaking and writing was both healing and fun.

- Slide #80– Art Therapy Workshop – Seton Hill, Pennsylvania – November, 2009
- Gretchen Miller
- Students pulping fiber
- Students making paper

In 2009 Combat Paper Project began working with art therapist Gretchen Miller, who is affiliated with Art Therapy without Borders. That year Combat Paper Project began offering workshops to art therapy students. One of the first was at Seton Hill in Pennsylvania.

- Slide #81– Residency – Southwest School of Arts & Crafts -- 2009

Artist residencies, such as the one they had in 2009 in San Antonio, Texas, at the Southwest School of Arts & Crafts, provided Drew and Drew with the opportunity to produce their own work for the Combat Paper Project. Residencies were usually accompanied by workshops for the institution.
Other residencies have been at the University of Alabama Book Arts Program and the University of Iowa Center for the Book.

- Slide #82– Workshop – Pratt Center for Fine Art --

Workshops, such as the one at the Pratt Center for Fine Art, in Seattle, in 2011, were always well received by those attending. Over the many years that Combat Paper Project offered workshops they always traveled with a team of veteran-artists to help facilitate the experience. Workshops have been all over the U.S. and in England. This spring, Combat Paper Project, and Drew Matott’s new Peace Paper, will offer workshops for war veterans in the Balkans.

- Slide #83– Firehouse Gallery Exhibit -- 2009

Since 2007 Combat Paper Project artwork has been shown in nearly 60 solo and group shows throughout the U.S., the U.K., Japan, and Australia. The Firehouse Gallery exhibition in 2009 in Burlington, VT combined a traditional show hanging and a fully functioning paper studio in the gallery, bringing the artist and the viewer together to share in the artistic process.

- Slide #84– Robynn Murray

Combat Paper Project has had a positive impact on the lives of many American veterans. Three are showcased here.

Many more women have gone to war in the past ten years than in previous generations. Robynn Murray was raised in upstate New York and was an all-American high-school cheerleader who became the poster girl for women in combat.

- Slide #85– Robynn’s Combat Paper Experience – Martha’s Vineyard
  - Indoctrination
Her war experiences in Iraq left her to fight an insidious foe – post traumatic stress disorder. One of her post-deployment experiences addressing her wartime trauma was at a 2008 workshop on Martha’s Vineyard sponsored by Combat Paper Project and Warrior Writers. It was at that workshop that she began to create three pulp paper breast plates – *Indoctrination*, *Baghdad*, and *Healing*.

The workshop put her in touch with an entire community of veterans and she was able to continue creating artwork that helped address her P.T.S.D. These two pieces made with a Combat Paper Project artist include photographs of her in uniform.

Through her involvement with Combat Paper Project, Warrior Writer, and Iraq Veterans Against the War Robynn met filmmaker Sara Nesson. For two years, Sara followed Robynn as she embarked on a journey of self-discovery and redemption through art and poetry.

The Oscar-nominated documentary short depicts how today’s veterans are not depending on the Department of Veterans Affairs to save them. They are taking responsibility for their own healing. The art and writing created through Combat
Paper Project and Warrior Writers has helped Robynn and many others process their experiences at war.

At the Academy Awards Ceremony in 2011, Robynn and Sara wear Combat Paper corsages created by former Marine Donna Perdue, a Baltimore native.

Since the film finished in 2010, Robynn completed a drug rehabilitation program for her addiction to painkillers and has been clean and sober for over two years! She continues to share her unfolding story with audiences in the U.S. and abroad, and is currently assembling her poems, journals, and writings into an autobiography. She has never been happier.

- Slide #89– Donna Perdue – *Amani My Culture*
  - Studios of Key West, Key West, Florida -- 2009

Another female veteran, former Marine Donna Perdue, also had a memorable experience with the Combat Paper Project. While visiting The Studios of Key West for a two-week artist residency, exhibit and community workshop in December 2009, the Combat Paper Project team developed an oversized print in the ocean. The silk screen was made from a photograph of an Iranian refugee Donna met while stationed in Ethiopia. The mould was made from a bed sheet, and the 4 x 6 foot piece of paper was made from the military uniform she wore while serving in East Africa. The finished piece retains some of the beach sand and wind blown debris imbedded in the paper fibers, reminiscent of Donna’s deployment in East Africa. It was hung with the Combat Paper Project’s *Fibers of Reason* exhibit at The Studios of Key West.

- Slide #90– Eli Wright
  - *These Colors Run Everywhere*
  - *Broken Toy Soldiers*
  - *Open Wound*
One of the artists who has benefited from the therapeutic aspect of papermaking is Eli Wright. An Army veteran from Colorado in his late twenties, Eli describes how the Combat Paper Project allows veterans to take the horrors of war from the battlefield into the studio for a chance to fight back against trauma. “I was a medic. I enlisted in the military to save lives, not take them. … So the first friend I made in Iraq was confusion. In a detention center, I witnessed a fellow medic beat a prisoner. And I made friends with anger that night. … I made my third friend coming home, and that was shame. … I only had these three friends until I discovered this project. I finally found some new friends. … This project saves lives, it gives us direction—to find we can build bridges and tear down those walls and remake sense of our lives.”

• Slide #91– Eli Wright & Combat Paper NJ

Eli is also active with Warrior Writers, explaining his involvement – “it's not something any of us could have done alone. I used to write before I went to Iraq, but when I got over there, I wasn't able to write. So through the Warrior Writers Project I have been able to slowly begin to find my words again and share my experiences and what happened over there. It's been a healing experience.”

Eli is also continuing the work of Combat Paper Project, with a New Jersey based branch at the Printmaking Center of New Jersey in Branchburg, established in October, 2011. His hope is to build a supportive community of veterans. “When you arrive in the war zone,” he notes, “that uniform stands for destruction and chaos and death and so to come back and take that symbol, that piece, to destroy it, to create something new out of it and make a positive thing from that uniform, it's got that feeling that you're moving on from that and stepping onto a new path.” Making Combat Paper helps veterans to move on.