

Call and Response: Artwork by Active Duty Service Members, Veterans, and Civilians



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau

The idea of call and response—themes and the artwork inspired by the themes—provides an interpretive overlay for the 44 works of art featured in this article of the journal. The themes chosen—*Recruit, Record, Rehabilitate, Retreat, React, Respect, Reflect, Remember, and Reorient*—suggest the experiential “life cycle” of those who have served in the armed forces—from recruitment into military life to reorientation back to the civilian world. Additionally, there are responses to a few of the themes by civilian artists who have had their own encounters with the forces of war and its impact on family and friends.

The pairing of themes and artwork facilitates deeper levels of understanding of stories both universal and unique. Within the structural parameters of each defined theme are opportunities for multiple interpretations of both artwork and theme.

Recruit includes work that suggests recruitment posters, a documentary film that explores the process of military training and its psychological effects, and the story of a young woman whose service in the Navy began at the point of a family tragedy.

Record depicts combat art that tells many stories. There are the visual “facts” of missions, but also insights into the level of vigilance required during combat. There are lessons to learn, bases to secure, and even rest and relaxation is tempered by a ready weapon. Perseverance is demonstrated in the *Rehabilitation* theme with the Joe Bonham Project drawings of a wounded warrior who is depicted as still in the fight and determined to go on with his life. But not all wounds are visible, and that too is suggested by work in this theme. Sometimes the invisible wounds of war take over, and the work included in *Retreat* captures a relentless inner chaos. The artwork included in *React* plays with different meanings of the term. An on-duty pilot is an “eye in the sky” protecting comrades from enemy danger, while the tank at ready on the home front suggests that those returned from battle find ways to reenact military maneuvers at home. Admiration and appreciation is at the core of all the images included in *Respect*—a flag, a wheelchair-bound warrior, a group of soldiers at reveille, a platoon of ceramic boots with dog tags created to honor 100 fallen soldiers, and the story of an Arlington National Cemetery burial and the legacy of this sacred place. The cost of war runs through all the images included in *Reflect*—the toll of combat seen in the eyes of soldiers from two different wars, and in the despair of a mother holding her dead son, and the ravages of war on land and home, to which new life always and inevitably returns. Proud legacies of service—accomplishment, identity, and community—are the highlights of the artwork represented in *Remember*. Two of the images recall the accomplishments of those who served in

WWII; two others suggest identity to a branch of service; while the final two depict familial community. For the last theme, *Reorient*, the artists use art making as a tool to find peace and to find their place again in a non-military world, depicting what it is like to “fight the demons,” finding ways to blend love and war, making visible horrific experiences that have been suppressed and invisible, and doing all that is required to save oneself.

Further insights regarding the motivations of the artist are in their biographies and artist statements. Reasons for making art are as varied as the artwork itself, and the artists represented have served in conflicts ranging from the Vietnam War to the most current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is also artwork by a Canadian soldier who was deployed throughout the Balkans on NATO and United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Aesthetically, the work covers a wide spectrum—from art making for healing to artwork intended to demonstrate professional art career ambitions. Images represented suggest historical legacy, duty and honor, as well as familial brotherhood and sisterhood. But they also depict betrayal, cynicism, and despair. Forms of expression include painting, sculpture, photography, mixed media, handmade paper, a ceramics installation, a one-person storytelling performance, and a documentary film production. Styles include the quickly captured “witness” art of Michael D. Fay, whose compositions and straightforward images recall the Civil War *Harper’s Magazine* illustration work of Winslow Homer, and Victor C. Juhasz, whose

drawings are filled with staccato lines that suggest the work of his mentor, WWII artist Howard Brodie.

Like many WWII veterans who took their GI Bill benefits and studied in arts programs across the country in the late 1940s and 1950s, today's veterans are doing the same and the inspiration for their work comes from a wide range of aesthetic and thematic influences, and from various mentors.

Giuseppe Pellicano created the installation of 100 ceramic boots with dog tags as his senior project while matriculating in the BFA program at North Central College. The work was funded by a grant from the school. Pellicano's installation recalls another one with boots—*Eyes Wide Open: An Exhibit on the Human Cost of the War*—developed by and displayed throughout the country since 2004 by the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker service organization.

The Veterans' Papermaking Project hosted by Patrick Sargent at George Mason University benefited from his earlier participation in a papermaking workshop lead by Drew Matott, co-founder of Combat Paper Project and Peace Paper Project. Sargent's artwork is about community collaboration and expands upon the Combat Paper Project traditions. So does the work of Robin Brooks, who participated in a Combat Paper Project workshop at Seminole State College in Oklahoma.

Gregory Gieske learned the mixed media technique he employs in his work from Brian Holland, one of his art professors at University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota. S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr. applies principles of art education acquired during his studies at

Bellarmino University in Louisville, Kentucky, to the information-driven pieces he creates, and Jessica Dittbenner, currently a student at University of Kansas, creates artwork out of her dual academic perspectives of art and anthropology.

A personal journey toward peace and contemplation has served and shaped the artistry of Tif Holmes. For the past three years she has studied contemplative Miksang photography with Jake Lorring, a photographer and writer as well as a registered nurse with the Texas Department of State Health Services, in Austin, Texas. At its most basic level Miksang (Tibetan for “good eye”) is concerned with uncovering the truth of pure perception. Holmes has used contemplative photography to bring vision and light to many troubling shadows that have trailed her since leaving the military.

The artwork presented here reveals a great deal to the observant viewer. Time and place and conditions of work are beautifully captured in the combat “witness” art of Fay and Juhasz. Several of the artists—Brooks, Gieske, Godin, Holmes, Kastava, McCall, and Neal—successfully interpret psychological trauma, offering a glimpse of inner turmoil and creative resolution. While others—Pellicano, Rohde, and Sargent—provide uplifting visions of honorable sacrifice and the strength that can be found in home, family, and community, however one finds it.

The Artwork

Recruit

Record

Rehabilitate

Retreat

React

Respect

Reflect

Remember

Reorient

Recruit



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—To enlist someone in the armed forces

Noun—A person newly enlisted and not fully trained

Featured Work



Gregory Gieske, *Progress* (n.d.)

Gregory Gieske, *Self-Portrait* (2012)

Robin Brooks, *Cold War June* (2012/2013)

S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr., *Reduced, Reused, Recycled* (n.d.)

S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr., *Rethink, Remove, Refuse* (n.d.)

Progress
‡
Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Mixed Media (n.d), 24 X 36 in., Courtesy Gregory Gieske

Description:

Mixed media in visual art refers to the employment of more than one media. A work on canvas that combines paint, ink, and collage can properly be called a "mixed media" work. When creating a painted or photographed work using mixed media choose the layers carefully and allow enough drying time to ensure the final work has integrity. Many effects can be achieved using mixed media. Mixed media is a flexible approach to art making. Found objects can be used with paints or graphite to express a meaning in everyday life.

Self Portrait

$$\vdots$$

Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Mixed Media (2012), 36 X 24 in., Courtesy Gregory Gieske

Cold War June



Robin Brooks (U.S. Navy Reserve)



Mixed Media, including pulped fiber from uniforms (2012/2013), Courtesy Robin Brooks

Cold War June

—Robin Brooks

Broken, shattered,
All that ever mattered;
Splintered, Fractured,
Mortally Wounded
In a Cold War June;
Literally torn apart, 1985
Preparing to embark
On a journey of independence;
Eternal reverberations
Of a single gunshot;
Resounding, resonating,
Vibrating through flesh and bone;
Piercing a vulnerable child's passionate heart;
Obliterating yesterday;
Taking with it, tomorrow;
Erasing a brother, annihilating a mother,
Echoing into forever;
So many lost souls
Suddenly adrift;
Now a dead girl walking
Into a sea of white uniforms;
Carrying a burning torch to the costume ball;
Illuminating the faces
Of a new family of surrogates;

Shining light upon painful cracks
In the once solid foundation;
Devoid of inspiration,
Hollow, empty;
Hanging by a gossamer thread,
Yet cloaked in standard, government-issue;
Honorable, protective garments;
Surrounded by generations,
Both past and present;
Rendering a private salute,
Pleading in a silent prayer
One fine Navy day
In June;
Levitating, rising, reincarnating,
A ghostly apparition appearing;
A former self;
A girl who once was;
A shadow, a specter hovering;
An unrecognizable daughter;
Alone;
Without a beloved father

Orphanhood

—Robin Brooks

Orphanhood, age nineteen,
Left to trek alone;
With only herself for company;
Born again, age nineteen,
Unto a broken home;
Fragments of some other life
Scattered about her feet;
Memories of a plastic bubble,
The tiny fish bowl,
A terrarium;
With smooth, perfect stones,
Predictable rows,
Pretty paths constructed
For the turtles to follow;
Orphanhood, age nineteen,
Fed to the dogs;
Left to die;
Nothing
But the howling wind;
And some strange girl
For company.

Description:

Cold War June, in its entirety, describes a sudden and complete metamorphosis in my young adulthood, during the 1980s, which combined two distinct, monumental, yet simultaneous events: Indoctrination into the U.S. Navy (a coming-of-age scenario) and the tragic death of my brilliant, beloved father (who was my foundational parent, life mentor, and hero on every conceivable level). My father died in the month of June, just days after my esteemed graduation from boot camp in Orlando, Florida, literally during the first three days of acclimation to "A School" in Meriden, Mississippi. In other words, my military journey began with horrific loss—not loss induced by war or hand-to-hand combat on the battlefield, but a familial loss that left an unimaginable, permanent wound that I've never gotten over. As the years have passed, I have learned to carry this burden of youth with some amount of wisdom and grace.

At the tender age of nineteen, my entire existence was forever altered; my life, future plans and enthusiastic outlook, essentially "turned on a dime," as the old saying goes. The gut-wrenching emotional and tangible, physical pain; confusion; and newfound embodiment of total abandonment that colored the beginning of my young Navy career are further described in an original poem from 1985 (the year of my father's death) entitled "Orphanhood."

The poem, written while I lived in the enlisted barracks at Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Maryland, encapsulates the evolution of a latent teenager/young adult to instant adult, overnight, without warning, with suddenly insufficient preparation for adulthood and all of the necessary requirements,

responsibilities, and hardships associated with total independence, the journey toward self-sufficiency at a young age without parents at the helm. I say, "without parents" in plural, as loving homage to my mother who was so deeply devastated by my father's unexpected death (she had lost her first husband in a terrible car accident right after he came home from Germany in World War II) that she was largely unavailable to me as a resource or mother-guide. She was absent, extremely forlorn, "missing-in-action." My brother, three years my senior, was also reeling from shock and disoriented. Therefore, I felt very much alone in my emotional space and processing, like a ship without a rudder aloft in a storm, particularly while attempting to fully embrace and embark on what should have been the beginning of a wonderful adventure, yet was so fraught with despair.

The artwork is a tribute to the girl I once was and the woman I became, largely due to my "surrogate family," the men and women of the U.S. Navy, closing ranks around me at a time when I needed a metaphorical anchor. I chose to imbed my traditional "Navy Whites" into Combat Paper pulp because it was my actual uniform worn at the time and because it represents an apparitional quality (something molting, perhaps angelic, ghostly, or other-worldly) surrounded by a cosmic form of protection; legions of soldiers, sailors, and "wingmen," walking me through the most difficult transition of my life. The uniform represents an authentic patriot, yet the parallel sense of being cloaked in a costume, completely disembodied, disconnected, and disassociated through grief. The ballet slipper, in the pocket of my uniform skirt, is a major part of that "lost girl."

Reduce(d), Reuse(d), Recycle(d)



S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr. (U.S. Army Reserve)



REDUCE[D]



"YOU GO TO WAR WITH THE ARMY
YOU HAVE...NOT THE ARMY YOU
MIGHT WANT OR WISH TO HAVE
AT A LATER TIME."

- DONALD RUMSFELD DEC. '04





REUSE[D]







RECYCLE[D]



Go	No Go	US MILITARY SUMMARY
	✓	CARE FOR VETERANS
	✓	CARE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES
	✓	CARE FOR SOLDIERS WITH MST
	✓	1 IN 3 SERVICEWOMEN ARE RAPED
	✓	CARE FOR VETERANS WITH TBI
	✓	CARE FOR VETERANS WITH PTSD
	✓	# OF SUICIDES OUTNUMBER CASUALTIES
	✓	OPERATIONAL READINESS

Ink Jet Print on Paper (n.d.), 36 X 24 in., Courtesy S. Bryan Reinholdt Jr.

Rethink, Remove, Refuse



S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr. (U.S. Army Reserve)



Ink Jet Print on Paper (n.d.), 36 X 24 in., Courtesy S. Bryan Reinholdt Jr.

Description:

My work mocks much of the propaganda that was used to recruit me and millions of others.

Record



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—To set down in writing or some other permanent form for later reference

Noun—A thing constituting a piece of evidence about the past, especially an account of an act or occurrence, kept in writing or some other permanent form

Featured Work



Michael D. Fay, *Setting in the Barbed Wire* (2013)

Michael D. Fay, *Laying Out a Patrol Base, Nawa District, 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment* (2013)

Michael D. Fay, *Counter Sniper Fire, Patrol Base Karma, 3rd Battalion of the 1st Marine Regiment* (2013)

Michael D. Fay, *Major Robert Farrell, CO of Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment* (2013)

Michael D. Fay, *In the Shadow of the Poppy Harvest* (2013)

Victor C. Juhasz, *Afghanistan—Catching Some Sleep in Transit* (2011)

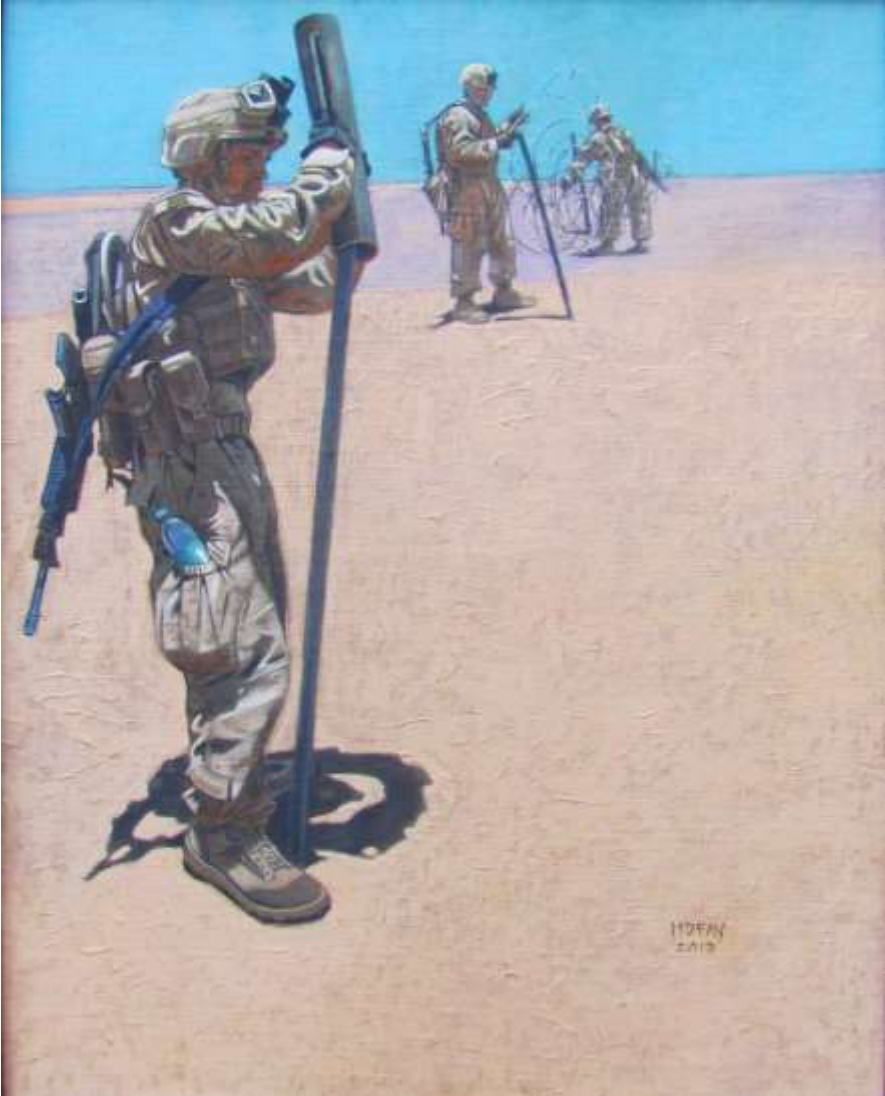
Victor C. Juhasz, *Combat Control Exercise* (2009)

Jerad Alexander, *Saw* (2005)

Setting in the Barbed Wire

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CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)



Acrylic on Canvas (2013) 20 X 16 in., from the art collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA

Description:

Few jobs are more demanding than setting in fresh barbed wire around a vulnerable patrol base. In this painting the Marines of 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment drive metal stakes into rock-hard earth and stretch out miles of barbed wire. Besides their body armor and rifles, their most valuable belongings are leather gloves and bottles of water.

War shapes everything from landscape and culture, to the very center of our psyches. My art philosophy is simple. Go to war, do art. As a naturalist, my methods are simple. Embed deeply, sketch what I see and return to the studio. Combat art has a reportage heritage, but is more poetic than literal. War art is witness art.

Laying Out a Patrol Base, Nawa District, 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment

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CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)



Acrylic on Canvas (2013), 16 X 20 in., from the art collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA

Description:

This painting shows Marines with the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment during the initial phase of setting up a new patrol base in the Nawa District of Helmand Province of Afghanistan. The location overlooks the Helmand River. The terrain is the rock-hard remains of once cultivated fields. Between lugging coils of barbed wire, filling HESCO barriers by hand, and fending off the Taliban, the greatest challenge is staying hydrated in the unrelenting heat of high noon in mid-May 2010.

Counter Sniper Fire, Patrol Base Karma, 3rd Battalion of the 1st Marine Regiment

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CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)



Acrylic on Canvas (2013), 20 X 16 in., from the art collection of the National
Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA

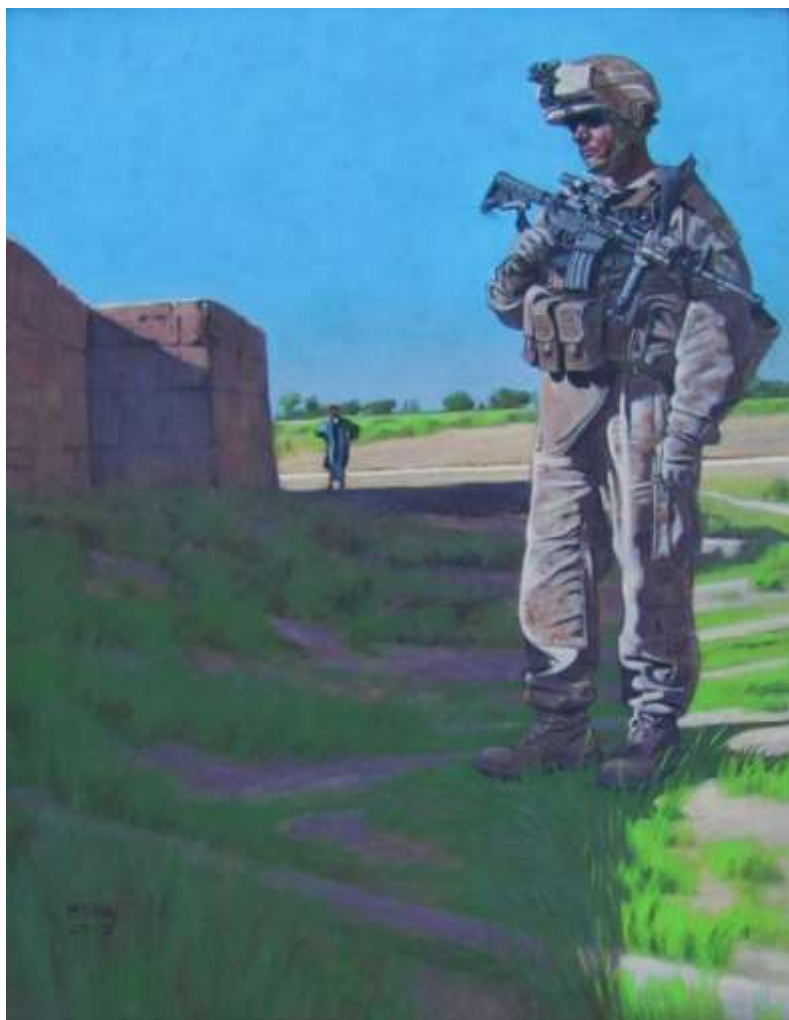
Description:

This image shows a Marine sniper team—Corporal King, his spotter, Staff Sergeant Diaz, and a crouching Lance Corporal Peterson—returning fire on a Taliban sniper at daybreak. The Patrol Base was receiving Taliban sniper fire from a mud compound approximately 300 meters south of their position. The team is on the roof of Patrol Base Karma, which in May 2010 was the southernmost Marine position in the restive Helmand Province and river valley. The patrol base was manned by a combined anti-armor team (CAAT) of Weapons Platoon of the Third Battalion of the 1st Marine Regiment. Sandwiched between two major irrigation channels and an easy target from other compounds, poppy fields, irrigation ditches, and tree lines, PB Karma was under constant fire from rocket-propelled grenades, rifle fire, and 102mm Chinese rockets. The enemy sniper was “walking” the rounds up Karma’s outside wall. The enemy’s “windage” was good, but the elevation off. The Marine sniper team maintained their cool as the rounds impacted just below them. While with the Marines there, the artist was missed by a Chinese rocket by one meter. The crouching Marine, LCpl Peterson, lost both legs two months later from an Improvised Explosive Device.

Maj. Robert Farrell, C.O. of Weapons Co., 3rd
Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment

‡

CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)



Acrylic on Canvas (2013), 20 X 16 in., from the art collection of the
National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA

Description:

Major Robert B. Farrell, commanding officer of Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion of the 3rd Marine Regiment, listens intently as a local school teacher rejects all help. Farrell stood off to the side as Human Exploitation (HET) Marines and an interpreter attempted to get the teacher to accept simple school supplies. The teacher believed, probably correctly, that even accepting pencils and paper would get him assassinated by the local Taliban. The Garmsir District in May 2010 was the most violent part of Afghanistan's Helmand Province. As Farrell listened, a student stood at the edge of the road leading back up to Forward Operating Base Geronimo and watched Farrell intently. Farrell's battalion was stretched so thin over such a large area, that Weapons Company was assigned its own area of operation and a major made commanding officer. Like his Marines, Farrell probably hadn't been out of his uniform in weeks, giving it the look and feel of stiff paper mache.

In the Shadow of the Poppy Harvest

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CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)



Acrylic on Canvas (2013), 20 X 16 in., from the art collection of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, VA

Description:

Lance Corporal Mulherron and his tracking dog, “Boone,” during a patrol pause outside of Forward Operating Base Geronimo in the battle-torn Garmsir Province of Afghanistan’s Helmand Province. Around them are freshly harvested opium poppy fields and they rest under the shade of trees beside piles of dried sheaves of poppies. The Marines of Weapons Platoon of the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Marine Regiment would find themselves during the ensuing months battling the profits made by the Taliban from the harvest, in the form of newly purchased rocket-propelled grenades and 102mm Chinese rockets.

Afghanistan: Catching Some Sleep in Transit



Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)



Pencil on Moleskin Paper (2011), 8 1/4 X 10 1/2 in., Courtesy Victor C. Juhasz

Text on the Artwork:

“8-14-11 / Transfer back to / Kabul on the / Way to Bagram / SGT.
Jonathan / Oliver”

Description:

One of the most satisfying aspects of my career has been the privilege and opportunity to return in recent years to a long suppressed passion for reportage – my last assignment was the 1982 trial of John Hinckley for the Washington Post. My desire is to carry the flame of great combat and reportage artists like the late Howard Brodie, my mentor and friend, and contribute to keep this vital and important art form alive. There is a special relationship that happens between the artist and the subject in the process of drawing, and I have tried my best to record as honestly and accurately what I have seen and experienced and in the cases of the soldiers and Marines interviewed, and have tried to tell their stories for the historical record. Like Brodie, who continued drawing on assignment into his 80s, I hope to continue contributing to witness art for as long as I am physically able. The five drawings and paintings included in this journal are a part of the tradition of "witness art."

Combat Control Exercise



Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)



Acrylic on Paper (2009), 22 X 29 in., from the art collections of United States Air Force, at the Pentagon, Arlington County, VA, digital image courtesy Victor C. Juhasz

Text on the Artwork:

“Combat control exercise instructors with trainees / Pope AFB /
Fort Bragg, NC 9-09”

SAW
‡
Jerad W. Alexander



Digital Photograph (2005), Courtesy Jerad W. Alexander

Description:

An M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon rests atop an amphibious assault vehicle during a cordon and search mission west of Camp Al Qa'im, Iraq, near the Syrian border, September 2005.

Rehabilitate



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—Restore to health or normal life by training and therapy after imprisonment, addiction, or illness

Featured Work



Victor C. Juhasz, *Kirkland AFB Pararescue Search and Rescue* (2010)

Victor C. Juhasz, *Sgt. Joseph Dietzel 1* (2011)

Victor C. Juhasz, *Sgt. Joseph Dietzel 2* (2011)

Suliman El-Amin, *Adjusting* (n.d.)

Kirkland AFB Pararescue (Search and Rescue Exercise)

‡

Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)



Acrylic on Board (2010), 24 X 48 in., from the art collections of United States Air Force, at the Pentagon, Arlington County, VA, digital image courtesy Victor C. Juhasz

SGT. Joseph Dietzel 1
‡
Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)



Pencil on Moleskin Pad (2011), 12 X 16 ½ in., Courtesy The Joe Bonham Project

Text on the Artwork:

“Sgt. Joseph Dietzel / USMC / 5-5-2011 / Physical Therapy / The
pain he is most / aware of is from / his broken heel / in right foot”

SGT. Joseph Dietzel 2

‡

Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)



Pencil on Moleskin, (2011), 12 X 16 1/2 in., Courtesy The Joe Bonham Project

Text on the Artwork:

“Stephens Johnson disease – red splotches – has lost 20 pounds
Sgt. Joseph Dietzel – USMC / President Obama presented Purple
Heart / John McCain gave him iPad / IED Afghanistan –”

“Bands used / for exercise / Six broken / vertebrae / Starting
below skull”

Adjusting
‡
Suliman El-Amin (Civilian)



Acrylic on Canvas (n.d.), 24 X 24 in., Courtesy Suliman El-Amin

Description:

The painting depicts a soldier who proudly wears the red, white, and blue but also expresses despair and sorrow. I created this image to bring awareness to the current state of many of our returning troops. For them the psychological and physical effects of combat are real and become more evident as they begin to readjust to civilian life.

Retreat



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—To withdraw from enemy forces as a result of their superior power or after defeat

Noun—An act of moving back or withdrawing

Featured Work



Anna Kestava, *Lost* (n.d.)

Anna Kestava, *Wasteland* (n.d.)

Lost
‡
Anna Kestava (U.S. Air Force)



Digital Painting (n.d.), 8 1/2 X 11 in., Courtesy Anna Kestava

Wasteland
‡
Anna Kestava (U.S. Air Force)



Digital Painting (n.d.), 8 1/2 X 11 in., Courtesy Anna Kestava

React



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—Respond or behave in a particular way in response to something; respond to a hostility opposition or contrary course of action

Featured Work



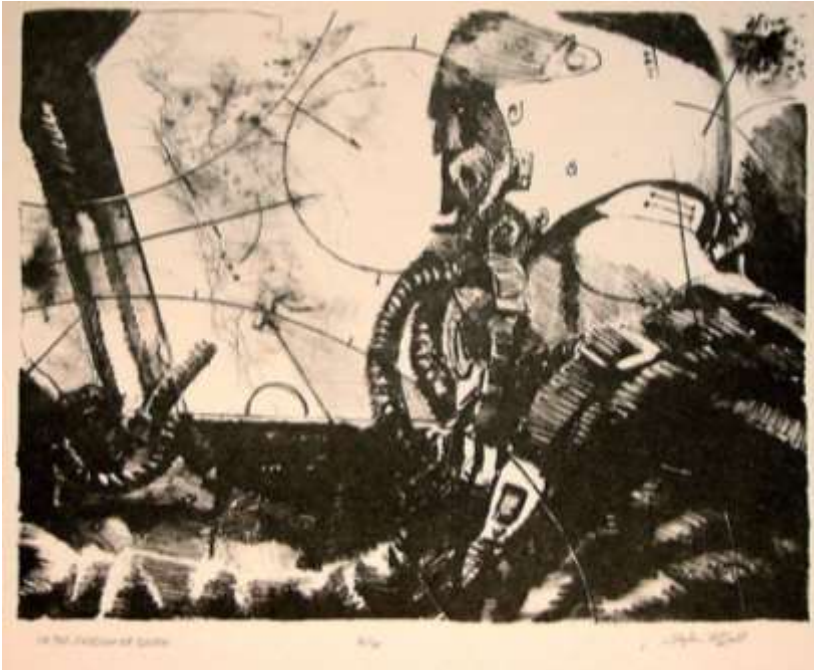
Stephen K. McCall, *In the Shadow of Death* (1985)

Anna Kestava, *Homeland Defense* (n.d.)

In the Shadow of Death

‡

Stephen K. McCall (U.S. Navy)



Lithographic Print on Paper (1985), 10 X 14 in., Courtesy Stephen K. McCall

Description:

This black and white lithograph is an image of a pilot scanning the terrain. He has banked his aircraft starboard, peers over the rail, and begins his search. He is sensitive enough to the dynamics of his aircraft to ignore the instrument panel allowing him to focus on the patterns and details below. This image was created to relate the unique “oneness” a man has with his machine and give reverence to our hero pilots.

Homeland Defense



Anna Kestava (U.S. Air Force)



Digital Painting (n.d.), 8 1/2 X 11 in., Courtesy Anna Kestava

Respect



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—Admire deeply as a result of their abilities, qualities, or achievements

Noun—A feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements

Featured Work



Tif Holmes, *Colors* (2012)

Skip Rohde, *Warrior* (2007)

Patrick Sargent, *Reveille* (November, 2012)

Giuseppe Pellicano, *Left. Left. Left, Right, Left* (2012)

Colors



Tif Holmes (U.S. Army)



Composite Photograph, Digitally Processed (2012), Courtesy Tif Holmes

Description:

This is an image showing the first two layers of the three-layer composite entitled *Invisible War*. These two layers consist of photographs of two American flags dated ca. 1953, given to my uncles after serving in the Korean War. This particular image has been rotated and mirrored from the original.

Warrior



Skip Rohde (U.S. Navy, Retired)



Oil on Canvas (2007), 60 X 60 in., Courtesy Skip Rohde

Reveille



Patrick Sargent (U.S. Air Force, Retired)



Pulp painting on handmade paper made from military uniforms and Fairfax County elementary school children's blue jeans (November, 2012), 26 x 18 inches, from the collections of Patrick Sargent, Clifton VA; on loan to George Mason University Office of Military Services, Fairfax, VA, digital image courtesy Patrick Sargent

Left. Left. Left, Right, Left
‡
Giuseppe Pellicano (U.S. Army)



Porcelain (2012), Given to Families of Whose Fallen Soldiers Are Memorialized by These Boots and Dog Tags, Courtesy Giuseppe Pellicano

Description:

Left. Left. Left, Right, Left. was an installation created to commemorate the fallen soldiers of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation New Dawn. The title stems from a cadence call used in the military during marching or running formations to keep soldiers in step with each other and is sung out from one soldier, then repeated by others. This call and response interaction between soldiers provides camaraderie and unity. This type of communication was reflected between the soldiers' families and me during the process of creating the individual boots and throughout the project. I sent out the call to the families and friends of the fallen and asked them to respond with information so I could honor their loved ones.

Thirteen years ago I enlisted into the United States Military and was adopted into a “family” that consisted of other men and women who chose to serve. I use the term family because I care for my fellow soldiers as I do my own brothers and sisters. We experienced many happy and difficult times together during my short, almost five-year stay, and in this period we built connection, love, and respect



Courtesy of North Central College

that will last forever. My military family will always be in my heart and mind, and when I learn that a soldier has fallen, it affects me the same way it would if I had lost one of my own siblings.

I began this project with the idea to create porcelain boot to represent each fallen soldier. I made a mold of an actual combat boot, which consisted of five parts, each creating the design for all sides. My concept represented the reality that each soldier died with his or her boots on, meaning they died fighting or serving. Based upon an old tradition when parents bronzed their newborn's shoes to memorialize their first steps into this world, I created a porcelain boot to commemorate each soldier's final steps out.

I first banded the five parts of the mold together, mixed the porcelain slip, and poured it directly into the



Courtesy Giuseppe Pellicano

mold. After fifteen to twenty minutes I poured out the excess. I then waited up to five hours before releasing the boot from the mold. When the slip was dry enough to release, I removed the seams left by the mold and smoothed and cleansed the surface areas of the boot. I then placed a hole in the tongue of each boot before it was fired and fastened the dog tags for each soldier after the firing was completed. I realized that each boot represented a life and that this person was loved by others. As I delicately

cleaned each boot, I imagined each soldier's body being cleaned and how their wounds are prepared so that he or she could arrive home to family and friends, ready for a memorial or funeral service. While cleaning the boots, I was again preparing them for family and friends to view. I chose porcelain, as it is the most precious of the many clay bodies that are used, and this would illustrate the respect I wished to present. I feel they deserve no less than the best. After firing, the boot remained white; this is the porcelain's natural color after bisque, which I feel presents a feeling of stillness and silence.

When I started slip casting each boot, I became overwhelmed with the potential number of boots I would need to make. Thousands of soldiers have fallen and I obviously knew it would be impossible to create one for each. However, I felt that the many I could make would inevitably reflect them all.

It was important for me to make each boot from the same mold. In religions, as well as in scientific theories, it is thought that we are all essentially made from the same elements or from the same design. I wanted to mirror this view in that each soldier is made from the same flesh and blood as the next, regardless of race, religion, or sex. We are all consistent in our existence, as are the soldiers who wear the same uniform and serve in the same institution. A plaster mold's short lifespan inhibited my ability to produce a greater number of porcelain boots, which I could have done if I had made numerous molds. For this installation, I made 100 boots, representing 100 soldiers who died in the line of duty.

In addition to my efforts to illustrate this thought of similarity regardless of individuality, I also decided to use dog tags. When visiting the National Veterans Art Museum, I saw a 10-by-40-foot sculpture, entitled *Above & Beyond*, which was designed by Ned Broderick and Richard Steinbock. There were thousands of dog tags that represented soldiers lost in Vietnam. The tags, like mine, had only the soldier's name, date of death, and branch of service.

Dog tags are worn to identify soldiers. They are typically worn around the neck, but in times of combat or deployment into hostile areas, commanders may order that one of the two tags be placed on the right boot. This is one of the reasons I chose the right boot for display rather than the left boot. The thought



Courtesy Giuseppe Pellicano

process was that the right boot would remain with the viewer and with the family or friend, as the left has stepped forward to begin the journey from earth. This is reflective of the military process: when a soldier falls, one tag remains with the body and the other tag is collected by the leadership. Each tag would be placed on each boot to identify the soldier and the date the soldier died. Although each soldier was an individual, he or she worked together for a cause. I felt it was also important to identify each branch of the military: Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, as doing so demonstrates the combination of the different forces and their unity.

Normally tags contain the soldier's name, Social Security number, blood type, and religion. I chose to leave out certain details as I felt they would distract or cause viewers to have other or distorted views of the soldier. The Social Security number, blood type, and religion were purposely excluded. I do not believe any of this information was central to the work and again thought that including this information would divert the viewer from the overall concept behind this memorial. The main objective of this work is to honor the fallen, not to unintentionally promote a certain religion or a political view. This is a difficult task, as Maya Lin stated, "People cannot resolve that war, nor can they separate the issues, the politics, from it." Maya Lin's work, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., memorializes the fallen in a beautiful simplicity and mentions only their names, but war is political, therefore the thought will always be present. Like Maya Lin, I wanted to create only a memory of the fallen. While the date

of birth of each soldier is and always will be imperative, the date the soldier died is the one I chose to represent. I wanted to keep the work simple and unclouded in communicating a message of remembrance.

The boots were stored safely in a room below the gallery. I retrieved and placed each boot individually onto the floor. While doing so I felt as though I was kneeling in front of each soldier, thanking them and remembering them as I read their name and gently placed the boot on the gallery floor.

For the final display I decided to place them in a formation of 10 boots in 10 ranks. This formation was meant to be in an open order, which in military terms means that there would be enough space between ranks to allow an inspecting officer or leader to pass through. However, due to a lack of space in the area provided for display, I was able to place them only in a close order; this unfortunately inhibited family, friends, and viewers to walk through and look at each individual boot as I had intended with my original concept. There is strangeness about the boots that affected me while creating them and setting them up for display. This eeriness was the knowledge of a lack of presence, but the oddness of them somehow being there with me. When looking at the boots, I envisioned the soldier who died wearing his or her boots. How did they die, what was their last thought, did they suffer? In Eleanor Antin's *100 Boots*, she set rain boots purchased from a surplus store and positioned them engaging in everyday activities: "By following 100 boots, we each become an extra pair. In essence, by simply having people look at the series, Antin has

helped foster a unity among us” (Salimi). I felt as though the fallen were standing in front of me. When I stored them, I was storing lives on a shelf that were waiting to be seen. When on display they were in formation, standing proud and with honor.

As I worked in a call and response fashion with military families to create this memorial, they did respond and often wrote something about their loved one that provided me with insight about that soldier. We worked together and formed close bonds. During the process of collecting the fallen soldier’s information from their family members or friends, I corresponded with many and learned a great deal about each individual soldier. They were loved and greatly admired. It was an emotional three months and with every email I received, my heart ached more. One evening before going to bed, I was emailed a request to include a soldier lost in Afghanistan. On many occasions a family member or friend would write a great deal about their soldier, but with this one, there was only one phrase. It simply said, “Rest in Peace, Brother.” My heart sank. I could not help but feel the pain this person was going through. I was touched deeply by all the words expressed by their family and friends, but this particular phrase overwhelmed me. I recalled the times I had with my fellow brothers and sisters in arms, and I relived the pain I had felt when I received word that some of the soldiers I had known had been killed or injured. I knew this work was meant to be seen and felt by others, so that they may understand the loss and the sacrifice so many have made.

During the installation, I wanted the viewer to be able to interact with the families as I had done throughout the project. In front of the formation of 100 boots was a pedestal with pamphlets containing the names of the soldiers each boot represented.

I created an accompanying booklet containing the letters I received from families and friends. The viewer was able to read about some of the soldiers and learn about the love and admiration the families had for each of them. I also included a hardbound black notebook to which I adhered a dog tag stating, "Letters to the families and friends of the fallen." In the notebook, viewers would be able to write to the families and to create a connection between them. I hoped that this interaction would render an understanding and bring honor and remembrance to the fallen and their loved ones. This practice allows the viewer to be touched by the individual stories as I have been during the creation of the work and, thus, brings a participatory aspect to the installation.

On the day of the opening reception, I was able to meet face to face with some of the families who provided me with the honor of commemorating their soldier. Again, it was very emotional. I was thanked for all my hard work and the time I spent on the project. This thanks perplexed me. These people had a loved one who gave his or her life serving this country. Regardless of the many thoughts and beliefs Americans have about war, politics, and the reason our country decided to deploy, our soldiers did something that so many other people would not do. They had the courage to stand and offer their lives, so others would not have to.

This same selfless service was exhibited by their families and friends, some of whom traveled many hours and from other states just to view their loved one's boot in the installation. Their thankfulness was humbling and caused me some confusion. I chose to create this memorial as a way to thank the soldiers and their loved ones for their service and their sacrifice. Instead, families thanked me for memorializing their loved one.

This project became something more than I had ever intended or imagined. I am thankful to these families for allowing me to learn more about myself and to understand even more greatly the strength they and their loved ones possess. During the installation, we spent two hours together talking about their lives and how they tremendously missed their heroes. They told me about the memorials they have at home in their gardens and of the rooms they have dedicated to their memory.

My intentions were to mail each boot, but for these families and friends who made their way to the gallery, I offered them their boot to take home. I wrapped their boots carefully and handed them to each person with respect and gratitude. I know that I will probably never speak to them again, but they, like their soldiers, will always be in my mind and I will be forever grateful.

The leadership, ethics, and values involved in my research for this project stem from my training in the U.S. Military. As part of this training I learned the seven core values associated with being a soldier in the Army. These values are Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Honor, Integrity, Selfless Service, and Personal Courage—all of which I carry into my civilian life, try to live by, and often create

works which invoke these characteristics and beliefs. This work exemplifies these values. It acknowledges and commemorates soldiers who fell during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and asks others to become aware of the courage and strength they, their families, and their friends display during such hardships.

Martin Chemers notes that leadership is the “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.” As a Non-Commissioned Officer in the Army, I learned the many attributes one must possess in order to become a successful leader. Of the many, one fixed itself above the rest. This is the belief that a leader should lead by example. I wanted to not only memorialize the fallen, but to show others that the selfless service these men and women demonstrated should be celebrated. I am not suggesting that others should follow suit and join the military, but only recognize these soldiers’ bravery in hopes that it may influence us in a manner that we can all follow. These men and women placed the welfare of the nation, the Army, and their subordinates before their own and by doing so, provided us with safety and modeled appropriate manner. Consideration of others fuels the common good and they lead by such an example.

The boots were shipped out to the family members and friends who I have reached all across America. I hope that when they received the boot, they will know that many other people have seen their loved one’s name and that their hero will be remembered. I am honored to be able to create a memorial for my brothers and sisters, and although it was a brief presentation, their

families and friends will be able to look at the boot they are presented and recall their loved one's bravery, service, love, and their time with us.

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Reflect



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—To think, ponder, or meditate

Featured Work



Stephen K. McCall, *First In, Last Out* (1985)

Richard Neal, *PTSD* (2009)

Skip Rohde, *Lament* (2006)

Andrew Godin, *Easter in Croatia* (1992)

Andrew Godin, *Vines on Bombed Out House* (1986)

Andrew Godin, *The Wicked Web We Weave* (1996)

Andrew Godin, *Mortars Under Trees* (2000)

First In, Last Out
‡
Stephen K. McCall (U.S. Navy)



Lithographic Print on Paper (1985), 10 X 14 in., Courtesy Stephen K. McCall

Description:

The black and white lithograph is an image of a war worn, battle tested infantryman/Marine staring from under his steel helmet with eyes that have seen too much, experienced too much, and lost too much. If he survives he will carry and manage, with reluctance or pride, a burden of hell what is now called PTSD. Those who do not know can sympathize, while those who do will understand. An old man at nineteen!

PTSD
‡
Richard Neal (Civilian)



Oil and Mixed Media on Panel (2009), 48 X 64 in., Courtesy Richard Neal

Description:

In 1973 I was a senior in high school with a draft number. When I learned about the end of U.S. military involvement in Viet Nam that year, 40 years ago, I experienced a mixture of relief and guilt. Primarily I felt relief because I would not have to go away to a foreign war zone. But also there were feelings of guilt in the realization that I had only been lucky in avoiding a war in which so many of my generation, over 50,000, had been killed.

We have since switched to a volunteer army, which means that a person's decision to enter the armed services is one's own and not a decision forced upon them. But statistics show that service now falls disproportionately to those of lower socioeconomic levels who have less access to higher education and the possibility for other, higher paid, and less stressful, less dangerous jobs.

During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it was upsetting to learn about the ban on photographs of the flag-draped coffins of our returning war dead, which served to insulate the American public from the true costs of those wars. Equally disturbing is the very high level of post-traumatic stress disorder among current soldiers and veterans. My portrait of a soldier witnessing battle is an attempt as a civilian to bring more awareness in a visual way to the plight of those who have bravely done what is asked of them.

Lament



Skip Rohde (U.S. Navy, Retired)



Oil on Canvas (2006), 60 X 60 in., Courtesy Skip Rohde

Description:

Lament is part of a series of paintings, titled "Meditation on War," that examines the effects of combat on people and places. All were based on my own experiences in the military—they were about things I experienced or saw. *Lament*, in particular, is based on Michelangelo's *Pieta* and is about a parent's loss when their son or daughter is killed in the line of duty. Whether that loss was worthwhile for a greater cause is up to the viewer.

Easter in Croatia



Andrew Godin (Canadian Armed Forces, Retired)



Photograph & Poem (1992), Courtesy Andrew Godin

Tanka Poetry Accompanying Artwork:

Gentle rains of spring
Wake earth from its winter sleep
New life is reborn
Weapons of man reign from high
Sowing only death and pain

Vines on a Bombed Out House



Andrew Godin (Canadian Armed Forces, Retired)



Photograph & Poem (1992), Courtesy Andrew Godin

Tanka Poetry Accompanying Artwork:

A home once for man
Abandoned and scarred by war
Occupied now by nature
Vibrant, flourishing
Slowly masks all signs of hate

The Wicked Web We Weave



Andrew Godin (Canadian Armed Forces, Retired)



Photograph & Poem (1992), Courtesy Andrew Godin

Tanka Poetry Accompanying Artwork:

Web of a spider
Suspended in the barbed wire
Unaware of me
Covered in the morning dew
All is well in nature's eyes

Mortars Under Tree



Andrew Godin (Canadian Armed Forces, Retired)



Photograph & Poem, (1992), Courtesy Andrew Godin

Tanka Poetry Accompanying Artwork:

In a perfect world
Trees would bear fruit like apples
Wars raged by man produce fruit
Metal; explosives
Borne from the true poison tree

Description of Artistic Process:

I was medically released from the military in 2006 with an Operational Stress Injury or OSI. More specifically, I was diagnosed with PTSD, Major Depression and Anxiety Disorder. I was hospitalized in a Stress and Trauma treatment facility and was introduced to Art Therapy. Already an avid photographer, I began experimenting with poetry writing and trying to combine both genres. What I came up with was utilizing an ancient Japanese form of poetry called Tanka. Tanka poems consist of 5 lines and a maximum of 31 syllables which are broken down as follows:

5 Syllables

7 Syllables

5 Syllables

7 Syllables

7 Syllables

Tanka poetry is well-grounded in concrete images but also is infused with the intensity and intimacy that comes from the direct expression of emotions. They were often composed as a kind of finale to every sort of occasion; no experience was quite complete until a Tanka had been written about it. For me, it became a vehicle through which I could deal with one specific aspect of my experiences at a time without being overwhelmed by the flood of images and memories associated with my trauma.

This flood, or "Flow State" as I refer to it as, was so intense it would keep me in a state of panic for days or weeks on end. The strict structure of Tanka poetry meant I only had to deal with a

small piece of the puzzle at time allowing me to process and come to terms with it before moving on to the next piece. Over time it became easier to deal with my trauma by chipping away at small pieces of the huge balled up mess I had accumulated during my career. This method of using Tanka poetry to come to terms with my trauma was symbolically my way of completing the career experiences and has allowed me to move forward with life.

Remember



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—To bring to one's mind an awareness of something that one has seen, known, or experienced

Featured Work



Gregory Gieske, *Blue and White Devils* (2012)

Gregory Gieske, *Yankee* (2010)

Gregory Gieske, *Memories* (2012)

Patrick Sargent, *Moments* (November 2012)

Patrick Sargent, *Moments 2* (November 2012)

Patrick Sargent, *The Corps* (November 2012)

Blue and White Devils



Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Mixed Media (2012), 36 X 24 in., Courtesy Gregory Gieske

Description:

Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division earned the nickname “Blue & White Devils” during WWII as they fought off the German invasion and held their ground against all odds. Blended into the background are old photos from WWII, and the main subject is a soldier from Crazy Troop, 3rd Squadron, 7th U.S. Cavalry, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Yankee
‡
Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Mixed Media (2012), 36 X 24 in., Courtesy Gregory Gieske

Description:

Yank, the Army Weekly was a weekly magazine published by the United States military during World War II, which I helped resurrect during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn by recreating the covers from WWII as well as being a photojournalist and drawing cartoons for the magazine.

Memories

‡

Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Mixed Media (2012), 8 1/2 X 11 in., Courtesy Gregory Gieske

Description:

Remembering the war torn city of Mosul, Iraq, this photo always made me smile. An Iraqi S.W.A.T. officer is sporting a Tom Selleck mustache.

Moments



Patrick Sargent (U.S. Air Force, Retired)



Pulp painting on handmade paper made from military uniforms and Fairfax County elementary school children's blue jeans (November, 2012), 26 x 18 inches, from the collections of Patrick Sargent, Clifton VA, on loan to George Mason University Office of Military Services, Fairfax, VA, digital image courtesy Patrick Sargent

Moments 2



Patrick Sargent (U.S. Air Force, Retired)



Pulp painting on handmade paper made from military uniforms and Fairfax County elementary school children's blue jeans (November, 2012), 32 x 21 inches, from the collections of Patrick Sargent, Clifton VA, on loan to George Mason University Office of Military Services, Fairfax, VA, digital image courtesy Patrick Sargent

The Corps



Patrick Sargent (U.S. Air Force, Retired)



Pocket from a Marine Corps uniform immersed in pulped fibers from Fairfax County elementary school children's blue jeans (November 2012), 10 X 7 inches, from the collections of Patrick Sargent, Clifton VA, on loan to George Mason University Office of Military Services, Fairfax, VA, digital image courtesy Patrick Sargent

Reorient



Tara Leigh Tappert and Kate Rouleau, Eds.

Verb—To change the focus or direction; to find one's position again in relation to one's surroundings

Featured Work



Gregory Gieske, *Fighting the Demons* (n.d.)

Jessica Dittbenner, *LOve AnD WaR* (2013)

Tif Holmes, *Prisoner of War* (2013)

Tif Holmes, *Invisible War* (2012)

Tif Holmes, *Self-Portrait of a Savior* (2012)

Fighting the Demons
‡
Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Mixed Media (n.d.), 24 X 36 in., Courtesy Gregory Gieske

LOve AnD WaR



Jessica Dittbenner (U.S. Army)



Sculpture (Mild Steel & Cast Plastic; 2013), 28 X 18 in., Courtesy
Jessica Dittbenner

Description:

LOve AnD WaR is primarily constructed of mild steel pieces connected by rivets. At the center of the body cavity is a plastic grenade cast from a training grenade. The piece has been painted with double coat acrylic spray paint. Love and war—the two most explosive forces in the human experience!

Prisoner of War
‡
Tif Holmes (U.S. Army)



Composite Photograph with Digital Drawing (2013), Courtesy Tif Holmes

Description:

Prisoner of War (2013) is a composite image that is very personal to my own military experience and yet encapsulates a shared suffering within the veteran community: the internal (and oft times silent) costs of war and military experience. The black shadow-figure standing behind the soldier in the image represents any combination of a multitude of captors, physical and mental, that keep veterans prisoner: shame, regret, fear, intimidation, anger, depression, PTSD, psychological responses to physical wounds and limitations, physical beings, or the military institution itself—the list will vary from veteran to veteran, but the concept remains that something or someone keeps us prisoner beyond the battlefield. On my own very personal level, it represents a physical being—a comrade—who betrayed my trust and sexually assaulted me repeatedly during my military service.

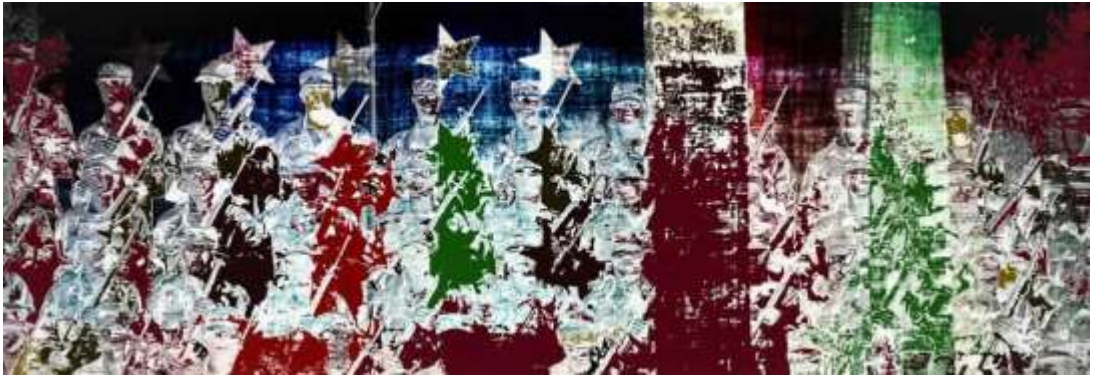
The gun represents violence: captor against veteran, veteran against others, and veteran against self in a perpetual cycle of fear and manipulation. The shadow-figure's hand covers the soldier's mouth representing the veteran's silence, enforced by the captor. The flag represents the veteran's pure and honorable conviction to serve, though that conviction is soiled by the atrocities of war and the harsh reality of military culture; therefore, the flag does not extend fully across the image behind the shadow-figure. Instead, we see only dirt and grime behind the captor. Lastly, and on a more personal note, the image of the veteran is actually a blending of my own Basic Combat Training photo with an image of my

perpetrator. This is to illustrate how entangled we become with our captors, how we continue working with them (physically and mentally), how we actually try to reckon with them and negotiate with them in desperate attempts to survive. We try to out-think them, and even to understand them so that we might answer the question we all inevitably ask: "Why?"—That entanglement is the most threatening and destructive captor of all.

Invisible War

‡

Tif Holmes (U.S. Army)



Composite Photograph with Digital Painting (2012), Courtesy Tif Holmes

Description:

This is a three-layer image consisting of two images of American flags dated ca. 1953 that were given to my uncles after serving in the Korean War, and an image of my Basic Combat Training platoon photo dated 2005. After the three photographs were layered into one, I used computer software to digitally paint over the top of the image.

I created this image on Memorial Day 2012 as an acknowledgement and celebration of those who have suffered and continue to suffer in service to this nation (and other nations) on battlefields both distant and near. But even more specifically, this

image is representative of the numerous men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces who have been deeply wounded or murdered in battles less obvious and in less distant places. It is a photographic representation of the invisible becoming visible, in terms of both wounds and the wars in which they are suffered: psychological versus physical, the unseen versus the seen. It is a direct response to the epidemic of rape in the military, most recently brought to public light by the documentary entitled *The Invisible War* by filmmaker Kirby Dick.

"How do you keep war accountable to the American people when war becomes invisible?"

You make it visible.

(Self) Portrait of a Savior

‡

Tif Holmes (U.S. Army)



Composite Photograph, Digitally Processed (2012), Courtesy
Tif Holmes

Description:

This image is a composite photograph consisting of two portraits and multiple other photographs for texture and color. Of the two portraits used, one is an intimate composition of a statue of Christ during the last hours of his crucifixion. The close-up image communicates to the viewer the pain and suffering Christ endured on his final journey to the cross. The other portrait—a self-portrait of the artist—was layered on top of the portrait of Christ, lining up the facial features and softening some details for a better blend. The eyes are mine. The lines at the corner of the mouth are mine. Part of the nose is mine. The mouth, eyebrows, chin, cheeks, nose bridge, and part of the nose are an amalgamation of the Christ statue's and my own. The concept is simple: we all suffer—some of us terribly—but there is the strength of a savior within each of us, and we must find that within ourselves to rise again. For me personally, this image represents an acceptance of my own responsibility to this life: a responsibility to my own well-being, and a commitment to saving myself from the pain and suffering of post-traumatic stress.

The Artists



Jerad W. Alexander (U.S. Marine Corps)

Robin Brooks (U.S. Navy Reserve)

Jessica Dittbenner (U.S. Army)

Suliman El-Amin (Civilian)

CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)

Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)

Andrew Godin (Canadian Armed Forces, Retired)

Tif Holmes (U.S. Army)

Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)

Anna Kestava (U.S. Air Force)

Stephen K. McCall (U.S. Navy)

Richard Neal (Civilian)

Giuseppe Pellicano (U.S. Army)

S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr. (U.S. Army Reserve)

Skip Rohde (U.S. Navy, Retired)

Patrick Sargent (U.S. Air Force, Retired)

Jerad W. Alexander (U.S. Marine Corps)



Courtesy Jerad W. Alexander

Jerad W. Alexander is a writer and the associate editor of *The Blue Falcon Review* and a contributing editor for the *Journal of Military Experience*. From 1998-2006 he served as a U.S. Marine infantryman and combat correspondent with deployments to the Mediterranean, the Horn of Africa, and Iraq. He is the author of *The Life of Ling Ling: A Novella about Iraq* (2013). He currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia.

Robin Brooks (U.S. Navy Reserve)



Robin creating *Cold War June*, Courtesy Tara Leigh Tappert

Robin Brooks is a Navy Public Affairs Officer, Lieutenant Commander, in the process of retiring from the U.S. Navy Reserve. Currently, Brooks is affiliated with a Voluntary Training Unit (VTU) at the Navy Operational Support Center in Oklahoma City; although she has spent the bulk of her military career on the West Coast of the United States in Southern California. She is primarily a writer and creates oil-paintings and multi-media projects on a regular basis for cathartic relief and for entertainment.

Jessica Dittbenner (U.S. Army)



Courtesy Jessica Dittbenner

My artistic expressions include painting, mixed media, and photography. My current status is active reserve, as a member of the U.S. Army Reserve—with deployments to Iraq in 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2008 and one deployment to Afghanistan as a contractor in 2011. I've also spent time in conflict zones in Asia as a volunteer with the non-profit organization Worldwide Impact Now. I believe there is a wide gap between the reality of our current conflicts and the perspective civilians get from the media. In my art I try to bridge that gap. I am currently majoring in Art and Anthropology at the University of Kansas.

Suliman El-Amin (Civilian)

I am a self-taught artist who has been painting for six years. I work mainly in acrylic and paint urban American life themes. Although I have never served in the military, I have many family and friends who have served in all branches of the military. I firmly support them and our country's endeavor to protect American life at home and abroad.

CWO2 Michael D. Fay (U.S. Marine Corps, Retired)



Courtesy Michael D. Fay

Michael D. Fay is a retired Marine Corps chief warrant officer. From 2000 to the end of 2009 Fay was the primary official combat artist for the National Museum of the Marine Corps, located in Quantico, Virginia. As a war artist in uniform, he deployed twice to Iraq (2003 and 2005-2006), and twice to Afghanistan (2002 and 2005), and as a freelance correspondent he went one more time to Afghanistan (2010). Fay's illustrations and writings have appeared in *The New York Times*, Canada's *National Post*, *Leatherneck Magazine*, *American Artist Magazine*, and the *National Endowment for the Arts Quarterly Magazine*.

Gregory Gieske (U.S. Army)



Courtesy Gregory Gieske

Gregory Gieske served in the United States Army as a Forward Observer and as a Photojournalist. He studied art at the College of Visual Arts in St. Paul, Minnesota, and with Brian Holland, a professor of mixed media art at the University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota. Gieske has been working as a photographer and mixed media artist for more than a decade. He has completed arts commissions for Army Generals and Battalion Commanders, and has done murals in Kuwait and Iraq. Gieske and his wife have their own photography business in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and in addition to that work he also creates what he describes as his own “unique grunge style” of art.

Andrew Godin (Canadian Armed Forces, Retired)



Courtesy Andrew Godin

I am a 20-year veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces as a Warrant Officer. I spent my first 10 years and 2 UN tours as a Combat Engineer. My primary role on these missions was minefield clearance, as well as UXO (Unexploded Ordnance Disposal) and disarming booby traps. I re-mustered and spent my remaining 10 years as a surveyor and mapmaker. In total, I was on 5 United Nation and NATO peacekeeping operations mainly in the Balkans.

Tif Holmes (U.S. Army)



Courtesy Tif Holmes

I am a photographer, a writer, a musician, an educator, and a former soldier, among other things. My experiences have made me intensely aware of injustice and suffering, as well as immense beauty and joy, and I strive to communicate those things through my work. While I have a very strong connection to nature, and much of my work emanates from that connection, I enjoy working with diverse subjects and continually seek to push the boundaries of my own self-expression. I am a member of the visual peacemaker community at International Guild of Visual Peacemakers, and I am purposefully committed to their ethical code, their values, and their vision.

Victor C. Juhasz (Civilian)



Courtesy Victor C. Juhasz

Victor C. Juhasz is a prolific illustrator of caricature and satiric images for major publications for nearly 40 years, and since 2006 he has been able to devote a significant portion of his work time to a parallel passion for reportage—also known as "witness art."

Juhasz is a member of the USAF Art Program via the Society of Illustrators, New York (and currently serves as vice-chair of the Government Services Committee). In August 2011, as a member of the International Society of War Artists, Juhasz embedded for a few weeks in Afghanistan, with an Army Medevac (Dustoff) unit stationed in Kandahar. His drawings and journals were featured in *GQ* online and turned into an app for *GQ*'s July 2012 online edition. He is the recipient of both a gold and silver medal from the Society of Illustrators as well as the prestigious Hamilton King Award in 2013 for his combat art journalism.

Anna Kestava (U.S. Air Force)



Courtesy Anna Kestava

Once my fancy was soothed with dreams of virtue, of fame, and of enjoyment; once I falsely hoped to meet with beings who, pardoning my outward form, would love me for the excellent qualities which I was capable of unfolding. I was nourished with high thoughts of honor and devotion. But now crime has degraded me beneath the meanest animal. No guilt, no mischief, no malignity, no misery, can be found comparable to mine. When I run over the frightful catalog of my sins, I cannot believe that I am the same creature whose thoughts were once filled with sublime and transcendent visions of the beauty and the majesty of goodness. But it is even so; the fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone.

Stephen K. McCall (U.S. Navy)



Courtesy Stephen K. McCall

Stephen McCall was born and raised in Nash County, North Carolina, and earned a BFA from East Carolina University in 1985 and an MFA from the University of Georgia in 1988. McCall developed an interest in the Civil War era while an undergraduate student, and found through historical reenactment events the opportunity to bring together his passions for history, the U.S. military, and art making. McCall has created hundreds of paintings and drawings, with subject matter ranging from still lifes to portraits, book illustrations, as well as historical events. His work is in the collections of North Carolina state historic sites and state parks, public institutions, and private owners. He has exhibited across the U.S., in Spain, and in South Africa.

Richard Neal (Civilian)



Courtesy Richard Neal

Richard Neal is a painter and sculptor working at Chalkboard Studio in Barnstable, Massachusetts. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from UMass Dartmouth and a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. His work has been exhibited in many group and one-person shows and is included in numerous private collections. In 2012 his work was featured in Chelsea, New York City, at *Patty DeLuca's Sock Monkey* and at the NKG Gallery in Boston. In 2013 he was the Set Foreman and Artistic Advisor for the first Cape Cod production of *Red*, John Logan's play about Mark Rothko, and he had a one-man show at the Tao Water Gallery in Provincetown, Massachusetts. In 2014 he will be featured in Debbie Forman's book about outstanding Contemporary Cape Cod artists.

Giuseppe Pellicano (U.S. Army)



Courtesy Giuseppe Pellicano

Giuseppe Pellicano is the founder of the Warrior Art Group, a grassroots organization established to create a zone for veterans, active duty military members, and their spouses. The group showcases original artwork in any form or medium, and plans to offer online space where members can exhibit, sell, enter contests, and network with others.

S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr. (U.S. Army Reserve)



Courtesy S. Bryan Reinholdt, Jr.

S. Bryan Reinholdt enlisted in the Army Reserves in 1999 as an Apache helicopter electrical and armament systems technician. Despite disillusionment with the Reserve system and its readiness, his unit (8/229 Aviation Regiment) deployed under the 42nd Infantry Division in 2004. The deployment in support of O.I.F. III shed light on the operational function of the unit and its corresponding companies, but the experience also challenged him to rethink the purposes and motives for war. While serving out his time in the military, He is currently an art education teaching assistant at the University of Kentucky. Reinholdt has also been active with Iraq Veterans Against the War, serving on the national Board of Directors as secretary from 2009 to 2010, as treasurer from 2011 to 2012, and currently as a co-chair.

Skip Rohde (U.S. Navy, Retired)



Courtesy Skip Rohde

Skip Rohde is a retired U.S. Navy cryptologic officer with over 22 years of service. Subsequently, he deployed to Iraq for 18 months with the Department of State and the Army Corps of Engineers. A year later, he deployed to Afghanistan with the Department of State, serving in Kandahar Province. He's been an artist since childhood. After retiring from the Navy in 1999, Skip earned a BFA from the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Upon graduation, he became a professional working artist for five years before deploying to Iraq. While deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, Skip continued to make artwork. A series of almost 50 drawings, titled *Faces of Afghanistan*, was shown in October-November 2012 at UNC Asheville.

Patrick Sargent (U.S. Air Force, Retired)



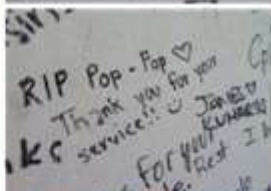
Courtesy Patrick Sargent

In 2002, after twenty years of service, I prepared to retire from the military. With our nation at war I felt strangely guilty for leaving. Earlier that same year I completed my first degree at George Mason University in political science. When I signed up for Professor Diccio's printmaking class it was supposed to be one of those courses that would round out and complete my educational experiences. Instead, and rather amazingly, it became the beginning of another journey. That course introduced me to the centuries-old traditions of printmaking. Since then I've earned a BFA in printmaking at George Mason University (2012), and I am currently in their MFA program, where I am continuing to explore the printmaking process, and, by extension, its emphasis on collaboration—between artists, printmakers, and audiences.

Project Overview: George Mason Paper Project



Patrick Sargent



Courtesy Patrick Sargent

I like to work in collaborative environments that foster a sense of belonging —sharing information, sharing techniques, exchanging and donating artwork, creating exhibitions and workshops, and hosting other kinds of community events. I work with local non-profit organizations that assist returning war

veterans in reintegrating into society, and I also work with groups that address issues of hunger in our community. My specific goals are to create collaborative arts experiences for these particular populations—creating artwork and organizing exhibitions centered on artistic expressions of healing and coping. Collaborative arts processes—such as printmaking and papermaking—are catalysts for communities to experiment with forms of expression and creativity, and are also opportunities to foster new ideas and critical thinking. To leave the quiet and sanctity of the artist studio for art making in public spaces invites the kind of interchange that can connect disparate segments of a community. For those groups that express a sense of disenfranchisement, loss of connect with society, or suffer from alienation, providing art making processes at skill levels applicable for all participants, not only results in a flow of creative expression, but also a stream of dialogue that dispels misinformation, deepens understanding, and strengthens the foundation of the community.

In recent years the veterans' community has become the fastest growing population on the George Mason University campus. Even though students who are veterans are often just a few years older than their civilian classmates, there is very little common ground in their life experiences and maturity. Last year, over the Veterans Day weekend (November 8-11, 2012), Students, veterans, visitors, and Mason employees cut uniform items, formed sheets of paper, asked questions, and created works of art that represented their military or their personal experiences.

In preparation for the Veterans Day weekend, they worked with students in eight Fairfax County (Virginia) elementary schools, cutting blue jeans, pulping them, and forming large sheets of paper. These sheets were then decorated for Veterans Day, and given to GMU student veterans. The intent was to connect different generations of students throughout Fairfax County—elementary school students and GMU student veterans. Additionally, the pulped fiber created with the elementary school students was blended with the pulp from military uniforms. This unique mix of fibers—symbolizing the reintegration of veterans back into their local George Mason and Northern Virginia communities—was used by participants of the Veterans Day weekend project to create pulp-painted handmade paper.