

The Graffiti of War Project



"A Nation will be judged by the way it treats its veterans..."

George Washington

What We Are Doing & Why

This idea has been a dream of ours since our return from Iraq in support of OIF '05-'07. The premise behind this project is twofold: to bring about understanding, foster empathy and bridge the widening gap between service members and civilians through the creation of the published book. Upon the completion of the book and subsequent sales, we are committed to donating a large portion to the select non-profit organizations we are working with that focus on PTSD and TBI research, treatment as well as offering support and solutions for those afflicted with the silent wounds of war, PTSD and TBI

As this war has entered its tenth year our nation has become silently divided, the widening divide between soldier and civilian grows with each year. It has become more and more difficult to understand the life and trials of a deployed soldier and their family. Although most Americans support our brave men and women, they don't grasp the magnitude of what affect this conflict, these deployments have on the families and on the mind and soul of the soldier. In documenting these images created by soldiers, marines, and airmen, our aim is to give a unique glimpse into the minds of these warfighters. To give America an inside look at what has gone almost entirely unseen to the vast majority of the public. Many of these images are raw and created in the moment on unconventional canvases in a very unconventional war. This art, this emotion on canvas will help civilians understand what it is to be separated from family, to lose one of your own in a blink of an eye, to get a feel, a taste of what 15 months fighting a very unpopular war is like. We want to bridge that divide growing in America, we want to bring back the empathy that is lacking for these men and women, and empathy is an emotion that requires understanding, which is our mission. *To bring understanding to Americans not familiar with the emotions of war.*

The other part of our goal is to bring healing to the American warfighter. With the advances in medical technology, vehicle and body armor, more of our combat troops are surviving the horrors of conflict. In the past, battlefield deaths were drastically higher than now because of these technological advances. Many troops that are coming home after surviving brutal injuries, living with the nightmares of a hell on earth are having a difficult time readjusting, relating, and surviving their inner struggle. Still more are heading home with not a scratch on the surface, but their minds are full of holes. These silent wounds are leaving our soldiers riddled with despair. In not treating this grievous affliction, we are leaving these soldiers on the battlefield. The focus of this project after the completion of the book is to use those funds to help our brothers and sisters-in-arms use artistic expression to fight this inner battle, to heal those unseen wounds. Through developing a program of art therapy and support groups with the help of the VA and university psychology departments as well as volunteers, we hope to bring together veterans and service members with civilians to encourage dialog, promote camaraderie and create the skills needed to cope and one day heal from this debilitating invisible wound afflicting more and more of our warfighters. Our mission is to serve those who serve us, to ensure the successful reintegration and fill in the gaps of an overburdened and underfunded VA system.

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We have, from the beginning, wanted to do something for our fellow veterans and current service members that would benefit every aspect of their life. From their emotional and mental state to their creative minds and incredibly selfless acts of service. And it really comes down to this: As service members going through Basic training, either as Soldiers or Marines, Airmen or Sailors, we were getting yelled at, belittled, pushed to our physical and mental limits, but one thing kept us going, each other.

When we went to war, some foreign hot (or frigid) hellhole thousands of miles from our warm beds, we didn't quit. When we did some of the most difficult things, ever to be asked of a citizen of this Nation, we did it, not because of some politician, or policy maker, some President or Congressman, we did it because of US. We did it for our brother on our left and our sister on our right. We did it, and would do it all over again, because we had each other's back.

Our reminders were everywhere, on our Tanks and Helicopters, on those rucks we carried and those aid bags we wiped clean of blood, U.S.....Us, you and I, and those we lost.....US.

That was our mission and still is, as veterans, former soldiers and marines, and airmen and sailors. US, By Any Means Necessary! Why should our care for one another stop when we get our DD214, why should our support of one another cease when we are assigned to Fort Couch? It doesn't have to and it Damn well shouldn't. Therefore, our mission at the Graffiti of War is to continue that tradition of support and camaraderie to support our brothers and sisters to our left and to our right. Why should we let the civilians corner the market on success? We are millions strong now, our numbers have grown. Our great-grandparents and grandparents did it in WWII; they came home and grabbed their success, took it and made it their own. We can learn from the mistakes of Vietnam, we shall not be judged by those who never took a man's life for their country, that never watched their buddies die in their arms, that doesn't know what it is like to taste the blood of their brothers and sisters-in-arms while their life is sucked away thousands of miles from their loved ones. We are strong, we made it through, and we can accomplish anything because of what we have already accomplished.

For those that want to get involved we would direct them to our website, www.GraffitiOfWar.com or on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/graffitiofwar as well as on Twitter (@graffitiofwar) and they can request brochures and flyers at no cost to pass out wherever they see a need. All of us are very accessible and can be reached via email or through social media. Please send inquiries and correspondence to the email and address listed below.

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PAST EVENT SPONSORS

Purpose 1 – Regional presenting sponsor of the National Tour, providing in-kind printing for the Conflict Art Exhibit.

M&T Bank – Our first major sponsor of the National Exhibition Tour and presenting sponsor for our opening event in Pennsylvania on Veterans Day 2011.

No Limits Graphix – The exclusive designer and apparel provider of the Graffiti of War Project's National Exhibition.

Maxim Magazine – They have provided the Project with tens of thousands of dollars in marketing and exposure as well as monetary funding for the National Art Exhibition.

Nations Photo Lab – The official printing partner of the Graffiti of War Project and National Art Exhibition Tour. They are the exclusive outlet for the new "Graffiti Canvas" developed for showcasing graffiti art in an entirely unique form.

Art Reach Foundation – Art Reach Foundation has been developing and providing Arts Therapy for almost a decade and has now begun working to reach out to the Warfighter/Veteran/Military-Family communities through our exhibit and tour.

GiveAnHour.org – One of three non-profit partners, GiveAnHour.org is the project's primary non-profit partner, fiscal umbrella for the Gallery Tour and to help increase awareness and interest in the Gallery Tour.

NSLF – The National Security Leadership Foundation is collaborating with the Project to raise awareness for the brave special-ops community and working to provide alternative solutions for healing and coping.

ESS Advanced Eye Protection – Sponsored the summer expedition by providing advanced eye protection for the team at no cost.

Exit 12 Dance Company – Exit 12 and the Project are collaborating for an upcoming creation about PTSD and the struggles of the American Warfighter. Exit 12 Dance Company will be a feature at the National Gallery Tour event for Veterans Day.

Operation-Helmet.org – Sponsored the Project's summer expedition with helmets for the team at no cost.

Zoriah.com – World-renowned humanitarian photographer Zoriah Miller provided the Project use of his incredible images for the National Art Exhibition and as well as permission to use them in the upcoming book.

PROJECT SUPPORTERS

USAA – They have posted on their social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter about The Graffiti of War Project and our upcoming Expedition.

Kellogg, Brown and Root (manages MWR facilities in Iraq) - They display our brochures and posters in six different locations.

Fluor, Inc (manages MWR facilities in Afghanistan) - They display our brochures and posters in 29 different locations.

Zoriah.com - Zoriah Miller, a world-renowned humanitarian photographer has generously allowed us to use some of his work on our website, for our brochure and in the upcoming book. He has been instrumental in providing direction and advice to us as we push to the next level. He has expressed high interest and respect for this project, multiple times.

HopefortheWarriors.org – We are working with this nationally-recognized non-profit as it relates to their work with alternative treatment options such as Arts Therapy for our veterans and military members suffering from PTSD and TBI.