

# Arts + Social Impact Explorer Fact Sheet

## ARTS + MILITARY

## IMPACT POINTS

### 66% IMPROVEMENT IN DEPRESSION

Two out of three soldiers who have been treated with art therapy say it improved their depression.<sup>1</sup>

### 83% DECREASE IN REPORTED STRESS LEVELS

The arts can play a powerful role in treating the physical and psychological impact of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Art therapies address effects of TBI, yielding a 66 percent improvement with depression, 50 percent improvement with anxiety, and 83 percent decrease of stress.<sup>2</sup>

### 85% SAY ART THERAPY HELPS

85% of military patients who have access to art therapy say it was helpful in their healing.<sup>3</sup>

### \$1.7 BILLION IN SAVINGS DUE TO ART THERAPIES

Art therapies could save the U.S. military billions of dollars in healthcare costs. Evidence-based treatments, (e.g., art therapies) for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and major depression could save the United States as much as \$1.7 billion, or more than \$1,000 per veteran.<sup>4</sup>

### ARTS HELP VETERANS REINTEGRATE

Creative writing helps returning veterans with re-entry to civilian life. Veterans who participated in expressive writing experienced greater reductions in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms, distress, anger, physical complaints, and reintegration difficulty compared with veterans who did not write at all.<sup>5</sup>

### ARTS RANK IN THE TOP 5 FOR MOST HELPFUL TREATMENTS

Over a year and a half at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence at Walter Reed Medical Center in Maryland, service members ranked art therapy in the top five “most helpful in their recovery” of approximately 40 treatment options.<sup>6</sup>

### ARTS INSPIRE NEW THINKING IN MILITARY TREATMENTS

The U.S. Army created new Systemic Operation Design program based on principles of design thinking. The Army highly prioritized this program enough to experiment with and adapt it, document and teach it, apply it in the field, and prescribe it across the entire organization.<sup>7</sup>

## OVERVIEW

The arts are essential for the health and well-being of our active duty service members, veterans, their families, and caregivers across the military continuum. The arts promote readiness and resilience from pre-deployment to deployment and provide viable employment opportunities and marketable skills for re-entry and reintegration into the civilian workforce after military service.

While there are many examples of the arts and the military coming together for entertainment purposes like the USO, the integration of the arts can address the physical and mental well-being and recovery of military personnel.

Creative arts therapies are proven to increase the recovery rates of service members with physical, mental, and moral injuries. Arts and military based activities in communities facilitate the difficult transition from military to civilian life for veterans, their families and caregivers, providing socialization, and fostering positive meaningful relationships that bridge the military/civilian divide.

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# EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

## MusiCorp, Washington, DC



MusiCorp helps wounded soldiers learn to play an instrument as a core part of their rehabilitation. The success of the program has led to the creation of the Wounded Warrior Band, comprised of injured veterans who became musicians through MusiCorps.

<http://musicorps.net/Home.html>  
[info@musicorps.net](mailto:info@musicorps.net)

**image:** Cpl Josh Cawthorn, USMC (ret), and Spc Nathan Kalwicki USA (ret). Photo by SSgt Tim Brown, USMC (ret). Courtesy of MusiCorps

## The Veterans Project: A Long Journey Home by Diavolo, Los Angeles, CA



The Veterans Project is equal parts community, creativity, and discovery. This dance program aims to use the practice of movement arts to restore core inner strengths that have been diminished by trauma and help participants transition back into civilian life.

<http://www.diavolospace.com>  
[info@diavolo.org](mailto:info@diavolo.org)

**image:** The Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian. Courtesy of Diavolo.

## The Telling Project, Austin, TX



Through performance, The Telling Project puts veterans and military family members in front of their communities to share their stories.

The program gives veterans and military family members the opportunity to speak, and gives their communities the opportunity to listen.

<https://thetellingproject.org/>  
[info@thetellingproject.org](mailto:info@thetellingproject.org)

**image:** Telling: Austin, TX, with Anisa Moyo (foreground) talking about her experiences as a medic deployed to Iraq, Mexican American Cultural Center, Austin, TX, 2013. Written by Jonathan Wei, directed by Stacey Shade Waren

## Veterans Art Project, Fallbrook, CA



The program offers bronze and ceramics classes to veterans and their families and advocates. These classes are intended to teach artmaking skills and also to utilize the process as a medium to connect veterans with each other and their communities.

<http://www.vetart.org/>  
[steve@vetart.org](mailto:steve@vetart.org)

**image:** Meaning in Bronze Exhibition at Oceanside Museum of Art.

## Theater of War, New York, NY



Theater of War Productions presents community-specific, theater-based projects that confront topics such as combat-related psychological injury, end-of-life care, police and community relations, prison reform, gun violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and substance abuse and addiction.

<http://theaterofwar.com/>  
[bryan@theaterofwar.com](mailto:bryan@theaterofwar.com)

**image:** Theater of War performance at Fort Drum, New York

**top image:** She Went to War, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, MN, 2017. Written and directed by Jonathan Wei and Max Rayneard. Photo by Dragon's Eye Studios.

### REFERENCES

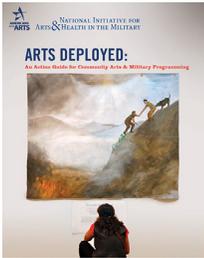
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2. Americans for the Arts. (2013). Arts, Health, and Well-being Across the Military Continuum: White Paper and Framing a National Plan For Action [Electronic version]. Americans for the Arts/National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military, 23. Retrieved 19 February 2018 from AFTA. Arts, Health and Well-Being across the Military Continuum: White Paper and Framing a National Plan For Action.
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# READING LIST

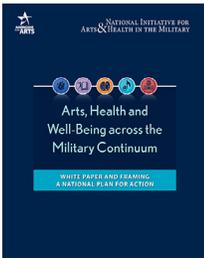
## Arts Deployed: An Action Guide for Community Arts & Military Programming



Created by Americans for the Arts and the National Initiative on Arts & Health in the Military, this guide helps artists and community organizations to create art programming for military and veteran communities, as well as their caregivers and families.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/98616>

## Arts, Health, and Well-being Across the Military Continuum



This report examines policy, practice, and research drawn from national convenings that explored the benefits of arts and the military. It includes case studies, reports, and recommendations.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/85248>

## Engaging Veterans through Creative Expression: Oklahoma Arts and the Military Initiative Pilot Program Evaluation Catalogue



A 2016 evaluation catalogue that can assist individuals and organizations in providing programming for veterans and military members in their communities. It consists of a University of Oklahoma program evaluation of the pilot arts program for residents at the Norman

at the Norman Veterans Center, offered through a collaboration of the Oklahoma Arts Council and Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100564>

## The Arts: A Promising Solution to Meeting the Challenges of Today's Military – Then and Now



Developed from a 2012 roundtable convening and a 2016 follow-up, the report puts forth a national action plan to ensure the availability of arts interventions and to include the arts as part of the “standard care” in military clinics.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100523>

## Strategy Sampler: State Arts & Military Initiatives



The sampler is a survey of existing policy goals, services, and relationships of state agencies and regional arts organizations serving military and veteran communities through the arts.

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100525>

top image: The Veterans Project. Photo by George Simian. Courtesy of Diavolo.

REFERENCES continued

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# ORGANIZATIONS

## Creative Forces: National Endowment for the Arts Military Healing Arts Network

The Network serves active military personnel and veterans by bringing arts therapists into the core of patient-centered care. Service members use visual arts therapy, music therapy, and therapeutic writing to help address emotional, physical, and neurological challenges.

[arts.gov/partnerships/creative-forces](http://arts.gov/partnerships/creative-forces)

## Creative Arts Program at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center

The program is committed to creating a world-class arts program that advances the field of arts and health while serving its patients and their families and caregivers through state-of-the-art models and best practices.

<http://www.wrnmmc.capmed.mil/PatientVisitors/SitePages/HealingArts/CreativeArtsProgram.aspx>

## National Initiative for Arts & Health in the Military

This initiative works across military, government, private, and nonprofit sectors to raise visibility and support of arts and health in the military and advance the arts as tools for health for military staff, family members, and veterans.

[americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/the-national-initiative-for-arts-health-in-the-military](http://americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/the-national-initiative-for-arts-health-in-the-military)

top image: Yo-Yo Ma performs with MusiCorps members Specialist Nathan Kalwicki, Lance Corporal Josh Cawthorn, Sergeant Rex Tharp, Corporal Marcus Dandrea, Lance Corporal Tim Donley, and MusiCorps teaching artists Greg Loman Musicorps founder Arthur Bloom at the 2013 Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



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[AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT](http://AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SOCIALIMPACT)

Americans for the Arts developed this Fact Sheet as part of the Arts + Social Impact Explorer.

