



Sarah Garland

PHOTO BY JOE GLODE

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— SARAH GARLAND
VETERAN, "COMBAT PAPER" PARTICIPANT

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A veteran and storyteller himself, Stroud says that through all the performances he's choreographed, one common thread among the participants is a deep, underlying need to tell their story.

This is true for Matt Geiger, a Navy veteran who served in counter-terrorism. He says it's important that civilians hear stories straight from the mouths of those who've served, which is why he signed up to take part in the project.

"If we leave it to the media and Hollywood, those are the stories that will resonate with people," he says.

When he and his veteran friends watched the 2014 blockbuster, "American Sniper," he says they noticed things in the film that civilians would not.

"It applies glamour to service – people think, 'Oh look at this badass Navy SEAL,'" he says. "It's framed very differently than the stories I have, and the stories that my friends have."

Geiger was the one of the last to sign up for the project and discovered he would be transforming his uniform into paper art just moments before speaking with Street Roots.

But it didn't shake him. He says he's curious about the process, and not at all nervous or hesitant about cutting up his uniform.

"I'm not sure why, but I've been holding on to my uniforms since 2008," he says. "Other than wearing them to paint my apartment, they're not much use."

PSU student and veteran Sarah Garland hopes telling her story, which she says is both "disgusting and humorous at the same time," will give civilians a better



IMAGE COURTESY OF DREW CAMERON

Above and at right: Work by Drew Cameron as part of series of prints appearing in the multimedia project, "Beyond Zero: 1914-1918." Pulp printing techniques were used to set images of archived military photographs on paper constructed from U.S. military uniforms from the Vietnam and contemporary era, U.S. flags, bank notes, firefighter uniforms, U.S. Forest Service uniforms and other cloth items.

understanding of veterans' perspectives.

"It's about giving people something to connect to," she says. "Events like this help to bridge the gap – and there's definitely a gap."

Some veterans who participated in Cameron's papermaking process say it served as a lifeline when they were feeling isolated and depressed because it connected them with other veterans going through the same emotions, and it gave them a positive way to express themselves.

"It's all chance. Let's say someone has just gone through a terrible couple of years, and then – just by chance – they happen to find a group of people who are making art together," says Cameron. "And for whatever reason, in the person's mind, something clicks with them, and they find they have this whole new realization within themselves – hey, that's fantastic!"



IMAGE COURTESY OF DREW CAMERON

Combat Paper Project All events are free

April 7: 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Artist Talks
Veteran artists Drew Cameron, Jesse Albrecht and Aaron Hughes discuss their works
Oregon College of Art and Craft
Centrum Gallery, 8245 SW Barnes Rd.

April 8, 9 and 10: 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Living Installation
Interact with veteran artists as they create Combat Paper
511 Gallery
Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Center for Art and Design, 511 NW Broadway

April 11: 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Pop-up Combat Paper Art Show and Readings
Featuring works created at the living installation at 511 Gallery, Celebrate People's History: Iraq Veterans Against the War portfolio, This Just In...Endless War, talks from local veteran artists and poetry from Warrior Writers
Ash Street Projects, 524 SE Ash St.

April 22: 7 p.m.

Veterans' Voices
An evening of true stories from PSU's Veteran Community accompanied by a showing of their Combat Paper
Portland State University
Smith Memorial Student Union Ballroom, 1825 SW Broadway