



Putting Veterans First Since 1992
NEW DIRECTIONS *for* VETERANS

FEBRUARY 2026 ★ VOLUME II ★ ISSUE I

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE

Friends....

Two hundred and fifty years after the Declaration of Independence, the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness continue to guide the American experience.

For generations, the United States military has promoted these ideals by defending freedom and providing aid in times of danger and uncertainty. Today, service members carry on this work by supporting allies overseas, responding to natural disasters at home, and assisting civilians in unsafe situations. These actions protect families, strengthen communities, and give people the chance to live safer, more hopeful lives.

At New Directions, we bring these same ideals to life by caring for veterans after their service has ended. Our staff show up every day with compassion and commitment, helping veterans find housing, stability, and a renewed sense of purpose. Our board members provide steady guidance, keeping our mission focused on the people we serve, and our donors make this work possible through their generous support, restoring dignity, opportunity, and hope.

In 2026, as we mark 250 years of the American experience, we honor our shared responsibility to stand with those who have served our nation. Together, through care, partnership, and belief in every veteran's potential, we keep the promise of America alive. We invite you to join us in this effort and look forward to finding ways to improve the lives of veterans who have given so much in service to our country.

With Gratitude,

Leo Cuadrado



Leo Cuadrado, M.B.A.
Captain (Ret.), USMC
Executive Director

Save the Date ★ ★ ★

Honoring Our Heroes Gala

November 2026
Los Angeles, CA

*In Celebration of America's
250th Anniversary of Independence*

*Veterans are encouraged to wear military apparel
and/or service ribbons. Civilian guests are asked to
note that the event is black-tie optional.*

**To Learn More About
the Gala or How You
Can Contribute**

Please Contact:
Scott Brumer |
sbrumer@ndvets.org |
310-806-8413

NEW YEAR★ NEW CONNECTIONS★

WE HOPE EVERYONE HAS HAD A WONDERFUL START TO THE NEW YEAR. A HIGHLIGHT FOR VETERANS IN OUR CARE EACH YEAR IS OUR FELLOWSHIP AND WELL-BEING PROGRAM. IT CREATES MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS TO COME TOGETHER, STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND BUILD LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

TO PARTNER WITH US, PLEASE REACH OUT TO OLIVIA RUSSELL AT ORUSSELL@NDVETS.ORG. YOU MAY ALSO SCAN THE QR CODE OR [FOLLOW THE LINK HERE.](#)

WE LOOK FORWARD TO BUILDING SOMETHING MEANINGFUL TOGETHER.



PROFILES IN COURAGE

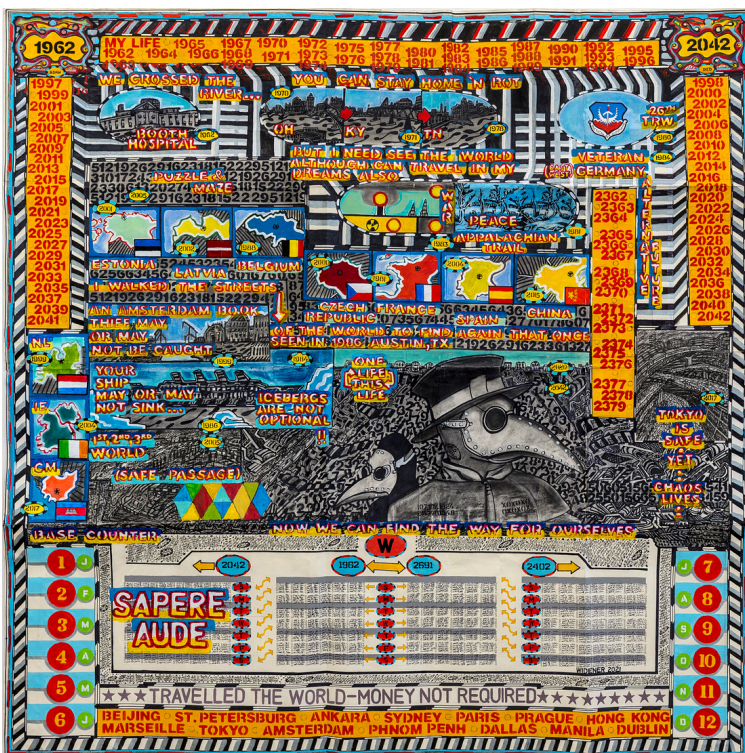
GEORGE WIDENER - UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

For many, art begins as a hobby or recreation, a way to process the trials and tribulations of life and transform them into something meaningful. Turning that passion into a career is challenging, and breaking into the highly competitive professional art world, is even more difficult.

Against all odds, those dreams became a reality for George Widener. Originally from Kentucky, George served four years in the United States Air Force. In 1984, a terrorist attack in Germany led to his honorable discharge, but also a lasting diagnosis of PTSD. Turning to art as a form of therapy, he began expressing his experiences and emotions through mixed media, dates, and numbers. A calendar savant, George is completely self-taught and was later discovered by an Outsider Art dealer in London. In 2005, he debuted his work at the New York Outsider Art Fair, the premier fair for self-taught artists, where hundreds of collectors and curators gather to discover artists like George.



“MANY SOLDIERS FACE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES WHEN TRANSITIONING TO CIVILIAN LIFE DUE TO TRAUMA. AS A VETERAN, I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND COMFORT, CALM, AND HEALING THROUGH THE ACT OF CREATING ART.”



SELF PORTRAIT, 2020
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER, 60 X 59.5 INCHES

Since then, George's work has been featured in major institutions like the Intuit Art Museum in Chicago, the American Folk Art Museum in New York City, and the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Germany. He has also exhibited extensively in galleries around the world, with an upcoming showing this year at the Hirschl & Adler Modern Art Gallery in New York City. His art incorporates his vast experiences, his love of antique and rare books and maps, and his remarkable ability to accurately identify the day of the week for any given date- past or future.

This exhibition, his first show in several years, centers on his time as a volunteer during the war in Ukraine and conveys "the feeling of being surrounded." George hopes this will commence his "comeback" into the art world. "I would love to display a positive side of veterans and their lives on this campus; that a top artist can live here and leave a lasting legacy."

COMMUNITY CORNER

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO CIVIC GROUPS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES WHO HAVE DONATED TO ENHANCE THE LIVES VETERANS IN OUR PROGRAMS

BLANKETS AND PILLOWS FROM BRAD WITH OPERATION BLANKETS OF LOVE



CHRISTMAS GIFT BAGS DONATED BY THE BRENTWOOD SCHOOL



A COAT AND COLD WEATHER DRIVE HELD BY REDONDO BEACH ELKS LODGE #1378

A HYGIENE KIT OUTREACH DRIVE HELD BY UCLA GEFEN SCHOOL



TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN START YOUR OWN DONATION DRIVE PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINK HERE, SCAN THE QR CODE OR REACH OUT TO US BY PHONE OR EMAIL!

LEGACIES OF VALOR

IN CELEBRATION OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Harlem Hellfighters

In 1917, after three years of neutrality, the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I. Thousands of men were drafted, and civilians on the home front mobilized to support the war effort. Although death on the front lines did not discriminate, the U.S. military remained segregated. More than 350,000 Black soldiers served in the war, many hoping their sacrifice abroad would lead to greater equality at home.

The 369th Infantry Regiment of the New York Army National Guard, known as the “Harlem Hellfighters,” spent more time in continuous combat, 191 days in the trenches, compared to any other American unit. The regiment was assigned to French units, which was not segregated and faced little racial discrimination. The 369th was instrumental in the advancement on the Western Front and was the first Allied unit to reach the banks of the Rhine River.



Following the war, the soldiers were recognized for their bravery with the French Croix de Guerre and were welcomed home to New York City with massive crowds and celebrations. Despite their valor and international recognition, the regiment suffered approximately 1,500 casualties, the highest of any U.S. unit, and returned to a nation still marked by deep racial tension and discrimination.



Join us this year as we count down to the historic milestone of July 4th. Together, we will reflect on our nation's history, honor the contributions of all Americans, and look ahead toward the future we hope to build for the next generation.

UNITED BY STRENGTH



IN MARCH, IN HONOR OF WOMENS HISTORY MONTH, WE CELEBRATE THE LEGACY, SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN VETERANS. THEIR SACRIFICE REMAINS A LASTING SOURCE OF PRIDE AND INSPIRATION THROUGHOUT OUR NATION'S HISTORY.

VETERAN RESOURCE FAIR MARCH 12TH

IN COLLABORATION WITH LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER TRACI PARK (DISTRICT 11) AND THE LADWP VALOR PROGRAM, WE WILL BE HOLDING A VETERAN RESOURCE FAIR ON THE WEST LA VA CAMPUS. THIS RECURRENT EVENT BRINGS TOGETHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES, CLOTHING AND ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR MEANINGFUL IMPACT.

★ WE ARE HIRING! ★

DISCOVER OUR OPEN OPPORTUNITIES AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF VETERANS AT [NDVETS.ORG/JOBS](https://ndvets.org/jobs)