

TCCU®



The TCU Veterans Project

**Increasing Empowerment and Visibility
Through Storytelling**

April Brown, M.Ed.
Director, Student Affairs | Veterans Services
Texas Christian University
a.e.brown3@tcu.edu



The Voices

I miss the diversity of the military, but I have found other veterans to help me feel like I belong at TCU.
Air Force Veteran

I sometimes feel invisible at TCU as a black woman, but this interview empowered me” Army Veteran



“Telling my story, helped me find my voice after leaving the military” Navy Veteran

I felt lost after leaving the Navy, but sharing my story helped me reflect on my identity and know that I am still a leader, just in a different place. Navy Veteran



How Sharing Stories led to the TCU Veterans Project

On campus, and throughout society, many veterans have sometimes felt invisible, silenced or isolated. This presentation shares the experiences of how student veterans' conversations and sharing stories supported their journey as they transitioned to university life.

Although the initial conversations and storytelling became a way for veterans to reflect on their journey, explore their identity, and experience a sense of belonging, it also led to a project that became known as the TCU Veterans Project



Why storytelling is empowering

- As stated by Sherry Hamby, Ph.D. (Sept. 2013) four benefits of sharing your story are realizing that sharing your story can help others, help you find your voice, can re-affirm our values and find peace and hope.
- Reflect on a time when you shared a story or when a story was shared with you. If you would, please comment in the chat box what you remember. (empowerment, understanding, empathy,)



Therapeutic, Change Lives, History for Future Generations

- Storytelling can be therapeutic for the storyteller by allowing one to reflect on an experience and find meaning in one's life. In his book, *Transforming Tales: How Stories Can Change People*, Rob Parkinson (2009) focuses on the therapeutic value of stories and how they can instigate real change in people's lives.
- When storytelling or oral history is written, these experiences become concrete. Stories become a form of history that is preserved and can be read by future generations.



What is the TCU Veterans Project?

- The TCU Veterans Project is an initiative undertaken by TCU Veterans Services in collaboration with author and journalist, Ethan Casey, and the support of the TCU Discovering Global Citizenship program.
- It became a collaboration with various partners, some which included the TCU Honors College, TCU Press, TCU Theatre Department, and TCU Graphic Design Department.
- The TCU Veterans Project led to an honors colloquium, a book design contest, a theatre production and a book.
- What's exciting about this project is that there are endless ways for continuous opportunities to expand and evolve and to continue to amplify and empower the voices we hear.



Taking the Journey

- Building community starts with a conversation
- Identify possible contributors for narratives
- Invite contributors to interviews
- Phone
- Email
- In Person
- (Virtual)



Before the Interview

- Coordinate interview schedule (send reminders)
- Collect permission forms and contact sheet prior to interview
- Set up interview space
- Audio
- Lighting
- Privacy



Interview Tips

- Compile questions
- Establish Rapport
- Explain the Process
- Allow for pauses or silence
- Do not force an answer
- Be Respectful
- Listen
- Possible Triggers (counseling resources available)
- Ask a person if they are needing support



After the Interview

- Transcribe and edit interview
- Share transcription with interviewee for corrections or clarification
- Share final edits with interviewee
- Interviewer take time to process and reflect
- Share the stories



Why Share Stories

- Veteran Engagement within the Veteran Community and Supporters
- Build Community Support
- Education and Understanding
- Reflection
- Healing
- Dialogue



Share the Story with Others

- Veterans and Military Families
- Veteran Support Organizations
- Campus and Community Partners
- Helping Professionals
- Clergy
- The Community



Consider Opportunities

- **Classes**
- **Panel Discussions, Dialogue and Workshops**
- **Blogs**
- **Library Archive**
- **Website**
- **Readings**
- **Radio Broadcast**
- **Theatre**
- **Articles**
- **Book**



Veterans Project Highlights

- Student Engagement
- Panel Discussions and Dialogue
- Theatre Production
- Published Book



Student Engagement

Bookjacket Student Contest, Honors Colloquium, Interviews, Writing Personal Narratives, Reflection



Honors Colloquium





Panel Discussions and Dialogues





Theatre Production TCU Department of Theatre

THE VETERANS' PROJECT

February 11, 2018 | A World Premiere

The TCU College of Fine Arts presents an unflinching look at the sacrifice and service of our veterans. Based on stories from TCU veterans and their families, this new theatrical work explores all aspects of the military experience: enlistment, combat and the return to civilian life.



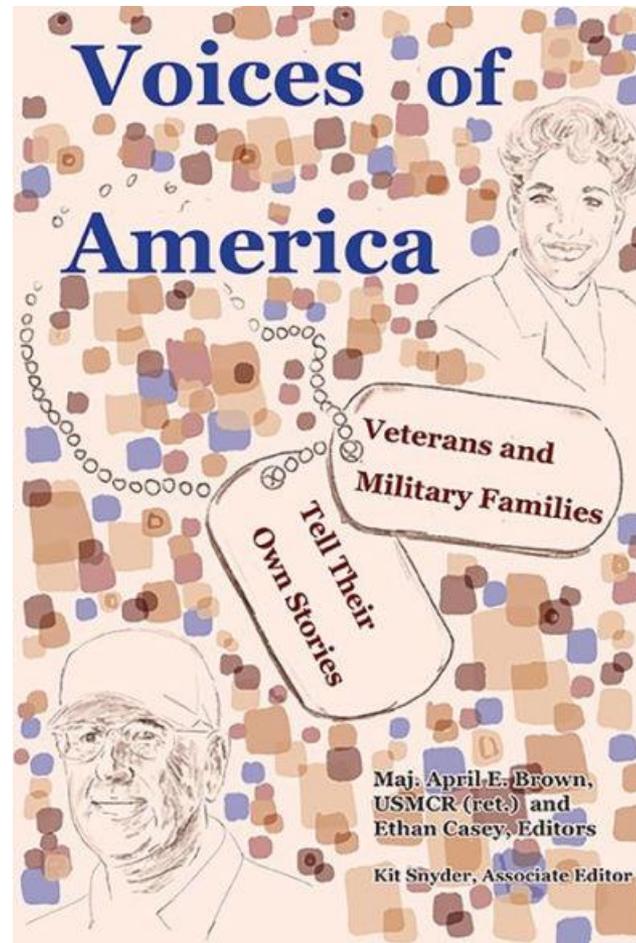
TCU is proud to be part of the Yellow Ribbon program. For more information about TCU Veterans Services, visit veteranservices.tcu.edu.





Voices of America:

Veterans and Military Families Tell Their Own Stories
Published November 2020



Book Cover design by Elaina Brown-Spence
TCU Alumnae and Military Family Member

Order the book from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc.,
or directly from the link:
<https://www.tamupress.com/book/9780875656731/voices-of-america/>



Every Story is Unique, Empowering, Validation, Engagement

There is power in helping others through the sharing of an experience. Each person's unique story is shown to have value when listened to or read by others. In addition, the storyteller can find his or her voice by being the one to tell his or her story.

This ownership can lead to empowerment. Stories can identify what priorities a person has and can validate the journey that is taking place. Telling a story can help a person understand challenges that he or she has overcome and provide a map for persistence. Stories can also create engagement with others who have shared experiences.

I invite you to consider the ways to increase the empowerment and visibility through storytelling of your veterans and others.



Questions?

Thank you for supporting our
Veterans and Military Family Members



TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY