



The Twenty-Year War: Our Next Greatest Generation

On View: March 13 – October 2, 2022

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum proudly presents, *The Twenty-Year War: Our Next Greatest Generation*, on view through October 2, 2022. This exhibition is an extension of “The Twenty-Year War,” a photo journal that was officially launched at the museum to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of 9/11. The exhibition was created in collaboration with artist Beau Simmons, and authors, Dan Blakeley and Tom Amenta, both former U.S. Army Rangers.

The Twenty-Year War: Our Next Greatest Generation highlights the diverse experiences of Veterans who served during our country’s longest war – the Global War on Terror [GWOT]. Though each Veteran featured in this exhibition faces individual and collective challenges – navigating through military transition, physical and mental wellness, changing family dynamics and more – they remain determined to impact our nation and the communities they call home. We call attention to their captivating and personal stories of courage, sacrifice, and continued service. It is our hope that you take with you the impact of their stories, and the belief that these men and women represent Our Next Greatest Generation.

Exclusive content including additional stories, podcasts, videos, and programming are accessible via the Museum’s website and gallery QR codes. Through October 2, 2022, we invite you to join us for in-person and virtual programming opportunities that focus on physical and mental wellness, transitioning from service, and leadership.

*“We created *The Twenty-Year War* exhibition to share the unvarnished stories of service and sacrifice from post-9/11 Veterans, in their own words, on their journey of transition to a new mission in their civilian lives. I hope everyone who sees and interacts with this work will reflect on their own lives and consider how they can support returning Veterans eager to serve their communities.” –*

Dan Blakeley

About Dan Blakeley, Co-Author - Dan Blakeley is a former US Army Special Operations Ranger, who served with the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment. During his years of service, he has deployed six times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Following eight years of service, Dan found himself suppressing his experiences in the military to 'fit in' to his new community of friends and coworkers. After earning a double master's at Appalachian State University, Dan began seeking ways to reconnect with the veteran community. From personal experience and conversations with fellow veterans, Dan knows all too well how difficult it is to find the 'right' veteran organization, not to mention finding one that provides purpose to those involved.

About Tom Amenta, Co-Author - Tom Amenta was born in Chicago, IL, and grew up in the area before enlisting, against his family's wishes, into the United States Army on his 18th birthday. Following his five years as a member of the 75th Ranger Regiment, including two combat tours in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Tom earned his degree in political science from the University of Illinois. Tom spent the next eight years as the COO of the veteran lifestyle apparel company Ranger Up. Leveraging the success at Ranger Up he helped produce and starred in the only fully veteran-produced Hollywood movie, Range 15. He is a passionate advocate for veteran entrepreneurship and assisting veterans in transition.

About Beau Simmons, Photographer - Beau Simmons is a fine art and documentary photographer who has specialized in Americana and Western lifestyle for over twelve years. His admiration and respect for those who have served all started when he was looking to join the Marine Corps, but his life took him into the field of photography. Dealing with a sense of guilt, he has always wanted to find ways to help support those who have fought for our freedoms. After establishing his name in the fashion and celebrity industry and reconnecting with his childhood friend Dan, he found a way to focus his passion while supporting veterans. With starting United Valor he has dedicated his time to honoring the stories of these brave men and women while shedding light on the physical and emotional stress of war.

National Veterans Memorial and Museum

The National Veterans Memorial and Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that takes visitors on a narrative journey telling individual stories and sharing experiences of Veterans from all military branches throughout history. The Memorial and Museum also honors the sacrifices of men and women in service and their families. History is presented in a dynamic, participatory experience with photos, letters and personal effects, multimedia presentations, interactive exhibits, online events and digital content. Together, these elements link our national story to the larger context of our world. For more information, please visit nationalvmm.org.

Explore the exhibition at NationalVMM.org

