



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
June 1, 2023

Contact: Tamara Kissane, Producer
Phone: (919) 493-7972
Email: artistsoapbox@gmail.com

THE WRITE TO HEAL: SOLDIERS DEEP DIVE INTO STORYTELLING **An Artist Soapbox Limited Podcast Series**

Raleigh, NC - In a new, limited six-episode audio series, Artist Soapbox speaks with life-changers – people who champion creative writing as a catalyst for soldiers' healing, as well as soldiers whose lives have been radically transformed through story. The interviews are conducted by Tamara Kissane, Artist Soapbox producer and 2020 Piedmont Laureate, with June Guralnick, 2022 Raleigh Medal of Arts recipient and creative writing teacher for veterans.

"I died in Korea from a shrapnel wound and narcotics resurrected me. I died in 1960 from a prison sentence and poetry brought me back to life," said veteran Etheridge Knight. The personal impact and trauma of war captured in stories, poems and diaries by the men and women on the front lines enables civilians to picture a war often thousands of miles away. These writings also have served as a life-saving release valve for soldiers grappling to make sense of their experiences in war – and coming home.

Controversy over the Vietnam War, including strong public anti-war sentiment, led returning soldiers to bury their stories for many years. Over the last few decades, veteran writing groups have emerged throughout the U.S. and in a cathartic outpouring, are sharing powerful narratives capturing life under fire and at home. Research has shown that expressive writing has the power to provide a path forward to healing for soldiers and their families as well as inspire community connection. "Expressive writing ... has given me the ability to express myself in a positive way. As a veteran with PTSD and depression, this has been a life changing event," stated Bill Dixon, Vietnam War veteran and Board Chair of Vets to Vets.

The Write to Heal will air weekly commencing on Flag Day, June 14th, in six, 30-minute episodes as follows:

- 1. STORIES SAVE US: The Write to Heal Episode 1 – June 14th**
Interview with Joseph Bathanti, former NC Poet Laureate and Dr. Bruce Kelly, retired Assistant Chief of Primary Care at the Charles George VA Medical Center
- 2. BIG GUNZ, SMALL BULLETS: The Write to Heal Episode 2 – June 21st**
Interview with Barbara Aragon, social worker with Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration's Tribal Training and TA Center and Pedro Reyes, Iraq veteran and Native American digital storyteller
- 3. TRANSFORMING PAIN THROUGH ART: The Write to Heal Episode 3 – June 28th**
Interview with Brooke Dickhart, Executive Director of The Joel Fund and Linda Giles, retired social worker with the Department of Social Work at Womack Army Medical Center
- 4. OUR MINDS ARE STILL THERE: The Write to Heal Episode 4 – July 5th**
Interview with Gail Ashby Bryant (Army veteran 1975-1981), Mark Bartholomew (Iraq Combat Medic veteran), and Bill Dixon (Vietnam veteran and Board Chair of Vets to Vets)
- 5. RESILIENCE IS A MUSCLE: The Write to Heal Episode 5 – July 12th**
Interview with Captain Moira McGuire, former Chief of the Arts in Health Program at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, and Sarah Moore, Community Specialist for Arts and Health at Walter Reed Hospital
- 6. LET OUR ANGELS SING: The Write to Heal Episode 6 - July 19th**
Interview with the podcast co-producers June Guralnick and Tamara Kissane

Listeners can find episodes of **The Write to Heal** on all podcast platforms including Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google podcasts and more. For more information about the series and upcoming episodes, visit <https://artistsoapbox.org/the-write-to-heal/> or email artistsoapbox@gmail.com.

Established in 2017, Artist Soapbox (ASBX) is a podcast production studio based in North Carolina producing original scripted audio fiction and interview podcasts about the creative process.