



NEWS RELEASE

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Fort Hood art show brings out the best in Soldiers

By Jeri Chappelle
CRDAMC Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas – *Unspoken: Overcoming Struggles of Combat through Art*, an exhibition of art that showcased artwork by Fort Hood Soldiers, provided insight into what Soldiers experience downrange and raised awareness of how expressing emotions through various art forms helps the healing process.

The art show, held July 18 at the III Corps Headquarters building, was a collective idea of staff members of Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center's Behavioral Health Dept. who were looking for innovative and creative ways to give Soldiers a positive method of expressing their inner emotions.

The exhibit, which was free and open to the public, featured 27 original pieces created by Soldiers from across Fort Hood who deployed in support of combat operations. Visitors had the opportunity to fill out a comment card to give feedback to the artist.

During the opening ceremony, Col. Patrick D. Sargent, commander of CRDAMC, shared a quote he recently read by Emily Scott, former Canvas Art Director for Art Relief International, "If a voice can't be heard, teach it to be seen." He added, "The collective body of work presented today provided a window into the souls of our Warriors."

Although all submissions were anonymous, Sgt. Michael Britton provided insight toward his motivation to create his book of landscape photos to draw his attention to the beauty around countering the ugliness in war. Sargent presented him with a CRDAMC coin of achievement for "having a creative mind and sharing his narrative with the audience.

Britton, whose pieces included a book of photos from Afghanistan, said he wanted to dispel the misconception that, "Afghanistan is not pretty – it is. It helps me a lot to look at what I have seen."

As a Soldier who has deployed, Sargent told the crowd of visitors that to be resilient, "We have to be honest with ourselves and seek support" through available programs like this art show.



“This is a positive venue for Soldiers to express themselves about deployment-related issues, to share their experiences with local communities, and a synergistic event to share Fort Hood programs and services” he said.

John Howell, owner of an art school in Harker Heights who came to see the art show, agrees.

“I was really curious about the art show, to see the creativity of Soldiers, to see how they express themselves. I loved it and was very moved by these pieces. I’m really glad this is happening,” Howell said.

“Art has long been recognized as a way to express emotions or reactions,” said Teresa McCrary, a therapist with the Dept. of Social Work. “Events can sometimes be difficult to verbalize, but art provides containment of the intense emotions evoked by the memory of traumatic experiences.

The artwork shows that while Soldiers are affected by their combat experiences, they can still have the ability to focus on their goals, carry on, and get back into the fight. Their creativity is one way of achieving their goals.

“CRDAMC providers actively seek opportunities to improve and enrich our interactions with all beneficiaries. We want to provide them with the best experiences and the highest quality of care we possibly can, said Lt. Col. Sheila Adams, chief of the department of Social Work.

Soldiers who participated in the art show also submitted a brief description of their artwork to help people understand their art and their emotions. Pieces were submitted to the Apache Arts and Craft Center at Fort Hood and reviewed by a committee of CRDAMC staff members for appropriateness before the exhibition.

“Through special events such as this one, we encourage the Fort Hood communities to establish programs that bring our Soldiers into the community, and encourage our Soldiers to become involved in the communities. Through these efforts, we can all help Soldiers deal with the challenges of the stress of combat, Adams said.

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Cutlines

The Fort Hood and Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center Soldier Art Show kicked off July 18, in the III Corps Headquarters east atrium. Twenty-seven pieces were displayed, including this black and white graphic. (Photo by Jeri Chappelle, CRDAMC Public Affairs)

Col. Patrick D. Sargent, commander of Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center, and Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Walls, viewed artwork during CRDAMC's Soldier Art Show July 18 in the III Corps atrium at Fort Hood. (Photo by Jeri Chappelle, CRDAMC Public Affairs)

Liz Mason, a Fort Hood spouse, and Alexis Dow, Mason's mother, observe one of the 27 original pieces displayed at the Soldier Art Show opening in the III Corps Headquarters East atrium. The show will be available for viewing at in Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center's main lobby July 20-21. (Photo by Jeri Chappelle, CRDAMC Public Affairs)



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Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center's Soldier Art Show kicked off July 18, in the III Corps Headquarters east atrium. Twenty-seven original pieces by Soldiers from across Fort Hood were displayed including Exhibit 22, titled, "My Struggle." "This artwork gives you a glimpse into the soul of a Soldier who has deployed," Col. Patrick Sargent, CRDAMC commander said. (Photo by Jeri Chappelle, CRDAMC Public Affairs)