

# HELP HEAL VETERANS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2020 VETERANS DAY 'CRAFT & SALUTE' VIRTUAL ART COMPETITION

*Winning entries depicting meaning of Patriotism and Military Service will be displayed at Military Hospitals and VA Facilities throughout the Country*

SAN DIEGO , CALIFORNIA, USA , November 11, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Help Heal Veterans](#) (Heal Vets), a nonprofit that provides free therapeutic arts and crafts kits to hospitalized and homebound veterans and active duty military, today announced the three winners of its 2020 Veterans Day [Craft & Salute](#) arts & crafts contest.

Craft and Salute is a nationwide, patriotic arts contest open to all in which contestants submitted art pieces that depict what military service or patriotism means to them. The purpose of the online competition is to honor veterans while celebrating the healing and unifying power of crafting, and veterans, crafters and families from across the country participated. Submissions have included a variety of mediums: mixed media, digital art, sculpture, blacksmithing, woodwork, performance art, and body/face paint.

"In today's unprecedented environment, the impact of crafting and activities that provide awareness and goodwill are more necessary than ever," said Joe McClain, retired Navy captain and Help Heal Veterans CEO. "Through Craft & Salute, we wanted to share and elevate the healing power of crafting, and we hope to inspire others to bring about positive change by managing stress in creative ways."

## THE WINNERS

First Place:



Craft and Salute First Place Winner: Army Veteran Maria-Eliza Cabarrus This sculpture entitled, "But on the Inside," depicts the injury she sustained while in the Army that ultimately catapulted her to her true calling—making art that inspires and touches others.

Maria-Eliza Cabarrus, Army Veteran (Maywood, Illinois)

[Sculpture: But on The Inside]

Description: Cabarrus turned to art as a way of healing from an injury she sustained while in the Army. Her piece depicts the injury she sustained that ultimately catapulted her to her true calling—making art that inspires and touches others.

From the artist: Made in 2020, this piece is my first sculpture. I wanted it to embody the pain that I endure on a daily basis--Pain that isn't visible to the naked eye--Invisible pain that many of my fellow veterans struggle with.

Second Place:

Sherman Watkins, United States Air Force Veteran (Hampton, Virginia)

[Paintings: Black History V-I-P and The Quilt]

Description: His pieces took two years to complete and illustrate the accomplishments of Black Americans.

From the artist: I am 79 years old and while looking up the information on these people, I learned something about the achievements of Black Americans. I hope this painting brings some insight to schools and the American people on the accomplishments of Black Americans.

Third Place:

Ting Du, Navy Veteran (San Diego, California)

[Woodwork: Sail Boat of Hope and Beacon of Light]

Description: These woodwork pieces symbolize the days and nights she spent at sea and the tumultuous hardships she has navigated through in life. The tower symbolizes the beacon of light and beacon of hope.

From the artist: As a retired sailor, the boat reminds me of all those days and nights that I had spent underway among the deep blue ocean. Not only does it symbolize all the tumultuous hardships that I have successfully navigated through in life, it also symbolizes the ultimate inner soul journey that I am still sailing and navigating through, within the heart, searching for the ultimate truth, freedom, and the place of peace and harmony: harmony with the self, and harmony with all nature-beings on earth. The tower symbolizes the beacon of light and beacon of hope. Even during the darkest nights with the most difficult conditions in the ocean, as long as we can see the beacon of light within our own hearts, we will be able to find our own path back home.

The winners will be awarded a Southwest Airlines gift card for \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 respectively.

Contestants' entries were reviewed by a distinguished panel of judges including Captain Joe McClain, Retired Navy Captain, CEO, Help Heal Veterans; Mark Kaleimamahu, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran and America's Got Talent Semi-Finalist; Beth Kingston, craft expert at The Home Shopping Network and military spouse; and Ana Schwager, Community Outreach Lead at Southwest Airlines.

Help Heal Veterans has been supplying arts-and-crafts kits free of charge to veterans and active duty military who are recovering from wounds, injuries and long-term psychological effects of warfare for almost 50 years. Today, millions of veterans are on lock-down, many suffering from TBIs, PTSD and substance abuse, and now experiencing isolation, boredom and anxiety during the pandemic. Heal Vets has seen a huge increase in demand and has shipped nearly 290,000 craft kits to veterans since the beginning of the pandemic. Kits have gone to more than 90 VA Medical centers around the country and a large number of military bases (domestic & overseas), state veteran homes and other locations where the need is great.

The winning submissions can be viewed at: [Healvets.org](https://healvets.org)

#### About Help Heal Veterans

First established in 1971, Help Heal Veterans has provided free therapeutic arts and crafts kits to hospitalized and homebound veterans for generations. These craft kits help injured and recuperating veterans improve fine motor skills, cognitive functioning, manage stress and substance abuse, cope with symptoms of PTSD and TBI, while also improving their sense of self-esteem and overall physical and mental health. Most of these kits are developed, manufactured and packaged for delivery at our production center headquartered in Winchester, California. Since inception, Help Heal Veterans has delivered nearly 31 million of these arts and crafts kits to veterans and veteran facilities nationwide, along with active duty military overseas.

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