*Borne the Battle*

*Episode #116 Petey Ace- Marine Veteran and Hip-Hop Artist*

*Hosted by Timothy Lawson*

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:02] Music

# **[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE:**

**Timothy Lawson:** Wednesday, August 22nd, 2018. This is *Borne the Battle*, brought to you by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. I am your host, Marine Corps Veteran, Timothy Lawson. Took a couple weeks off to regroup, organize, and sort of plan for the future. I’m hoping to add a segment in during the week to this, or maybe at least a couple times a month, to feature some other productions that are going on around VA. Possibly going to include a segment that will be spotlighting the Veteran Legacy program out of the National Cemetery Administration and just some other ideas that we’ve been having to produce more content that we can put into this podcast feed and make you, our audience, more aware of what’s going on here at the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, and inside of our three administration’s: the Health Administration, the Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. Last week, our… Last week, Explore VA did a Facebook live event on life insurance. That video can be found at the Blue Star Families Facebook page [Link to Blue Star Families Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BlueStarFamilies/>.] I believe it was on Thursday. You’re going to want to check for the video on August 16 on the Blue Star Families Facebook page. Really good Facebook live event that they did talking about life insurance and eligibility. I think you’d be surprised to know that you’re eligible for some sort of life insurance, depending on your situation. So do check that out. This week’s interview is with a gentleman who will be going by the name Petey Ace. It’s more of a stage name. Him and I were connected years ago back when I was doing the *Veteran Empire* podcast. He was a guest that I had on that show. We were talking about music and whatnot. He reached out to me recently, and I invited him to come on *Borne the Battle*. We learn about his time in the military. We learn about his music. We learn about a group of Veterans that he’s a part of now that are that are helping sort of provide camaraderie and empathy to other Veterans. And we talk about fatherhood and a number of other things. So, really interesting interview here with hip-hop artist and Marine Veteran, Petey Ace. Enjoy.

[00:02:32] Music

# **[00:02:37] PSA:**

**Woman 1:** There are nearly two million women Veterans who served and deserve the best care anywhere.

**Woman 2:** VA is dedicated to meeting the unique needs of all women Veterans. VA offers comprehensive primary care and women’s health specialty care.

**Woman 1:** Women Veterans who are interested in receiving care at VA should call the women Veterans’ call center at 855-VA-WOMEN [855-829-6636].

**Woman 2:** Or contact the nearest VA center and ask for the women’s program manager. Visit [www.va.gov/WomenVet](https://www.va.gov/WomenVet) [Link to VA’s Center for Women Veterans].

[00:03:06] Music

# **[00:03:12] INTERVIEW:**

**Tim:** Mister Petey Ace. Sir, we go back to the days of *Veteran Empire*; it seems like so long ago.

**Petey Ace:** Yeah.

**Tim:** Back when I was doing that podcast. It’s so good to come back around and talk to you again.

**Petey:** Yeah, it’s been a long time. I think the last time we spoke, I was up in San Francisco, and now I’m living down here in LA.

**Tim:** Okay. How’s LA?

**Petey:** [Sigh] Just how it sounds. Busy. [Laughter]

**Tim:** [Laughter]

**Petey:** My job keeps me busy. But uh-

**Tim:** Yeah?

**Petey:** After that-

**Tim:** Everybody on cloud nine because LeBron’s coming to town?

**Petey:** Oh, yeah. I was losing my mind when I got news of that. I’ve been a huge LeBron fan since he went back to Cleveland. That was when I kinda jumped on the LeBron train, and then I’ve just been a fan of him ever since. And then, so for him to come here, I am stoked. [Laughter]

**Tim:** Yeah, definitely. Alright, sir, we’re going to start this where we start all our interviews and that’s going back to your decision to join the United States military. Bring us back to that decision for you.

**Petey:** Mhmm. Well I was 16, and I had just met my great-grandfather, I wanna say a year before that. I was about 15. And he was in the Marine Corps. He joined when he was 14 years old and he fought in World War II. He turned 17 in Saigon. And he just had a lot of, a *lot* of, stories that he’d told my brother and I. And it really… I mean, I just feel like that was the turning point. That was just when it was all set in stone that I knew that’s what I was gonna want to do, as well. So, when I graduated, I spent my 17th birthday swearing in at MEPS, and then a month later I was at boot camp.

**Tim:** And what was your occupation?

**Petey:** I was a rifleman, an 0311.

**Tim:** Yeah. Okay.

**Petey:** [Laughter] Yeah, dumb grunt.

**Tim:** [Laughter] You said it, not me. Uh what-

**Petey:** Yeah. [Laughter]

**Tim:** [Laughter]

**Petey:** I loved it, though. I met some of the best guys I will ever know.

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** And, uh, we all still stay in touch. We try to meet up as much as we can. It was definitely one of the best decisions I made. And, like I said, you know, I’ll have those friendships forever.

**Tim:** So how long were you in?

**Petey:** I was in for five years.

**Tim:** Five years? So tell me-

**Petey:** Yeah.

**Tim:** Tell me about a close friend or a great leader that you had while you were in?

**Petey:** For me, probably my closest friend would have to be Nico Gill. He was- I met him probably a couple months after boot camp, and then we were just inseparable after that. We went through everything from that point on together. And what initially kind of jumpstarted that friendship was that we were both from the same area back home. So that’s kinda what connected us from the get-go. And then, you know, we just- we grew up together. We both grew up in the Marine Corps with each other. I was 17. He was 19. So he was kind of the big brother and I was the little brother he never had because he was a single kid. So um… Yeah, he was definitely my best friend. And then uh… We actually- we went through the ranks together, as well. So when I was a section leader, he was a squad leader. So I got to see him as a leader, as well. You know, like I said, he was like a big brother. So I definitely learned a lot from him, not only just as far as like a man, being a man, but also, you know, the way he led Marines kinda of influenced the way that I did. We kind of just fed off of each other.

**Tim:** Yeah. What prompted your decision to get out, then?

**Petey:** For me, when I decided to get out, it was the last deployment that my unit was gonna have in a combat zone. So we were leaving Afghanistan, and they had let us know that this is it. We're not gonna be coming back here. You know, welcome to peace-side Marine Corps. And I was fine with it because I didn’t really know what that entailed, but once we were back from deployment, the barrack lifestyle, garrison lifestyle, had changed so much and they treated us a lot differently. Now, they knew they didn’t really need us anymore for combat deployments. And I just, I don’t know. For me, it just wasn’t the Marine Corps that I had joined, you know?

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** So I just kinda took it as a sign that it was time for me to close that chapter. [Laughter]

**Tim:** Sure. Um. So, you know, the way that I know you is because of your music. Years ago, when you were on the *Veteran Empire* podcast, that's what we were featuring. And you reached out to me recently because you had just made another song that you wanted me to hear, and I thought that it was really well done. You’re on to some new initiatives, both with music and outside of music. Tell us a little bit about that. Feel free to fill in some gaps between you getting out and pursuing music and stuff like that. But let’s get a little bit into your music.

**Petey:** Well, I got really, really into music when I was about twelve. And so I just started writing back then. And then, you know, I ended up joining the Marine Corps and that is really something that kind of takes up everything. I still would listen to my music and write my music and stuff like that, but I never really had the time that I felt I needed to devote to it to make the right stuff that I wanted to. So I kinda put a pause on it for the Marine Corps, and right after I got out, I moved to Reno, Nevada and I just started making my music. I was recording all the time, put out a couple projects, and that’s actually when we got in touch. I sent you a few of my songs. They got featured on your podcast at *Veteran Empire*.

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** Back in the day. [Laughter]

**Tim:** Back in the day.

**Petey:** Um. Yeah. Um. And then I ended up going to San Francisco for school. I got accepted into the university out there, and I was there for a year. And then I decided to kinda come home down here in LA to visit family and everything. And during that trip, I met a producer down here who had heard some of my stuff online, and he wanted to work with me. And at the same time that I met him, I was kinda mulling over the idea of moving back down here. So it was kind of just a happy coincidence. And it was- I took it as a sign of like, “Alright, maybe I’m making the right decision, or I’m at least headed the right way.” So I went ahead with the move down here. I started working a lot with the producer that I had met, and we made a lot of good, good music. Did a couple projects together, and then we ended up kind of going our separate ways. Just a mutual thing. He kind of got in more the film realm where I was just really focused on the music. So that forced me to get into the production side of the music because before that, I was just the writer and the performer, you know? I would write my stuff, and I would record it, and then, you know, have somebody else edit it, mix it, master it. But, like I said, splitting from that producer kinda forced me to look at getting into that side of it myself, and that was when I actually created the song that I sent you most recently, the “Scared to Dream”. I was put in touch with this group- it’s called the Sable Group- and it’s a Veteran-owned, Veteran-run foundation that, you know, they’re a clothing line. It’s like a Veteran outreach program, and then they also have a racing team. They were down in Baja for the Baja 500 and the Baja 1000 this year racing their trophy truck. So, yeah, I got put in touch with them and they kinda shared their mission statement with me, going over, you know, their goals, reaching out to Veterans, and raising suicide awareness. Kind of trying to cultivate an environment where we can get together and not have to feel like we’re facing those problems alone.

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** And, if nothing else, just be around a group of guys that just get it because I think that’s the one thing that we miss the most is not having to explain what we’re going through because we’re around the guys that went through it, too. You know, so we don’t have to talk about it. You get it, I get it, and that’s it, you know? That’s all I need. [Laughter] And they did a really good job of creating that environment at all the events that they put together. So, when they reached out to me to create a song kinda discussing those topics, in the wake of one of our friends passing, I jumped on it right away. It was something I had written about plenty of times before, but I just- I never really knew how to put it into a song. So, when they reached out, I took that as a sign. You know, again, I’m taking everything as a sign. [Laughter] I took that as a sign that, you know, I need to really buckle down, and try to put this into a song. And I wrote “Scared to Dream”. I recorded it on my own. I mixed it, mastered it all on my own, and I sent it over to them and they loved it. It really got a lot of Veteran’s attention because it really touches on a lot of things the infantry, specifically infantry military members face, not only on deployment, but coming back, as well, and, you know, separating from the military. And it’s definitely not Marine Corps-specific. It’s one of those things where, you know, the guy, Steven Jackal?- the guy that prompted the whole song- he was in the Army. You know, he wasn’t even a Marine. And I think that was probably one of the biggest takeaways that I learned personally because as a Marine we’re really prideful and we like to distinguish ourselves from the others based off of that pride. But doing this project and being around other service members, it really showed me that, you know, we’re all going through the same thing. You know, we might think we’re better than one group, and they might think they’re better than us, but we’re all brothers. You know, we’ve all been through it, and it’s all the same, you know? It doesn’t… The trauma doesn’t care what branch you were in. [Laughter] It’s coming for whoever goes through the situation. That’s what really presented itself to me during this whole thing. Where I had the blessing to do this project with them, and they actually ended up liking me enough to involve me in the group. And so now, yeah, I get to help out. It’s not only just the song that I got to help with. I get to help arrange events, and go to these events, and talk with the Veterans. You know, get feedback, figure out what sort of things they might enjoy doing in the future. So, yeah, it’s just been a real big blessing, you know? The music… It may not be as huge of a success as I originally wished it would have been, but it’s definitely brought a lot of blessings to me, and I’m really, really glad that I never gave up on it. Even during that time when you and I, we kind of stopped talking, and there were even times when I stopped recording. But the music was always important to me, and I’m really glad that I stayed the course with it because, you know, now it’s not even like I’m just reaping these benefits. I’m actually helping Vets now, and this is something I never would have thought I would have been involved in, and now I’m in it and I love it. [Laughter]

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** Um. And-

**Tim:** Let’s see. You talked about the group being… You know, one of the missions of the group is just to sort of be there for Veterans at times where it’s just good to have people around.

**Petey:** Right.

**Tim:** If you will… If you’re willing, tell us about sort of what one of those times looked like for you when you first got out, when you wish you’d had a little bit more community around you.

**Petey:** Yeah. Well, when I got out, I had a really, really tough time transitioning back into the civilian world. And I think a big part of that might have been because I was so young when I joined. Seriously, I was 16, and on my 17th birthday I was swearing in, and a month later I was in boot camp. But, you know, in boot camp, I was more 16 than I was 17. [Laughter] So they really got to form me into, you know, who I am or who I was when I got out. I was exactly what the Marine Corps made me. And so, I was really aggressive when I got out, thinking it was normal, you know. I didn’t think anything of it because the guys that I was around, they were just as aggressive, you know? That’s just how we were. I had a really bad drinking problem, and I was just really bitter towards everything. I just had a really, really sour outlook on everything. And when I got out, I went from being around the guys that got it to being around nobody, and then having to, you know, make new friends. And when I did that, you know, I kind of mirrored the people that I was trying to hang around with so they thought I was like them, but over time, you know, the real me came out and it was that aggressive, you know, drinking Marine. I just really ended up isolating myself because of the way I acted when I got out, and I had no one to reach out to and I went through a real tough time for about a year. Where I just didn’t know what to do, and so I didn’t really do anything. I just kind of went into this, you know, this autopilot where I would work, come home, sleep. And I didn’t talk to anybody, not even in my family. I didn’t talk to my mom, my dad. I didn’t talk to anybody for about a year just because I went through this phase where I just didn’t think anybody cared. I didn’t think anybody was interested in what was going on with me, and anybody who didn’t really know me, I didn’t think they’d have any interest in getting to know me. And, you know, luckily, I pulled myself out of that with the help of some of my friends, including Nico, my buddy that I was talking about earlier. He actually moved out to San Francisco where I was at, and that was actually a really big help just being around somebody like that who, like I said, had been through what I had been through. And when I got through it, I guess I kind of just hoarded that, I kind of kept it to myself, that feeling of, you know, getting through something and, you know, someone being there for me and I didn’t really do that for anyone else. And when I ran into this group, you know, by coincidence or destiny, and they presented opportunities that I just… I couldn’t say no to it. I had to help. And it’s awesome. I really wish that everybody would have that friend that I had or, you know, the chance to be with a group of guys like I am with where they just reach out, you know? There’s times where the founder of this foundation, he’ll call me if he’s having, you know, a situation. He’ll call me, nine o’clock at night and, “Hey man, just wanted to talk. Having a rough night, not good.” And it’s not even like, you know, he wants me to fly out to Florida or wherever he is to go be there for him. He just wants to talk on the phone to somebody that gets it. And it goes both ways, you know? It really does make that difference, being able to call somebody who gets it. And you don’t have to do anything special. Just talk with me, man. “How are you?” “Having a rough time.” You know. “What’s going on? Talk to me about it. You’re going to be okay, you get through it. If you need anything, let me know.” And five minutes of that can make all the difference. As soon as you’re getting ready to get off the phone, you’re just like, “Thank you man. I don’t know why I was freaking out, but thank you.”

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** It’s been huge. And yeah, so, like I said, I mean that first year after I got out, it was really, really hard for me, and isolating myself wasn’t the answer. If anything, it was reinforcing those relationships with those guys who’d been through what I’d been through.

**Tim:** Sure. How old’s your son now?

**Petey:** [Laughter] He’s a little over a year old.

**Tim:** Just a little over a year old.

**Petey:** Yeah, he’s-

**Tim:** How has fatherhood changed your perspective on mental and emotional health? Maybe not changed, but just influen- made you think differently about it?

**Petey:** Yeah it’s tough now. [Laughter] It’s something else, man. Do you have any kids? I don’t believe we’ve ever talked about that.

**Tim:** I don’t. Not yet.

**Petey:** There you go. Yeah, it’s something else. As soon as I saw him, I just, I knew a lot of things had to change, and I wasn’t anywhere near where I was when I got out of the Marine Corps a few years ago, but I still knew, you know, as far as my outlook, it wasn’t just me anymore. My dad did a great job with us, me and my brother. He did a great job with us. But my dad hadn’t gone through a lot of the things that I’d been through. So, I kind of went into it with like the cheat sheet [Laughter] where I know some of the things that my son is going to go through. I know when he’s feeling like the world is crashing down around him, it can always be worse, and it can always be better. Never settle and don’t give up, you know? And even if he thinks it’s all coming down, he can count on me and I’ll be there for you. And it was really weird because when he first came into my life, when he was born, I felt a connection but, like, it’s nothing like now, you know? I just- over time, as I see him grow and grow and grow and, you know, develop into who he’s going to be the rest of his life, I just really see that, you know, there’s a lot of work that goes into being a dad that I never really understood, you know? And that- it just makes me more appreciative of my father because it is a lot of work. I mean, he’s gonna be, at least in large part, who I influence him to be. He’s going to have his own character, and his own little flare but a lot of what he carries out into the world is going to be what I give him. And it’s a really sobering thought, you know, literally sobering. [Laughter] It’s one of those things where, you know, the drinking has slowed down quite a bit. [Laughter]

**Tim:** [Laughter]

**Petey:** It just makes you realize that, you know, you’re giving something. What am I leaving for the world when I go? And it’s him. And people aren’t gonna… They’re not gonna care about me when I’m gone, but they’re gonna wanna know this guy, Noah, you know? And how he acts. And it kinda- it showed me the responsibility that I carry, it’s not just even so much for myself or for him, but it’s for the environment around him because who I help him to become is going to affect the people around him, and his overall happiness, you know? If I raise him to be miserable and grumpy, he’s not going to be a happy person. People aren’t going to want to be around that. You know, if he’s an immoral person, people don’t wanna be around my, you know, and be… So just… Aw, man, I can’t even… I couldn’t even go over all of it, but it’s a thousand thoughts just rushing at you a million miles a second. You are just like, “I can’t mess this up, I can’t mess this up.” [Laughter] But it’s great. I love it.

**Tim:** [Laughter] Yeah. I know you didn’t really, I’m sure you didn’t really expect to come on here and talk about fatherhood, but I think it’s something that doesn’t get discussed enough. That so many people… Parenthood, in general, that people can resonate-

**Petey:** Yeah.

**Tim:** - with. I think, and correct me if I’m wrong, but I think I remember around the time that your son was born, you posted a Facebook post that was like a pseudo letter to him. Is that right?

**Petey:** Yeah.

**Tim:** Am I remembering that right?

**Petey:** Yeah. Yeah, you are. [Laughter]

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** I did.

**Tim:** You know, I-

**Petey:** It’s funny that you remember that.

**Tim:** Yeah it is funny that I remember that because I don’t remember much. [Laughter] The thing that stood out to me-

**Petey:** Yeah.

**Tim:** -was you had a paragraph in there about alcohol.

**Petey:** Uh-uh.

**Tim:** I think that any parent with a vice, I think, or that has gone, that has experienced a vice to a dangerous level, I think, fears-

**Petey:** Mhmm.

**Tim:** -that any member of their family might also follow suit. You said that, you know, your drinking has cut back a lot. You know, how much of that is ensuring that you’re sober and how much of that is exposing, making, you know, letting him see the habit.

**Petey:** Well, I mean, I don’t ever want him to go through what I went through, and a big part of that was because of, you know, the alcohol that I was drinking, and the amount that I was drinking. And I just- I went down this rabbit hole where it was really hard for me to get out of. And I wouldn’t wish that on my worst enemy. It’s one of those things where- and I really mean that- I wouldn’t wish that on anybody.

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** So when he was born, you know, there was just a bunch of things that were coming to me, and I wrote that letter the night before he was born. [Laughter] We were in the hospital, and my fiancé, she was having contractions, and they gave her the epidural and everything. Like, he was coming. [Laughter] And I didn’t have any idea when it was going to be or, you know, if he was going to be okay because there were small complications that had the nurses and the doctor a little worried, where they were kind of giving us a little bit of extra attention.

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** And I just didn’t know what to do, so I started writing. So I figured I’d write him a letter, and when it came to the alcohol, it was just one of those things that I- ‘cause the whole idea of the letter was things that I thought he should know, and one of them was the alcohol. And, you know, my dad kind of was good at telling us, “Make sure you don’t do this, don’t do that.” But I think with, like, my parents’ generation, it was more just, “Don’t do it because I said don’t do it. And, you know, don’t ask. Just don’t do it because I said don’t do it.”

**Tim:** Right.

**Petey:** And, for me, that wasn’t enough, you know? Don’t tell me not to do it, tell me why. Like, what’s up? What’s going on? And so I just made sure that in that letter- which I’m eventually going to have him, you know, read when he’s a little bit older- I will let him know, you know, it can tear you apart, it can mess up a lot of things for you. And some people in my family have drinking problems, so I don’t know if it’s a hereditary thing. So that terrifies me and, at the very least, he knows, you know, I cared enough to tell you my part of it. You know, my downfall to that fight, and, you know, if it’s something you want to experience, I’ll be here for you, but you don’t have to experience it, you know? I did it for you. [Laughter] That was kind of my biggest emotions during that part of that letter. Um-

**Tim:** Yeah. Well I-

**Petey:** And, you know, I- I- Sorry. What was that?

**Tim:** Pause you to say I appreciate you expanding on that because we definitely didn’t come into this planning on talking about fatherhood, but I remembered that letter and I wanted to address it.

**Petey:** Oh, yeah, no that’s cool that you remembered it. [Laughter] I didn’t expect that at all, but yeah. I love talking about him. He’s the best. I talk about him all the time. [Laughter]

**Tim:** [Laughter] Going back to the events and meet ups and stuff that you and your group put on for Veterans, what do you think are some of the gains? What do you think of the Veterans that are attending these are really gaining from the attendance and from the interactions they’re getting?

**Petey:** Well, for me, when I, because, when they- when we were put into contact with each other about my music, I hadn’t even been to any of these events, none of that. I didn’t even really know anything about them. It was a subject that meant a lot to me, meant a lot to them, and everybody involved had been through the experience. So it was something that we could all relate to. But when I was actually invited to an event, I went, and at that point, I hadn’t been around any military members for a couple years. I mean, I’d hung around with a couple of my buddies, but not an event, you know? Like, kind of a ridged military format as far as, like, a schedule. You know, we got to be here at this time. Nothing like that since I’d been in. And so being around these guys, I mean, it was just nuts. It was more than a vacation. It was- I just felt, like, rejuvenated. I felt like I’d recharged my batteries and I was just good to go some more. Being around the guys that got it, you know, being able to joke with them, talk with them, make little inside jokes that only somebody in the military would get, you know? You don’t get to say to people, you know, at my job where I’m welding, you know? [Laughter] And it’s a relief being around those guys who’ve been through all the things that you’ve been through. And you don’t feel like you have to act any sort of way. It’s just be who you are, be who you were when you were in, you know? Be the you that you that was a big, big, big part of your life, you know? And for some people... I’ve got a couple buddies that will even say, “Being in the Marine Corps was the most important thing they think they’ll ever do in their life.” And if that’s really how someone feels, which a lot of guys feel that way, then you really, really look at that person that you were during that part of your life as who you really are, or at least who you wish you could always be. And these events give you the opportunity to be back in that mentality, to be back in that environment where it’s okay for you to still be a Marine or a soldier or a sailor, you know. You don’t have to be “Jeff Welding Metal” or, you know, “So-and-so working at a school”. You can go back and be around these guys that are there, too, and you get to meet these guys and you have a solid connection with these people who, you know, “Alright, man, I’ll see you at the next event.” And then you find one of the guys from the event that lives in California, and he lives 30 minutes from you, and he will randomly call you and say, “Hey, man, let’s go grab a beer.” Or, “Hey, man, let’s go grab some tacos.” You know, just have this friend of yours that you didn’t have before and it’s that one person who knows, you know, who just gets it. For me, it’s like a gem, you know? It is so invaluable and precious to have that one friend who just gets it, you know? And that’s all you really need is one person. And in the group, you get 20, 30. And it’s new Veterans at every event. We do our best to invite new Vets to each event as often as we can. So what we’ll do is, depending on where the event is- sometimes it will be in Vegas, sometimes it will be up North. We have a fishing event coming up with some professional bass fishermen up at Folsom Lake within, like, the next month or two. And so we’re going to reach out in that area, too, because that’s another thing, you know. We don’t want to call, you know, Marines and soldiers and sailors down in San Diego and say, “Hey find your way to Vegas and come to this event.” No, man, we wanna- If we’re going to be in Vegas, we’re gonna call you or reach out to, you know, Vets in Henderson - say,” Hey, man, 30 minutes away, come to this event. It’s free. Food, hangout, get a hotel for you. We’ll hook you up. We’ll just meet up, you know?” [Laughter] Let us be a blessing to you, basically. It’s like I said, it’s the biggest takeaway, definitely, being able to connect with guys that were involved in the same thing you were when, you know-

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** - you may consider to be your prime, the good old days.

**Tim:** Sure. Going back to your music. What are your plans with that anymore? Are you on iTunes? Where can I listen to your stuff, man?

**Petey:** Yeah. I’ve got some music on iTunes. A lot of it- I’ve got a project I’m working on right now. It’s called “Self-Medicated”, and “Scared to Dream” is actually a part of that. It’s one of the things from that project. And the whole premise of it is just things that I’ve used to help me get through tough times, whether it’s music. There’s, you know, songs about alcohol, songs about, you know, drug use, and none of it’s promoting it. It’s just kind of what I’ve been through. But that’s going to be on iTunes, probably, I want to say, within the next month or two. I’ll have a better idea on that release date by next week because I’ve got a couple songs that I have to clear. So I’m just waiting on those.

**Tim:** Yeah.

**Petey:** And it’s completely produced by me. Like I said, I mixed it, mastered it, and did everything on my own so that’s probably part of the reason it’s taking so long. But, other than that, I mean the rest of my stuff it’s all free. You can find it on Soundcloud, [soundcloud.com/peteyace](https://soundcloud.com/peteyace) [Like to Petey’s Soundcloud page], and then a lot of stuff that’s original. So it’s really good, it’s just I wasn’t at a point in my music where I wanted to monetize it. With this album that I’m working on right now, that I’m getting ready to release, it’s definitely going to be on iTunes, Spotify, Tidal, and you’ll be able to Shazam it.

**Tim:** Okay. Very well. Petey Ace, Marine Core Veteran, hip-hop artist, and Veteran advocate, I’ll say. Sir, it’s been a real pleasure catching up with you again and I hope we get to speak again a little further down the line when you’ve got some more music out.

**Petey:** Absolutely. Yeah. It’s been a pleasure talking to you.

[00:38:15] Music

# **[00:38:20] PSA:**

**Man 1:** I served in Vietnam.

**Man 2:** I served in World War 2.

**Woman 1:** I served in Afghanistan.

**Man 3:** And VA serves us all.

**Man 1:** No matter when you served.

**Woman 1:** No matter if you saw combat or not.

**Man 4:** There are benefits for Veterans of every generation.

**Woman 2:** See what VA can do for you.

**Man 5:** To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit [www.va.gov](https://www.va.gov/) [Link to VA website]. That’s [www.va.gov](https://www.va.gov/).

[00:38:45] Music

# **[00:38:50] CLOSING MONOLOGUE:**

**Tim:** Again, big thanks to my friend, Petey Ace, for joining me. It was- Maybe that conversation about fatherhood was really interesting. That was a topic that I wasn’t even intending on going over or talking about when we entered the interview, but I was reminded of that Facebook post that he made when his son was born and it really turned into being a good conversation. So big thanks to him for not only joining me, but answering questions that he may not have been prepared for. Like I said, Explore did a video, did a Facebook live event on life insurance. It is on the Blue Stars Families Facebook page [Link to Blue Star Families Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BlueStarFamilies/>]. Go to their Facebook page, look for the video from August 16. A lot of great information there regarding life insurance. And, of course, you can go to [explore.va.gov](https://explore.va.gov/) [Link to Explore VA website] and get information on other benefits like disability compensation, education and training, home loans, healthcare, employment services, pension, memorial benefits, life insurance, and more. That’s [explore.va.gov](https://explore.va.gov/).

This week’s Medal of Honor citation reading is for William Spicer. Service is U.S. Navy. Rank of Gunner’s Mate First Class. Division: he was on the U.S.S. Marblehead. Conflict is the Spanish American War. Year of honor: 1898. Citation reads, “On the U.S.S. Marblehead, at the approaches to Caimanera, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 26 and 27 July 1898. Displaying heroism, Spicer took part in the perilous work of sweeping for and disabling 27 contact mines during this period.” We honor his service. That wraps up this week’s episode. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen. Thank you for your patience as we took a couple week’s off and are now back to producing weekly content. We’ll be right back at it next week with another great interview. As always, you can follow us on Twitter [Link to VA’s Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor>] and on Instagram [Link to VA’s Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/?hl=en>] @DeptVetAffairs for more stories and images from our community. And as I mentioned in my interview with Petey Ace, we will be playing his song, “Scared to Dream” at the end of the podcast. So you can hear the track that he was talking about and get a reference for his explanation from the interview. I’m Timothy Lawson, signing off.

[00:41:25] “Scared to Dream” by Petey Ace

(Lyrics for “Scared to Dream” follow)

Yeah.

Drunk again. I’m writing this with a heavy hand.

Another night, my mind ain’t right, and I need a plan.

So tired of hearing all the questions about Afghanistan.

And if you really wanna know, go fighting for our lands.

You ask about killing like it’s important.

That’s like asking a stranger if she’s had an abortion.

What the f—is wrong, man, just send me back.

At least over there, I know somebody got my back.

If you get back home, nobody’s gonna take the time to understand.

It’s fine, just pop these pills until you die.

And once you going, got some space.

Give your momma a flag and an easy payday.

“You should be proud of your son, he was the best one I knew.”

They spewing lies to his momma in front of me and the crew.

‘Cause you ain’t never shook the hand of any one of us low-life’s.

You cool with dying, just so long as it ain’t your life.

Maybe if you been where we been, and you’d sinned like we sinned,

You’d be reaching for the gin again, too.

And maybe if you’d seen what we’d seen,

you would know what we mean when we say that we’re scared to dream.

Maybe if you’d been where we’d been, and you’d sinned like we’d sinned,

You’d be reaching for the gin again, too.

And maybe if you’d seen what we’d seen,

You would know what we mean when we say that we’re scared to dream.

Suicide is on my mind.

No sleep at night. It’s fight or flight, it ends tonight.

I couldn’t even begin to tell you about all of the friends that I lost.

No, I’m not talking about the war, I’m talking about what it cost.

Making it through the battle, to commit suicide in your bed.

Man, he made it. What the f—was he thinking?

Most of us are already dead.

I left her a little piece of my spirit back in the sands, so it only makes sense

I came back a worse man.

And I know myself well enough to acknowledge my demons.

I can beat ‘em, but only next to something I believe in.

Now, I’m screaming and everybody that I love is leaving.

This “American hero” dream is so deceiving.

Everybody that I love is leaving.

This “American hero” dream is so deceiving.

And you wonder why we’re scared to dream.

Yeah, you wonder why we’re scared to dream.

Maybe if you’d been where we’d been and you’d sinned like we’d sinned,

You’d be reaching for the gin again, too.

And maybe if you’d seen what we’d seen,

You would know what we mean when we say that we’re scared to dream.

Maybe if you’d been where we’d been and you’d sinned like we’d sinned,

You’d be reaching for the gin again, too.

And maybe if you’d seen what we’d seen,

You would know what we mean when we say that we’re scared to dream.

Scared to dream.

Yeah.

Howie, Wynn, Polanski, Jablaowski, Schaeffer, Jackal, Freedman.

We won’t forget.

Can’t forget.

Rest easy.