

Borne the Battle

Episode #57

Sebastian Junger- Journalist, author of "Tribe"

Hosted by Timothy Lawson

(Text Transcript Follows)

Music [00:00:00]

[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE:

Timothy Lawson (TL): Tuesday, November 7, 2017. *Borne the Battle* podcast brought to you by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. I am your host, Timothy Lawson. Hope everybody is doing well. This is the second episode of the week of podcasts leading up to Veterans' Day, which is on Saturday, November 11. And, uh, yesterday we debuted the new title, *Borne the Battle*. We debuted the "Benefits Breakdown" program, which is, uh, just a 7-10 minutes of, uh, looking into a resource, a benefit, or program office-whatever, um, whatever inspires me. And, uh, I'm going to try to take a little deeper look into what that is. Or, at the very least, explain more of it than maybe you would normally get out of a, uh, out of a blog post, or a tweet, or something like that. And helping you, helping my audience understand what's available and how to take advantage of, uh, of what you may qualify for. As I said, today is November 7th. Look, if- if free food isn't your thing, I understand. I know some Veterans, uh, have a principle against this stuff. But, uh, if that's something you're interested in, I will note that on, uh, November 7, Chipotle is doing a "Buy One, Get One Free", uh, for- for military members and Veterans, I believe. Um. So, take a friend and, uh, go get, uh, go get a burrito. Buy one, get one. Today's featured interview is with Sebastian Junger. Some of you are probably wondering, "Whoa. Sebastian Junger. Is he a Veteran?" No, he's not. I thought about it long and hard and, uh, decided that Sebastian fits the bill, especially with the theme of today and tomorrow which is "Storytellers". Um, and, um... Before we get to Sebastian's interview, I'll tell you about Storytellers. StorytellersX, to be exact. StorytellersX is the TedX version of Got Your 6's flagship Storytellers events. Now, they just put one on last night in LA. Like, the- the- their Storytellers event. They have another one going on tomorrow night in Washington

DC. Both of those streaming from their Facebook, and I'm sure videos will be up later. But VA has partnered with, uh, Got Your 6 to bring the Stor- the Storytelling events at a much loc- more local level, like a TedX would. And they're going to be at the local community Veteran engagement boards nationwide throughout November and December. Uh, just looking at the, uh, list of places I see here: Connecticut, Maine, Colorado, uh, Illinois, North Carolina. New York, New York. Uh, Grand Junction, Colorado. Cleveland, Ohio. Tucson, Arizona. Um. So, there's a handful of places across and they're still looking for people to host these things. Um. If you go to [blogs.va.gov](https://www.blogs.va.gov) [Link to VA's blog] and just search "Storytellers", you'll see the blog- you'll see the blog post that's called: "VA and Got Your 6 announce Storytellers events across the Nation" [Link to original blog post: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/42713/aimed-strengthening-civilian-military-relationships-va-got-6-announce-storytellersx-events-across-nation/>]. That has more information there. Um, but these events are going to be cool. There's a lot of power in storytelling. I'm familiar with it, not only from my podcasting days, but I have also, uh, participated in a TedX event. But Storytellers is more- the events that I'm talking about- is more about talking about service and how- and how one's military service helped get them to where they are now or how that's connected, right? So, where they are now, their service, how those two things are connected, that journey. Um, and that's what- And that's how- That's what Got Your 6, uh, has aimed for and we're piggybacking off of that with the StorytellersX events. We're really excited to- to move forward with that initiative with them again. Uh. Go to www.blogs.va.gov [Link to VA's blog page]. Search "Storytellers" in the, uh, in the search bar. And the "VA and Got Your 6 announce StorytellersX events across the Nation" is the blog you're looking for, for more information on that. So, featured interview with Sebastian Junger. So- those of you unfamiliar with Sebastian- he recently wrote the book Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging. He's also- He also wrote War, he wrote The Perfect Storm, which I'm sure many of you are familiar with. He's been a- He's an award-winning journalist. He has, uh, spent a lot of time in conflict zones, war zones. Uh. And has seen the worst of it, like many Veterans have. And I think- And that's why, um, when the idea of talking to Sebastian about storytelling came up, I hesitated,

briefly, uh, because, you know, we want to stay true to, uh, to our- to our Veterans and featuring them on this show. But, um, I think that it benefits Veterans for us to talk to Sebastian about his experiences, what he has seen from the Veteran community from his, uh, from his point of view. Um. And just, you know, what he's learned through storytelling of his own, through hearing other's. So, Sebastian Junger came on and, uh, it was- I was glad that we did the interview because, um, he's going to talk to us about the power in sharing your experience, combat or not. But, especially those that had been deployed, the power of sharing your experience to your community, not just your- your Veteran friends and- and your- your military peers, but your actual community and allowing them to better understand, um- maybe not completely understand- but to better understand what you experienced and, in some ways, to take some ownership of, um, of a conflict, of a- of an experience that they helped, you know, fund through taxpaying dollars and- and, you know, maybe voted for through their representatives and stuff like that. So, it's a really cool conversation. I'm excited for you to listen to it. Award-winning journalist, Sebastian Junger. Enjoy.

Music [00:06:10]

[00:06:14] PSA:

Kids: I pledge allegiance to the Flag...

Man 1: We grew up together. We believed in something bigger than ourselves.

Group: I solemnly swear...

Man 1: The military took me to one side of the world and her to the other. And even though she was always the strong one, when we caught up years later, I found out she had fallen on some hard times. It was her call to make but doing it together made all the difference.

Narrator: For Veterans who are homeless or on the brink of homelessness, call 877-424-3838.

Music [00:06:43]

[00:06:46] INTERVIEW:

TL: Alright, Sebastian Junger. Author of The Perfect Storm or, more recently, Tribe. Sebastian, one thing that I find really fascinating about you is multiple times in recent history when I've- when I've talked to people about you, people are surprised to learn that you aren't a Veteran. Do you- Do you get that confusion at all? I mean, I'm sure it comes with your- how closely associated you are with the military community. But do you- do you get people often confusing you for a Veteran?

Sebastian Junger (SJ): Yeah, I do. I think they're sur- I think Veterans often are surprised that, with my experience with the U.S. military, they just sort of assume that I would have had some kind of military background. And, you know, I have. And I've been a war reporter since the early '90's.

TL: Yeah.

SJ: Um. But, uh, yeah. I've never- I've never served this country or any country.

TL: Yeah. Did you, uh, did you ever consider the military when you were younger?

SJ: No, not at all. You know, I grew up in a very liberal family during Vietnam and every adult I knew was against the war and against the whole U.S. "war machines". And, frankly, there's nothing- I mean, nothing seemed less appealing than a peacetime Army.

TL: Yeah.

SJ: You know? Had 9/11 happened when I was 25, I think that I would have completely changed my calculations. But, you know, I got out of college in 1984 and nothing looked more boring than, you know, like, being in a peace- you know, the U.S. military in peacetime. And so, I didn't even consider it. But what I did consider was being a war reporter. I mean, that world of conflict definitely was compelling to me, particularly because my father was a war refugee. So, that was a world I was sensitized to. But I did not, in any way, want to wear a uniform.

TL: Yeah. Well, you know, the first question I ask each Veteran that's on this show is why they decided to join the military. So, I'm going to alter

that to- when it's almost similar for you- you decided to also go into areas of conflict. What- What made you decide to pursue journalism in conflict zones?

SJ: Well, I sort of wallowed through my twenties trying to write about things in the United States and I- You know, I had various jobs to pay my living. I was- Mostly, I was a climber for tree companies. I was an arborist. And I worked very high up in the air and with a chainsaw and a rope. And I eventually got pretty badly hurt doing it and I thought, "Oh maybe I'll write about dangerous jobs." And that brought me to The Perfect Storm. So, that was my first book, non-fiction, obviously. It was based on a storm in 1991 on the east coast. And it also got me thinking about war reporting. And that was particularly compelling to me because my father was a refugee from the Spanish civil war, pushed into France. And that's how he wound up in this country. And so, I was very curious about war. And there was a civil war in Bosnia. Sarajevo was besieged and I thought, "Oh my god. Maybe if I go there, I can sort of earn my stripes as a journalist and make a full living as a journalist. Maybe I just have to jump in." And that's what I did.

TL: So, you know- for those listening that may be less familiar with you and your work- Do you have- I mean, I know you have thousands of stories, but maybe do you have a story that you can share from one of your times in those areas. Maybe one that you think either epitomizes your experience or one that you recall on often?

SJ: Oh my god, there's so many. I was in Kabul. I was in Afghanistan in 1996, right when the Taliban were taking over. And I remember a guy in Jalalabad- an Afghan guy, obviously. America wasn't there yet. And I remember a guy in Jalalabad pointing up to the Tora Bora Mountains and saying, "There's foreigners up there. There's Arabs up there training. and I'm an," he says, "And I'm an Afghan. I can't even go up there. They'll kill me, and this is my country. Something very bad will come of this." And I, just, you know- How prophetic those words were. And it's one of those things that, as a journalist, like, sometimes you'll get a glimpse of the future and you won't even know it. A couple weeks later, I was in Kabul, in the front lines outside Kabul, and I was shot at by a Taliban machine gunner. They hadn't overrun Kabul yet. And the guy that I was with was a young Pashtun kid and he said, "You know, we hate those people, the Taliban. We hate them. But we're going to let them in because we're so sick of the civil war and the corruption in this country and they'll clean up the corruption." And I thought of that many times after I- My brilliant friend, Sarah Shaze, who was an NPR

reporter and now works at Carnegie, wrote a book about how all of the really radical Islamic movements- like Al-Shabaab in Somalia, and Boko Haram in Nigeria, ISIS, and Taliban, Al-Qaida- they all gained traction in the populous, not because people want radical Islam- to be ruled by radical Islam- but because all of these movements promised to clean up corruption in the government. And if we really want to fight terrorism, really what we should be doing is fighting corruption in the governments we're allied with. That would go a very long way in buffering those countries against the "solution" of radical Islam through that terrible problem of corruption.

TL: Yeah. We always- We always talk to Veterans about their transitions out of the military and in Tribe, you touched on how warriors for centuries have been coping with returning from war through storytelling. When you return from a conflict area, how do you yourself transition back into, you know, normal life here in America? How's that transition for you?

SJ: Well, most of the wars that I covered I was not with American forces because they weren't involved. I was all over civil wars in Africa and the Middle East. And so, I was over there solo. I was not with a unit. So, I wasn't bonding with this tight community. I was just on my own- in Liberia or Sierra Leone or Afghanistan, wherever it might have been- and I came home alone. So, the transition wasn't as bad because I wasn't saying goodbye to a close-knit unit, a platoon, that I had shared a year, you know, a year straight with. So- So, you know, I think I had it much easier. When I came back from the Korengal Valley, having spent time in an American platoon, that was much, much harder because suddenly I was going from this group to being an individual and I- You know, I didn't have it nearly as badly as the soldiers did. But- the soldiers that I covered- but what I found is that- I mean, there's two problems when you come back from a war. One is that some soldiers, maybe around 10% of the U.S. military, is actually in combat and they are in a position to be traumatized by combat. So, you have, for some people- one in ten, roughly- you have trauma. But for everyone you have a transition problem of going from a close-knit unit to this very alienated American society, very individualized American society. And even if you weren't in combat, even if you weren't traumatized- which, of course, is the majority of American soldiers- it doesn't matter. That transition is really hard. So, people in the Peace Corps- One quarter of Peace Corps volunteers, when they come back into the United States, sink into a deep depression. And, you know, obviously, those people weren't in combat. That transition is very, very hard. And I struggled

with it when I came back from the Korengal. But psychologists will tell you that only around 20% of traumatized people wind up getting stuck in a sort of trauma loop where they have a long-term problem with it. So, most people will recover on their own from- from the effects of trauma within a few months or a couple of years.

TL: Yeah. So, you know, touching on, you know, your time coming back from the Korengal, in those transitions, did you experience any emotional crisis?

SJ: Yes. Well, I found myself to have a- Well, first of all, because of all the combat out there, I had a very exaggerated startle response, I had a lot of combat dreams, and I had a very- And this I attribute to the- to being included in that group. So, this is a positive thing, not a negative thing. But I had a very high level of emotionality. And by that, I mean that I would- I would get extremely emotional and tearful in all kinds of random circumstances. I mean, at the post office, or watching a mother with her little child, or at a wedding. Or, you know, all these things that, like, I don't think- they don't merit tears. They're good things. They're beautiful things, right? But, suddenly, I was getting emotional all over the place and I was also, you know- not long after I returned- my colleague who I made *Restrepo* with was killed in combat in Libya. And I was supposed to be Tim Hetherington. I was supposed to be with him on assignment. And at the last minute I couldn't go, and he got killed. And I felt enormously guilty and an enormous amount of grief. And so, I also struggled with, I think, the same kind of depression that soldiers get related to grief and guilt over the loss of brothers and sisters. And that's a very, I think, a very important part of PTSD. This sort of guilt that you survived and someone you love didn't survive. And that- And you're going to get that at the Vegas shootings, you're going to get that in the wildfires in Santa Rosa. I mean, you don't have to be a soldier to experience that. Life- Life kills people and the survivors really, really struggle with their quote "Good luck" at surviving.

[16:32] TL: Yeah. Uh, yeah. I think- I think those listening can understand how a mother with her- with her child and a wedding can be emotional. What were you tearing up at for at the post office? [Laughter] What was getting you there?

SJ: Um, you know- I mean, just, here was this old, you know, old person who had worked at the post office their whole life and they were just- they were doing their job.

TL: Yeah.

SJ: And just that was- And, you know- for the record- I had never cried at a wedding before this, right? [Laughter] So, you know, like, this was all new behavior. But, you know, at the post office I was just so suddenly moved at this sort of quiet dignity of most people. You know, just going about their lives. And- And there was something about that that just choked me up and I actually left the post office. Like, I couldn't deal with it. [Laughter]

TL: [Laughter] So, some- I can only relate to this, you know, obviously, through my own eyes and I haven't seen combat- but I definitely exited the military with, you know, with emotional cri- with, like, problems of transition problems and depression and I've learned that telling your story, at the very least- from what I've learned- opens the door for more coping down the road. In that, when you tell a bunch of people what you've experienced, having that conversation again down the road becomes just a little bit easier. Talk to us about the power behind storytelling. And you can touch on the ideas that you explained in Tribe and how it can help those returning from conflict cope with their experiences.

SJ: Well, there's enormous cathartic value in telling one's story. I mean that a part of the power of therapy is that you're telling your story to the therapist. And, you know, of course, they have knowledge that's helpful. But, you know, part of the value is just the fact that you're just articulating and sharing something that happened to you that feels important and emotional. Now, imagine doing that same process but for not your shrink, but for your entire community. For the community that you fought for, right? I mean that in a sort of an ancient sense when in small-scale society, hunter-gatherer society. Which, of course, is what humans evolved for and spent 90% of their history doing was living in small groups in mostly nomadic, hunter-gatherer economies. Storytelling was- That was how people participated in the group, right? And you didn't have to be a returning warrior. You could be a hunter, you could be a mother, you could be a shaman. I mean, whatever. I mean, that is- That is how community- human community was organized and run. And when you do that, two things happen. First of all, in telling your people what you did for them- And I think you could- I think this would apply to the post office worker, too. I mean, you don't have to be a soldier. Really, anyone functioning in any capacity for the community can do this. When you tell your community what you did for them, you unburden yourself of some of the emotional cargo that

comes with that task because you're sharing it with others. And it allows other people to then participate in that emotionality and in the sort of moral, you know- in some ways- the moral debt. I mean, there's a- I mean, waging war and killing people encourages sort of moral- a moral burden, right? And even if you believe it's a just war and a righteous war, there is still a moral burden of killing. And when you tell your community that you've killed for them and that you saw your friends die for them, you are asking them, the community, to take some of that- to own the conflict. I mean, if a soldier kills- You know, when the soldier pulls a trigger at a checkpoint in Ramadi and accidentally kills an Iraqi family that was not a threat, the entire nation of America killed that person- killed that family. I mean, we pay the taxes, we bought the gun, we did the training, we shipped him over there. He pulled the trigger but that death really belongs to all of us. And so, I think when you allow Veterans to talk about things, particularly things that pain them, it forces the nation and the community to take on ownership of the war. And I don't say that as a- I'm not in an anti-war position when I say that. I'm strictly speaking on a sort of- in emotional terms for soldiers.

TL:

Yeah. That's- What I thought was interesting that you brought up the therapist at the beginning and how, you know, your- You know, while a therapist is prepared to help you process some things, a lot of their job is really just to let you talk, right? Let you get talking and get things out. And I've mentioned on VA's blog before that I've just started therapy myself and have found myself saying something very- something that's not hidden, something that is normal. But I'll say it to my therapist and realize, "Oh! That's something I should tell somebody else." And, like, in my next opportunity, will tell them. And it's not because it's hidden, or secret, or it was difficult for me to process, I just had never- I had just never processed it, you know, getting it out there. And when I did, I was like, "Oh! That's a good thing for me to talk about." And I realized- I noticed a lot of Veterans when they start- when they get opportunities to do public speaking, when they get opportunities to, you know, talk to high schools, when they get opportunities to be just a part of support groups and stuff like that- When they start talking about their experience, whether or not they were guarded about it, it was getting it out there initially is what helped them continue to get it out there to other people. And, like you said, the communities to help them own part of that experience.

SJ:

Yeah. I mean, I think it's understandable but I think very, very destructive for Veterans, is that Veteran attitude you said- that I often

encounter- is this sort of, like, "You'd never- I'm not going to talk about it because you'd never understand."

TL: Yeah.

SJ: That's a useless criterion for whether you should speak with someone. I mean, you know- I mean, I, as a man, I'm never going to, like, understand, in that sense, childbirth. Right? I'm a man. But that doesn't mean that a woman who's given birth can't talk to me about the experience and communicate something of its essence to me. Like, that's just an absurd standard—

TL: Yeah.

SJ: that you can only speak to someone who had an identical experience that you've had. And it allows Veterans to wall themselves off. And, you know, what's terrible about that is that it deprives America of actually hearing about the war that they commissioned and paid for. They should hear the good stuff and the bad stuff. I mean, you know, if countries are going to wage war, they should really hear all of it. Like, right up front, in their face. But also, it- You know, I think for a lot of Veterans, particularly the ones that were not traumatized, that were just in a rear-based unit, and are m- as you say- are missing- You know, like, the transition was difficult even though there was no trauma involved. The thing you don't want to do is isolate yourself more. I mean, that is perpetuating the problem. You need to- You need to stop- Veterans need to stop at some point- for their own sake- at some point stop seeing themselves as inescapably different from everyone else and, therefore, isolated from the rest of the nation. Like, they are guaranteeing psychological problems for the rest of their lives if they insist on that kind of- sort of ghetto-sizing themselves and their valor.

TL: Yeah. I think, you know- What you talked about earlier with the one approach of being, "Well, I'm not going to talk to you about it because you won't understand," is very counterproductive, right? Like you said, you know, how, then, can anybody understand if no one talks to any- You know, that's the whole point of storytelling, right? Like, you know, that's a big part of storytelling, that's a big part of sharing experiences, is for better understanding of what each other's been through. And, you know, I think childbirth is a really great example of that. So, moving that idea forward, to the power of storytelling as it's used to explain where one's been and how that contributes to where they are now. That's sort of where, you know, VA is partnering with Got your 6 to

piggyback on Got your 6's "Storyteller" initiative. And we're going to do StorytellersX, where Veterans in their local communities can not only share their experience like how we've been talking about, but share their experience as a foundation and as a reflection of where they've been and how that's contributing to where they are now. And it's something that we're seeing a lot of Veterans doing as they transition into different industries, new areas of life, etc. Especially since a lot of recent conflict Veterans are now, you know, 5-10 years outside of their service. Where- What have you seen as far as that- as Veterans moving forward in their life and using that story, the power of storytelling, as a reflection more so than a coping mechanism?

SJ:

Well, yeah. I mean, I've seen a lot of examples of that. I mean, people, human beings, just naturally, instinctively, know that they need to tell stories in order to share their burden. And even if it's just with your wife or your husband. I mean, people- We all kind of intuitively know that. I just saw a really interesting study in a British psychiatric journal showing that the wealthier the society, the higher the rates of PTSD. And the poorer the society, the lower rates of PTSD. My guess is that part- one of the reasons- is that in small-scale, poorer, small-scale societies, people are more socially connected. I mean, they live closer-squish closer together, they have to parti- they have to be more collaborative because they're poor and need to share resources. If you talk to the Peshmerga fighters, the Iraqi fighters, the Afghan fighters- Like, you talk to them about PTSD and they just look at you like you're crazy. And, you know, it's not that they're tougher than us. It's that they live in small communities and the experiences that they have get shared and the communities participate in the lives of the soldiers and vice versa. And I'm sure that was true of the Comanche, and the Apache, and the Navajo and everybody else in the earlier parts of American history. So, if you go to my website, SebastianJunger.com [Link to Sebastian Junger's website], there's a page on it called "Veteran Townhall". And what we s- I had this idea taken from, uh, Native American ceremonies for bringing warriors back into the community after combat. And of course, those Native societies have been doing exactly that for, you know, 10-15,000 years. Like, they know- they know how to do it. And they're still doing it in the context of modern wars. They're still bringing Veterans back into the tribal community with ceremonies. And those ceremonies involve the returning Veteran dancing, singing, speaking, telling the community what he or she did in-overseas for them, for the community, for the nation. And they have enorm- incredibly low rates of PTSD, as it turns out. So, if you go onto my website, one of the things I started doing at townhalls, was having-organizing events on Veteran's Day where Veterans of any war- and I've

seen from World War II, Vietnam, Korea and the current conflicts- they each have ten minutes to stand up in front of their community. And I don't mean in front of a bunch of Vets, I mean their community. Like, the town that they live in, that they fought for. And they get ten minutes to stand up and talk about what it felt like to serve. And, you know, some of them- we've done this many times- and some Veterans are incredibly proud of their service and it's the best thing that ever happened to them. And other Veterans are incredibly angry at the government, at the fact that they fought a war, and they're really, just, boiling over with rage. But, you know, if you're going to get- send people to war, some people are going to be angry. I mean, as a nation, we should face and embrace that anger because it's part of the experience of war. And, you know, some Veterans were, you know, basically crying too hard to even speak very effectively. Yeah. Usually over a missing- you know, a missing brother or sister. You know, someone that was killed near them in combat. And so, what this does is it, again, it's a very cathartic experience with the Veterans. But it's incredibly important for the community to hear these stories and hear the ambivalence, the pride, and the anger, and the grief and to go home carrying- partly carrying the burden of those feelings for the Veterans. And so, I think it's very important if you have these sort of- this kind of speaking therapy, that you must do it in a mixed civilian community. If you just do it in a context of fellow Veterans, you're missing an important part of what that process should be.

TL:

Yeah. Absolutely. Sebastian, this has all been really great. I think storytelling is one that, I think, the Veteran community values but, as you pointed out right there, I think we are- Going back to that "You won't understand" idea, I think Veterans have, in a lot of cases, have forced themselves to only be around Veterans, and there's definitely ways where that's beneficial. But, you know, as a society- The society is not going to be able to take ownership and help share some of that experience if they don't hear the stories from the Veterans. To wrap this up Sebastian, a question that I like to ask each one of my guests as a way to- for us to learn about the Veteran community and maybe find out who's doing cool things. Give me a Veteran or a Veteran organization that you are familiar with or that they have you really excited about what they're doing right now.

SJ:

Oh, god. You know, I've spoken with and to so many organizations. I mean, Got Your 6 is pretty- I really like their idea. I mean, I've- You know, early on, I started working with IAVA [Link to IAVA's website: <https://iava.org/>] because they're just such a big umbrella organization

and I think they've, you know, they've built a really amazing, sort of, edifice in society. Obviously, any big organization makes mistakes and, you know, they have to, I suppose. But, yeah, you know, I might go with Got Your 6.

TL: Okay. Yeah. Very well. Sebastian, thank you so much for your time. Thank you for talking to my audience, to our Veterans, and for giving us your insight on the power of storytelling and sharing the experience of conflict and more.

SJ: Thank you very much. I enjoyed it.

Music [00:31:39]

[00:31:43] PSA:

Women 1: When my husband came home from Vietnam, he didn't really look into all his VA benefits.

Man 1: But now, I got some health issues and I'm glad VA is there for me.

Male Narrator: To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit www.va.gov [Link to VA's website].

Music [00:31:57]

[00:32:00] CLOSING MONOLOGUE:

TL: And since I do the "Benefits Breakdown" on Mondays now, I'm not going to really touch on much after the interview except, just to reiterate, the VA and Got Your 6 "StorytellersX" events that are across the nation. Look up that blog that I mentioned earlier: blogs.va.gov [Link to VA's blog page]. Search "StorytellersX". You'll find it there. [Link to referenced blog post: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/42713/aimed-strengthening-civilian-military-relationships-va-got-6-announce-storytellersx-events-across-nation/>]. And just see how you can get involved, see if maybe you can host one, um, or see if there's one going on- going on near- near you. Um, despite all that, go to, uh, Got Your 6's Facebook page [Link to Got Your 6's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/GotYourSix/>] to make s- to watch these StorytellersX events that they're putting on, both in Los Angeles from last night and Washington DC tomorrow night.

Today's Veteran of the Day is Army Nurse Corps Veteran, Grace Elizabeth Farley. Grace served during World War II. She recalls on her first night in England, when she was deployed there, that she was greeted by German planes dropping bombs on a nearby town. And that is when her and those that she arrived with realized that they were, in fact, in a combat zone. And, uh, she was a busy one, at that, as she recalls with the Veteran History Project that, as a nurse in the operating room, she only ever left to eat and sleep. We honor Grace's service. To read Grace's full write-up [Link to Grace's write-up: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/42866/army-veteran-grace-elizabeth-farley/>], or to nominate your own Veteran of the Day, go to [blogs.va.gov](https://www.blogs.va.gov) [Link to VA's blog page]. That's it for Episode 57. *Borne the Battle*. Thank you so much for listening. I know there's a lot of options out there for entertainment, so I appreciate you spending your time here with me. You can follow us on Twitter @DeptVetAffairs [Link to VA's Twitter page: https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor] to get more stories from our community. I'm Timothy Lawson, signing off.

Music [00:33:39]

(Text Transcript Ends)