

VAC - Veterans' Art Connections

A collaborative tour program designed for veterans by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts Museum Guide Programs and the Minneapolis Veterans Hospital Psychiatry Partial Day Program (PPH).

Time frame:

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. VAC guide-led tour

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. lunch (guides participate)

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. Optional VA self-guided tour (guides do not participate)

Logistics:

A day or two before the tour:

- Contact the tour office for information on group's size and request for accommodation, such as requests for wheelchairs and/or assisted listening devices.

On the day of the tour:

- Arrive early. The PPH group often arrives as early as 15 minutes before the tour starts.
- Greet the group in the lobby and bring them directly to classroom 114. The veterans are allowed to bring bags or packs to the classroom. They will have their bag lunches with them.
- In the classroom, there will be a cooler for the veterans' lunches.
- Invite the group to sit and give your introduction in the classroom. (see below)

On the tour:

- Offer the use of stools on every tour and ask for preference for elevator or stairs.
- Slow it down. Allow time for participants to move through the museum. For most veterans, this will be their first time visiting the museum.
- Look to the VA staff for help or direction when needed.

Lunch in the classroom:

- After your tour, return to the classroom at 12:00 p.m. for lunch. Point out the nearest restrooms (there are two single restrooms in that hallway, just east of the Otis elevator, if anyone requires/requests privacy).
- When you return for lunch you will find coffee, hot water for tea, cold water, and cookies provided by the museum.
- You are encouraged to bring your lunch and eat with the group.
- During lunch, review the objects on the VAC Powerpoint presentation. This will be set up and ready to go. This is a review of what was seen on your tour, and a preview of what they can see on their follow-up self-guided tour. While it is nice to have some general knowledge of these objects, the purpose is to generate discussion as well as excitement for what they may see on their self-guided tour, or a return visit.
- Give the VAC cards (for a free audio tour) and VAC Self-guide brochure to the VA staff.

After lunch:

- After lunch, the veterans and VA staff go back into the galleries for self-guided time in the galleries, leaving their belongings in the room. You are free to leave at this point. Please lock the door as you leave.

Introduction: Key things to include in your introduction (not in any particular order)

- Welcome and introduction, everyone introduce themselves, state their branch service.
- Avoid referring to the museum as the “MIA.” In the military, MIA is the acronym for “missing-in-action” and may be a “trigger” to negative memories for some veterans.
- Introduce VAC tour as specially designed for them by MIA and VA staff.
- Tell the group what to expect, explain the time frame—one-hour tour/half-hour lunch/one-hour to 45 minutes for self-guided tour.
- Invite/encourage them to participate in discussion.
- Remind them not to touch (most participants have never been here before).
- **Thank the veterans for their service** – this may be the most important thing you can do.

The tour:

- Slow it down; allow time for participants to look and respond. Many may find it emotionally challenging to express themselves.
- Don’t take comments personally. Remain open-minded.
- Defer to the VA staff if you feel uncomfortable or unsure how to respond.
- Be flexible. Tour routes and choices may need to be amended along the way.
- Relax, be yourself.

Acronyms:

PPH: Psychiatry Partial Hospital Program, Minneapolis VA Medical Center

OEF: Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan

OIF: Operation Iraqi Freedom

MIA: Missing in Action

TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury

PTSD: Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome

MST: Military Sexual Trauma

Resources:

Armstrong, Best, Domenici, *Courage After Fire: Coping Strategies for Troops Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and Their Families*, Ulysses Press, 2006

Docent/Guide library (ask Paula or Jennifer)

Battlemind Training Brochure

Developed by Walter Reed Army Institute of Research Land Combat Study Team

Training to assist Soldiers and Family Members transition at homecoming

<http://www.ptsd.ne.gov/pdfs/WRAIR-battlemind-training-Brochure.pdf>

VAC Tour Suggested Objects:

The following objects are works of art that veterans find interesting and VA staff feel are appropriate. These are a few suggestions; feel free to include other works of art.

Corinthian Helmet, 540 BCE, bronze, Greek, 2001.80.1

An exceptional example of Corinthian personal armor

A'aninin/Nakoda (Gros Ventre/Assiniboine), Shirt, about 1890, Fort Belknap Reservation, Montana, 2001.197

A man would earn the right to wear the shirt. Honorable behavior might include bravery in battle, cunning in warfare, or thoughtful and wise actions to benefit the community.

Japan, Armor, early 17th century, Edo period, iron, leather, lacquer, silk, wood, gold leaf and powder, bear fur, 2009.60a-s

A light, form-fitting armor designed to protect the body in man-to-man combat with hundreds of lacquered metal and leather plates laced together with silk cords to give the suit flexibility. It may have belonged to Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602-71), the feudal lord of Kii Province.

Henry Moore, Warrior with Shield. 1953-54, English, bronze, German, 54.22

A wounded soldier no longer is able to hold a weapon, but valiantly defends himself with his shield—the embodiment of the heroic spirit.

Armor, about 1520, German, steel, leather, copper alloy, 23.54

Armor parallels the development of warfare and fashion.

Sir Alfred Gilbert, The Kiss of Victory, marble with wood base, British, 76.32

Roman legionary fallen in battle at the moment of his death in the arms of Victory.

Prestige weapons from Africa (Konda, Yukoma,) 13th -20th century**Nicolas Poussin, The Death of Germanicus, 1627, French, 58.28**

Tacitus's account of the death of the Roman General Germanicus, poisoned by his jealous uncle Tiberius.

Central or Southern Germany, Wheel lock rifle, about 1630 Iron, fruitwood, bone, mother-of-pearl, and cowhorn 97.39.2a-c

Octagonal rifle barrel with intricate bone and mother-of-pearl inlay throughout, would have been owned by German aristocrat for hunting. Signed M.P.

Edward K. Thomas, View of Fort Snelling, about 1850, oil on canvas, 44.21

Exemplifies the frontier images in which Dakota tipis, houses of the families associated with the American Fur Company, and the military fort exist side by side.

Martin Red Bear, Akicita Wasté (Good Soldier), 1991, acrylic on canvas, 91.96

Martin Red Bear entered the military in 1969 and served in Vietnam and it was during his time that he started painting. Akicita Wasté combines the symbols of the Plains Indian warrior tradition with those of his military experience.

Abraham Storck, The Four Days' Battle, 1666, oil on canvas, Dutch, Netherlands, 84.31
Chronicles the Four Days' Battle (June 11-14, 1666) between the Dutch and the British fleets.

Warrior Figure, Jalisco, Central America, Mexico, 100 B.C.- A.D. 500, 47.2.24
Crouching figure of a warrior with an upper body shield is holding a notched club ready to strike. His helmet is topped by two standing dogs in full relief.

Paul Revere, Templeman Tea Service, 1792-3, silver, 60.22.1-9
Made by American revolutionary, Paul Revere.

Thomas Sully, Portrait of George Washington, 1820, oil on canvas, 32.12
First Commander-in-Chief and general in revolutionary war.

Joseph Chinard, Bust of General Brune, after 1797, 77.31a,b
During the Napoleonic Wars, General Guillaume Brune served as Commander-in-Chief of French forces.

Sir John Everett Millais, Peace Concluded, 1856, oil on canvas, England, 69.48
A staged scene of domestic harmony, celebrating the end of the Crimean War.

John Wesley Jarvis, Captain Samuel C. Reid, 1815, 45.6
A hero of the War of 1812, Reid designed the present pattern of the American flag.

Bis Pole, 20th century, Melanesian region, New Guinea, Asmat, wood and pigment, 74.79.1
The bis pole is displayed outside of a communal house and clan members wage a mock battle around it to appease the restless spirits.

Kwaku Benpoh, Pair of Figures from a Shrine Group, late 19th century, wood, metal, ribbon, Ashanti, Ghana, 99.166.1
The figures represent some of the King's relatives and servants who carry objects symbolic of the King's position and power, including a soldier with a western/European gun.

Charles Russell, The Death Song of Lone Wolf, United States of America, 1901, 85.107
Lone wolf is surrounded by his enemies as he stands to face them as he sings the death song in his final moments.

Lakota Winter Count, 20th century, pigment on canvas, 2002.163
A yearly pictorial calendar of major events as recorded by a Lakota village