The Magazine 1664

AUTUMN | 2024

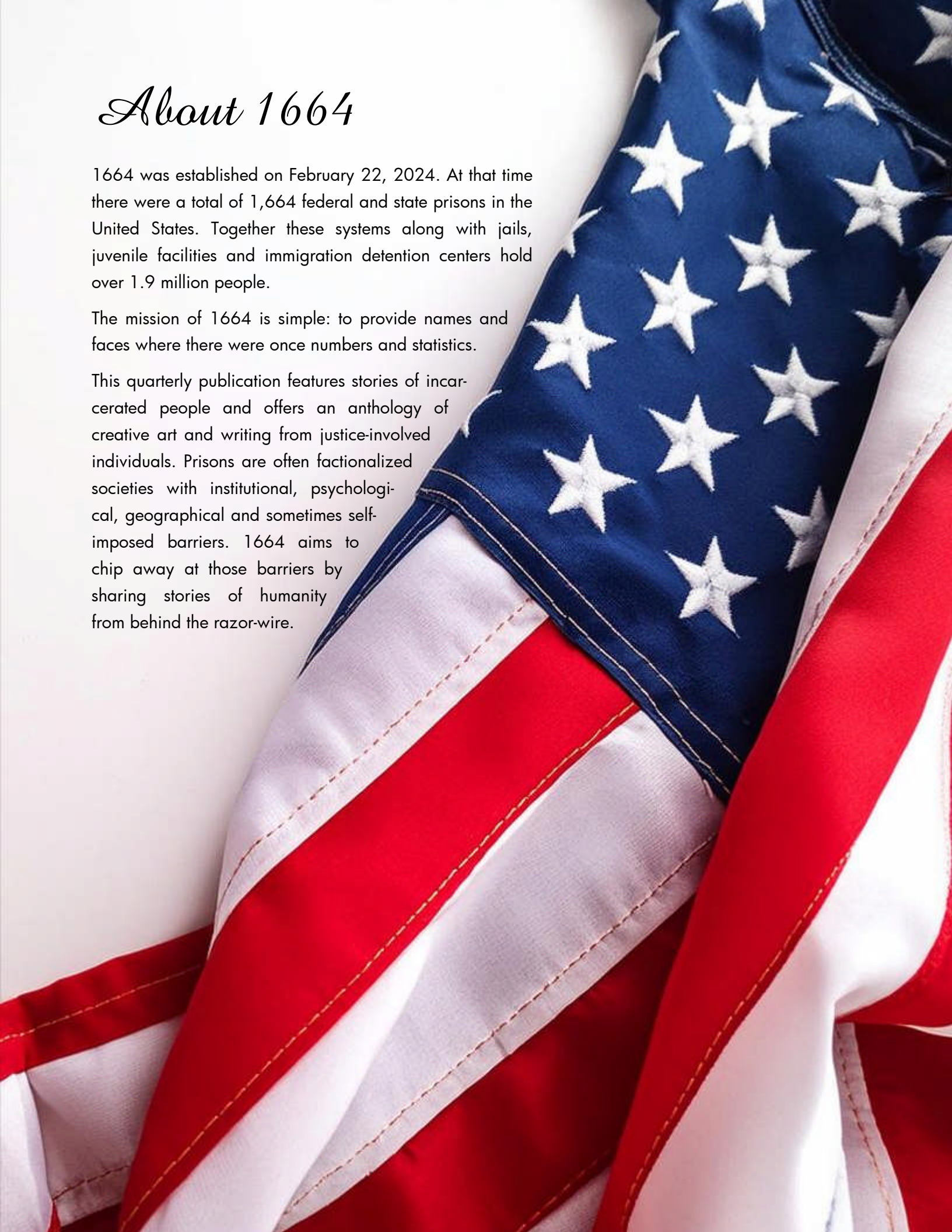
RED, WHITE AND PRISON BLUE

About 1664

1664 was established on February 22, 2024. At that time there were a total of 1,664 federal and state prisons in the United States. Together these systems along with jails, juvenile facilities and immigration detention centers hold over 1.9 million people.

The mission of 1664 is simple: to provide names and faces where there were once numbers and statistics.

This quarterly publication features stories of incarcerated people and offers an anthology of creative art and writing from justice-involved individuals. Prisons are often factionalized societies with institutional, psychological, geographical and sometimes self-imposed barriers. 1664 aims to chip away at those barriers by sharing stories of humanity from behind the razor-wire.



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STORIES

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the autumn 2024 edition of 1664.

Every edition of 1664 has a theme. The theme for this edition is patriotism and freedom in the prison setting.

In this magazine you will find profile stories of two incarcerated veterans, as well as stories and writing from non-veteran incarcerated people.

Each edition concludes with an interview with a formerly incarcerated person who has had their freedom restored.

1664 is a quarterly publication in limited printed copies and available digitally at all correctional institutions in Oregon.

While 1664 is produced at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, its purpose is to share stories from incarcerated people throughout the state. All writers are welcome, regardless of which prison they are currently housed in.

1664's contact information can be found on the following page.

Ultimately the goal is to highlight and celebrate humanity in the prison environment, and recognize that each of us is an individual with our own stories.

This publication is produced at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution. 1664 is available in print version at EOCI and available digitally on state-issued tablets at all correctional facilities in Oregon. This publication reaches the more than 12,000 incarcerated Oregonians as well as many outside the prison setting. All writing, artwork and photography (unless otherwise indicated) as well as the design of this magazine was produced by incarcerated people.

HELP SHAPE THE CONTENT

1664 publishes quarterly and has a theme.
Upcoming themes include:

Winter 2024 | Theme: *Music*

Spring 2025 | Theme: *Culture*

There are three ways to get involved with 1664:

1) Submit creative writing in the form of a personal non-fiction essay, poetry, or music lyrics of 350 words or less;
2) Submit artwork in any medium; or
3) Be featured in a profile.

Residents of EOCI can contact Institution Work Programs (IWP) by communication form for more information.

Incarcerated people outside of EOCI can submit creative writing and artwork by mailing their submission to the address listed below.

Additionally, 1664 collaborates with PonyXpress. The PonyXpress team shares potential writing for publication with 1664. Writers can submit work to1664 directly or through the PonyXpress writing workshop, if it is available at their facility.

Please do not send original work as it cannot be returned. Not all submissions will be selected.

For those outside of EOCI, mail submissions to:

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution C/O IWP
2500 Westgate
Pendleton, OR
97801

Or work with your PonyXpress volunteers.

THE ECHO

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

EOCI
Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

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WRITING FROM OREGON PRISONS

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When the Bugle Calls

By Juan C. Sanchez

Ve-te-ran *ve-tran**n.[L** vetranus, old, of long experience, , **fr.** Veter-, vetus, old]* ***1:*** *An old Soldier of long service* ***2:*** *A former member of the Armed Forces.* ***3:*** *A person of long experience in an occupation or skill – Veteran adj. – Merriam-Webster Dictionary*

Since the beginning of time societies have relied on their warrior class to protect, defend and expand their culture and customs. As such they would as a whole look after those warriors that survived to old age. The Spartans set aside housing where old soldiers would live out their lives in comfort. The Romans granted lands and the means to work them as farmers. And here in America Abraham Lincoln famously said that it was our sacred duty to provide for those returning from war and their widows and orphans.

In the majority of the world, military service is often compulsory, and in many cases a prerequisite to achieve full citizenship ala "Starship Troopers." In the United States we are almost unique in that we have had, since the end of the Vietnam War, all-volunteer Armed Services.

There are a number of reasons why people choose to serve. Some do it as a means of improving their lot in life; others for the benefit of a college education upon fulfillment of service; and a small minority who believe that it is their duty to protect and defend our constitution, customs and culture. Regardless of the reason, all deserve respect if not admiration, because in service there is no distinction when the bugle calls to war.

As incarcerated individuals many of us look to our service as an affirmation that no matter the circumstances of our being here, we can have the pride of having been of service to our country. Many times that is the only point of pride left to us. And believe me, we cherish it; if we had to do it again, we would.

Photo provided by Juan Sanchez

Juan C. Sanchez joined the Marine Corps in 1989 after completing high school. He served as a tanker on M1A1 battle tanks. Sanchez is currently incarcerated at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

In this edition of 1664 we will be learning about some of these individuals.

Paul Reyes served two tours in Iraq. His journey after service led down the road of substance abuse while struggling with PTSD. Reyes found a different kind of service in prison, and became a trainer for service canines that often support military veterans.

Robert Hornby joined the service in the 1980s as a Radio Communication Electronic Specialist, also with the U.S. Army. Hornby's path after service was one of addiction to methamphetamine.

There are many different veterans in prison and these are just a few of their stories, but they are veterans nonetheless. Regardless of how or why a veteran came to prison, they each have answered when the bugle called.

EMPOWERING

Produced by the OSP media team
Originally published on the ODOC blog
Edited by Phillip Luna

Veterans at the Oregon State Penitentiary participate in raising the American and POW-MIA flags.

VETERANS BEHIND BARS

Oregon State Penitentiary Honors Veterans

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU from the wife of an incarcerated military veteran at Oregon State Penitentiary highlights the impact of veteran support programs. She expressed, "It helps me to be able to live on my own without depending on others." This sentiment reflects the crucial role veteran support programs have in supporting veterans and their families.

It is not unusual to find veterans helping other veterans behind bars. When a veteran enters the Oregon prison system, the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs steps in to verify their status, advocate for their benefits, and assist their families with VA benefits. However, the sheer number of veterans in the system presents a significant challenge in providing the extensive advocacy they require.

Veterans represent approximately 8% of the prison population in the United States.

To address this challenge, ODVA proposed a pilot program in 2019 at OSP. This program allows incarcerated veterans to officially assist fellow veterans with needs beyond the usual outreach efforts. This initiative has since become a cornerstone of veteran support within the prison, contributing to their success both during incarceration and upon reentry to society.

Dana, who requested their last name not be used, is the first and only Veteran's Benefits Specialist in the state, and plays a pivotal role in this program. Dana conducts thorough interviews with incarcerated veterans to understand their military service and determine the benefits they qualify for. He uses his expertise to navigate the complexities of VA benefits, ensuring veterans receive the support they deserve.

"Without this program, veterans likely will never realize the extent of the benefits available to them," Dana said. He acknowledged that many veterans are unaware of their eligibility for certain VA benefits, and discovering this information can change their outlook on life.

Often veterans in prison come from homeless backgrounds. The Veterans Assistance Program provides a wealth of resources, equipping veterans with the tools they need to succeed during their incarceration and after their release. Dana stated, "It's likely that if you parole out of OSP, you won't be homeless."

Dana's mission is clear: "My job is to help make sure that my fellow veterans get every bit of help that they have earned ... This way, maybe they get out of prison better off than when they came in, so that they never have to return." ■

Photos provided by OSP media team

Ten veterans at the Oregon State Penitentiary pose in front of the prison's veteran monument.

A SURPRISE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Written by Charlie Brinton
Original posted on the ODOC blog
Edited by Phillip Luna

"THE OPPORTUNITY HAS MADE me even more committed to not coming back and for that I am extremely thankful for the experience." These were the words of Jose Jimenez, an incarcerated person at the Powder River Correctional Facility, after he attended a fireworks show on July 4, 2024.

For the second consecutive year, PRCF organized a special outing for select incarcerated people to enjoy the local Fourth of July fireworks show. This event, coordinated by Officer Erickson and Lieutenant Brazofsky, ensured they could view the fireworks.

The reactions from the incarcerated people were a mix of surprise, excitement, and a bit of confusion as they processed the opportunity.

"I was very surprised and thankful to be picked for the Fourth of July fireworks show. It was nice to be recognized for my hard work and daily effort of staying out of trouble," said Christopher Bishop, an incarcerated person who attended the fireworks show. He added. "It's all about transitioning to the community."

This year, six people were chosen to participate, accompanied by three correctional staff members:

Lieutenant Brazofsky, Officer Lopez, and Officer Brinton.

New Directions Northwest generously provided hotdogs, buns, chips and soda for the activity. NDN arrived at the designated location several hours before the show, allowing time to set up and relax. Staff and the attendees were able to socialize prior to the show, while enjoying the scenic view of the valley and mountains.

James Hunsberger, another incarcerated person who attended the event, said, "I was definitely a little nervous at first, but being around the staff in a more relaxed and joking environment helped me out a lot and calmed me down."

This annual event is more than just fireworks; it's an opportunity for incarcerated people to experience a sense of normalcy, community, and celebration.

"Going out on a non-work-related event with staff that could have easily stayed at home with their friends and family was very eye-opening," said Alex Thomas. Thomas has been incarcerated for more than 48 months and worries about becoming institutionalized. He said the firework event "all felt normal, which came as a great relief."

Thomas said, "I've seen that a contact officer or a 'Norway Program' can be more than just a mission statement on a website."

According to OSP officials, the positive responses from attendants and participation emphasized the importance of a supportive and rehabilitative environment.

"I want to thank the staff for allowing me to participate in this great event," said Kenneth McDaniel. McDaniel described a feeling of belonging, adding that for him the event was a reminder of the importance of sobriety. "I appreciate the camaraderie shown to us and just being a part of something that took me out of incarceration and allowed me an opportunity to enjoy a holiday, clean and sober." ■

Photos provided by Powder River Correctional Facility
Illustrations by Seth Mathews

Paul Reyes poses with service canine Brave at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution on Oct. 31, 2024.

PURPOSE FROM SERVICE

A profile of Paul Reyes
Written by Phillip Luna

Paul Reyes joined the U.S. Army in 2006, two years after he graduated high school. He served two deployments in Iraq. In 2011 he was injured and lost a close friend in an explosion from a roadside bomb. For Reyes, life after the service included survivor's guilt, post-traumatic stress disorder and drug and alcohol addiction which contributed to his incarceration in 2015. But there is a silver lining to his story – as an incarcerated person, Reyes works for his prison's service canine training program. He trains service dogs that often support veterans struggling with PTSD or physical impairments.

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Photo by Phillip Luna

Photo by provided by Paul Reyes

Paul Reyes, 19 Delta: Cavalry Scout for the U.S. Army. He served two tours in Iraq during his service from 2006-2011. Pictured here, Reyes is in Kuwait on his way to his first deployment.

Reyes poses for a photo in a C17 transport airplane on his way to his second deployment in Iraq.

Reyes holding a 249 squad automatic weapon in a guard tower at Command Outpost Meade.

TOO TALL FOR THE NAVY

Reyes grew up in Grants Pass, Oregon in a family with strong military ties. "Everyone on my mom's side of the family has been in the service," he said. His mother was a nurse for almost 40 years, but her family was filled with service members.

Reyes' father is a Native American of the Purépecha Tribe, sometimes called Tarascan, and originally from Mexico. The Purépecha people are indigenous to northern Michoacán. Most notably, the Purépecha were one of the few tribes never conquered by the Aztecs, although the two groups were engaged in conflict for much of the Pre-Colonial era.

His father obtained a green card in the 1970s and became a U.S. citizen in 1999. Reyes regarded his father as "a great man" and said he admires him for his work ethic.

Reyes called his childhood filled with sports and lots of friends. His two siblings are nearly 20 years older than he is, so he often felt like an only child. After he graduated in 2004 he spent a few years working in roof construction. "It felt like Groundhog Day," Reyes explained. He felt he lacked a sense of purpose and when he sought meaning in his life the answer became clear – join the military.

"It was always instilled upon me that we should

Reyes poses in front of an MRAP Caiman, a vehicle commonly used in Iraq. An MRAP is a mine-resistant ambush protection vehicle.

Reyes with his dog, Sabrina, after returning from his first deployment. He said, "When I came back from Iraq my sister brought her to the airport to see me."

love our country," Reyes said. "Most of my uncles were in the Navy. They told me not to join the Navy because I would spend the whole time ducking." The ship bulkheads are just 5-feet-10-inches in height and Reyes is 6-foot-6, which he attributes to his heritage. Reyes said the Purépecha are known for their height.

In Grants Pass the U.S. Navy recruiter's office is next door to the U.S. Army recruiter's office. Since he was too tall for the Navy, Reyes went next door and joined the Army.

"I became a 19 Delta: Calvary Scout, one of the oldest job titles in the military." Reyes would find his purpose in the service.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

After basic training, Reyes was stationed at Fort Stewart, Georgia - about 2,700 miles from Oregon.

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Photo by Philip Luna

On a cloudy Oct. 31, 2024 Reyes works with service canine Brave on the East compound of EOCI.

U.S. and coalition forces invaded Iraq in 2003 as a result of the 9/11 terror attack. Reyes' first deployment was Operation Iraqi Freedom Five which began December 2006. He spent most of the time on foot patrols in Iraq. Reyes was clearing houses and finding and destroying weapon caches for most of his deployment, which was considered one of the most dangerous assignments at the time.

"War is not pretty," he explained. "It wears on your humanity. When you go to Al-Fallujah you see whole houses just blown down from lines of Abrams (tanks). You see terrible things." It's estimated by the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs that more than 200,000 Iraqi civilians were killed in war as a result of U.S. and coalition action.

"It wears on your humanity. When you go to Al-Fallujah and see whole houses blown down from lines of Abrams. You see terrible things."

Reyes returned from his first tour in April 2008.

His second deployment began December 2009; however, this experience was very different. At the end of the Bush administration in 2008, the United States entered into a long-term agreement with Iraq called a Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA. The agreement changed rules of engagement for U.S. troops in Iraq and mandated withdrawal by 2011. "The SOFA agreement changed everything between the second and the first deployment. It dictated how we fought," he said.

"We could no longer just fire upon the enemy, not until our personnel actually took rounds." Reyes described that even when his vehicle took enemy fire they could not engage the enemy. "We were also told if the enemy gets hurt, our medic has to attend to them before they attend to us," he said.

He described the U.S. military's role in Iraq after the SOFA agreement as having a "much more limited capacity." Often U.S. forces were working side by side with the Iraqi police or the Iraqi army. "It gave me more stress. We couldn't go anywhere without the police. If I was in the rear vehicle, their humvee was right behind us," Reyes explained. "I didn't trust anybody that didn't have my uniform on." The SOFA agreement also required U.S. combat troops to coordinate missions with the Iraqi government, hand over prisoners, and relinquish key military zones.

According to a 2003 Pentagon policy memorandum, the United States enters SOFAs to protect "personnel who may be subject to criminal trial by foreign courts and imprisonment in foreign prisons." According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the SOFA agreement "rendered U.S. troops powerless in containing future violence." According to Paul Reyes, "That went over like a fart in church."

Despite the changes, Iraq was still a dangerous place. Near the end of his deployment, Reyes' humvee was hit by an IED. His convoy was travelling down Baghdad Airport Road - once dubbed "the worlds' most dangerous road" and referred to by military personnel as "Route Irish." The 7.5-mile stretch from Baghdad's Green Zone to the airport was plagued by roadside bombs, sniper fire and suicide bombers during the Iraq occupation.

Reyes was stationed at JSS Justice and was returning from a mission at Forward Operating Base Falcon when his convoy travelled down Route Irish. "Going down the route gave you a lot of trepidation," he said. His vehicle was the only one hit by the IED. "I was in the back, the dismount of the armored humvee. I felt the vehicle tilt up and slam back down. When I opened my eyes there was a giant hole in the humvee, right next to me." His close friend was in the back of the humvee and was killed in the explosion.

Reyes had taken shrapnel damage to his right knee. "I remember people yelling. I was trying to grab the first aid kit and I passed out. I woke up in a medical tent."

After shrapnel was removed from his knee, part of Reyes' rehabilitation was walking around the hospital. He recalled walking to the major trauma ward. "It was the biggest dose of reality I ever had in my life. There were people with limbs blown off, shrapnel to the face or completely blind. I was lucky because there was no permanent damage."

But there was permanent damage, it was just harder to see.

The incident on Route Irish would be the catalyst for Reyes' PTSD and the loss of his friend left him struggling with guilt. "There is a lot of survivor's guilt

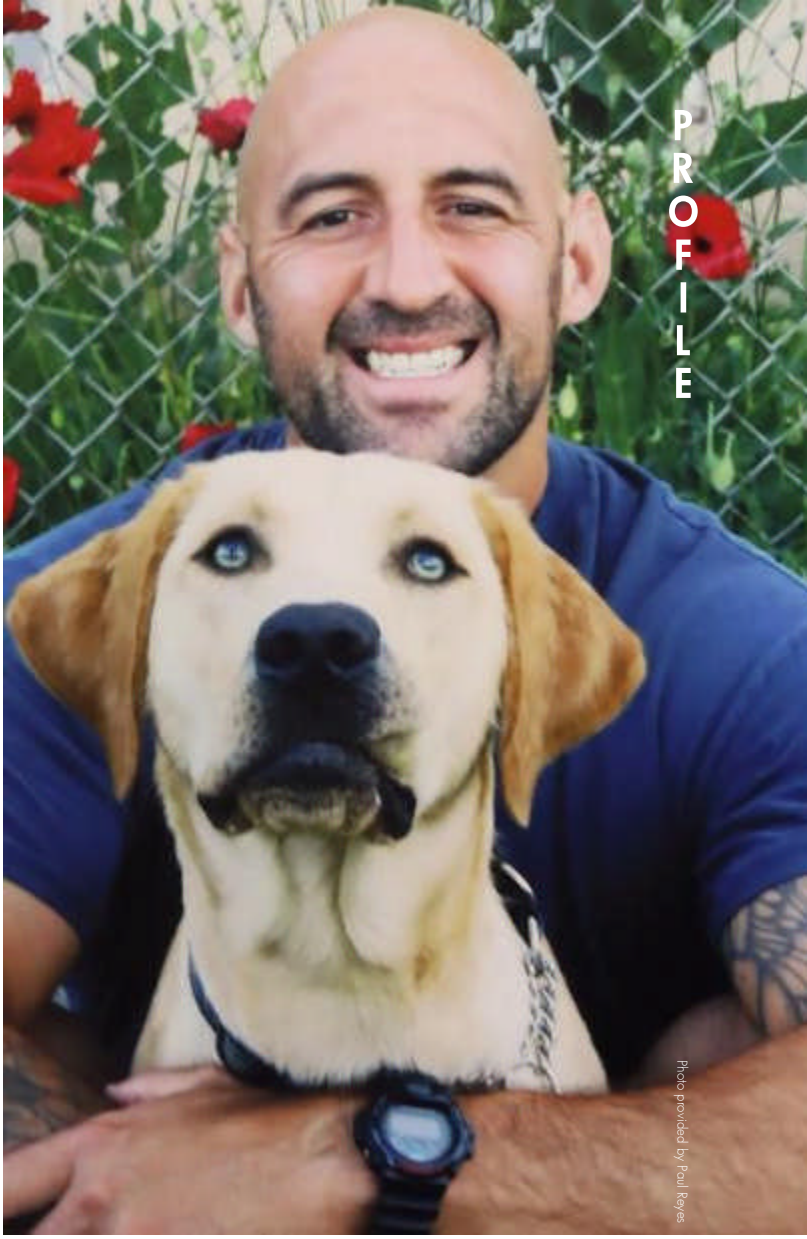

Photo provided by Paul Reyes

Paul Reyes with server canine Usher in the summer of 2024. Usher is one of the nearly 100 service animals Reyes has worked with in the last five years.

there," he said. Reyes explained the passing of his friend as one of the most difficult events he had experienced in his life. Reyes recalled his early days in Fort Stewart, Georgia: "He and his family were the only people I knew in Georgia; he was always bringing me over for Christmas or Thanksgiving."

Reyes presented the folded flag to his friend's family at the memorial service. He described it as symbolic, but felt it was an empty gesture compared to what was given.

After two tours in Iraq, Reyes decided it was time for his service to end. He called the incident on Route Irish a "wake-up call" that made him consider

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the brevity of life and the importance of being home for his family. He did not reenlist with the Army. "I thought I'd given enough, so I got out."

NEARLY TWENTY-PERCENT

The National Institute of Mental Health defines PTSD as, "An anxiety disorder after exposure to a significant event where grave physical harm has occurred or was threatened." According to NIMH, untreated PTSD can lead to substance addiction.

"When I got out of the Army I was broken. I drank every morning when I woke up until I went to sleep." Five months after his discharge Reyes and his wife divorced. His spouse wanted him to re-enlist, but Reyes said he didn't have it in him.

He also acknowledged that he was part of the problem in their relationship. "I was pretty selfish back then, and I was really struggling after I got out of the service. I didn't always treat people the best."

In 2011 Reyes moved from Georgia back to Oregon. He started attending school, taking advantage of the GI bill to pursue an associate's degree. On the surface, and despite his drinking, Reyes was following the right path. However, he was still struggling to cope with the incident in Baghdad. "I should have gotten help, but I didn't want to take any medication."

He described flashback instances where he pulled a gun on his father, believing he was an enemy from Iraq.

Reyes also described contemplating suicide on several occasions. "More than once I put a barrel in my mouth, but I was too scared to pull the trigger." He would address his PTSD, survivor's guilt, and suicidal thoughts through a daily regimen of alcohol and marijuana for the next four years.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that nearly 20 percent of veterans from the recent war in Iraq have experienced PTSD. Many veterans face a range of challenges when returning to civilian life, coping with serious health conditions such as PTSD is chief among them.

Reyes' path eventually led to the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton, Oregon. He was incarcerated in 2015.

Reyes, right, poses with his father at a JLAD training demonstration. Reyes' father is a Native American of the Purépecha Tribe.

Photo by Phillip Luna

"I wanted to be more than my worst mistake."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SERVICE

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, veterans discharged during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn account for 13% of veterans in prison and 25% of veterans in jail. The overall population of veterans in prison is about 8%, but research shows post-9/11 veterans are statistically more likely to become incarcerated. Post-9/11 veterans are more likely to have seen combat and experienced emotional trauma.

But for Reyes, prison had its benefits. He began addressing his PTSD, attending counseling and taking medication. Reyes said, "No matter what the reason, all my mistakes, I believe coming to prison was the best option for me." Additionally, and unexpectedly in 2016, EOCI became the pioneer facility for Oregon's first service dog training program.

The Joys of Living Assistance Dogs (JLAD) program is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising and training assistance dogs for people living with PTSD or physical impairments. The program was founded in 2004 by Joy St. Peter. Twelve years later St. Peter brought the program inside correctional facilities to utilize incarcerated people as service dog trainers. The canines would live inside the correctional facility, housed in a cell with a trainer for the duration of the 18 month program.

In 2006 Reyes found his purpose by joining the military and serving his country. More than ten years later, Reyes took up a different kind of service by joining the JLAD program."I wanted to be more than my worst mistake," he said.

Reyes found training a service animal was a great feeling. "Not every one of these dogs goes to

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Reyes works with service canine Windy during a training demonstration on Oct. 7, 2024.

Photo by Phillip Luna

Paul Reyes trains a service canine named Brave on Oct. 21, 2024. While 4,492 U.S. service members were killed in Iraq, more than 30,000 were wounded; many wounded veterans require the use of service canines like Brave.

a veteran, but they go to someone in need."

A few years ago, Reyes completed his five-year certification, the highest certification for a JLAD training. He worked with more than 100 service dogs during that time and after. Trainers rotate which service animals they work with every few months.

The program expanded during that time period, becoming the second U.S. prison to host a puppy whelping – puppies born and raised in the prison setting to be trained as service animals. JLAD has expanded to several other facilities in Oregon, but EOCI remains the epicenter of the program.

"I know what these dogs have done for me and given to me. If they can do that for me, they can do that for anybody. There is no judgment from the dogs. I feel at peace when I am with them and I know they can give that peace to someone else."

People with disabilities often rely on these highly trained canines for specialized support and assistance. For many people life would be very different without the aid of their service dog.

There are approximately half a million active service

dogs in the United States, a large gap compared to the 61 million Americans who have disabilities, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

"We are selfish before we come to prison, in some way," he said. "To give back and not be selfish, it's a beautiful thing."

By 2020, Reyes no longer required medication for PTSD and had completed therapy

After five years in the JLAD program, he has become a facilitator, teaching other incarcerated people how to work with and train service animals. But the biggest change is how he sees himself and thinks about his experience in the service.

"I have to be able to talk about it, my experience, because it is not going to change. I have to accept it," he said. "Do I fail? I fail everyday. But now, I am happy with the person I see in the mirror." ■

A Good

Robert Hornby on the landing of the A4 appendage stairwell at EOCI.

Photo by Phillip Luna

Story

A Profile of Robert Hornby

Written by Phillip Luna

When I start rooting for the characters, I know it is a good story," said Robert Hornby, a 54-year-old incarcerated person at an eastern Oregon prison. Hornby is an avid reader, a habit he developed during his multiple incarcerations; he is currently serving his seventh sentence in prison - 70 months for robbery.

I first met Hornby on Friday, Sept. 27, 2024. He was scheduled for an interview and arrived in the late afternoon, once his shift in the prison's call center was complete. Hornby was scheduled to meet with me because he is a veteran, having served in the U.S. National Guard and then in the U.S. Army where he was a 31 Victor: Radio Communication Electronic Specialist stationed in Germany.

During our first interview, however, we barely discussed his military service. We did not talk about his substance addictions or his commitment to sobriety. We did not talk about his role as a facilitator in the Narcotics Anonymous program at our correctional facility. We did not talk about his relationship with his parents or his three children. Nor did we talk about the 38 felony convictions he has earned over the last 30 years. Instead, we talked about books.

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Ken Follet, Conn Iggulden, Brent Weeks, Robert Jordan and Terry Goodkind: these are just a few of Hornby's favorite authors. He breezes through three and five novels per week. "I read maybe four to six hours a day," he said. "*Pillars of the Earth* by Follet is my favorite series. He has the best character development."

Hornby believes the way to know if a story is good is by how you feel about the characters. As a heavy reader myself, I can relate to this idea. And while conversations about books may seem irrelevant, much of interviewing is about building trust with the subject. Trust, as author Ken Follet once said, is like "holding a little water in your cupped hands – it is so easy to spill the water, and you can never get it back."

We parted after forty-five minutes. Over the next six weeks, I would interview Hornby seven more times where we would cover many topics and I would try carefully not to spill any water.

SWIMMING IN THE SEA

Robert Stanley Hornby was born in 1970 as Jason Scott McDaniel. His biological father was absent from his life, but when he was five years old his stepfather adopted him and his name was changed as a result. "He is my father, and he is my Dad too," Hornby said. "At the time, I was the last person in the line to carry on the Hornby name, which was very big in England." Hornby's father was originally from England.

Hornby was raised in the small town of St. Helens, Oregon, just 30 miles northwest of Portland. His father worked as a millwright for Boise Cascade. His mother wrote stories for Highlights children's magazine. According to Hornby, they were a typical middle class family. Despite his relatively normal upbringing, Hornby felt the weight of expectations and pressure of societal norms at an early age.

"I was short, fat and didn't play sports. I didn't fit in," Hornby said. "My dad bought me a guitar, but that didn't work, so he bought me a bass guitar. When that didn't work he bought me a motorcycle."

He had good manners and morals as a youth, but was always getting in trouble. He remembered his parents would buy him anything he asked for and said he had "no sense of consequence." Hornby added, "I love that man with all my heart, but looking back neither of my parents disciplined me very well."

Robert Jordan, one of Hornby's favorite authors and most famous for the *Wheel of Time* series, once wrote, "He was swimming in a sea of other people's expectations. Men had drowned in seas like that." For Hornby, the overwhelming weight of expectations and his desire to fit in would sink him into addiction early in life, which he feels has heavily contributed to his multiple incarcerations.

"I started smoking pot the summer of sixth grade," Hornby explained. "I just wanted to fit in. By the time I was 13 I was dealing marijuana to all my friends. I figured if I was going to smoke pot I might as well sell it so I can get it for free." Once he started getting high, his grades dropped and he began getting in trouble more often. He said his father always supported him and blamed the school anytime he got in trouble. "To him, I could do no wrong."

By the time Hornby started high school, he had earned a reputation as the town nuisance - trespassing, pulling the fire alarm at school, or speeding through town on his motorcycle. Once he even stole a beer truck and took it to Salmonberry Lake, where he and his friends went to drink.

When Hornby was 14, he was invited to prom by a senior girl – resulting in an unexpected pregnancy. Hornby's first daughter was born when he was 15 years old. "My parents let them live with us," he recalled. "Her parents kicked her out and it made sense for her to stay with us."

Unfortunately, fatherhood did not change Hornby's behavior. By the time he was 16 he had accumulated 3000 hours of community service and more fines than he can recall. "The judge told me

On Nov. 7, 2024, Robert Hornby sits at the bottom of the stairs that lead to the Oregon Corrections Enterprises call center, where he currently works.

he was tired of seeing me," he said. The judge offered Hornby a deal – become emancipated, find a military recruiter and join the service or the consequences for his crimes would become more severe.

"The judge told me we would go to the police station, collect all my juvenile records and then go to his office and shred everything. He offered to help me get emancipated. He said, 'you'll have a clean record if you join the service.'"

Hornby joined the U.S. National Guard.

THE EASY ROAD

"I tried to take the easy road. I joined the National Guard," said Hornby.

Terry Goodkind, another in the long list of Hornby's favorite authors, once said "If the road is easy, you're likely going the wrong way." Goodkind would know, because he was dyslexic and struggled to complete high school, but his epic fantasy series *The Sword of Truth* has sold more than 25 million copies.

The easy road for a then 17-year-old Hornby meant basic training and Advanced Individual Training at the electronic school in Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

When he returned to Oregon he was stationed in St. Helens. It was not long before Hornby was in trouble again.

»»

"We were loading up to go to Korea for the summer. A bunch of us got intoxicated," Hornby said. "My friends and I decided to take a humvee. I thought it was my humvee, but when you are drunk they all look alike."

Hornby and three of his military friends drove to the beach. "We started doing donuts and rolled the humvee." They were subsequently arrested for misappropriation of a military vehicle.

Hornby said his father was there for the Court Marshall and paid $16,000 for damage to the vehicle. "I remember he told them I was a good kid, I just lacked discipline." His father suggested that his son join the U.S. Army. "I'd let my father down, but he was still there for me. He wanted me to join the Army."

Hornby received a general discharge under honorable conditions from the National Guard and he signed up two years in the Army.

TO GERMANY AND BACK AGAIN

Hornby was stationed in Germany as a Radio Communication Electronic Specialist for the U.S. Army. "Here I was, a now 18-year-old kid in a foreign country." He said he was excited to be outside the United States, but felt a sense of loss too. Hornby left his two-year-old daughter and her mother behind.

"What else could I do?" Hornby explained, "It was the Army or jail."

Hornby was stationed in the southern town of Bayreuth. He repaired communication equipment in humvees and M1A1 Abram tanks, and other radio equipment.

In 1988, when Hornby first arrived in Germany, the Berlin Wall divided the country. Hornby never travelled to East Germany, but in 1990 the wall was torn down. He recalled the challenge of integrating the two places into one. "East Germany was almost a third world country. They were so deprived of everything. When the wall came down it was horrible, they gave everyone in East Germany 200 marks to spend. They came over in their little plastic cars on the *autobahn*, and they bought up everything."

Bayreuth was 221 miles away from Berlin and Hornby was not present for the tearing down of the wall, although he did collect a piece of debri afterwards. "My Dad has that piece of the wall now."

After his two years of service were complete Hornby left the Army, but during that time something unexpected happened. He met a German girl and fell in love. After he was sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey to be processed out of the U.S. Army, Hornby moved back to Germany and married.

He said this was the first time he was able to experience the culture of Germany. "If you are willing to learn the language and fit in they will embrace you. They don't like foreigners unless you try to learn the language and work." Hornby learned the language and became a *Zimmerman*, which is a German word for a carpenter.

Hornby and his wife had a child – his second daughter. "They are very family oriented over there, so we started a family." He said he thought about his first child often, but he was young and foolish. "I tried to visit her, but her mom didn't want me around." Looking back now, Hornby said, "I wish I would have tried harder."

He still struggled with substance abuse during his time in Europe. "When you are young you don't recognize substance abuse. You just think you are invincible." In 1993, he was caught transporting hash from Holland to Germany. He volunteered to be deported and his wife and second child came with him to Oregon.

After a few months Hornby and his wife separated. "She took my daughter and I was devastated. That was my whole world." At 23 years old, he found himself out of the military, back in the United States, and divorced with two estranged children. His drug use escalated.

"The first time I did meth, it burned. I did a couple lines of it." Hornby didn't recognize how dangerous the drug was at first. "I thought, 'Yeah, but it's not heroin.'" His view was that methamphetamine was not dangerous because he was not intravenously injecting the drug.

Hornby realized by cooking methamphetamine he could turn $2000 into $30,000 with just a few days of work. "It was the money that drew me in."

"Once you start, there is no stopping. That's the thing with meth."

A CYCLE OF ADDICTION

"The first time I went to prison was in 1993," Hornby said. Methamphetamine would start a cycle of incarceration for Hornby that would continue for nearly two decades. He served six prison sentences between 1993 and 2010.

"Once you start, there is no stopping. That's the thing with meth." Hornby's rapsheet includes stolen cars, gun charges, burglary, and possession and manufacturing of methamphetamine. "When I am high, I am stupid. I wouldn't steal a car right now, but when I am loaded all my morals go out the window. Everything my Dad taught me goes out the window. It's like being a different person."

He finds it difficult to remember dates and times during this 17-year period. In 1999, during one of his brief periods outside of prison, he had a third child. He would not learn about her for another 14 years.

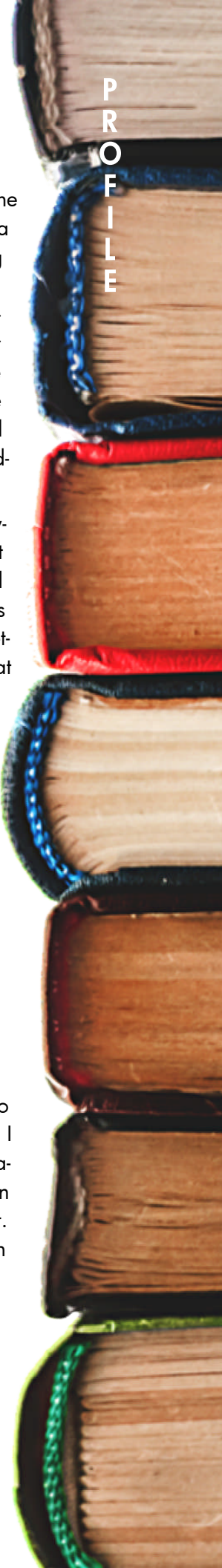
Hornby had a scarce relationship with his known children during his incarceration, but his parents remained supportive. "When I got out, they would help me get back on my feet. But I'd always end up back with the old crowd." The rush from methamphetamine and the money he could make selling drugs drew him back each time.

While manufacturing methamphetamine has been glorified in recent years as a result of television shows like Breaking Bad and Sons of Anarchy, Hornby said these shows are not the reality he experienced. "I've done what they did, but Bryan Cranston's character got all the money. That wasn't me. I was his little partner Jesse. I could cook it, but I would blow the money like that. I was an addict."

Hornby attended Narcotics Anonymous meetings while incarcerated, but he did not begin taking it seriously until 2008, when he received letters from his two oldest daughters - both sent him letters around Christmas. "They said, 'What was so important about drugs that you couldn't be around?' My oldest daughter, she didn't even call me dad. She called me Robert."

When he was released in 2010, he attended NA meetings, completing 90 sessions in 90 days. This was the first time he obtained a sponsor and used some of the skills he was taught in the military. According to Hornby, the most important thing he learned in the service was the ability to communicate and work as a team member. "In the service, my job was to make sure people could communicate. I was a Radio Communication Electronic Specialist. I understood how important communication was. It is life or death in the Army. In NA, communication is just as important. For a lot of guys in NA, communication is life or death."

Hornby was out of prison from 2010 until 2022, which included the longest period of sobriety in his adult life. He found stable employment, reconnected



with his family and even met his third daughter, whom he learned about in 2013 for the first time. "My youngest daughter, she just wanted to meet me because the man who had raised her had just passed away." Hornby said she found him on Facebook. "I told her I would be whatever she wanted me to be."

"I'm so blessed to have such successful and beautiful daughters," Hornby said. Although substance abuse and criminality are often intergenerational problems, all three of his children are successful.

In 2016, after eight and a half years of being clean and sober, Hornby had hip replacement surgery. He was prescribed oxycodone and morphine for the pain, which ultimately contributed to a relapse. He completed the Washington County IRISS (Integrative Reentry Intensive Supervision Services) program from 2017 to 2019, which is a suspended sentence drug and alcohol treatment program.

In 2019, after successfully completing the IRISS program, Hornby had a second hip replacement surgery and was out of work for a number of months. He was again prescribed oxycodone and morphine.

Hornby was incarcerated for the seventh time on Aug. 14, 2022 with a release date in 2028.

THE OATH WE GIVE

One topic that recurred throughout each interview with Hornby was his parents, specifically his father. In our second interview he expressed deep admiration for the man he called dad, but disappointment in himself for letting his father down. He recalled, "When I was arrested [in 2022], he just said 'what did he do this time?' That was not a good feeling."

His mother and father were married for forty years until his mother passed away in 2015. His father lives in England and they haven't had much contact because of the distance. Hornby hoped to reconcile with his father, but was struggling to find the right words to put in a letter. "I've been working on a letter to my dad for a couple of months now." It's a letter his father would never read.

Hornby missed our third scheduled interview. When I connected with him next he informed me his father had passed away unexpectedly, on the day we were scheduled to meet.

His father was a central figure in almost every conversation I had with him – before and after his passing. It's very easy when conducting an interview to become hyper-focused on the details – dates, times and facts – but this event was a jarring pull back into the reality of the moment.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"He was a great dad. He deserved a better son."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"It's hard, to realize my dad was a better father than I am. Way better. That's a tough pill to swallow. He was a great dad. He deserved a better son," Hornby said.

We discussed memories of his father and how he plans to cope with the loss. He still intends to write the letter and he prepared something for his NA meeting, which he facilitates every Tuesday night. Hornby has great pride in his role a facilitator for the program and each time he talks about his father it is subsequently followed by how he plans to address the loss during the next meeting.

There is a point when Hornby questioned the purpose of the interview and his role as the subject. In between the emotion and the memories – some sweet, some sour – he asked me, "Are you sure you want to interview me? This is not a good story."

I can't say if other people will find Hornby's story good or not. It would be difficult to consider a self-described short, fat and funny kid whose biological father didn't care enough to be a part of his life, and not feel a profound sense of compassion. It would be difficult to think of the man who raised that boy like his own and not feel respect and gratitude that people like that exist in the world. It would be difficult to consider the intergenerational abandonment in this story, and not see the harsh ripples of addiction. And yes, It would be difficult not to

On Nov. 7, 2024, Robert Hornby poses for a photograph after his shift in the call center. Hornby will be incarcerated until 2028.

think of countless people who were likely affected by Hornby's crimes, the people whose lives may have been destroyed by the drugs he made and sold them, or the countless tax dollars spent to incarcerate him, and not feel an incredible sense of frustration – both at the person who made these choices and the justice system that cycles people with addictions through its gates without considering what little prison has to offer them.

But it would also be difficult to listen to Hornby talk about NA and not feel hope.

He said, "The basis of NA for me is helping somebody that is familiar to the pain and the process I went through and continue to go through. This is the beauty of NA. You don't have to be alone." Through sponsorship, Hornby believes there is accountability. "When you sponsor someone you are giving them your oath, your word that you've got their back."

I'm reminded of a quote by another of Hornby's favorite authors, Conn Iggulden. He once wrote, "We are nothing but the oath we give." Iggulden is a historical fiction author and is most well-known for bringing characters like Genghis Khan to life.

"Are there things I wish I had done differently, sure," Hornby said. "I wish I would have stayed in the service. I wish I had done better with my kids. I can't change that, but I can tell people what not to do, how to not be successful when you are an addict."

For Hornby, facilitating NA is about showing people the wrong path, the path to avoid, as much as it is about showing them the right one.

I can't say what other people will feel when they read Hornby's story, but someone once told me, "When I start rooting for the characters, I know it is a good story."

For me, at least, I know it's a good story. ■

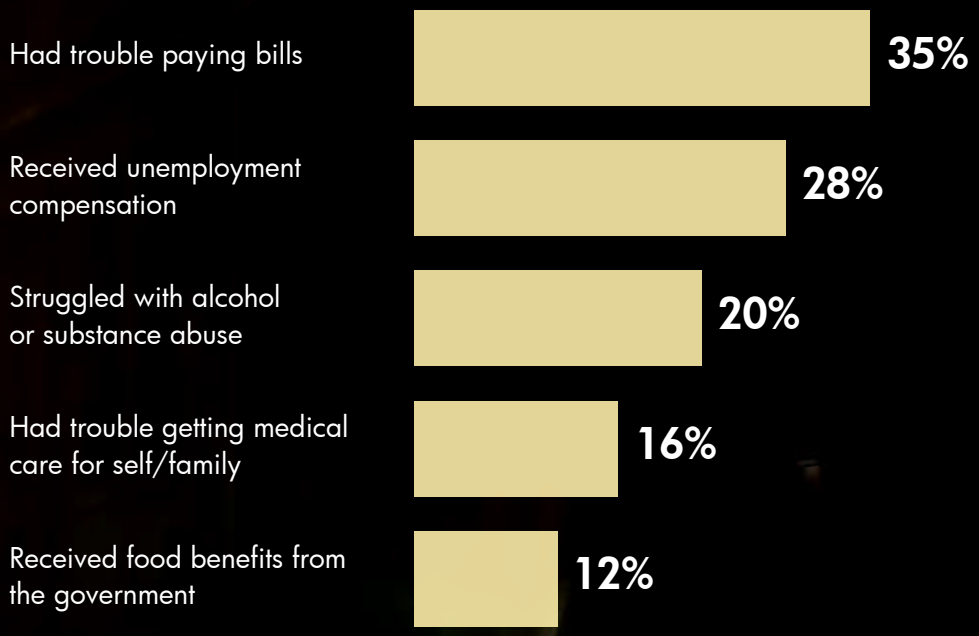
On a cold October morning, a veteran and currently incarcerated person walks to his unit at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton, Oregon.

Photo by Phillip Luna

Statistics on Veterans

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Percentage of veterans saying, in the first few years after they left the military, they...



According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, in 1980 about 18% of U.S. adults were veterans. After the U.S. military's transition to an all-volunteer force, enlistment numbers have declined to 6% in 2022. The population of incarcerated veterans in 1980 was between 15% and 20%, but has declined as well.

Veterans currently make up approximately 8% of the U.S. prison population, seventy-seven percent of whom received a military discharge that was honorable or under honorable conditions.

However, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, veterans discharged during Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn (operations that occurred after 9/11) account for 13% of veterans in prison.

Studies from the Pew Research Center indicate post-9/11 veterans have difficulty re-adjusting to civilian life. Veterans are more likely to struggle with substance abuse and mental health conditions, which often are contributing factors to incarceration.

The rate of incarcerated veterans has slowly increased in the many years after the Sept. 11, 2001 terror attack.

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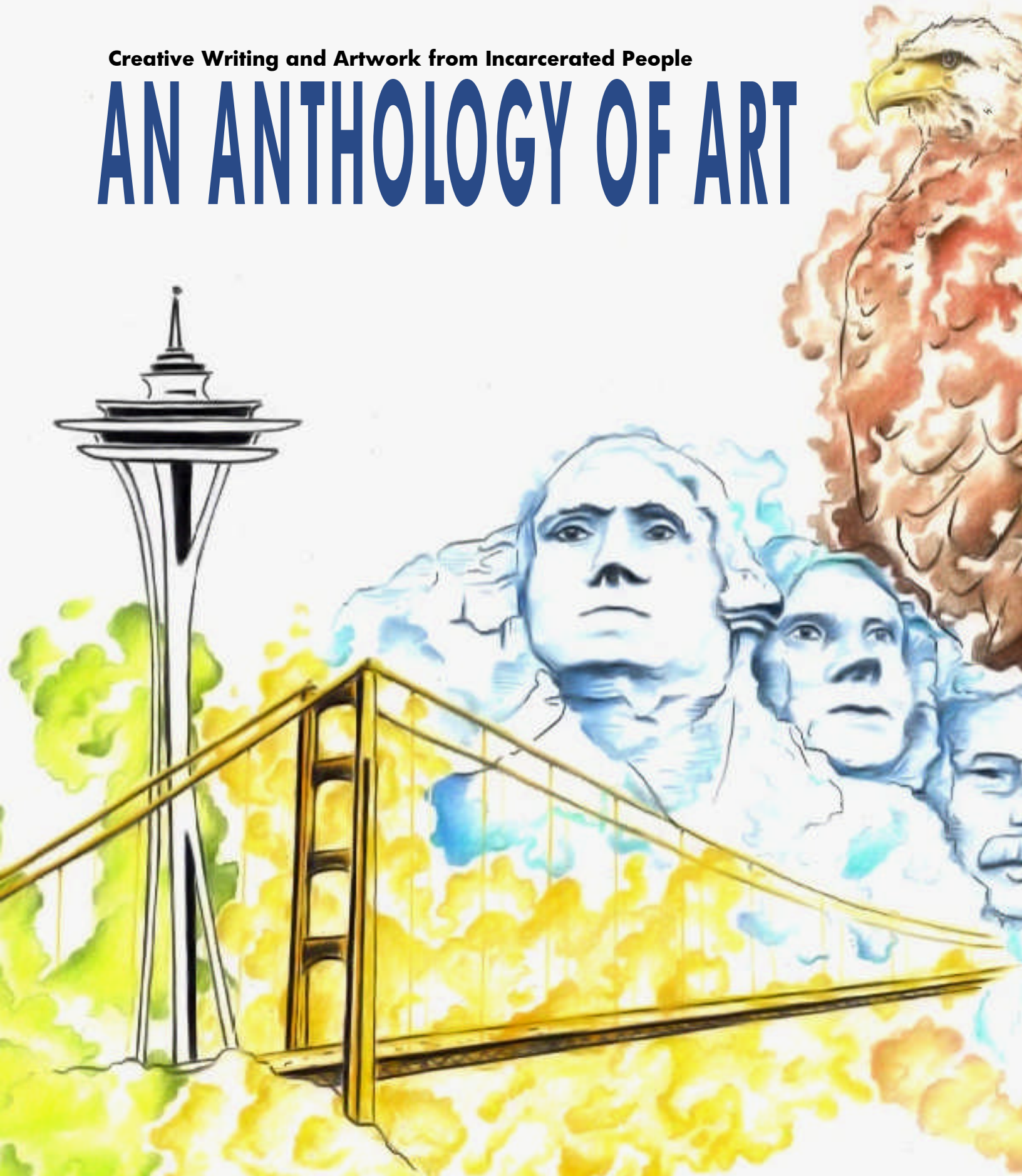
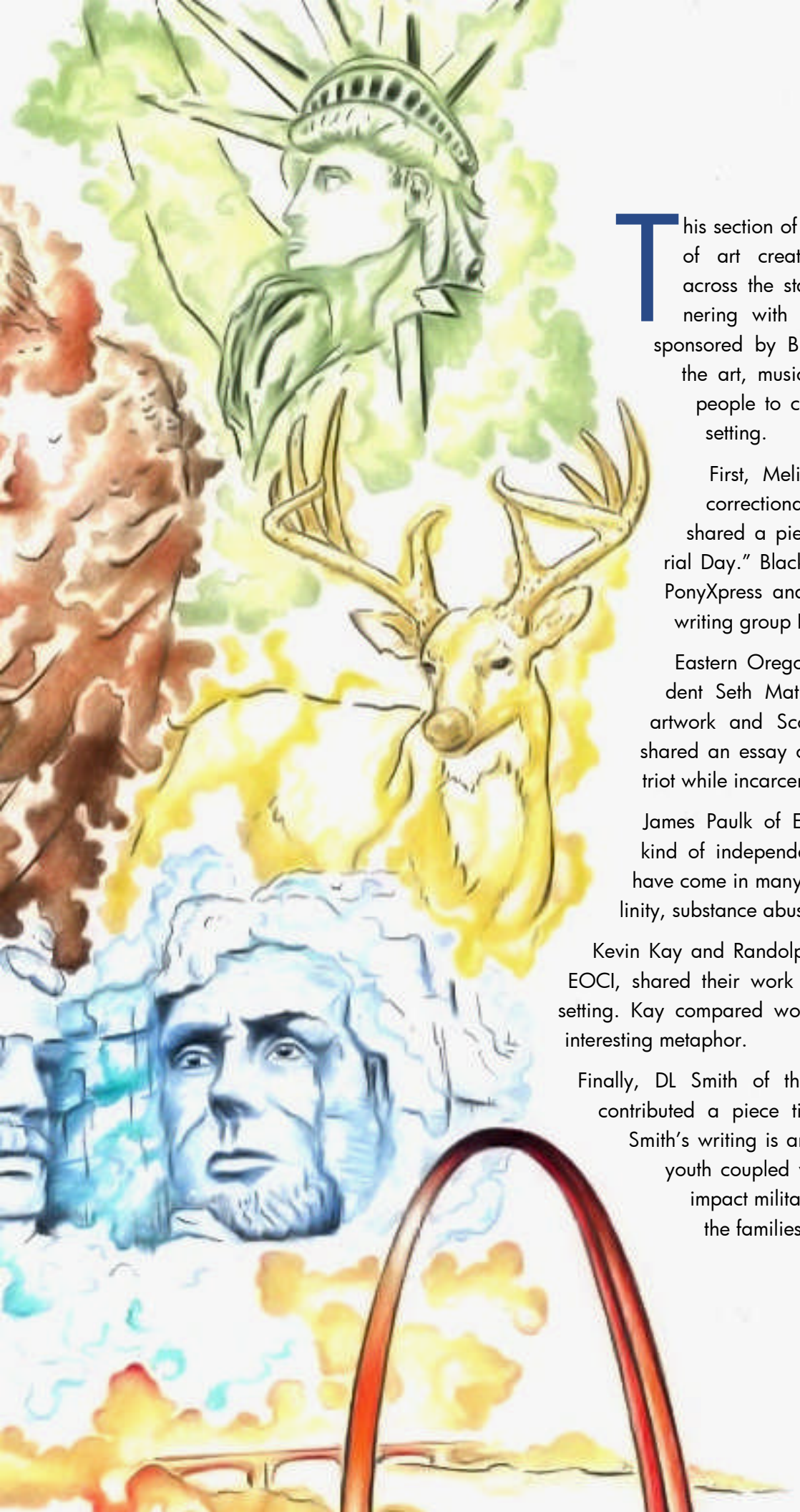
Creative Writing and Artwork from Incarcerated People

AN ANTHOLOGY OF ART





This section of 1664 offers a brief anthology of art created by incarcerated people across the state of Oregon. 1664 is partnering with PonyXpress, an organization sponsored by Bridgeworks Oregon, to bring the art, music and writing of incarcerated people to communities outside the prison setting.

First, Melissa Black from the women's correctional facility in Coffee Creek shared a piece titled "In Honor of Memorial Day." Black is a regular participant with PonyXpress and a part of the Coffee Creek writing group Hecate's Lantern.

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution resident Seth Mathews contributed poetry and artwork and Scott Steffler, also from EOCI, shared an essay on what it means to be a patriot while incarcerated.

James Paulk of EOCI wrote about a different kind of independence. He wrote, "My prisons have come in many forms, including: toxic masculinity, substance abuse and racist ideologies."

Kevin Kay and Randolph Paul K. Magpoing, both of EOCI, shared their work on patriotism in the carceral setting. Kay compared words to a mustard seed in an interesting metaphor.

Finally, DL Smith of the Oregon State Penitentiary contributed a piece titled "At My Mother's Feet." Smith's writing is an incredible recollection of his youth coupled with thoughtful insights on the impact military service has on veterans and the families they return to.

Illustration by Seth Mathews

In Honor of Memorial Day

By Melissa Black, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
Published on PonyXpress.org, reprinted with permission

Here's to all that hear and answer the call.

- Melissa Black

What does it take to be one nation under God, with justice and liberty? The question is "Are we a nation under God with justice and liberty?" Things are beginning to look quite different.

Today we recognize and commemorate with honor all the souls who have died in war. This day set aside to fully observe what that means, as we watch our red, white and blue flag sway in the wind. As a holy country, there is a state of being to uphold.

In my state of mind, I see my grandfather standing with his bayonet moving ashore, as a young man. I see my father rolling up the bridge. My uncle Al in the bomber plane flying back and forth to re-up his supply.

There are many stories to be told — expression, thoughts and memories carried down to me. It is in the untold secrets that lie within the chamber that are also important. Moving forward to deploy, so that we will not be destroyed. It is in the heaviness of heirloom. Holiness that we must uphold and secure the sacredness of the universal light of life.

Devotion
Spirituality
Godliness
and Sainthood

Here's to all that hear and answer the call.

Patriotism

By Seth Mathews, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

I've been misused, mistrusted,
misunderstood by many. Protected by
the unwilling, protected by the willing.
Lost, found, forgotten. Ignored by
the ignorance of youth, then revered by
the revisionism of age. Loved then scorned.
I grow within the meek, the embodiment
I have exploded with pride and frozen
with humility. I've been co-opted by
political parties, champion to the unworthy.
Pulled out and put away, I've hurt many,
saved some, asked no forgiveness for
the heavy cost in lives and pay.
Who am I?

Is it Possible to be a Patriot in Prison?

By Scott Steffler, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

Is it possible to be a patriot in prison? Absolutely! To be sure, for a very long time I did not think this way. I figured since I felt I did not receive a fair trial, or maybe I did not have a good lawyer, or my sentence was too long, or the whole "Affirm Without Opinion" thing that the Oregon appellate courts tend to do way too often is at odds with the basic notion of due process; I thought: what is the point of even being a citizen? This might be reduced to, *What's in it for me?* It is easy to become bitter and resentful when we are denied instant gratification, especially in the criminal justice process.

I have been in prison for a long time, and I managed to spend much of that time learning, reading scores of books, and even managing to carve out a bachelor's degree from a respectable university. I realized one thing about the idea we know as the United States of America: we do indeed have an even table. While we may feel conflicted by ethnocentrism, religion, or socioeconomic status, the one thing we all have in common in this country, whether citizen or not, is the Bill of Rights. Our fundamental rights to free speech, due process, equal protection under the law, and the myriad others are equally available to each person within the geographic limits of the United States.

When I was a legal assistant for several years at Snake River, and here at EOCI, I had seen many people prevail on appeals with decades removed from their sentence. Sometimes they had lawyers appointed by the court, sometimes they paid for them on their own, and sometimes they filed the appeals themselves. The bottom line is, they had a judge hear their case and they won. In addition, I have seen many incidents of considerable relief in civil rights cases due to examples of inadequate medical care, discrimination, injury, and violations of civil rights.

The theme I long recognized is simply this: fair opportunity. The common denominator we have in this country is the Bill of Rights; rights that are equally important to us all in our own unique way. My right to Freedom of Speech may be polar opposite in content to the next person, and vice versa, but we both enjoy the freedom to exercise it. The common denominator, then, is that we all share access to the same rights. Whether our rights are honored is invariably dependent on whether or not we seize the *opportunity* within the system that safeguards them. No one *provides* them as if it were some arbitrary system of distribution; one must prevail on that *opportunity* that is equally accessible to all of us. To be successful in business, you have to market your product; to do well in school or sports, you have to work hard; to prevail in a legal process, you have to carry a winning argument.

There truly is no limit to opportunity in this country. And that is the *hope* in the country. If you work hard at achieving what you want to accomplish, then there is the realistic hope that you will be successful.

I have never met anyone in here who sincerely believed they can do nothing while incarcerated. I have seen many people earn college degrees, publish books, secure patents on inventions, even operate businesses. I would scarcely believe anyone who says they sincerely believe there is nothing they can do once they are released from prison. People have gotten out of prison and earned tremendous fortunes or even been elected into public office.

We all have access to the same fundamental rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights - our common denominator, and we have access to the *opportunity* to make good on them according to how we value them. When opportunity is reduced or taken away, then our rights are just maxims printed on a piece of paper.

The access to opportunity in all walks of life is why I think it is possible to be patriotic in this country, even in prison. Outcomes are real and always possible. Without opportunity, then there is zero hope.

A Declaration of Independence

By James Paulk, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

The only real self is the one we lock ourselves in.

- James Paulk

I declare independence from the bondage of self.

The only real self is the one we lock ourselves in. My prisons have come in many forms, including: toxic masculinity, substance abuse and racist ideologies.

I declare independence from toxic masculinity. As a boy I cut my figure, blood wiped clean revealing bone. "Make a choice," they said. "Be a man," they said. My many scars, internal and external, remind me of my masculinity.

I declare independence from the substance I abused for so long, to escape from reality and hide the truth. At 13 I fell in love. I found my voice in bottles of liquid courage. "Surrender your will," they said. "Find a higher power," they said. A life lost, 18 years in prison and broken homes reminds me of the destruction of my addictions.

I declare independence from my father's racist ideologies. As a boy I saw no difference. But seeds were planted. I borrowed a rap C.D from a friend, brought it home to listen to in secret. My father heard it through the walls. A broken noise. A shattered C.D. Hate instilled. "Not in my house," he said. "They're the enemy," he said.

C.D. fragments and my swastika tattoos remind me of my father's racist ideologies.

The Words of The Mustard Seed

By Kevin Kay, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

I've decided to study psychology. Immediately after saying this I take into consideration how this line of study allows me, in one way or another, to feel patriotic.

Whether we are aware of this or not, every time we give each other advice or try and build each other up, there is without a doubt a bit of patriotism being applied. We want to uphold each other and part of doing that is to uphold the working order of our country. Psychologists are in the business of helping others through dialogue, but we all can help each other through our words.

Contrary to what some might believe, this system - the Department of Corrections - saves lives. Many of us have been using drugs or engaging in other vices before coming to prison. Here, we are given time to reflect on how we may have conducted ourselves with our friends and family members.

There have been times when people have said, "I wish I would have handled that differently." To this very day I find myself saying those exact words.

Believe it or not, every single one of us may be in a state of emotional turmoil, but we truly have a moral duty. Many of us are matured far beyond our years.

I ask you to remember your words have an impact. Words are like the mustard seed, known to be the smallest seed that will become the biggest plant of its kind.

So please, let's do our patriotic duty and help our neighbors by giving good advice or saying a kind word.

Land of the AIC

By Randolph Paul K. Magpoing, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution

To be incarcerated in the U.S.
fair or not is anyone's guess.
Can I still be a true patriot
when my freedom has left?
Maybe I'll pretend there's no point
at least till I walk out this joint.
Bury my head in the sand
cover my face in my hands.
Be oblivious to my country's needs
the way I feel its treated me.
Or maybe stop and realize truth,
There's no better country with or without me or you.
Proud to be an American,
words I'll say over and over again.
No matter where I rest…a man who's free.

Can I still be a true patriot when my freedom has left?

- Randolph Paul K. Magpoing

At My Mother's Feet

By DL Smith, Oregon State Penitentiary
Published on PonyXpress.org, reprinted with permission

I would sit on the dingy old shag carpet,
My toes curled in the plush fibers
As if digging them in to hot sand.
I basked in the warmth of her love,
Waves of stories washing over me. She
would softly tell me tall tales
Of imagined lineage; old Okie conceits,
Attempting to link our people back to
Stonewall Jackson or Billy the Kid.
As if we should be proud of this, These
myths of Southern poverty,
Hanging around our necks like the harness of a plow,
Dragging behind us as we toiled into the future.
She told me a story of her father, And
why he hated Johnny Cash. Johnny
had beaten him up when they were children.
He would explode in expletives anytime
Johnny came on the radio.
I remember how small and mean
he seemed in that moment,
Persisting in his hatred like an outcropping of rocks
Spitefully jutting from the surface of the water;
Refusing to subside below the tide.

Years later, my father told me a story
that my mother never shared.
My grandpa, this large man made small
in my mind, was one of the "Chosin Few."
Abruptly, I could see him clearly,
All the hard bitter years smoothed from his brow,
Colder than death and terrified;
Skin ripping from sticking to the icy body of his rifle,
The blood freezing even as the wounds
became exposed. Hell frozen over.
17 days colder than the vacuum of space.
Bodies made concrete and stacked for barricades.
Frozen foxholes full of dead
Without a single bullet being fired. Huddling,
shivering behind a solitary tank
As they attempted to escape.
Men falling to the echoes of sharp cracks
Like icicles snapping in the wind.
Suddenly, that mean old man made sense to me.
His stubborn hatred crystallized in
that chilblain cemetery
Like a frostbitten blood diamond.
His glacial malice kept him warm.
Survival necessitated he make virtues of his vices.
He found salvation in his sin.

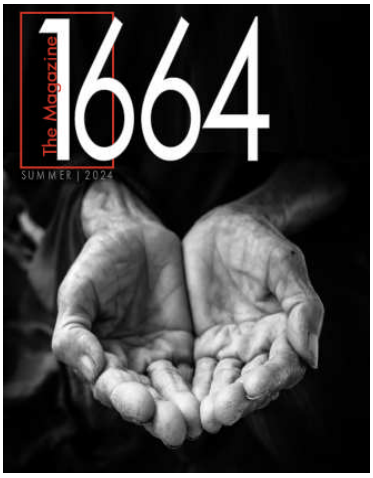
Who was I to judge who he had been?
At my Mother's feet, I learned as children do:
Warm, secure, and fluid. Embryonic.

At my Father's side, I learned the complexity
of truth: Hard, unforgiving, and colder than
a North Korean winter.

**At my Father's side,
I learned the complexity
of truth: Hard, unforgiving,
and colder than a
North Korean winter.**

- DL Smith

HELP SHAPE THE CONTENT



1664 publishes quarterly and has a theme. Upcoming themes include:

Winter 2024 | Theme: *Music*

Spring 2025 | Theme: *Culture*

There are three ways to get involved with 1664:

1) Submit creative writing in the form of a personal non-fiction essay, poetry, or music lyrics of 350 words or less;
2) Submit artwork in any medium; or
3) Be featured in a profile.

Residents of EOCI can contact Institution Work Programs (IWP) by communication form for more information.

Incarcerated people outside of EOCI can submit creative writing and artwork by mailing their submission to the address listed below. Additionally, 1664 collaborates with PonyXpress. The PonyXpress team shares potential writing for publication with 1664. Writers can submit work to1664 directly or through the PonyXpress writing workshop, if it is available at their facility.

Please do not send original work as it cannot be returned. Not all submissions will be selected.

For those outside of EOCI, mail submissions to:

Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution C/O IWP

2500 Westgate

Pendleton, OR

97801

Or work with your PonyXpress volunteers.

FREEDOM RESTORE

Interview by Ray Peters and Phillip Luna
Supplemental photos provided by Michael Hoffman

Michael Hoffman was released from prison on June 3, 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hoffman worked in the prison bakery for nearly 14 of his 15 years of incarceration. During that time Hoffman became a well-known and respected bakery worker, eventually becoming the lead baker and working on numerous special projects. Before leaving prison he had multiple job offers, but the jobs depression during the pandemic and his felony record would create hurdles for employment.

He eventually found work in the trucking industry. Despite the challenges, the four since his release are what he refers to as "the best years of his life," which he mostly attributes to reconnecting and marrying his childhood schoolmate, Theresa.

Hoffman is not a veteran, but is one of the more than 1.9 million Americans who understand the value of freedom through the loss of liberty.

Hoffman and his wife Theresa drove from Oregon City, where they reside, to Pendleton to be interviewed for 1664.

Michael Hoffman visits the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution four years after his release.

Photo by Phillip Luna

Photo by Juan Sanchez

Michael Hoffman during his incarceration. He worked in the EOCI bakery for 13 years and seven months. Hoffman was well-known for his culinary skills.

1664: What's the first thing you did when you got out in 2020?

MH: I went to Wal-mart and looked at the hot wheels. I used to love hot wheels. The crazy thing was everything closed at 4 o'clock, because of COVID and the riots at that time. I was released at the worst time. There were no restaurants open. I bought a few things and went back to the halfway house that I paroled to.

The next day I went and met with my parole officer and did all the things I needed to do. It was pretty overwhelming the first month. I wanted to get a job immediately, but my counselor told me to settle down first and get acclimated into society.

1664: What did you do for work?

MH: I got hired with a company one month out of prison, in a temp job. Then a guy I knew from EOCI, he told me there was a job driving truck at Feed Commodities. I went through all the phases of the company, but now I'm driving truck. It's a good job and I've been with them three and half years.

The one thing I've learned doing time is that prison is regimented. I still live that life in my world now. When I go into work, I know all my stops during the night, were I'm going to be and when. It's regimented. When someone throws a curve ball, I have a hard time adjusting because of all the years I did time. It's the hardest thing for me.

1664: Do you think you'll ever be able to adjust?

MH: Certain things will always be there. Like the regiment, or the fear of getting in trouble. When a cop is around me or is driving behind me, it's stressful. There are certain things that will never leave you.

1664: I find it interesting that you did not end up working in the bakery.

MH: I was guaranteed three jobs before I was released. When I went out there, I got the door slammed in my face. That was a hard thing to accept right after getting out of prison.

The only thing I could go back to was trucking. It's what I knew.

But one thing I learned in prison, that a lot of people outside of prison don't know, is respect. Respect in prison is very different from what people think of outside. There are things people have said to me that I would never say to someone.

In prison when you get there, you are the new fish for a while. But then you adjust, people get to know

"In the world, people are always treating you differently. You are a felon and they always want to judge you wherever you go."

you and what you are about. Outside in the world, people are always treating you differently. You are a felon and they always want to judge you wherever you go.

1664: You guys stay connected with people who are still in prison. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

MH: All the guys that we stay in contact with, some that have paroled and some that are still in prison, we send them birthday or holiday cards. We talk to them on the phone. We put money on their accounts if they need something.

Once a year I get together with all the guys that have gotten out, we have a barbecue and it's a support group. We have a support group. I didn't have that when I got out.

Theresa gave me that. She gave me my support group and now we try to give that to other people who are getting out.

Michael Hoffman and wife Theresa married two years after his release on June 4, 2022. They live in Oregon City.

1664: Did parole get easier over time?

The parole officers have such a big caseload. They look at how you did your time inside. If you were in prison rocking the boat and doing things you shouldn't be, they are going to scrutinize you more. If you do your time right, then when you get out you'll start on the right foot. Over time, yes, the P.O. will be easier on you.

1664: What are your hopes for the future?

MH: I'd like to retire at 67, and then work part-time. I'd like to move to the coast with my wife.

TH: That's always been my dream.

MH: I never appreciated life when I was out there before, always getting into drugs and stupid things. Now I want to appreciate things.

1664: What are the most difficult things you've had to adapt to outside of prison?

MH: Since I have been out I have not been on a computer. I just do not get on a computer because I don't know what I am doing. Second, the phones are just horrible. There are too many things. Everything is online now, I just don't do well.

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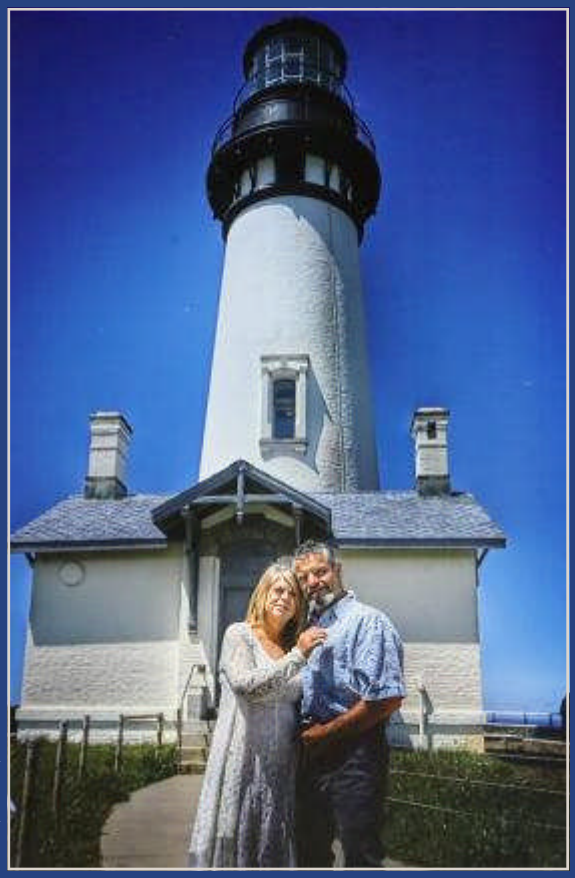


Photos provided by Michael Hoffman

Above: Michael Hoffman and wife Theresa at the Yaquina Lighthouse in Newport, Ore.

Right top: Hoffman's work vehicle.

Right bottom: Hoffman and wife visiting Newport, Ore.

When I came to prison, I lost everything. When I got out I thought I was never going to have anything. I was wrong. This last four years have been the best four years of my life.

TH: A lot of the other drivers have noticed that since I met him he doesn't go off the walls. He's become a totally different person, he doesn't go off the wall like he used to. Which is good.

1664: Michael, I noticed you are missing part of a thumb, which you still had when you were incarcerated here.

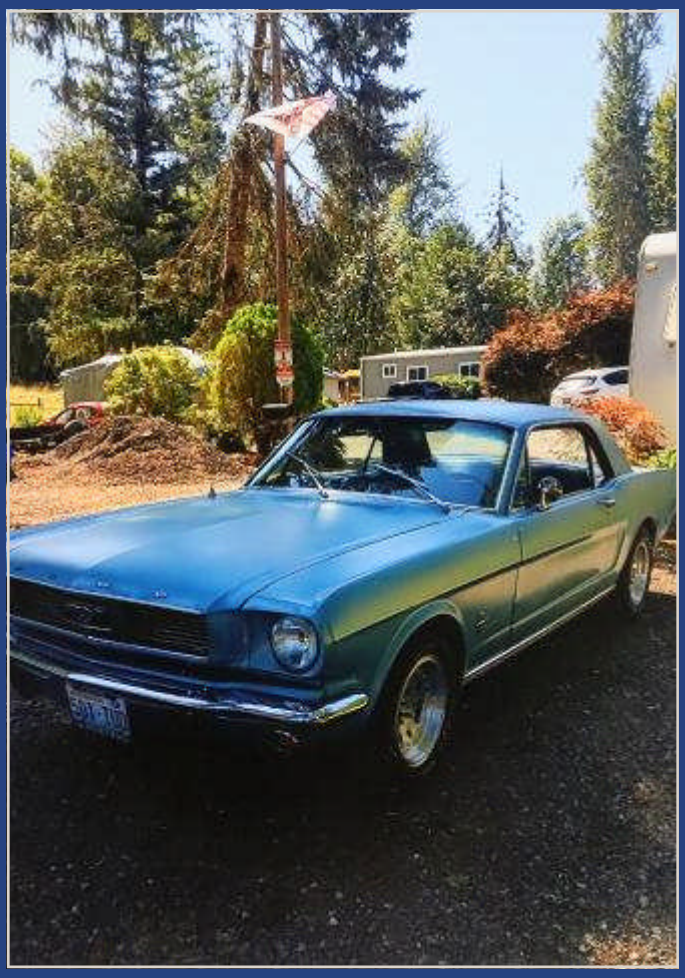
MH: Yeah wife did that. Two months after we got married, we were splitting wood with a hydraulic splitter for her uncle. His stove needed smaller pieces. She was running the lever and I had my hand under the wedge. That happened in September 2022.

1664: Well, you aren't going to be hitchhiking any time soon.

What are some other things you learned in prison that actually helped you?

Keeping your word. In life, you can be rich with money, but that doesn't buy happiness. The two things that make a man rich in society are your word and respect. If you tell someone out there you are going to do something, do it. Your word matters.

After seeing how certain inmates are treated,



The Hoffmans purchased a 1966 Ford Mustang which they now consider part of their family.

Michael Hoffman and wife Theresa host gatherings for many formerly incarcerated people on a regular basis.

whether that be by a staff or another inmate, I don't want to see that when they get out. They are trying.

1664: Do you stay in contact with any staff?

MH: Yes, we stay in contact with Emory [Liza Emory, Food Service Manager]. We sent her pictures of our wedding and I've asked her a few questions.

Mr. Gift, [Food Service Coordinator] when I was being shipped out, he came up to R&D and was upset that no one had told him I was being shipped out. He shook my hand.

Well, two days after I got out my phone rang and it was Gift. He keeps in touch with me, wants to know how life is going. Last time we were up here we had dinner with him and Flanagan [Food Service Coordinator].

I got to say one thing, Griner [Food Service Coordinator] I never liked as a coordinator. Never. I mean, we bumped heads. But when I came for my first visit here, over a year ago, he happened to come up to the visiting room. He walked over and shook my hand and said, "I wish we could hire you as a coordinator, but in Oregon you know we can't do that." I have a great appreciation for that.

1664: What's the one piece of advice you have for anyone doing time?

MH: You can do your time constructive or destructive. It's up to you. ■