

STACY L. PEARSALL

## *Veterans Portrait Project*

### *Editor's Note*

Stacy L. Pearsall got her start as an Air Force photographer at the age of seventeen. During her time in the service, she traveled to more than forty-one countries and attended S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. Pearsall was one of only two women to win the National Press Photographers Association Military Photographer of the Year competition and the only woman to have earned it twice. Now combat-disabled and retired from military service, Pearsall continues to work worldwide as a freelance photographer and is an author, educator, military consultant, public speaker, and founder of the Veterans Portrait Project (VPP).

Here is the introduction from the VPP's website ([veteransportraitproject.com](http://veteransportraitproject.com)), where many more of Pearsall's portraits may be viewed:

*Some are smiling. Others gaze at a distant point. All are veterans. The Veterans Portrait Project began while Stacy Pearsall recovered from combat injuries sustained in Iraq. Spending hours in VA waiting rooms surrounded by veterans from every generation and branch of service, Pearsall was compelled to honor and thank them in the only way she knows how, photography. The Veterans Portrait Project totals 3,000 veterans and grows daily.*

Pearsall is crowdfunding support for the Veterans Portrait Project at [crowdrise.com/stacypearsall](http://crowdrise.com/stacypearsall).



*Retired Army Master Sergeant Johancharles Van Boers served as a combat photographer from June 1983 to December 2009. Over the course of his career, he served in conflicts such as Desert Shield, Haiti, Southern Watch, Bosnia, and Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.*

*“Our job as combat cameramen is to tell the story as it unfolds in front of us, while still being a soldier at the same time,” Van Boers explains to Defense.gov. “You have to know when to pick up the camera or that rifle; if you hesitate, you could lose that perfect photo opportunity or you could cost someone their life. There really aren’t a lot of those moments, but when it happens, you don’t have time to think; you just have to react, and that is when all that training kicks in and your body just takes over and you just do it.”*



*Air Force Reserve Major Dana Fisk presently serves as a mobile hospital nurse and previously worked as an aeromedical flight nurse. While not nursing in uniform, Fisk spends her days at Seattle's Harbourview Medical Center as a burn trauma and pediatric nurse. Since joining the service in 1988, Fisk has traveled the world and deployed to the Middle East during the Gulf War.*

*"[For] those with an engaged and enthusiastic attitude, coupled with the willingness to do hard work, it's an exciting and rewarding job," Major Fisk told the 446th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office. "The art of kindness, compassion, and empathy are important aspects of nursing. Anyone can learn a skill or procedure, but not everyone can be a kind, caring nurse."*



*Lyndon Villene and his service dog, Ice, go everywhere together since Villene left the Marine Corps. Villene served as an amphibious assault vehicle driver and held the rank of E-4. During his enlistment from February 21, 2005 to February 22, 2009, he deployed to Iraq.*



*Wes Moore served as an Army infantry officer from 1998 to 2009, during which time he was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He continues to serve his fellow veterans by working on such projects as Coming Back with Wes Moore and sitting on the board of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America organization.*



*Robert "Bobby" Henline, also known as "the burnt comedian," originally joined the Army in 1989. After his first enlistment, he separated from service, only to be drawn back in October 2001. During the surge in Iraq, Staff Sergeant Henline deployed to Diyala Province as a transportation specialist. On April 7, 2007, an improvised explosive device struck Henline's vehicle, killing everyone but him. To best cope with the enormity of the situation, Henline turned to humor. He retired from the Army in January 2011 and is now a stand-up comedian.*



*Air Force Master Sergeant Lisa M. Zunzanyika retired from the Air Force after 21+ years of service as a combat photojournalist. During her career, Lisa traveled the world documenting the military in peacetime, wartime, and humanitarian operations. She is a graduate of the Military Visual Journalism Program at Syracuse University, through which she earned the distinction of being the first African American female military photojournalist in Air Force history. Now she is the owner/operator of a freelance photography company, Simply Zee Imagery.*



*Pronounced dead, Captain Johnny T. "Tommy" Clack was left among the deceased in Vietnam. It just so happened that a surgeon came outside to check the dead. Without prompting or reason, the surgeon uncovered Clack's body and discovered something that made him believe Clack was still alive, and yelled, "Get this man into the trauma room, now!" Tommy was an artillery forward observer and was struck by an RPG, which took three of his four limbs. "I'm no hero," Clack says. "And quite honestly, I don't know of any, except for the men and women who gave their all. Their names, all 58,267 of them, are on a long, black granite wall in Washington, DC. Those are my heroes."*



*All too often, the sacrifices of military spouses are overlooked. Shelee Christine Murray is the widow of Sergeant First Class Dennis Ray Murray. Dennis R. Murray, 38, of Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee, died November 21, 2011, in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. Shelee continues his service by volunteering for various nonprofit organizations, such as the All-Veteran Parachute Team.*