

## Wounded Warrior Project, National Press Foundation Honor Outstanding Journalism on Veterans Issues



*The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's John Diedrich speaks at the National Press Foundation Awards Dinner in Washington, DC after accepting the Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Award for Excellence in Coverage of Veterans.*

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The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and Long Lead won the National Press Foundation's inaugural Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Award for Excellence in Coverage of Veterans.

The award celebrates outstanding reporting on the experiences, challenges, and triumphs of veterans. WWP partnered with NPF [to create the award](#) to inspire high-quality journalism about the needs of those who served.

"The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and Long Lead brought humanity and urgency to the forefront of the conversation about veterans' issues," said Sherry Sanderford, WWP's director of Public Relations and Thought Leadership. "Their research and compelling storytelling went beyond surface-level reporting. Congratulations to John Diedrich at Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and the Long Lead team of Emily Barone, Samuel Braslow, Jasper Craven, Will DiGravio, Gale Holland, Kelly Kennedy, Morgan Lieberman, Russell Midori, Christian Martinez, Rebecca Murga, Andrew Nusca, John Patrick Pullen, and Sarah Rogers. We are grateful you helped shine the light on issues facing our nation's heroes."

The winners tackled distinct but equally vital topics: veteran firearm suicide and the homelessness crisis among veterans in Los Angeles. Both outlets published deeply reported stories that captured the resilience and challenges of veterans while also inspiring change.

### **Profiling Life-Saving Conversations**

The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's series, \*Behind the Gun\*](#), led by investigative reporter John Diedrich, explored firearm suicide, which accounts for the majority of gun-related deaths in Wisconsin. Diedrich's stories brought readers into the lives of veterans like Mike Aschinger, a retired Army Reserve veteran who is available to take around-the-clock calls from service members in crisis. The reporting also highlighted Dan Marcon, a Navy veteran and gun shop owner who engages veterans in honest conversations about mental health.

"What we tried to do was change the lens a little — take the conversation about firearms and look at the stories of veterans and gun owners in a way that's not about regulation, but about their lives, their struggles, and their community," said Diedrich, who formerly covered the military for the Gazette in Colorado Springs.

"This award is a special honor," Diedrich added. "It feels like a culmination of years of work and a reflection of the incredible men and women who have shared their stories with me."

Diedrich's reporting brought the harrowing statistics of veteran firearms suicides into focus, delving into grassroots solutions like gun shops offering safe firearm storage and veterans guiding others through crisis.

## Land and Dignity

*Long Lead's Emily Barone (from left), John Patrick Pullen, and Sarah Rogers join National Press Foundation President Anne Godlasky to accept the Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) Award for Excellence in Coverage of Veterans in Washington, DC.*

Long Lead's [comprehensive multimedia project](#), *Home of the Brave*, chronicled the decades-long challenge to house homeless veterans at the West Los Angeles VA campus, land that was donated to the federal government for that specific purpose after the Civil War.

The series, spearheaded by John Patrick Pullen and his team, took readers through the property's history, legal battles, and the grassroots activism that has kept their fight for housing at the West LA VA alive.

"These stories are about more than the issues — they're about people," said Pullen. "Our hope is to create a record that stands out, so veterans know they're not alone and that their struggles and triumphs matter to everyone."

Through poignant storytelling and striking visuals, *Home of the Brave* brought attention to the challenges faced by veterans without housing, while celebrating the resilience of activists who continue to fight for the West Los Angeles VA campus' rightful use. The project underscored the systemic challenges veterans face and the urgent need for lasting solutions.

## Inspiring Action Through Journalism

Both projects exemplify the journalism that WWP's award was created to inspire. By shining the spotlight on veterans' issues, these journalists have opened the door for conversations that can lead to meaningful change.

"Our nation owes a tremendous debt to the veterans who have served and sacrificed for our country," said Sanderford. "Quality journalism can help repay that debt by telling their stories with dignity, honesty, and compassion. This award reflects the importance of that mission."

NPF will present the awards in Washington, DC, on Feb. 20, 2025. Winners will receive \$5,000 prizes, underscoring WWP's commitment to fostering impactful journalism about the veteran community. Long Lead is donating its prize to AMVETS, specifically to help unhoused veterans in West LA.

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## About Wounded Warrior Project

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers — helping them achieve their highest ambition. [Learn more about Wounded Warrior Project.](#)

