## **OUR MISSION:**

We equip veterans for the mind's frontline, one story at a

time. We help individuals recognize that the tales we tell (and those we don't) are strongholds of safety, strategies for progress, and survival tactics shaped by experience, both for ourselves and others. That's the beauty of narrative: it brings order to chaos, coherence to confusion, and meaning to memory, for in every story, we find another necessary chapter in the field guide for life.





## FREE FOR ALL: VETERANS \* \* \* ACTIVE-DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS \* \* FIRST RESPONDERS

\* \* \*

& THEIR FAMILIES

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?



**Scan the QR code** for the VRP website.

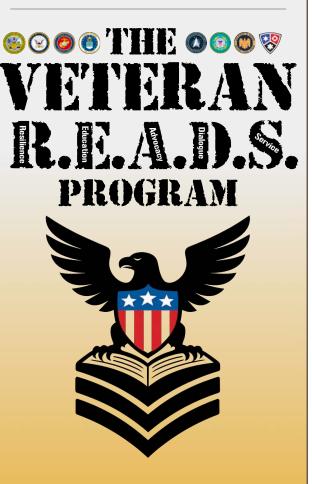


Email Joshua Shinn, VRP Pilot & Lead, at jshinn@missouri.edu



Follow The Veteran R.E.A.D.S. Program on Facebook for updates, events, and resources.

## Extension University of Missouri



STORIES ARE STRONGHOLDS AND STRATEGIES FOR THE MIND'S FRONTLINES





Transitioning from service to civilian life can be lonely, difficult, & overwhelming.



At the VRP, storytelling becomes the stronghold & the strategy for life beyond the battlefield.



Anger, trauma, & mental health challenges often follow veterans and first responders home—long after



Storytelling is one of humanity's oldest tools for **healing**, **connection**, and **meaning-making**.



- Cur personal narratives shape how we see ourselves, relate to others, and find our way forward.
- For veterans, storytelling is transformative. Sharing their stories helps process war memories (Esaki et al., 2020), heal identity crises between military and civilian life (Demers, 2011), and strengthen resilience.
- It offers a less threatening path to engage with difficult topics and construct meaning from them (Hamm & Leonhardt, 2023).
- Just as bootcamp immerses service members into military life, storytelling offers the immersive experience needed for reintegration (MITRE Corporation, 2019).
- By understanding the minds of others, veterans better understand their own—gaining critical insight, strength, and direction (Elder & Paul, 2004).
- Through story, veterans reclaim their voice—and with it, the power to heal, grow, and lead.

