

VETS TOWN HALL

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Info:

Kristen Eaton

Vets Town Hall

press@vetstownhall.org

802-825-4389

VETS TOWN HALL FOUNDED BY SEBASTIAN JUNGER ***New Vermont-based nonprofit aims to increase understanding*** ***between veterans and nonveterans***

Essex, VT (November 1, 2022) –Bestselling author Sebastian Junger has announced the launch of a nonprofit to create connections and increase understanding between veterans and non-veterans. Vets Town Hall will provide resources to help local individuals and organizations coordinate events where veterans of any era who served in any capacity are invited to stand before their community and speak for up to ten minutes about what it was like to serve their country. These events are non-political, and all perspectives are valued.

“It takes courage to stand up and speak. It also takes courage to sit down and listen,” says Junger, referencing a quote often attributed to Winston Churchill.

Junger wrote about the first such event—when he collaborated with Seth Moulton to bring a Vets Town Hall to Massachusetts on Veterans Day, November 11th, 2015—in his book, *Tribe*. Since then, dozens of Vets Town Halls have taken place throughout the country - but without any centralized way for people to learn more about how to organize them, or where to find the closest event. The fledgling national organization will provide support to local organizers and host a calendar of events at vetstownhall.org, with the goal of helping to establish annual Vets Town Halls in every state—and eventually in every community—in the US. The organization also directly organizes Vets Town Halls here in Vermont.

Junger will serve as president of the organization’s board of directors. Fellow board members include Jon Turner of Bristol and Kristen Eaton of Essex, who have been working together on Vets Town Halls in Vermont since 2017. Turner will host a Vets Town Hall at the McCarthy Arts Center on Saint Michael’s College campus in Colchester on Sunday, November 6th at 1pm.

The organization has already established relationships with Student Veterans of America, which has released a video encouraging chapters to host Vets Town Halls, and GORUCK, which is hosting two events this year, and will release a shirt and badge to raise funds for the organization.

To learn more about organizing or attending a Vets Town Hall in your hometown, or to donate, visit www.vetstownhall.org.

IF YOU GO

What: Vets Town Hall: a community forum aiming to increase communication and understanding between local veterans and the community at large

When: Sunday, November 6th at 1pm

Where: McCarthy Arts Center, Saint Michael's College campus, Colchester

Learn more & RSVP (optional but encouraged): vtvetstownhall.org

Questions: vermont@vetstownhall.org

ABOUT VETS TOWN HALL (VTH)

Vets Town Hall Corporation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded by Sebastian Junger with the goal of increasing understanding between veterans and nonveterans through events where veterans are invited to speak about what their service means to them. VTH provides resources and support to local event organizers, with the goal of helping to establish a Vets Town Hall in every state—and eventually in every community. For more information, visit www.vetstownhall.org.

ABOUT THE BOARD MEMBERS

Sebastian Junger (president, founder) is the bestselling author of *War*, about American soldiers in Afghanistan's infamous Korengal Valley, as well as *Tribe*, about their struggles adjusting to life back home. His documentary *Restrepo* - which he shot, directed and produced with photojournalist Tim Hetherington - won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Oscar the following year. Junger remains committed to helping veterans and is the originator of Vets Town Halls. His most recent book is *Freedom*.

Jon Turner served with the U.S. Marines from 2003-2007 as an infantryman, deploying to Haiti on a humanitarian mission and twice to Iraq in Fallujah and Ramadi. Since getting out of the service, he has worked with various communities in the United States to assist with the veteran reintegration process through agriculture and outdoor recreation. This past year, he helped launch the 22 Peaks Challenge, a fundraiser to support veteran organizations actively working to prevent veteran suicide. Jon currently operates Wild Roots Community Farm in Bristol, Vermont—a 10-acre operation dedicated to community resilience through food systems education and wilderness living skills. Jon has been hosting Vets Town Halls in Vermont since 2018.

Kristen Eaton (secretary, treasurer) is a project manager specializing in events that foster community and conversation. She has been coordinating and consulting on Vets Town Halls in Vermont since 2017, and is the Deputy Director of the national organization.

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