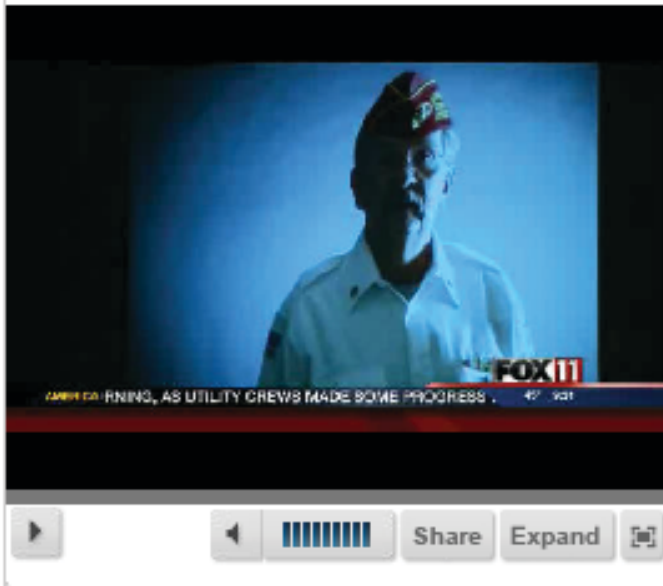


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## A look through the eyes of veterans

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OSHKOSH - Most people have never served in combat, but a project by students at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh gives a glimpse.

It's called "War Through Their Eyes" and features UW-Oshkosh alumni and students who are also veterans.

"I would say my story represents the average veteran pretty well," said retired Army Sergeant John Ackerman was a combat medic in the Iraq War.

He told FOX 11 his story is a good representation, because he had both very good and very bad experiences in Baghdad and he shared it all with UW-Oshkosh journalism student Morgan Counts.

"To learn about what really happens overseas and how his life was changed when he came back was just really mind-boggling," said Counts.

Some of the stories Ackerman recounted were from raids and patrols in Iraq and some are hard to hear: he saw children shot with AK-47's.

"Some of it was difficult to talk about, but overall, I think it was a positive experience," explained Ackerman.

Ackerman's story is part of "the War Through Their Eyes Volume Two: Warriors and Nurses." The multimedia project tells the stories of five medics from four different wars, all of whom are UW-Oshkosh alumni or nursing students.

It takes a look at people who've walked the line of being healers and fighters.

"I might forget, you know, high pressure systems I learned in geography class, but I'll remember these stories for the rest of my life," said Bradley Beck, a former journalism student who also took part in the project.



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The students hope those who see the project remember too.

"To honor them and show everyone what great things they've done," said Counts.

"How important they are to our freedom and the things they do to keep us safe everyday," said Beck.

Ackerman told us he hopes his account of war is a reminder that veterans are more than statistics.

"It's sort of a wakeup call and you acknowledge the fact that there's a human cost, as opposed to just the numbers you see," said Ackerman.

The veterans' stories have been compiled into a book, which was dedicated to fallen Fond du Lac Police Officer Craig Birkholz. Birkholz was an alumnus of UW-Oshkosh as well as a veteran. His story was featured in the first "War Through Their Eyes" project in 2009.