00:16: The purpose of this Thankful Generations Project is to show respect and appreciation for former and current military personnel and their families for securing and maintaining the privileges and freedoms we enjoy in America.

I hope to accomplish this through the creation of a first class traveling exhibit of beaded tapestries intended to honor and remember their sacrifices.

00:35 This project is a unique way I have of elevating an unusual art form that I particularly enjoy to a higher level of expression than people perhaps have seen in the past.

00:55 I am choosing to focus on WWII first because over the next several years living veterans from World War II will continue to pass on, and there is still time for us to express our gratitude and appreciation directly to them.

01:13 The concept of doing the first tapestry actually sprang up when I watched the PBS special called “The War”, and it’s a Ken Burns special. I was totally fascinated by the series and in fact my first WWII tapestry takes a National Archives photograph that Ken Burns used in his PBS special. It really got me thinking what can I do to use my artistic flair to make something special?

1:55 So it’s been a fairly unguided project and I’m happy with where it’s starting to go. I have a series of pictures that I’m considering for my next project. A very dear friend in California whose father also served in WWII and when we were visiting him last month, he shared with us his father’s box of photographs and momentos from the war. Fabulous photograph of his father in his little dixie cup hat, he was a sailor, and so that may be my next tapestry.

2:45 My father about a year ago sent out a Veteran’s Day email, ironically yesterday, or this week was Veteran’s Day week, and my cousin Aileen reminded the family that families also should be thanked because of the sacrifices that they went through. She reminded everybody about her father. I got to thinking what a great subject that would be for my next tapestry. I was just finishing my prototype and looking for the next opportunity. So I contacted her and asked her if she had any old photographs of my uncle. Thankfully she came up with this and several other photographs that I could consider to transpose. And with her permission and her sister Ann we decided that this was the right picture, and they liked the design that I created and they gave their approval to move forward.

3:51 You know I was approaching fifty, and I decided that I wanted to do something that would leverage my experience, my interests, my artistic talents, my skills. And as I approached fifty, I really challenged myself to do something that would push me beyond anything that I ever done before. I wanted to see if I could also be efficient with my interests, because I just couldn’t find time to do everything that I was interested in doing, so I came up with this idea that if I could combine interest areas, like my profound interest in World War II and my talent with beading that not only could I be learning and growing as an artist, I could also be efficient in how I was spending my time. One of the things I love doing while I’m beading is listening to audio books on WWII, I’ve listened to quite a few, and in the absence of good audio book I’ll pop in some big band music from the 1940’s era to keep in the mood and also to push my knowledge of music. This has been a really great project that was intended to mark my fiftieth year with something really big and powerful and different than anything I’ve ever done before.

5:35 My mother is Okinawan and she grew up as a child of the war. She was probably eight or nine years old during the Invasion of Okinawa and her family lost everything. For me to see her thriving today and enjoying life and being the wonderful person that she is, I’m thankful that she survived the war, that her family has since recovered and are thriving and you know this is just a way of thanking people who made sacrifices during that time and subsequent wars, because we live a good life here and I think it’s important that we honor and acknowledge that.