

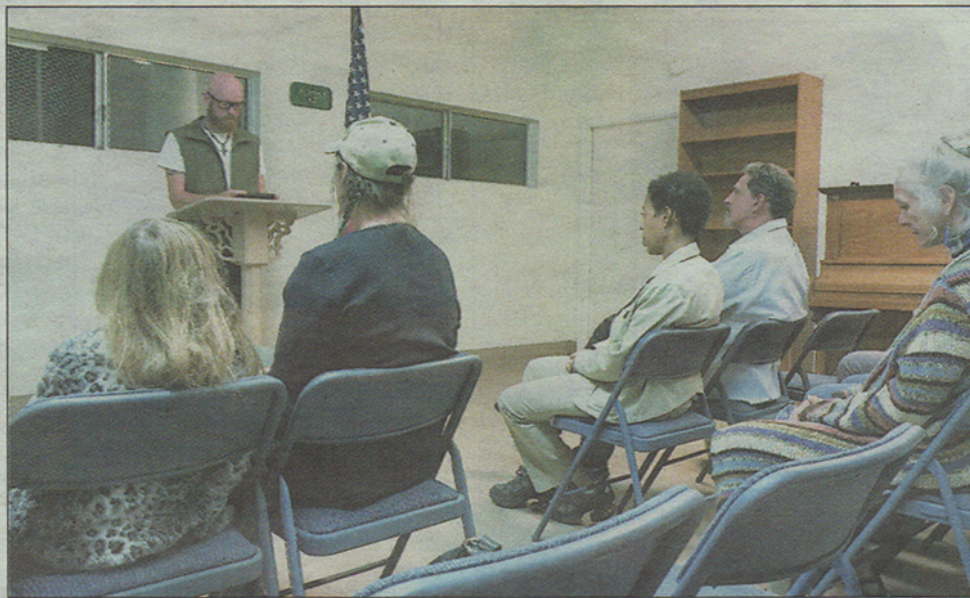
# War experiences expressed through art

By Jessica Gibbs

Hi-Desert Star

MORONGO VALLEY — The Art Colony of Morongo Valley hosted the Mil-Tree Institute's "The Art of War" Oct. 27. Veterans, families and local artists milled around the Covington Park Community Center to view a small excerpt of the collaboration between military writers and visual artists. Founder and acting president Cheryl Montelle opened the event, explaining what her experience has been since the inception of the project. "I found that as the veterans spoke, however people felt, they were profoundly inspired or came awake to something they had never seen before."

Sculptures and canvases brought alive the words of veterans from the Vietnam era to present day, moving some of the viewers to tears. "Undone," a sculpture by Melissa Spurr, mimicked the lyrics of Jen Housholder's work titled "Warriors Live On" — giving the ob-



JESSICA GIBBS Hi-Desert Star

James Golubi reads Tobias Crabtree's "after the song is over" at a Mil-Tree event held at the Covington Park community building. The Mil-Tree mission to bring together veterans, active-duty military and civilians with communication and art.

server a peak into the life of a combat veteran coming home feeling "numb and disconnected."

Two pieces were read aloud: "In Enemy Territory" by Katherine Barta and Tobias Crabtree's "after the

song is over." Both were delivered to a hushed room as the weight of the subject matter and its long-lasting effects hung over the room.

Mil-Tree was created in 2012 to help bring a diverse group of people to-

gether in an effort to help process, express and support the healing of scars from war through storytelling and art. For information about the Mil-Tree Institute and its mission, email mil-treecommunity@gmail.com.



JESSICA GIBBS Hi-Desert Star

"Undone," by Melissa Spurr, is part of an exhibit about war and its effects, shown at the Morongo Valley Art Colony's gallery in Covington Park.