

Greg Lauren's "Barracks" Benefit Operation Mend For Veteran's Day

Stylelist | By [Sarah Leon](#) | [Become a fan](#) | Posted: 11/11/11 02:07 PM ET | Updated: 11/11/11 02:07 PM ET



Credit: Billy Farrell

In honor of Veteran's Day – which is today if you weren't aware – designer Greg Lauren has opened a new retail installation, titled "Barracks" selling goods that will benefit [Operation Mend](#), a program that assists veterans. So, how did Ralph Lauren's nephew, who studied Art History at Princeton, begin designing a line of deconstructed, [military-inspired clothing sold at Barneys](#)? It's all about the inspiration: "I think that it's ironic that we want to wear things that are inspired by the military, history or the military aesthetic. We want to feel like that without actually earning out stripes, so to speak. For me, a lot of these pieces are about the idea that if we're

really going to wear something that has to do with military or surplus, why not take it to the extreme and actually makes these things out of real military fabrics instead?"

"Barracks," which is located at 125-127 Grand Street, will be open from 11am to 6pm from November 11th through November 18th. We sat down with the New York City native to discuss his love of unlikely materials, family heritage and goals:



Greg Lauren (third from right) with Veterans from Operation Mend. Credit: Billy Farrell

How do you get the materials for the pieces?

From flea markets, vintage sources, eBay – you name it, I find it. I use vintage duffel bags, US Army blankets, a long US Navy overcoat. I thought it'd be really interesting to create a collection of pieces that are tailored, fitted garments, but made out of actual military fabrics that were used for the least glamorous side of a soldier's life. Even when I do multiples, each piece is made individually, I want it to feel like a human being made it and I want the person who wears it to get that sense. I'm not trying to make it feel artificially old or vintage, but I do want it to have a kind of artistic expression. So I literally will hand-trim, wash and stitch some of these details.

Are there any words of advice your dad (Ralph Lauren Menswear designer, Jerry Lauren) or your uncle (Ralph Lauren) gave you before starting your line?

They have always encouraged me to love what I do, but most importantly, to really enjoy it. Both my dad and my uncle said, which makes sense coming from them, to stay true to my vision and if I have something to say, then say it. I wouldn't have done this if I didn't feel that I had something to say in clothing. And that's what's exciting.

What do you think are your plans for the future?

The collection will continue growing and expanding. This store is definitely a model of something that I will continue doing, both in the sense of installations as well as that future store-like space that I would always want to see be a changing, creative space of my collections. Whether they are unique collections like this or an extension of what's in the stores. It's a big part of how I work. I don't think really about seasons; I approach making clothing much more in a similar way to how I created any body of work as a painter. I get excited about themes or ideas that have to do with ideas that I want to explore artistically and I just get to express it through fabric now.