



ENLISTED

A film by



Visionalist
Entertainment Productions

In Association With





September 18, 2016

Keith Famie
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

It was great meeting you to discuss *Enlisted*. Your program concept is an excellent one. Remembering our local veterans, their families and contributions is a subject of great importance in our area. We are pleased to include it in our broadcast plans and work on a partnership for national distribution.

Detroit Public TV is committed to covering issues in the public interest, including those surrounding the challenges and triumphs of our veteran's population and their families.

Public Television has always had a fine tradition of offering unique documentary programming like *Enlisted*. It is our sincere hope that working together this program will become part of that tradition.

I look forward to speaking with you again soon. In the meantime, I wish you the best of luck in finding production funding for your work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred'.

Fred Nahhat
Senior VP, Production
Detroit Public TV



Visionalist

Entertainment Productions

Recipient of 11

Michigan Chapter Emmy Awards

September 15, 2016

Dear Caring Veteran Supporter:

I would like to introduce you to a year-long documentary film production that will step deep into the world of military life, the values forged as part of a deployed unit, the spirit of camaraderie, and the sense of loss and sacrifice when a loved one is killed in action.

I am confident this two-hour film will create a pathway of discussion about what it truly means to enlist today as a young person. What dreams and aspirations do they foresee in the future as part of the world's most powerful military? Where does it exceed their expectations? Where does it fall short?

I am hoping you would consider supporting this in depth production as one of our patriotic community leaders.

As you will read in the attached materials, you will have varying levels of support to choose from. All will allow you to write your donation check to the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization Urban Communications Group.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Keith Famie
Director/Producer



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**Visionalist Entertainment Productions
Production Begins Fall 2016**

OVERVIEW

Our modern military is an all-volunteer force. Today's enlisted more than likely joined the armed services in search of a stepping-stone on the way to something else, be it college or another career path.

As a fixture of American culture, our military has undergone profound changes as an institution, a sociological force, and as a career path. The great pride and patriotism of WWII gave way to skepticism and domestic unrest during the Vietnam era. Today, we face conflicts that are often unpopular, but perhaps with greater empathy for the individuals who made choices often more personal in nature than patriotic.

As we look at the military life for those who do enlist we ask ourselves: does an 18 or 19-year-old fully grasp the consequences of enlisting? To join the military is to make a commitment not typically found in the civilian world. How do these life-changing decisions unfold after their service? What makes the military camaraderie unlike anything else in modern civilization? What career paths are forged? Does and can government or society fall short in aiding or understanding those who are injured in the line of duty?

This documentary will seek answers to these questions and build new bridges by embarking on an objective journey through the lives of current active duty personnel and veterans from WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

This project will be a 2-hour PBS broadcast and a 90-minute theatrical version for festival submission and wide distribution. After production is complete, the film will be screened at community leader/media premieres in the Detroit area and Florida, both of which will benefit local veteran organizations.

This film from Director/Producer Keith Famie and the Visionalist Entertainment Productions team is produced in association with Urban Communications Group, a 501(c)(3) organization committed to telling educational, socially-conscious stories.





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AREAS OF FOCUS

The Military's Public Image

- How was being a soldier perceived in the U.S. prior to WWII? Was it a career path or the result of poor choices/limited options? How did WWII change this? 9/11?
 - Has military service changed from a conflict-centered commitment to a long-term career path? Why and how?
 - The difficulties of coming home – WWII veterans vs. Vietnam Era vs. today
 - People's criticism of war/military as an institution vs. criticism of military as a life path & the individuals that choose it
- History of how the military presents itself to the public
 - Promotion, marketing, relationship with media (news, films & television, cultural publications such as magazines)
 - WWII, Vietnam, 9/11

The Draft

- Public opinion of the draft during WWII, Korea, Vietnam through to the process of its abolishment
- Pros and cons of draft in a democracy
 - Conscientious objectors, draft card burners
 - Was the draft ethical? Right? Is the fact that a draft is unpopular with the public an indication that a given conflict should not be fought, in accordance with popular sovereignty?
- How do we differ from other countries with compulsory military service (ex: Brazil, Russia, Egypt, Israel, South Korea)

Recruiters

- Who is a recruiter, what do they do, where do they work?
- History of military recruitment (I Want You!)
- Quotas
- What aspects of the military do recruiters play up to potential enlistees? What aspects do they play down?

Youth & Enlistment

- Why do so many young people choose the military over further education?
 - Economic factors
 - Youth
 - Psychologists' perspectives – what is the mindset?
 - Brain development and impulse control
 - Little to no sense of mortality – applies to both yourself and the people you're fighting
 - Video games
 - How does military advertising use the forms and characteristics of video games – a leisure activity – to sell enlistment to young people, especially young men?
 - Rural/vs. urban environments – does isolation or hopelessness play a role?
 - Marginalized communities – does the military represent a true meritocracy that is attractive to underprivileged groups?
 - Is joining the military a good option for lost young people seeking a purpose?
- ROTC
 - How does it work? What leadership characteristics are taught?
 - Who enters ROTC and why?
 - History of ROTC – began 1916
 - What role did it play during the Vietnam War?

“Be All You Can Be”

- Boot camp
 - What is the role of boot camp? What happens psychologically, what is the purpose of boot camp other than physical training and fighting skills? What relationships are developed?
 - How people are changed by boot camp – confidence, self-esteem
- MOS – Military Occupational Specialty
 - Not everyone is infantry/in harm's way – the military has clerks, dental assistants, accountants
 - How do people choose what they want to do in the military?
 - Is there greater freedom in choosing your career path in the military as opposed to the civilian world (on-the-job training vs. getting an advanced degree)?
 - Expectations vs. reality
- Deployment
 - How does deployment change a person? Is it different for everybody?
 - What are the positives and negatives of being sent into a combat zone?

Camaraderie

- How is camaraderie developed? Why is it important on the personal/unit/organizational level?
- After service ends
 - Support groups
 - American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America; POW/MIA
 - How did they form and why?
- Is there such a thing as “too much” camaraderie? Is saying “civilians don’t understand” a scapegoat that allows both civilians and veterans to disengage from the realities of armed conflict?
 - “Redeployment” by Phil Klay
 - “The Mirror Test” by J. Kael Weston

Military Culture

- Patriotism
 - What is patriotism? Do different people have different definitions?
 - Is it learned?
- Integrity, self-sacrifice, ceremony, achievement
- “Embrace the suck”
- The 40% Rule
- Aggression and masculinity
 - How does this play into recruitment – see Youth and Enlistment section
 - Constructive aggression vs. destructive aggression
 - Women
 - Should women be allowed in infantry/special forces/elite units? Should there be separate physical tests or is that splitting hairs once you reach that level?
 - Do women feel the need to assimilate into macho culture or do they bring new perspective to individual units/bases/posts etc. or even the military as a whole?
 - Is military poorly equipped to handle women’s health?
- The Adrenaline Drug
 - Why would you want to keep deploying?
 - See Camaraderie section

After Service

- Veterans Affairs
 - Healthcare process – appointments, doctors, paperwork, etc.
 - Marijuana vs. opioids
 - Funding – how is it used?
- Charitable organizations
 - Why are there so many? What do they do for veterans?
- PTSD
 - History – thought of as a post-WWI phenomenon – do we see evidence of it before?
 - Public perception vs. reality
- Traumatic brain injury
 - How blast waves cause brain injury different from other traumatic events
 - How types of weapons change types of injuries
 - *Should try to find a field medic to talk to
- Service dogs
 - Paws For Vets, K-9s for Warriors
 - Man's best friend – what does animal companionship do for veterans?
- Public reception/perception
- After-service camaraderie
- Living with amputation/blindness/deafness
- KIA
 - Military Funerals
 - What is the purpose of a military funeral?
 - Beyond obvious answer “to honor...”
 - Why not just give a civilian funeral?
 - What purpose does the military funeral serve in the larger context of how we view the military as Americans?
 - What happens to the spouses after all the pomp and circumstance?
 - What impact does an event like this have on children, beyond losing a parent in general?
 - Does the military stay involved with the families? If so, how?

In Closing

- What has the military given you?
- Do you have any regrets?
- Would you encourage someone to join the military no matter who they are, or is it “what you make of it?”
- What is one thing you would have changed about your experience being in the service/a veteran?



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RESEARCH

In 2011, the Pew Research Center conducted two surveys regarding the military and post-9/11 attitudes. The results of those surveys support a narrative that many Americans are familiar with: military service is rewarding and prepares veterans for life after service, yet many still struggle with the transition as they try to find their way in a world that has a hard time understanding them and their experiences.

“Veterans who served on active duty in the post-9/11 era are proud of their service (96%), and most (74%) say their military experience has helped them get ahead in life. The vast majority say their time in the military has helped them mature (93%), taught them how to work with others (90%) and helped to build self-confidence (90%). More than eight-in-ten (82%) say they would advise a young person close to them to join the military.”

“44% of post-9/11 veterans say their readjustment to civilian life was difficult. By contrast, just 25% of veterans who served in earlier eras say the same. About half (48%) of all post-9/11 veterans say they have experienced strains in family relations since leaving the military, and 47% say they have had frequent outbursts of anger.”

“War and Sacrifice in the Post-9/11 Era”, Pew Research Center

The reasons for this are myriad. Part of it is simply pure numbers – active duty members comprise less than half of one percent of the population, which means more redeployments for a small number of citizens; and approximately only one-fifth of Congress has any military experience – a sobering statistic when you consider that these are the same individuals who determine whether or not to engage the military in an active conflict.

But what else is at play here? Why do people enlist? What do they get out of their time in the military? What are the unique challenges they face when they return to the civilian world? What can *we* do to address these challenges in our communities and in our nation?

Following is a snapshot of some of the research we will be using to support our exploration of life in today's military.



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PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

Production Schedule

Over the course of the next twelve months, our production team of videographers and producers will travel to several military installations to document “day-in-the-life” stories of enlisted service members.

We will conduct interviews with high-ranking officers to gain an understanding of many of the discussion points that are outlined in the film’s areas of focus.

We will also meet with leading professionals for interviews as well as authors of books that teach us about military life, family, and society.

Potential Filming Locations

Norfolk Naval Base, VA
Fort Bragg, NC
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, 29 Palms, CA
Dover Air Force Base, DE
Naval SEAL Beach, CA
Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan
1st Special Forces Group, Okinawa, Japan
Vietnam Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Potential Featured Professionals

Phil Klay, USMC (Ret.), Author
J. Kael Weston, Author
Clare McLaughlin, Arts in the Armed Forces
MAJ Ivan Castro, U.S. Army
SGT Lonnie Gaudet, U.S. Army, Ret.
TSgt Leonard Anderson, U.S. Air Force, Ret.
SSG Michelle Wager, Michigan Army National Guard, Ret.
Veterans For Peace
Vietnam Veterans of America
TAPS
IAVA
Team RWB
Marcia Valenstein, Professor of Psychiatry, University of Michigan