



How to Host a Screening of *Veteran Nation*

If you've never hosted a film screening event before, don't worry! All you need to do is follow the steps below and you'll be a pro before you know it. If you are experienced at organizing events—well, just think of these suggestions as a gentle reminder.

Why?

Organizing a screening of *Veteran Nation* is an easy and effective way to call a community to action and get your friends, neighbors and colleagues engaged in serving the nation's veterans by starting their own organization, joining an existing group or finding a cause to support. Let the film do the talking for you. And then ask your community—"What can we do?"

How to get started?

Contact Esprit de Corps at contactus@servingourvets.org. Tell us about your plan to hold a screening in your community. We'll mail you a DVD of the film for your screening event at no cost. You can download a screening kit at www.servingourvets.org. Then just get at it.

Whom to invite and how to promote your event?

Ask an existing local service organization, school, church or group to sponsor a screening or organize a screening in your community among your friends, neighbors and colleagues.

Promote your event by sending out a press release or a notice to local media outlets; adding the event information and banners to your website or blog; directing people to the film trailer (at www.servingourvets.org); hanging up posters at approved locations (There is a blank poster in the screening kit. You just have to add "where" and "when."); sending emails to your friends or subscriber lists; and promoting the event in social media (such as Facebook and Twitter). Also let us know and we'll add your event to our website (www.servingourvets.org) and our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/VeteranNation).

How to get organized?

Reserve a facility and equipment for the screening. Don't have a regular meeting place? Try your local school. An auditorium or even a study hall with a large screen and projector would be ideal, but any classroom with a screen and projector might do. Can't screen a movie at your school? Are you affiliated with a religious organization? How about asking your religious leader for permission to use a meeting space? Or you can also try asking your community center. Still stuck? Ask a local movie theater to donate screen time or host the film.

Make sure the facility can be darkened sufficiently and is large enough to accommodate the anticipated audience. Have sufficient seating or chairs and ensure the screen is sufficiently large and high enough to allow for viewing throughout the room. *Before the screening*, make

sure you have a working projector and DVD player, a good sound system, and microphones (if needed). You might want a technician to assist with setting up and running the equipment.

Enlist co-workers, friends and colleagues to help out. You'll need a greeter, host, clean-up crew—and a cook. We recommend serving light refreshments before the screening. We also recommend getting a note-taker, someone to capture comments, suggestions, ideas and feedback during the discussion.

Having a sign-in table at the front door serves two functions: you can greet the guests and you can ask for their contact information. We ask you to share emails from your sign-up list with us so we can update folks with tips, suggestions and news on how to serve our nation's veterans. We included a sign-up sheet in the screening kit at www.servingourvets.org.

After the credits roll?

The film runs about 30 minutes, so there is plenty of time for discussion. We recommend scheduling an hour for the screening and the discussion after.

Don't let folks go before starting the conversation "what can we do to make a difference?" Make sure you hold a discussion about the movie where everyone voices their opinions on the topic. There's really no point to watching a movie unless there's time for discussion afterward!

In order to start things off, always have a list of questions prepared that relate to the movie. Watching the movie on your own beforehand can give you some ideas.

You might start by asking if there are veterans in the audience and asking them to contribute their comments and ideas.

Here are some important questions to be addressed:

- What can our group or community do to help? What do we have to offer?
- How can we address the challenge of "contact"? How will we find veterans?
- How can we address the issue of "comradeship"? How can we add a peer-to-peer or mentoring dimension to our program so we make sure veterans are with other veterans?
- How can we address the challenge of "community"? How can we ensure that there is community backing to build a sustainable program or support for an existing program?

Get organized. Before folks head home, ask for a commitment to begin an action plan. Organize a committee to do the homework of mapping out the next steps. They can go to www.servingourvets.org to get some suggestions.

Finally, let us know what you did. How did you decide to make a difference? Send us an email at contactus@servingourvets.org.



About the Documentary

Veteran Nation is a moving 30-minute documentary on how America has treated our veterans and their families from Bunker Hill to Baghdad; the challenges facing this generation; and how the American people can best serve those who served. The goal of the film is to inspire all of us to give back to those who gave their all.

The documentary includes:

- Riveting combat footage from the front lines of today's wars.
- Rare historical photographs and archival footage.
- Jaw-dropping animation.
- Gripping interviews with veterans and experts.

Including the inspiring stories of:

- *Ben Richards*, a combat veteran profiled in *The New York Times*, on the trials of dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.
- *Greg Gadson*, a double amputee who remains on active duty as the Commander of Fort Belvoir, Virginia. He also starred in the Hollywood film *Battleship*.
- Captain *Dawn Halfker*, a wounded warrior who become an inspiring young entrepreneur.
- Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient Colonel *Jack Jacobs*, co-chairman of Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation and television military-commentator.
- Marine veteran *Eric Hastings*, founder of Warriors and Quiet Waters, a model of a community veteran-service organization in Bozeman, Montana, that uses the healing power of fly fishing to help heal the wounds of war.
- *Jack Carney*, a veteran of "Desert One," the failed 1980 Iranian hostage rescue, who went on to lead the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, one of the most effective service member and family assistance programs in the country.
- Combat veteran *Dave Sutherland*, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff "point man" on veteran and family support issues. Sutherland now heads the Dixon Center for Military and Veteran Community Services.

Narrated by the award-winning voice talent Ray Otis

Director Mark Waters • Executive Producers James Jay Carafano, James Fitzgerald, Jr.
Producer Josh Taber • Writers James Jay Carafano and Mark Waters



About the filmmakers

ColdWater Media is a leading producer of powerful, cutting-edge documentary films. Coldwater Media also makes educational films, curricula, and television series. For more information: <https://coldwatermedia.com>

Esprit de Corps is a veteran-led, non-profit foundation educating Americans on veterans issues. For more information: <http://www.servingourvets.org>



The Story Behind the Film *Veteran Nation*

In December 2010, the Council on Foundations and the Philanthropy Roundtable co-sponsored the program "Philanthropic Strategies for Helping America's Veterans" held in Washington, D.C. This event provided a unique opportunity to examine the width and depth of programs to help veterans heal the wounds of war and continue in a lifetime of service.

The presentations were remarkable—informative, heartwarming, and inspiring. One presentation on Warriors and Quiet Waters—a community-based group in Bozeman, Montana, that employs the therapeutic qualities of fly fishing to help heal traumatically wounded warriors—was particularly stirring.

The conference highlighted two great truths about our veterans: (1) We owe them a great deal. (2) They are one of our nation's greatest resources. At the conference, participants discussed the key attributes of a robust national enterprise to assist America's veterans. They include:

- *Contact*—reaching out to veterans and identifying their needs;
- *Comradeship*—building peer-to-peer support and mentoring in assistance programs; and
- *Community*—serving veterans and their families where they live and work, teaming with veterans and their families for long-term, sustained support with collaboration and clearinghouse activities that create a "one-stop shop" for assistance while fostering collaboration among those reaching out to veterans.

Unfortunately, we as a nation are not all pulling in the same direction. The need for an inspiring guide for philanthropic efforts has never been greater. On the one hand, the average member in the military today has experienced more service in a combat theater than any in our nation's history. Over 1.9 million service members have deployed since 2007. Many have had multiple combat tours. An estimated 300,000 have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Ten percent of all personnel deployed to Iraq were wounded or hospitalized.

On the other hand, Americans have never been more willing to help. According to a Pentagon white paper, there are over 400,000 registered websites for donors and organizations supporting our service men and women. "This is more than a poll of do-gooders—it is a Sea of Goodwill," the paper concludes. "Our nation needs a method to navigate this sea." Many groups do not know how to reach veterans and their families, what they need most, or how to best deliver assistance. Both the Pentagon and the Department of Veterans Affairs have concluded that linking those who want to help with veterans and their families is the single greatest and most important challenge they face.

This urgent need inspired Esprit de Corps and ColdWater Media to make the documentary film *Veteran Nation: The Mission at Home has Just Begun*. The purpose of the film and the call to action is simple: Taking care of veterans is the responsibility of all Americans. The film was crafted to make three points:

- 1) Explain to Americans that assisting veterans and enabling them to pursue their dream of lifetime of service to the nation in all forms of public life is the responsibility of all of us—not just the government;
- 2) Educate Americans on the three critical tasks for addressing veteran needs—contact, comradeship, and community; and
- 3) Offer a template for how a group of any size can tackle these tasks.

The documentary has a great story to tell. Few Americans know the triumphs and tragedies of how the nation has treated its veterans. Additionally, the film tells the story of contemporary veterans through the eyes of combat veterans who are fighting to heal the wounds of war while preparing for a lifetime of service. Among the veterans interviewed in the film is Colonel Greg Gadson, the Army wounded warrior who was featured in the recent film *Battleship*. Others include an individual participating in *Warriors and Quiet Waters* and a young veteran making the transition from military to civilian leadership. Chronicling their trials provides the emotional core of the film and illustrates the key components of successful veterans' assistance and offering a template for others.

The film offers an overview of how the nation has treated its veterans from the American Revolution to the present. It then focuses on contemporary and future challenges of serving the nation's veterans. The film runs less than 30 minutes in length, an ideal running time for viewing during a local community meeting. The companion website (www.servingourvets.org) helps put the ideas contained in the documentary into practice.

Esprit de Corps, an all-volunteer, veteran-led 501(c)3 organization and ColdWater Media—a leading producer of powerful, cutting-edge documentaries—collaborated on the project.

The film was funded by generous donations from The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation and The Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

Veteran Nation is available at no cost for community screenings. For more information, visit www.servingourvets.org or contact us at contactus@servingourvets.org.

James Jay Carafano

President

Esprit de Corps



Facts All Americans Should Know

There are over 22 million veterans.

- Over 487,000 were wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Up to 30 percent of veterans live with post traumatic stress disorder.
- An estimated 18 veterans commit suicide every day.
- Veterans are 1/5th of the homeless population.
- Twenty-seven percent returning from war abuse alcohol.
- Unemployment for Gulf War-era veterans is 12.1% higher than the national average.
- The divorce rate among military couples has increased 42 percent.

But they are veterans, not victims.

- Of veterans age 25 and older, 92 percent have a high school diploma.
- Over 800,000 military veterans are now attending U.S. colleges.
- Over 3 million veterans own small businesses.
- Women veterans become managers/professionals at a rate 8 percent higher than non-veterans.
- Veterans who work full-time have higher median earnings than non-veterans.
- Seventy-one percent cast a ballot, compared to 63 percent non-veterans.
- In 2012, 16 veterans were elected to Congress.

The most important acts of serving those who served won't originate in government. Rather, they will arise from within America's communities. What will you do?

Learn more. Get involved.

www.servingourvets.org | contactus@servingourvets.org

ESPRIT DE CORPS FILMS PRESENTS

THE MISSION AT HOME HAS JUST BEGUN

VETERAN NATION



DVD
VIDEO

When _____

Where _____

