



National Geographic Entertainment presents
An Outpost Films Production
In Association with National Geographic Channel

RESTREPO

One Platoon, One Year, One Valley

A film by Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger

94 mins. • 2010 • USA • SD and HD • Stereo • Rated R

RELEASE DATE: June 25, 2010

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RESTREPO

RESTREPO chronicles the one-year deployment of a platoon of American soldiers at one of the most dangerous outposts in Afghanistan.

SYNOPSIS

RESTREPO is a feature-length documentary that chronicles the deployment of a platoon of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley. The movie focuses on a remote 15-man outpost, "Restrepo," named after a platoon medic who was killed in action. It was considered one of the most dangerous postings in the U.S. military. This is an entirely experiential film: the cameras never leave the valley; there are no interviews with generals or diplomats. The only goal is to make viewers feel as if they have just been through a 94-minute deployment. This is war, full stop. The conclusions are up to you.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

The war in Afghanistan has become highly politicized, but soldiers rarely take part in that discussion. Our intention was to capture the experience of combat, boredom and fear through the eyes of the soldiers themselves. Their lives were our lives: we did not sit down with their families, we did not interview Afghans, we did not explore geopolitical debates. Soldiers are living and fighting and dying at remote outposts in Afghanistan in conditions that few Americans back home can imagine. Their experiences are important to understand, regardless of one's political beliefs. Beliefs can be a way to avoid looking at reality. This is reality.

– Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger

THE MAKING OF RESTREPO

From May 2007 to July 2008, Battle Company of the 173rd Airborne Brigade was stationed in the remote Korengal Valley of eastern Afghanistan – considered one of the most dangerous postings of the war. The soldiers of Second Platoon built and manned a remote and strategic outpost that they named "Restrepo," in honor of their medic, PFC Juan Restrepo, who was killed in action. This is their story, in their words, of a group of men who came to be considered the "tip of the spear" for America's efforts in that area.

In the past five years the Korengal Valley – a rugged valley six miles long near the border with Pakistan – has become an epicenter of the U.S. war in Afghanistan. It was considered to be a crucial relay point for Taliban fighters moving from Pakistan toward Kabul, and several top Al Qaeda leaders were thought to have used it as a base of operations. In 2005, Taliban fighters cornered a four-man Navy SEAL team in the Korengal and killed three of them, then shot down a helicopter that was sent to save them. All sixteen American commandos on board died. By the end of 2007, almost one fifth of all the combat in Afghanistan was taking place in the Korengal. The fighting was on foot and it was deadly, and the zone of American control moved hilltop by hilltop, ridge by ridge, a hundred yards at a time. There was literally no safe place in the Korengal; men have been shot while asleep in their barracks. To date, close to fifty American soldiers have lost their lives there.

Starting in June 2007, Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger dug in with the men of Second Platoon, making a total of ten trips to the Korengal on assignment for Vanity Fair Magazine and ABC News. Each trip started with a helicopter flight into the main firebase in the valley and then a two-hour foot patrol out to Restrepo. There was no running water at Restrepo, no internet, no phone communication, and for a while, there was no electricity or heat; it was essentially just sandbags and ammo. Some days the outpost was attacked three or four times from distances as close as fifty yards. Hetherington and Junger – sometimes working together, sometimes alone – did everything the soldiers did except pull guard duty and shoot back during firefights. They slept alongside the soldiers, ate with them, survived the boredom and the heat and the cold and the flies with them, went on patrol with them, and eventually came to be considered virtually part of the platoon. By the end of the deployment, they had shot a total of 150 hours of combat, boredom, humor, terror, and daily life at the outpost.

Conditions for filmmaking couldn't have been harsher. The surrounding mountains rose to a height of 10,000 feet – all of which was traversed on foot. Long operations meant carrying enough camera batteries to last a week or more, on top of the fifty or so pounds of gear required on even ordinary patrols. Cameras got smashed into rocks, clogged with dirt and hit with shell cartridges during firefights. Men were killed and wounded during filming, so there was a constant issue of when it was OK to turn on the cameras and when it was not. Only the filmmakers' close relationship to the men of the platoon allowed them to keep shooting in situations where other journalists might have been told to stop.

Three months after the end of the deployment, Hetherington and Junger traveled to Vicenza, Italy, where the unit is based. They used two Veri-Cams, a full light and sound package, and two cameramen to conduct in-depth interviews with their main characters. These interviews – initially considered a kind of glue for the verité, and a way to avoid outside narration – wound up being some of the most powerful and affecting material of the entire project. The soldiers were able to allow themselves a level of emotion and introspection that is simply not possible in combat.

Hetherington and Junger hired acclaimed editor Michael Levine (*Billy the Kid, My Kid Could Paint That*) and associate editor Maya Mumma to help them put the film together at Goldcrest Post. John Battsek and Nick Quested joined the team as executive producers on the project. The edit lasted ten months and was closely supervised by both filmmakers. *RESTREPO* is Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger's directorial debut.

Junger's time with the men of Second Platoon is also the subject of his recently released book "WAR," by Twelve, a division of the Hachette Book Group. In a starred review, Publishers Weekly called the book "riveting... an unforgettable portrait of men under fire."

Q&A with Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger

How did you come across this particular assignment – what brought you there? why did it appeal to you?

Sebastian: We were on assignment for Vanity Fair and ABC News. After an embed with Battle Company in 2005, I'd had the idea of following one platoon for an entire deployment and both writing a book and making a documentary about their experience.

We hear the initial reactions of the soldiers upon hearing that they've been assigned to the Korengal Valley. What was your initial reaction?

Sebastian: When I stepped off the helicopter in June '07 I was stunned by the ruggedness of the terrain – and the beauty. Then again, I didn't have to spend a year there, and I assumed the fighting would be minimal, which of course it wasn't.

What kind of advice/protection did the soldiers offer you while you were shooting? Did you receive any training/guidelines (for your safety) prior to shipping out?

Sebastian: They knew Tim and I had been in plenty of wars before this, so they didn't really offer any advice. Once or twice during combat I was advised where good cover was (it depends on what direction they're shooting from).

Did you take turns with the camera?

Tim: We each had a camera and filmed more or less of our own volition. If I was busy taking stills, Sebastian would make sure to cover the camerawork. There were scenes where we were both shooting, and we would divide things up in a crude manner – I'd take the wides, he'd take the tights, or I'd shoot the Afghans while he shot the Americans.

What limits were placed on your access?

Tim: No limits at all on access; none. There was a stated agreement that we would not shoot wounded American soldiers – or would get their okay later – and I think there was an understanding that we would be very sensitive about filming the dead. The army asks to review a rough cut later for security and privacy concerns, but they had no issues.

Did you stay the entire duration of their deployment?

Tim: No, we did five trips each, sometimes together, sometimes not. Each trip lasted around a month.

How much footage was shot vs. what made it into the film? Did you ship footage back as you went along?

Sebastian: We shot 150 hours of footage, and we'd bring our footage back on each trip and copy it and log it. We also shot around forty hours of interviews at the soldiers' base in Italy about three months after the deployment.

Who are these soldiers? Did you get any distinct impression of them, where they came from, why they were there? Any specific qualities that come to mind?

Tim: No one had followed a platoon for an entire duration of their deployment, so we became incredibly close to many of the soldiers. They came from a variety of backgrounds and had joined the army for a myriad of competing reasons. Some said they needed to get out of their parents' home and saw the army as offering them independence, others that they were seeking a rite of passage and new experiences. Many didn't think they had many options open to them and saw the army as the best opportunity on offer. They came from all over the U.S. – many from Texas and California, others from faraway places like Guam.

What kind of dynamic did you have with your subjects?

Sebastian: Each trip the dynamic got more and more relaxed and comfortable. It became clear to the soldiers that we were not doing a political story and that we were comfortable in that environment – and that we were willing to take the same risks they were and endure the same discomforts. Tim broke his leg in combat; I ripped my Achilles tendon. Then I got blown up, but none of those things kept us from going back out there.

After being under fire for a sustained period, how would you describe the effect it has on you? Did you notice any change in the soldiers over the course of your time with them?

Sebastian: Both of us have been war reporters for some time now, so this was not our first experience being shot at. Being in a combat zone can be both exhilarating and terrifying, combined with long stretches of boredom. Things appear very simple in a war zone as the clutter of daily living recedes with the larger equation of being killed or staying alive. Mix this with being drip fed adrenalin, and inevitably it's going to make "coming back" incredibly difficult. I think this is something that the soldiers experienced, and to a lesser extent we also.

In one scene, we see a soldier making small talk during serious acts of war. It's quite affecting and an interesting choice. Why did you choose to include it? Were there other moments like this that struck you?

Tim: There's a great emphasis in war reporting on capturing the actual "bang-bang" fighting of war – and many reporters feel that any work would be incomplete without a sense of this "action." We were no different, but because there was an incredible amount of fighting going on in the Korengal Valley, recording the actual firefights got quite boring. What was infinitely more interesting and revealing was how the soldiers carried on in these situations. People who haven't experienced war inevitably base their understanding of it through the mediated versions of news or Hollywood. These representations are often limited and can't quite reveal the humor, boredom and confusion inherent in combat. It's something we

felt was important to represent.

The film shows how multi-faceted the role of the captain is with respect to his team and the village/ elders – being able not only to advance the military goal but also having to communicate the humanitarian aspects, too. Were there any dynamics of the platoon that you hadn't anticipated that you were especially glad to have captured?

Sebastian: I was unprepared for just how smart and dedicated the officers were, and many of the enlisted men as well. I was also amazed by how open and welcoming they were with us – the press. It was not what I had anticipated.

Any interactions with the village people/ elders that didn't make it into the film that you wish you could have included?

Tim: There were many, many scenes of all types that we were heartbroken not to include in the film. There were very funny moments in the “shuras” – the meetings with the elders – and also very intense moments when someone was very angry. There were several scenes of locals saying how much they hated the Taliban and gave up information on them, and other scenes where they clearly hated the Americans and wanted them to leave. All of it shows the complexity of this kind of war, but we couldn't put everything into the movie.

The film is very balanced and doesn't lead you, but rather just shows you how it is. Could you describe whether you had any guiding principles about how/ what you shot as well as how you edited, how you shaped the film ultimately?

Sebastian: We were not interested in the political dimensions of the war, only the experience of the soldiers, so we limited ourselves to the things soldiers had access to. We did not ask any generals why they were in the Korengal, for example, because soldiers don't have that opportunity, either. Our guiding principle was that we would only have people in the movie who were fighting in the Korengal. It was that principle that excluded Tim and me from the movie as well... and prevented us from using an outside narrator.

Tim: It was a conscious choice. We are journalists, and as such, we are not supposed to “lead” people to a certain opinion. That is called “advocacy,” and it certainly has its special place in the media world, but as journalists, it's not something we wanted to engage in.

“Into the Valley of Death”

By Sebastian Junger

Photos by Tim Hetherington

Vanity Fair, January 2008

<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/01/afghanistan200801?printable=true>

“Return to the Valley of Death”

By Sebastian Junger

Photos by Tim Hetherington

Vanity Fair, October 2008

<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2008/10/afghanistan200810?printable=true>

National Geographic Channel will premiere RESTREPO globally on the network Fall 2010.

TIM HETHERINGTON – Producer / Director / Camera

Tim Hetherington is an acclaimed photographer and filmmaker who has reported on conflict for over ten years. He was the only photographer to live behind rebel lines during the recent Liberian civil war – work that culminated in the film *Liberia: an Uncivil War* and the book “Long Story Bit by Bit: Liberia Retold” (Umbrage 2009). Hetherington is the recipient of four World Press Photo prizes, including World Press Photo of the Year (2008) and an Alfred I. duPont Broadcast Award (2009) for his work in Afghanistan. A native of the UK, he is based in New York and is a contributing photographer for Vanity Fair Magazine. Hetherington's forthcoming book about the soldiers will be published in October by Chris Boot Ltd. More information on Hetherington can be found at: www.timhetherington.com.

SEBASTIAN JUNGER – Producer / Director / Camera

New York-based writer and journalist Sebastian Junger is the bestselling author of “The Perfect Storm,” “Fire” and “A Death in Belmont.” He first reported from Afghanistan in 1996 and, four years later, was one of the last Westerners to accompany legendary guerrilla fighter Ahmed Shah Massoud (while reporting for National Geographic) during his war against the Taliban. Junger has reported for Vanity Fair Magazine, where he is a contributing editor, from many war zones across the world: he was trapped in Monrovia during the Liberian civil war in 2003, caught in Sierra Leone during the civil war of 2000, and very briefly held by “oil rebels” in the Niger Delta in 2006. His October, 1999 article in Vanity Fair, “The Forensics of War,” won a National Magazine Award for Reporting. He has also won an Alfred I. duPont Broadcast Award for his cinematography while embedded with American soldiers for ABC News. Junger’s recently released book, “WAR,” is about his time in the Korengal Valley with Second Platoon. (Twelve, May 11, 2010. www.twelvebooks.com)

Combined filmmaker bios

Sebastian Junger has been reporting from Afghanistan since 1996. He is the bestselling author of the “The Perfect Storm” and “War” and is a contributing editor to Vanity Fair. Tim Hetherington has reported on conflict for over ten years. He was awarded the 2008 World Press Photo prize for his work in Afghanistan and is a contributing photographer to Vanity Fair.

JOHN BATTSEK – Executive Producer – Passion Pictures

John Battsek runs Passion Pictures’ film department and is one of the most successful and prolific feature documentary producers in the marketplace today.

In 1999, Battsek conceived and produced *One Day In September*, which won an Academy Award in 2000 and an Emmy in 2001. He has since been responsible for a variety of high profile feature documentaries, all of which have been theatrically released across the globe. These include *Once In a Lifetime* (nominated for the 2007 WGA Award, 2006 IDA award); *Black Sun* (nominated for the prestigious BAFTA Award in 2007, winner Grand Jury prize 2006 Newport and Sarasota film festivals); *Sergio*, a film about Sergio Vieira de Mello, based on the biography by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Samantha Power (Sundance 2009 U.S. Documentary Editing Award, shortlisted for an Academy Award nomination, 2010 PGA nomination for Producer of the Year Award in Documentary Theatrical Motion Pictures). Battsek exec-produced *In The Shadow of The Moon* (Audience Award winner, 2007 Sundance Film Festival World Documentary Competition), *My Kid Could Paint That* (2007 Sundance Film Festival main competition) and *We Live In Public* (Grand Jury prize-winner Sundance 2009). Sundance 2010 saw the premiere of two new films: RESTREPO, exec-produced by Battsek, opened the festival and went on to win the Grand Jury Prize. *The Tillman Story*, produced by Battsek, was acquired by The Weinstein Company. Both films will be released theatrically in the U.S. this summer.

NICK QUESTED – Executive Producer

Born in London, Nick Quested started his film career as an apprentice editor. He carried every film can under the sun. Quested went on to direct over 100 music videos for world renowned artists Sting, Dr.

Dre, P.Diddy, Shaq, Master P, Trick Daddy and Trina, as well as the feature documentary *Voice of a Nation* starring Ice Cube and KRS 1 and Rakim.

Since coming aboard as Executive Director of Goldcrest in 2001, Quested has overseen the exponential growth of Goldcrest Post Productions, and has helped develop Goldcrest into a vertically integrated media company with development, finance, production, post and sales capabilities. In 2007, he produced *Elvis & Anabelle*, directed by Will Geiger and starring *Gossip Girl*'s Blake Lively and Max Minghella (The Weinstein Company). Quested has EP'ed *The Winning Season* (Lions Gate), *In a Day* (IFC), *Vanishing on Seventh Street*, *Arctic Son* (PBS), *Homework*, *On the Ice*, and *Restrepo*.

MICHAEL LEVINE – Editor

Before joining the RESTREPO team, Michael Levine edited a number of critically acclaimed documentaries including Bennett Miller's *The Cruise*, Amir Bar-Lev's *My Kid Could Paint That* (with John Walter), Jennifer Venditti's *Billy the Kid*, Dan Klores' *The Boys of 2nd St. Park* and *Ring of Fire: The Emile Griffith Story*, Vincent Fremont and Shelly Dunn Fremont's *Pie in the Sky: The Brigid Berlin Story*, and Ken Burns' *Baseball* and *The West* series.

MAYA MUMMA – Associate Editor

Maya Mumma's short documentaries with collective Profluence Productions have screened in the U.S. and internationally at festivals such as HotDocs, Big Sky and Dokufest in Kosovo. Originally from Oklahoma, Maya has a BA in Social Anthropology from Boston University and an MA in Media Studies from the New School.

And featuring (military rank as of April 2010):

CAPTAIN DAN KEARNEY - Married, 2 Children, Age 29, Fort Benning, GA

MASTER SERGEANT LAMONTA CALDWELL - Married, 2 Children, Age 46, Ruston, LA

STAFF SERGEANT KEVIN RICE - Married, 3 Children, Age 30, Burlington, WI

SERGEANT MISHA C. PEMBLE-BELKIN - Married, No Children, Age 25, Hillboro, OR

SERGEANT KYLE M. STEINER – Single, No Children, Age 25, Watertown, WI

STAFF SERGEANT ARON J. HIJAR - Single, No Children, Age 28, Laverne, CA

STAFF SERGEANT JOSHUA A. MCDONOUGH – Single, No Children, Age 28, Reno, NV

SERGEANT BRENDAN C. O'BYRNE – Single, No Children, Age 26, Pennsylvania

SERGEANT MIGUEL CORTEZ – Married, 1 Child, Age 26, Indianapolis, IN

SERGEANT STERLING J. JONES – Married, No Children, Age 27, Reno, NV

STAFF SERGEANT LARRY I. ROUGLE – Killed in Action, 1 Child, 25 at time of death, West Jordan, UT

ARMY PRIVATE FIRST CLASS - JUAN S. RESTREPO, Killed in Action, Single, 1 Child, 20 at time of death, Pembroke Pines, FL

CREDITS

Directors

TIM HETHERINGTON SEBASTIAN JUNGER

Producers

SEBASTIAN JUNGER TIM HETHERINGTON

Executive Producers

JOHN BATTSEK – PASSION PICTURES
NICK QUESTED

Cinematography

SEBASTIAN JUNGER TIM HETHERINGTON

Editor

MICHAEL LEVINE

Associate Editor

MAYA MUMMA

Post Production Supervisor

MIKE HARROP

Featuring

THE MEN OF BATTLE COMPANY, 2nd OF THE 503rd INFANTRY REGIMENT,
173rd AIRBORNE BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

Interviews (military rank at time of filming)

CAPTAIN DAN KEARNEY
1SR SERGEANT LAMONT CALDWELL
STAFF SERGEANT KEVIN RICE
SPECIALIST MISHA PEMBLE-BELKIN
SPECIALIST KYLE STEINER
SERGEANT ARON HIJAR
STAFF SERGEANT JOSHUA MCDONOUGH
SERGEANT BRENDAN O'BYRNE
SPECIALIST MIGUEL CORTEZ
SPECIALIST STERLING JONES

Director of Photography – Italy interviews

JAKE CLENNELL

Camera Operator – Italy interviews

DEREK WIESEHAHN
Additional Camera
TEUN VOETEN
Additional Footage
BRENDAN O'BYRNE
MISHA PEMBLE-BELKIN
RUDY VARNER

Supervising Sound Editor / Re-Recording Mixer

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Dialogue Editor

STEPHEN BARDEN, M.P.S.E.

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MATT SNEDECOR

Weapons Specialist for Sound Department
PFC PAUL MILLER

Music Supervisor
RUY GARCIA

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GOLDCREST POST PRODUCTIONS

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JOHN DOWDELL III

DI Finishing Artist

CHRISTY MacKARRELL

DI Producers

JEANNE SISON & JEAN LANE

Head Tech

BEN LAY

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Business Manager

SINEAD DUELL

Accountant

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KAREN SHATZKIN

FOR GOLDCREST PRODUCTION SERVICES

Head of Production

GRETCHEN McGOWAN

Production Coordinator

MÁRCIA NUNES

MUSIC CREDITS

Izjel E Debyu Haidutin

Performed by Valya Balkanska (Traditional)

Courtesy of Balkanton Records licensed through KVZ Music Ltd.

Never Forget Where I'm From

Performed by Angel Tovez

Kekama Emmsley/Tapusoa Tigi (PAKELEKIA PUBLISHING /NEOS PRODUCTIONS INC)

Stay Together for the Kids

Performed by Steve Kim

Ted Barker/Delonge, T./Hoppus, M.(EMI MUSIC PUBLISHING)

Touch Me

Gunther & The Sunshine Girls

Jon Astrop/Pete Harris/Sheeve, M./Mark Shreeve (UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING -

Z TUNES LLC. ON BEHALF OF IMAGEM LONDON LTD.)

Courtesy of Warner Music

Sunshine

Performed by: Atmosphere

Daley Sean Michael Davis/Anthony Jerome (ANT TURN THAT SNARE

DOWN/UPSIDEDOWN HEART MUSIC)

Courtesy of Rhymesayers Entertainment

BarRoom Hero

Performed by DropKick Murphys

Rick Barton; Ken Casey; Matthew Edward Kelly (UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING)

Courtesy of Hellcat Records, LLC

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Technical information:

HDV 1080i/60, 16:9, LTRT / Cameras: Sony HVR-Z1, Sony HVR-A1, Sony V1, VariCam