

AMERICAN VETERAN



**Four-Part Series AMERICAN VETERAN Premieres on PBS Tuesdays, October 26-
November 16, 2021**

**AMERICAN VETERAN Companion Podcast and Digital Video Series Premiere Fall
2021**

GBH Multiplatform Initiative Explores the Breadth of the Veteran Experience Across the Nation's History Through Interviews with Dozens of Veterans From All Branches of the Service

BOSTON, MA (July 28, 2021) — GBH today announced **AMERICAN VETERAN**, an ambitious initiative that traces the veteran experience through a four-part PBS series, a 10-part series of digital shorts and a nine-part podcast. From the citizen-soldiers who fought in the nation's earliest conflicts, to the men and women in today's all-volunteer armed forces, it is a rich and deeply moving story told through personal remembrances that draw civilian viewers into an unfamiliar culture. Every voice in [AMERICAN VETERAN](#), from hosts to interviewees, is that of a veteran. Their stories contribute to our evolving understanding of the relationship between Americans who have served and those who have not.

America is home to nearly 18 million military veterans, from the "Greatest Generation" to the men and women coming home from recent tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. From the beginning of the republic to the present, military service has been a transformative experience for those who have served. What is that experience, and how does it change the men and women who have joined the ranks? How have vets been perceived throughout the nation's history? Sometimes honored, sometimes reviled, ignored or forgotten, veterans may re-enter civilian life to encounter a population that often has little or no understanding of their experience.

The military is part of America's founding story—an enterprise to which, as George Washington put it, every citizen owed "his personal services." In war and in peace, what veterans have done in our nation's name and how they have been treated is an essential part of the American story.

"In this project, American veterans from all branches of the military share their experiences and insights," say GBH Executive Producers Elizabeth Deane and Judith Vecchione. "We hope this will connect civilian Americans with a world that many know little about—and that veterans will feel they are truly heard."

As Vietnam War veteran Duery Felton says in the television series, “We are living history. I am primary source, I’m telling you my story.”

AMERICAN VETERAN
Broadcast and Streaming Series
Tuesdays, October 26 – November 16, 2021

AMERICAN VETERAN, a four-part series, premieres Tuesdays, October 26-November 16, 9:00-10:00 p.m. ET ([check local listings](#)) on PBS, [PBS.org](#) and the [PBS Video app](#). Each episode is hosted by a veteran: former Marine and TV host Drew Carey; Senator Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq War Army veteran and Purple Heart recipient; Wes Studi, a Vietnam War veteran (National Guard) and Native American (Cherokee) activist; and J. R. Martinez, an Army veteran, actor and motivational speaker.

The production team, led by Insignia Films, interviewed a diverse group of nearly 50 veterans—young and old, enlisted and officers, men and women, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and those whose service left them with physical disabilities or PTSD. In each episode, veterans reflect on and share their personal experiences in the military, from boot camp to service in war and peacetime to return to civilian life.

Episode 1: “The Crossing” – Tuesday, October 26

As recruits take the oath to serve, they leave the civilian world to become soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen or women and their transformation begins. “There is a very stark line between before boot camp and after boot camp,” one veteran recalls. Hosted by Drew Carey.

Episode 2: “The Mission” – Tuesday, November 2

Military life shapes servicemen and women in profound, unexpected ways. Veterans’ stories showcase the raw impact of these experiences, including a young Coast Guard recruit who helped ferry soldiers to fight and die on D-Day, a pilot based in Nevada who remotely guided bomber drones over Afghanistan, and a young Marine who rose to become the first Latina general. Hosted by Senator Tammy Duckworth.

Episode 3: “The Return” – Tuesday, November 9

Hollywood war stories seem to end with the hero’s triumphant return, but in reality, the road back to civilian life is often less certain. For some, there were ticker-tape parades; for others, protests, anger and silence. Some veterans recall the confidence they brought home, while others remember thinking, “What am I going to do now?” Hosted by Wes Studi.

Episode 4: “The Reckoning” – Tuesday, November 16

“Those who went into the service and those who did not, we are two different realities,” observes a veteran. But there are differences from veteran to veteran. Some appreciate “Thank you for your service;” others wonder if the thanks are just “bumper sticker deep.” Veterans reflecting on their

service ask how we—veterans and civilians together—can move America forward. Hosted by J. R. Martinez.

“American Veteran: Keep it Close” Digital Series
10 Episodes on PBS Voices YouTube Channel
Tuesdays (Biweekly), September 7, 2021 – Jan 11, 2022

“American Veteran: Keep It Close” is a 10-part digital series that will be released biweekly Tuesdays, September 7, 2021 – January 11, 2022, on the [PBS Voices YouTube Channel](#). The short-form series explores the veteran experience by asking participants: What did you carry with you in your service and bring back home, and why did that matter? What do these objects mean to you today? The objects the vets kept close vary widely, from a microphone that a vet used to record his music while serving—“my therapy,” he calls it—to a puppy rescued from Syria.

The host for the digital series is Shain Brenden, a U.S. Navy vet who served multiple tours of duty over his 10-year career. He is now a comedian, writer and actor in Portland, Oregon.

“American Veteran: Unforgettable Stories” Podcast
Tuesdays, October 19 – December 14

“American Veteran: Unforgettable Stories” a nine-part podcast, drops on Tuesdays, October 19 – December 14. Distributed by PRX and with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the series is available to listeners free on-demand across all major podcast platforms, including Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Selecting from the rich array of veterans interviewed for the series, each episode focuses on the direct testimony of a single veteran. Their stories are emotional and thoughtful, from an Army nurse who volunteered to serve in Vietnam, to the first Black American woman held as a POW, to a Special Ops sniper coming to grips with what he was tasked to do. The podcast is hosted by Phil Klay, a Marine Corps veteran featured in the television series and author of the award-winning book *Redeployment*.

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Project executive producers are GBH’s Judith Vecchione, Elizabeth Deane and John Bredar. The **AMERICAN VETERAN** television series is produced by Insignia Films. Stephen Ives and Leah Williams directed the series, which is written by Stephen Ives and Gene Tempest. The series producer is Amanda Pollak. The digital series, **“American Veteran: Keep it Close,”** is produced by Blue Chalk, producer Mariko Fujinaka and supervising producer Natalie Taylor. The podcast, **“American Veteran: Unforgettable Stories,”** is a production of Insignia Films for GBH, produced by Curtis Fox with sound design by Ian Coss and production and distribution support from PRX.

Funding for **AMERICAN VETERAN** is provided by The Wexner Family Charitable Fund, Battelle Memorial Institute, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, JPMorgan Chase & Co, and Analog Devices.

About GBH

[GBH](#) is the leading multiplatform creator for public media in America. As the largest producer of content for PBS and partner to NPR and PRX, GBH delivers compelling experiences, stories and information to audiences wherever they are. GBH produces digital and broadcast programming that engages, illuminates and inspires, through drama and science, history, arts, culture and journalism. It is the creator of such signature programs as MASTERPIECE, ANTIQUES ROADSHOW, FRONTLINE, NOVA, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, Arthur and Molly of Denali and a catalog of streaming series, podcasts and on-demand video. GBH's television channels include GBH 2, GBH 44, GBH Kids and national services WORLD and Create. With studios and a newsroom headquartered in Boston, GBH reaches across New England with GBH 89.7, Boston's Local NPR; CRB Classical 99.5; and CAI, the Cape and Islands NPR station. Dedicated to making media accessible to and inclusive of our diverse culture, GBH is a pioneer in delivering media to those who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind and visually impaired. GBH creates curriculum-based digital content for educators nationwide with PBS LearningMedia and has been recognized with hundreds of the nation's premier broadcast, digital and journalism awards. Find more information at [gbh.org](#).

About PBS

[PBS](#), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS' premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](#), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](#), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](#) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](#).

About CPB

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, is the steward of the federal government's investment in public broadcasting. It helps support the operations of more than 1,500 locally managed and operated public television and radio stations nationwide. CPB is also the largest single source of funding for research, technology and program development for public radio, television and related online services. For more information, visit [cpb.org](#),

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CONTACTS:

CaraMar, Inc.

Mary Lugo	770-851-8190	lugo@negia.net
Cara White	843-881-1480	cara.white@mac.com
Abbe Harris	908-244-5516	abbe.harris@caramar.net

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