

Outpost Films
presents

RESTREPO

One Platoon, One Year, One Valley

A film by Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger

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

www.restrepothemovie.com

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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 90-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 are 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 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 fire fights. 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.

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RESTREPO: TELEVISION BROADCAST

National Geographic Channel has acquired worldwide television rights to RESTREPO, which will premiere globally on the network Fall 2010.

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“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>

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. 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 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 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 next book, “War,” is about his time in the Korengal Valley with Second Platoon. (Twelve, May, 2010. www.twelevbooks.com)

Combined filmmaker bios

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

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.

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

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
COLL ANDERSON, M.P.S.E.
Dialogue Editor
STEPHEN BARDEN, M.P.S.E.
Sound Effects Editor
MATT SNEDECOR
Weapons Specialist for Sound Department
PFC PAUL MILLER

Music Supervisor
RUY GARCIA
Post Production Services
GOLDCREST POST PRODUCTIONS
Colorist
JOHN DOWDELL III
DI Finishing Artist
CHRISTY MacKARRELL
DI Producers
JEANNE SISON & JEAN LANE
Head Tech
BEN LAY

FOR OUTPOST FILMS
Legal Service
MARC CHAMLIN (Loeb & Loeb)
Business Manager
SINEAD DUELL
Accountant
RICHARD KOENIGSBERG
Additional Legal Services
KAREN SHATZKIN

FOR GOLDCREST PRODUCTION SERVICES

Head of Production
GRETCHEN McGOWAN
Production Coordinator
MÁRCIA NUNES

MUSIC CREDITS

Izlel E Delyu 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

AN OUTPOST FILMS PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL

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Technical information:

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