

WAR STORY

THIS YEAR, COMMEMORATE REMEMBRANCE WEEK WITH WAR STORY

Premieres Thursday, November 8 at 8 pm on HISTORY®

Landmark new documentary series features firsthand personal stories of Canadians in combat
Series premieres with harrowing two-part story of WWII's Bomber Command

Toronto, ON (October 29, 2012) This year Canadians commemorate Remembrance Week with a remarkable new television documentary series, **WAR STORY**, premiering on HISTORY Thursday, November 8 at 8 pm. **WAR STORY** is a landmark series, featuring the personal stories of Canadians in combat, told entirely by the men and women involved.

In **WAR STORY**, veterans bring their own experience to the screen in their own voices – no pundits, no narrator. The result is a series remarkable in its immediacy, its humanity and its candour. Using intimate and moving interviews, together with spectacular high definition archive film, **WAR STORY** to life the horror and heroism of battle and survival as never before.

Each episode of **WAR STORY** recounts an exciting and untold tale of a specific historical event or campaign. These stories include: a courageous, costly and controversial WWII bombing campaign over Germany; a guerilla campaign Jewish partisans fought against the Nazis in the forests of Poland; heroic soldiers slogging their way up Italy; exuberant Canadian women on the homefront forging the guns that won the war; and unsung airborne veterans jumping from planes into Germany, only to confront the Red Army.

“These witnesses are now at a time in their lives when they are willing to reveal what really happened, in all its horror, humanity and, sometimes, humour,” says **WAR STORY** Series Director/Co-Executive Producer Barry Stevens. “These are men and women who, often at a very young age, went through hell to fight for what they believed in. **WAR STORY** honours their sacrifices - and we hope viewers will, too.”

HISTORY will commemorate Remembrance Week by showcasing ten episodes of **WAR STORY** over the four day period leading up to and including Remembrance Day.

Thursday, November 8

8:00 pm – “Bomber Command: Hitting Back”

Canadian aircrews, German fighters, and survivors of strategic bombing reveal the true impact of civilian bombing. The Allied response to German bombing of British cities took a hellish toll on Germans on the ground and also on the Canadian airmen involved. Detailing one of the most controversial aspects of the war, Hitting Back tells the harrowing story of Bomber Command in the veteran’s own words.

8:30 pm - “Bomber Command: Getting Home”

Getting home was never easy for bomber crews: flying with Bomber Command was the most dangerous service in the Allied forces during the Second World War. Of the 125,000 men who served in bomber aircrew, 55,000 were killed, including nearly 10,000 Canadians. Getting Home continues the incredible story of Bomber Command begun in Hitting Back.

Friday, November 9

8:00 pm - “Kapyong: The Forgotten Battle”

One of the greatest small-unit battles in Canadian history took place during the Korean War, when Canada’s hugely outnumbered Princess Patricia’s repelled a massive Chinese onslaught to help save the Korean capital, Seoul. This little-known turning point in a largely forgotten war is told by the Canadian and Chinese veterans who fought each other over 60 years ago.

8:30 pm - “Bomb Girls Remember”

Hear the colourful personal stories of some of the Canadian ‘bomb girls’ who helped build the arsenal used by Allied forces to win WWII. Over 250,000 women from all across Canada left traditional jobs and hometowns and villages, to come to the big city and work in munitions factories, driven by a desire to help win the war through meaningful employment.

Saturday, November 10

8:00 pm – “Sicily - The First Campaign”

Canadian veterans from the Italian Campaign tell vivid stories about this baptism by fire. The first full-scale military campaign by Canadian soldiers in WWII started with the largest seaborne invasion in history, on July 9 and 10, 1943. Allied forces attacked Axis territory via Sicily, hoping to knock Italy out of the war and attack Germany from the south.

8:30 pm - “Ortona - The War Inside”

The story of Ortona, one of the fiercest, most vicious battles of WWII’s Italian Campaign, is remembered by the Canadian soldiers who experienced this horrific combat. Inexperienced Canadian infantry were pitted against the Nazi’s toughest, battle-hardened paratroopers, with the Canadians fighting for ground street by street, house by house, grenade by grenade.

10:30 pm – “The Road to Rome”

In The Road to Rome, Canadian WWII tank veterans share their incredible experiences fighting the Nazis in the Italian Campaign, the victories and horrors of armoured combat, and their pivotal role in the success of the campaign.

Sunday, November 11

8:00 pm - “Out of the Clouds - Paras in Normandy”

Canadian paratroopers were among the first to be dropped behind enemy lines on the night before D-Day. Surrounded by the enemy and taking heavy casualties, they successfully held the eastern flank of the invasion, ensuring the Germans could not break through to counter-attack the Allied landing beaches.

8:30 pm - “Across the Rhine - Paras in Germany”

Across the Rhine relates the personal stories of Canadian paratroopers who fought in Belgium and The Netherlands in winter 1945 and became the only Canadian unit to fight in the Battle of the Bulge – thus preparing for the final push into Germany itself.

10:30 pm - "Vengeance"

Vengeance features the personal experiences of Jewish partisans, both men & women, who managed to escape extermination in death camps by joining 30,000 Jews in an underground resistance army fighting the Nazis. Four partisans tell their incredible stories of losing everything and fighting back.

Toronto-based documentary filmmaker and screenwriter Barry Stevens is the series director and co-executive producer of **WAR STORY**. Barry began his career writing TV dramas, winning his first Gemini Award for *The Diary of Evelyn Lau*. He then switched to documentaries, as a writer on the International Emmy®-winning documentary, *Gerrie and Louise*. His personal documentary *Offspring*, about his search for his sperm donor, was seen in 61 countries, won the Donald Brittain Award, was nominated for an Emmy® Award, and influenced public policy on sperm donation in the UK and elsewhere. His other feature doc credits include *Bio-Dad*, *The Bomber's Dream* and, more recently, *Prosecutor*, a behind-the-scenes look at the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

WAR STORY boasts one of the best teams of documentary filmmakers in Canada. In addition to Stevens and co-executive producer David York, the group includes multiple award-winning editors Nick Hector and David Kazala, veteran story producer Alan Mendelsohn and composer David Wall. Directors of Photography are Michael Boland, Andrew Sims and Michael Grippo; Line producer is Bryn Hughes. Executives in charge of production for Shaw Media are Nick Crowe and Andrew Johnson.

WAR STORY is produced by War Torn Productions Inc. in association with Shaw Media and with the participation of the Canadian Media Fund (CMF), the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit and the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit.

WAR STORY was produced with the assistance of the highly-respected Historica-Dominion Institute, whose Memory Project has recorded the wartime experiences of thousands of World War II and Korean War veterans.

The series companion website, www.warstory.ca, was produced by Secret Location, Inc., with the participation of Shaw Media and the Bell Fund.

War Torn Productions Inc. is a collaboration of filmmaker Barry Stevens and 52 Media Inc., a television company based in Toronto, Canada. Formed in 2006 by David York, 52 Media's first show in production was *First Comes Love*, starring comedienne Elvira Kurt and produced with

Paperny Films for LOGO. Since then, the company has produced *Stuck*, a 26 x ½ hour docusoap for W Network, and *Air India 182*, a two hour docu-drama on the Air India disaster for CBC that had its World Premiere on the opening night of Hot Docs in April 2008. In 2010, 52 Media, in co-production with the National Film Board, produced the feature documentary *Wiebo's War*. Directed by David York, the film had its world premiere at Hot Docs, then went on to screen at festivals around the world, and was released in Canadian theatres in 2011. It was nominated for a Genie Award as Best Feature Length Documentary. www.52media.ca

For full media access to **WAR STORY** high resolution images:
shawmediatv.ca

For interview requests, screeners, etc., please contact:

Jeremy Katz

Publicist – **WAR STORY**

O: 416-656-6970

C: 416-997-6970

E: jeremyk@sympatico.ca