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TATTOOED UNDER FIRE
REVEALS THE HEARTBREAKING PSYCHOLOGICAL CASUALTIES OF WAR ON
IRAQ-BOUND AND RETURNING SOLDIERS THROUGH THE ART OF TATTOOING,
A MILITARY RITUAL

To Premiere on Public Television Beginning November 8, 2009 at 11 PM

(Killeen, TX)— In the heart of central Texas lies the city of Killeen—home to Fort Hood, America's largest military base. Across the street is River City Tattoo Parlor, a place where many of the war-bound and returning soldiers go under the needle. An estimated 95 percent of the U.S. military sport tattoos. For those joining the ranks at Ford Hood, a pilgrimage to the River City Tattoo Parlor is an essential rite of passage.

TATTOOED UNDER FIRE, directed by Nancy Schiesari, centers on the military ritual of getting inked, interweaving the personal stories of six central characters—and their relationships to the war in Iraq—with the visual expressions of their tattoos. The film is an intimate, character-driven portrait of Iraq-bound and returning U.S. soldiers, professing their pride, sharing their secrets and confessing their fears as they go under the tattoo needle. What emerges is an evocative, poignant and highly personal look at the human and cultural cost of war. **TATTOOED UNDER FIRE** will premiere on public television nationwide beginning November 8, 2009 (check local listings).

River City Tattoo Parlor owner/artist Roxanne Willis and her team of tattoo artists welcome young men and women daily: as they arrive, shed their uniforms and carve permanence into their transitory flesh. Some seek to adorn their limbs, make a statement, ward off evil with fierce engravings or honor a loved one. Some seek grizzlier images, like “meat tags.” A play on traditional dog tags, “meat tags” are a morbid marker of name, DOB and serial number, designed for posthumous identification. Tattooed just under the armpit on the torso, they are strategically located in the place most likely to remain intact in the event of death by IED explosion. The young men and women are introduced as they are being tattooed; raw recruits at first and then as returning soldiers, changed in ways only their fellow soldiers can grasp. Through the creative and sometimes subversive act of tattooing, these young soldiers use skin to create personalized images and words that reveal a seldom seen part of the psyche of the American soldier.

TATTOOED UNDER FIRE is a co-production of the Independent Television Service (ITVS) in association with KLRU-TV, AUSTIN PBS. The national television premiere will be broadcast on public television in more than 25 cities.

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ABOUT THE PRODUCTION CREW

Nancy Schiesari (Producer/Director)

Nancy Schiesari has directed, produced and been a cinematographer on both broadcast documentaries and narrative features for over 20 years. She produced and directed *Hansel Mieth: Vagabond Photographer*, a full-length documentary that premiered on PBS Independent Lens. Her other works as director include *History Man, a Portrait of Martin Scorsese*, for the BBC, and *Green Flutes*, a feature documentary for the UK's Channel 4. Nancy has experience as a director of photography on over 30 documentaries and feature films broadcast for [Channel 4 is the BBC; this should be removed] BBC, ABC, National Geographic and PBS. She was nominated for a 2002 Television Emmy for outstanding cinematography on *The Human Face* (a project produced by John Cleese). Among her work as cinematographer is Ken Mc Mullen's 35mm Channel 4 feature film, *Partition*, Bennie Klain's PBS documentary, *Weaving Worlds: How the West was Spun* and Pratibha Parmar's and Alice Walker's *Warrior Marks* for BBC's Channel 4. She has an MFA from the Royal College of Art in London and is a professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where she teaches Filmmaking and Cinematography.

Christina Kim (Editor)

TATTOOED UNDER FIRE is editor Christina Kim's first feature documentary. She spent two years on the project, collaborating with Nancy through many stages of post production. Christina is an Austin-based filmmaker who graduated with a B.S. in radio,-television and film from the University of Texas in 2006, and she also worked on independent documentaries— *Snakebit* and *Location Location*—as an assistant editor. Christina's own film, *Dreams in All Sizes*, screened at the Austin Asian Film Festival and is scheduled to air on the Documentary Channel in 2009. Her previous short, *For Me and Him*, screened at the Dallas Video Festival and aired on *SXSW Presents* on Austin's PBS station, KLRU in 2005. Christina is currently pursuing an MFA in film at UCLA.

Alison Rooper (Executive Producer)

Executive producer Alison Rooper cut her teeth at Granada TV on history and documentary series. After joining the BBC, she series produced and edited a number of flagship shows on current affairs and science, along with various documentaries, such as the award winning *War Feels Like War* (special mention at Hotdocs 2004) and *The Headmaster and the Headscarves*. Rooper's recently directed documentary for the BBC, *Doping for Gold*, aired on PBS *Secrets of the Dead* in may 2008.

Laura Sobel (Co-Producer)

Laura Sobel has produced and written for PBS, A&E, Biography and VH1/MTV Networks. She produced, directed and wrote *Cereal: History in a Bowl*, a pop-culture pilot for The History Channel that was subsequently extended to a 13-part series. As a development writer, her credits include film treatments and series proposals for PBS, HBO, National Geographic, Bravo, Discovery-Times Television, HGTV, Outdoor Life Network and the Weather Channel. She has also taught documentary filmmaking workshops at DCTV in New York and at The Mobile Film School in Austin.

Carol Geiger (Associate Producer)

Carol Geiger has been involved with the non-profit sector in various capacities since the seventies. While her educational background was in molecular biology, her desire to work for the greater good has directed her career path. She has been involved with organizations that provide health care services for the uninsured, offer legal services for victims of domestic violence and advocate for health and human services issues, such as clean air in Texas.

ABOUT KLRU-TV, AUSTIN PBS

KLRU-TV, Austin PBS, reflects, celebrates and inspires Central Texas through creative excellence, community engagement and lifelong learning. In addition to providing locally produced and quality national television programming, KLRU is also a non-profit organization helping to build a stronger community through educational workshops, community engagement projects and public events. Known as the producing station for the longest running live music television show, *Austin City Limits*, KLRU has also worked on several other national productions including the documentaries *Last Best Hope* and *Lady Bird*. Get more information about KLRU at **klru.org**.

ABOUT ITVS

The Independent Television Service funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the Emmy® Award-winning weekly series Independent Lens, which airs Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since ITVS's inception in 1991, its programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing television audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. ITVS is funded by the CPB, a private corporation funded by the American people. For more information about ITVS, visit **itvs.org**.

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