

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Movie Project Honors Those Who Serve America** *AVI, DaytonDefense, and Cox Radio Spearhead Unique Fourth of July Tribute*

DAYTON – When the American Veterans Institute (AVI), based in Tipp City, put out a call for help with a sizeable military project, it wasn't the cavalry who rode to the rescue, but it was the next best thing. *DaytonDefense* – formerly the Dayton Area Defense Contractors Association – answered AVI's call for support of an exciting movie premiere honoring local GIs, reservists, and veterans. Once on board, *DaytonDefense* enlisted additional help from WHIO Radio, which agreed to donate promotional support for the project. As a result, the powerful film *Brothers At War* will be shown in the Miami Valley starting July 3, thanks to the unified efforts of these patriotic organizations.

This unique initiative began when Mike Jackson, Lt Col, USAF (Ret.) heard actor Gary Sinise discussing the film which Sinise co-produced. In the movie, actor/filmmaker Jake Rademacher sets out to understand the experiences, sacrifice, and motivation of his two brothers serving in Iraq. The movie follows Jake's exploits as he risks everything – including his life – to tell his brothers' story and to paint an realistic picture of our men and women in uniform. Jackson, who co-founded AVI, thought the film needed to be shown in Dayton as a tribute to local GIs.

“Because the movie is a documentary, it doesn't have the promotional budget of your typical theatrical film, so we needed to pre-sell 1,000 tickets. But we didn't want to *just* pre-sell the tickets, we wanted to donate them to the very people this film honors...our men and women in uniform. As a small non-profit, we pour every cent into programming, so we needed help with the ticket sales. Enter *DaytonDefense*, which stepped right up to the plate, purchasing the first 1,000 tickets that will go to our active duty, reservists, veterans, and their families,” Jackson said. “*DaytonDefense* has taken a true leadership role and we hope other companies and organizations will follow suit on this project. As we celebrate our freedom on the July 4<sup>th</sup> we want people to really think about why we still have that freedom 230 years later.”

*Brothers At War* will premiere at the Huber Heights Showcase Cinemas on July 3 and will run for as long as ticket sales support it. Also on July 3 at the cinema complex, AVI will host a red carpet reception for GIs, base personnel, sponsors and donors, and local dignitaries. AVI officials are hoping the region will dedicate the entire month of July to honoring area troops and veterans for their service and sacrifice.

“There's no better time than the Fourth of July to connect our freedom to those who defend it,” said AVI co-founder Tara Dixon Engel. “Thanks to *DaytonDefense* and Cox Radio, we have free tickets for our troops and promotional support. National Amusements has graciously donated our reception venue and we are very pleased that producer David Scantling will be our special guest at the reception. The Berry Foundation has jumped on board with a donation, as has Roger Thomas of Tipp City and Jim Coffman of Riverside. All of these great people and companies will allow us to truly 'roll out the red carpet' for our GIs. We are seeking participation by anyone who wants to help us say those words that every GI longs to hear...*thank you and welcome home.*”

In fact, Tipp City's Roger Thomas, a former member of the famed 101st Airborne Division, donated \$1,000 to the project and issued a call for fellow airborne veterans to meet or beat his \$1,000 challenge. He also injected a little “inter-service rivalry” by stating... “I KNOW we can exceed anything done by

those Marines you see all around. We'll see who has the most 'semper fi' in the Miami Valley! Let's get a little rivalry going! The American Veterans Institute and DaytonDefense are great local organizations and this film sounds like a meaningful tribute to the men and women who are risking their lives in the name of freedom. We veterans need to stand up to honor them!"

The newest company to step forward and support the project is Bob Evans Restaurants. Bob Evans will be catering the July 3 red carpet reception and also made a \$2,500 donation to the project. AVI officials are working with Area Managers Tony Wenclewicz and Don Adams to coordinate involvement of all the regional Bob Evans Restaurants. *DaytonDefense* and AVI are coordinating with WPAFB officials to distribute movie tickets to as many local GIs as possible. Advance tickets for the film will be available to the general public, starting in mid June on the *DaytonDefense* web site. In addition to underwriting the tickets for our troops, *DaytonDefense* will pre-sell an additional 1,000 tickets at \$20 each via their web site, [www.DaytonDefense.org](http://www.DaytonDefense.org). The cost of each ticket will cover the ticket itself, *one free admission for an active-duty GI*, plus \$2 to the *DaytonDefense* scholarship fund, which provides Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) scholarships to Wright State University, Sinclair Community College, and Clark State Community College. The fund underwrote \$20,000 in scholarships last year and will hit \$25,000 this year. Those who purchase advance tickets will receive a certificate of appreciation for supporting our troops. For more information on the July 3 reception and sponsorship opportunities, go to [www.AmericanVeteransInstitute.org](http://www.AmericanVeteransInstitute.org) or call AVI at 937.669.2040. To view clips and film promotions, go to [www.Brothersatwarmovie.com](http://www.Brothersatwarmovie.com).

"We encourage everyone to go to our website, and purchase their tickets – not only will you see a powerful film, but you will treat a deserving GI, and support our vital scholarship program. There aren't many better ways to spend \$20, especially as we observe our Independence on July 4," said Deborah Gross, president of *DaytonDefense*.

The director of *Brothers At War*, Jake Rademacher, has been moved by the response from the Miami Valley. "Col Jackson, AVI, and *DaytonDefense* are dedicated to rallying support for 'Brothers' and using it to honor veterans and active duty personnel in the Dayton region," Rademacher said. "There are much larger markets that don't have a kick-off this impressive, and everyone tells me that Dayton will double or triple those ticket sales before the July premiere. Based on what I've seen so far, I wouldn't be surprised. This kind of passion for our troops is something very special."

For Mike Jackson especially, *Brothers At War* is a bittersweet reminder of another war and another time. "I am so proud of Jake for going against the 'Hollywood grain' to make a movie that tells the true story of the service and sacrifice of our troops. The reason we founded AVI and Operation Welcome Home was to make sure that America never again blames its men and women in uniform for an unpopular war," explained the disabled veteran, who flew 210 combat missions in Vietnam, was wounded in combat, and has waged a decades-long personal battle to gain recognition and gratitude for his generation of soldiers. "By telling the story of his two brothers in Iraq, Jake is telling the story of every GI who has ever served...their struggles, triumphs, and sacrifices. There's nothing pretty or romantic about war; no one gets out unscathed, but it is a necessary evil and we need to honor those who are willing to fight to preserve our way of life...sometimes giving up their own lives in the process."

AVI is a grassroots non-profit that helps elderly and disabled veterans secure the VA Improved Pension through Project VetAssist ([www.VetAssist.org](http://www.VetAssist.org)). AVI also helps communities develop and implement veterans' celebrations and memorials, and is partnering with Ohio University to develop a national K-12 curriculum that energizes young people toward American history, language arts, leadership, science and technology, through the stories of individual veterans. The organization is also working to establish the

American Veterans Hall of Honor and the American Veterans Research Library. *DaytonDefense* is a not-for-profit, Industry Association established in 1995 with the purpose of serving as a focal point for research, development, acquisition, and supporting new, developing, and fielded aeronautical, aerospace, and information systems. The organization promotes regional economic activity among local defense contractors and Wright Patterson Air Force Base in addition to serving the Dayton-area community in partnership with other organizations seeking to improve the defense industrial base.