

Borne the Battle

Episode # 131

Ozzy Ramirez—Army Veteran, Actor

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/55820/ozzy-ramirez-army-veteran-actor/>

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE:

Timothy Lawson (TL): Wednesday January 23, 2019, this is *Borne the Battle* brought to you by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. I am your host, Marine Corps Veteran Timothy Lawson. Hope everybody got an opportunity to view the town hall that aired last Thursday. The secretary provided some remarks on his priorities at V.A. and answered some questions from the prior town hall, and then a number of officials and V.A. leaders in each administration- NCA, VBA, VHA- sat down and provided information and insight on what their administration is doing moving forward and how we can better serve Veterans. You can find that video in its entirety at our YouTube page, just search [DeptVetAffairs](#) [Link to VA's YouTube channel]. That is our username, our handle, if you will, on Youtube and you'll find the video there. This week is the last week in the commemoration, the anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. January 25 is the date in which the Bulge ended. That is two days from now, Friday. Our video team has been producing short videos featuring World War II Veteran Harry F. Miller on his experiences during the Battle of the Bulge. You can find them on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/VeteransAffairs](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs) [Link to VA's Facebook page]. If you go to videos, you will be a playlist titled "Harry F. Miller Recalls Battle of the Bulge." There are currently four videos there now that have been released starting December 15th, and they're released about once every week and a half or so. And the fifth and final video will be posted on Friday, so go catch up on those great videos. Harry's insight and his experience is unique and very valuable for us to remember and ponder as we continue honoring our nation's Veterans, especially those that served in World War II. This week's interview is with Army Veteran Ozzy Ramirez. Ozzy is currently pursuing a career in acting down in Hollywood, but before he started pursuing the silver screen, he served in our United States' Army. When he was 17 years old, he got his parents to sign a waiver so he could enlist. He wanted to be able to provide for his family. During his service in the Army, he was able to get

full citizenship, after enlisting on a green-card. Ozzy is gonna share with us his experience in enlisting, a great friend he had in the military, his transition out, and then his pursuit of acting, enjoy.

[00:03:02] Music

[00:03:12] PSA:

Man 1: I served in Vietnam.

Man 2: I served in World War II.

Woman: I served in Afghanistan.

Man 1: And, V.A. serves us all.

Man 2: No matter when you served.

Woman: No matter if you saw combat or not.

Man 1: There are benefits for Veterans of every generation.

Woman: See what V.A. can do for you.

Narrator: To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit www.va.gov. That's www.va.gov.

[00:03:34] Music

[00:03:39] INTERVIEW:

(TL): Alright, wonderful. Uh. . . I'm guessing-- you go by Ozzy, right? Is that how—

Ozzy Ramirez (OR): Yeah.

(TL): Yeah, okay. Ozzy Ramirez, Army Veteran, actor out there in L.A. Sir, thank you so much for joining me.

(OR): Thank you so much for having me.

(TL): Ozzy, I just noticed that we have a mutual friend in Mr. Solace, Hector Solace.

(OR): Ohhh, okay.

(TL): Yeah, yeah. That uh... Hector and I served in Moscow together while we were out there, so.

(OR): Ohhh, man, alright, I'm gonna have to bring that up. (Laughter)

(TL): Yeah—

(OR): (Laughter)

(TL): It's always fun seeing the connections, you know? The Veteran community is smaller than we think sometimes, you know?

(OR): Yeah that's what we do. And then, all of a sudden, the world is, uh... Once we leave, we always reconnect some weird way. I'm like, we all go into different fields but then we pop out again. (Laughter)

(TL): Exactly. Ozzy, we're gonna start where we start all these interviews, and that is your decision to join the United States' military. Bring us back to that day for you.

(OR): Aww, man. I was in high school at the time. I joined in 2002 out of high school, so I had to have my parents sign the waiver for me to go into the military already while I was still a senior in high school, so... The decision to make that was I saw in 2001 when the towers fell. I was in my classroom as a senior watching this, getting ready for school-- 'cause I would always put the news on-- and then watching that happen live. I thought it was a movie. I thought something was going on, so I didn't think nothing of it, and then I get to school, and it's the real deal. Everybody is stuck on their TV's, watching that and just seeing that replay over and over of what's going on. Very uh... Impacted me and also a lot of people around me, and, like, decided to join, also, on, like, after that incident. So. . . that was a big push for me to join, and at the same time, before that was gonna happen, I had already had it in my head to join the military just to help 'cause my father left my family at 16, so I became the man of the house at 16 years old, so...

(TL): Oh wow.

(OR): Yeah. So I was, uh... I'm the oldest of four boys. So I got three younger brothers and one of my brothers, the next one down from me, is disabled since birth. So he has seizures. He has a lot of complications when he was growing up just 'cause his body progresses a lot slower than everybody else's. So... Me thinking ahead, thinking about college, thinking about my future, I was like, "The military would be best. I can learn something, I'll have money for school, and then also I can provide for my mom and my brothers, some financial assistance 'cause we get a cot and three meals." So I was like, "Hey, I'm good." I'm like--

(TL): (Laughter)

(OR): (Laughter) I was like trying to sell it like that to my mom. I was like, "Hey, they're gonna feed me. So you don't have to worry about that expense, and then I'll have some money to be able to kick down and be able to help you guys."

(TL): Yeah.

(OR): So, yeah. My mom signed the waiver 'cause I told her if she doesn't do it now, I'm gonna do it in ten months when I turn 18. So she signed the waiver so I could get time and grade already, and that was it. I was off once I graduated. Boot camp was just a month away. I went August 5. I was alrea- I hit... At Fort Knox, Kentucky is where I did my A.I.T. and Basic Training, for a scout, 19 Delta.

(TL): Okay. Oh, scout! Okay.

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): Yeah. How um. . . What did you...? What drew you to that during enlistment?

(OR): Man, uh... A thing, uh... I scored high on the ASVAB to be able to pick any job but for my current situation; I wasn't a citizen. I just had a green-card 'cause I came over from Mexico, my family did.

(TL): Yeah.

(OR): Yeah, so we didn't have our papers at all, our citizenship. So trying to get those jobs-- I was going for satellite communication, actually-- and because I couldn't get clearance 'cause I wasn't a citizen yet, they gave me that first sheet of what the Army needs.

(OR) and (TL): (Laughter)

(OR): So . . . yeah. I'm like... I went. They had the cook, artillery, infantry, all the basics that they always are open. And they had scout in there, and they threw on a VHS tape 'cause (Laughter) there was no DVDs. And, yeah, the job seemed interesting, and then at the same time I was like, "Well if I didn't get the job that I really wanted, which was going into satellites, learning about that, well then I got to be a real soldier. I gotta learn how to blow up things and be a real G.I." (Laughter)

(TL): That's right.

(OR): So, they sold me on the video and that was it. I saw them going on dune buggies and motorcycles, and they were all looking like having a great time going through the desert. Yeah, I never got my dune buggy or my motorcycle I was in, so...

(OR) and (TL): (Laughter)

(OR): They lied.

(TL): So, tell me about a great friend, or tell me about a close friend, or a great leader you had while you were in.

(OR): Man, I still got a grea—I'm still great friends with my sergeant, my one-after-- I did my second duty station-- named Victor Orta, Sergeant Victor Orta. He very-- he took me under his wing. I was still an E-3 at the time, and he really took a lot of guys under his wing to really school us on learning the rules, learning the Geneva Convention, learning all about, on our off-time, the 'do's', the 'can's', and the 'can-not's' of enlisted and officers. So, he really just mentored us on getting more knowledge and not just taking whatever any sergeant or anybody higher up, uh, with the, that it is true. I'm like... They-- sometimes they'd be lying and they don't know the accurate information, so they're like, they just kinda told us to just get more knowledge to be able to protect ourselves more, um, like, from other platoons or other people that're just trying to mess with you.

(TL): Yeah. Well--

(OR): Yeah, he was a great guy and I'm like, I'm still friends with him. Now, he lives in Santa Barbra, he works for the federal government, still. And, yeah, we're still close friends. We still hang out every chance we get.

(TL): So what, what was the process, then, of. . . So you said when you enlisted you still only had a green-card. What was the process, then, of getting your citizenship? Did that happen early on in your career? Did you have to serve a certain number of time? Like, how'd that work?

(OR): From there, I didn't even know until I got shipped over to South Korea after my basic training. I got-- my first duty station was at Camp Gary Owen on the DMZ in South Korea. So from there, I was gonna put paper work in once I found out how things were going. But at the same time, the people out there never did know. . . Nobody in Korea did ever unpack it like that to have service members get their citizenship, so they really didn't know what to do to be able to go through that process. So what they advised me was, "Once you leave this place and you go into your new duty station back in the States," they're like, "then, try to put in your paper work then to get it approved, so then you can get your citizenship." So, I was in a good year and a half before I came back to the States, and then I put in my paperwork in through S1 and, yeah, they uh. . . I got it less than a month. I would say two months, I was already going, getting my finger prints. Every time I would go to a federal building, my packet would just get pushed up to the top 'cause I would go in my military uniform,--

(TL): Sure.

(OR): --like they told me to do, and they're like I got V.I.P. service. So the process was way faster compared to the civilian side. Like, my mom who has been waiting for, like, ten plus years, still waiting to get that approval to become a citizen. So once I got it, I got hers right after in literally two months. So the process for me going to it in three months was me and my mom were finally citizens of here.

(TL): Yeah, very cool.

(OR): Mhmm.

(TL): What were your years of service?

(OR): 2001 to 2006.

(TL): Okay. Did you deploy? Um.. Did you like...?

(OR): Uh, I deployed just to the DMZ. After that, I got stuck at Fort Irwin in Cali, in Barstow, just training.

(TL): Yeah.

(OR): I'm like, we were just nonstop out in that desert training everybody for Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq, man, everywhere. We were nonstop just getting through, going through rotations of just every unit that you could think of was coming through us. So, we were just stuck there just getting everybody prepared. So, that was our deployment, just getting everybody ready for that desert life that they were about to get over there and get them as ready as possible. Um, like, 'cause our unit was just doing all blue fort training just nonstop, no days off. (Laughter)

(TL): Yeah.

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): So what prompted your transition out, then?

(OR): Umm... Man, it just uh... Things, I'm like, just. . . I felt already I just needed something different. I felt that I didn't want to keep doing the same. Well, I knew if I stayed in as a scout then I was like, it's just gonna, and how the war was seen and everything, I was like, "I'ma be a desert rat, forever." (Laughter) I'm like, and I felt like I could do something else, that I had other skills that I needed to go search out, or other passions. I'm like, I wanted to become a soldier and do my part and I did that, and I did it to the fullest. So, I wanted to do another part of that and go see how that would trans-- how I'm gonna transition into that new field and then help out other guys in a different way 'cause I knew a lot of guys going in that I joined at the same time from basic training. Half of us stayed in; half of us got out. I'm like, and it was just 'cause—it just kept getting worse, and especially for combat MOSs. I just kept getting the worse and worse duty stations, just the type of heavy load of things that we had to do. I was like, man, this is just... And now I'm feeling it, my body feels it now. (Laughter).

(TL): Yeah, I can imagine.

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): Are you, um, I mean, are you...? Where do you get your healthcare from? Do you go to V.A. for healthcare?

(OR): Yeah, I go to the V.A., man. I'm like, it's a system that needs a lot of help. We need to get a lot more Veterans in these power positions at that place to really be able to have a good say-so because they've gone through it. And they know the type of medical attention that we need, females and males, that are coming out because sometimes these people haven't served at all and are in these positions. They don't understand that we do need help. We're not warriors all the time; we cry, we feel, so they need to understand that.

(TL): Yeah, yeah absolutely. So what-- when you got out did you go right back to southern California when you got out?

(OR): Ah, yes. I'm like, I was just down the street. I'm like, from Barstow I was only a couple hours away from my hometown in Riverside, California. So, I moved back in with my mom for a couple months 'til I got settled in, figured out what was my next move in life, and I just jumped around from uh--just doing from college to college, trying to do just my generals, 'cause I still didn't know exactly what I wanted to do, and then I started doing construction. I was an assistant superintendent for a plastering company 'cause growing up I did a lot of construction 'cause that was the trade my father did coming over here to the States 'cause that's the only thing they would hire you for, so that's where he really—I learned that trade from him and learning all about that. So, I did that for a while until the housing market crashed in 2008 and I got the boot because I was the youngest guy. So, finally from that I was like, "Okay, I really gotta-- I never liked construction growing up; I don't know why I'm in it now." I'm like, "I need to get into something that I like doing." So, I went to go apply to go become a physician assistant over here in Ontario with an accelerated program. But the bad thing: I hadn't done math for so long that I failed. I passed everything but the math portions of their tests, so until you, I'm like, once I failed twice on this, the math portion again, they were like, "You can't. You have to wait until a year until the next rotation of students come in for this program, and if you pass, then you jump in with them." And I'm like, "I can't wait a year; that's too long." So, that fired something under me to just jump into the acting world, the entertainment world, and just go in head first. Never took no acting classes, never did anything in theatre before in my life, so I was like, "I'm either gonna sink or swim. So, let me go out here, find a school in L.A. that accepts the G.I. Bill, and really start immersing myself into this new field, and see if this is really what I

want to do and I want to pursue.” So, yeah, that, and I guess, yeah, that went over and I did it and it’s been a struggle, it’s been hard, but I’m just staying going forward, little by little, gaining a little progress and it’s working out.

(TL): Yeah, absolutely. So, then, you’re acting, right?

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): You’re like... How did-- Like um. . . You talked about sort of your progression and work after the military. Were you interested in acting through that whole endeavor, or did something inspire you?

(OR): Uh, well, yeah, you know, I’m like, we always... I’m like watching movies all the time on our downtime, especially when you’re in these, on base, or certain places, or out in the field. If you took your little portable DVD, everybody is always watching films. I’m like, that is how we spent our past time when we had a little time. So I’m like in growing up, I always was intrigued with TV and film and just the whole aspects of just seeing people getting the opportunity to try new things to play a doctor, to be a racecar driver, to be, um, like a scientist. And, um, like and getting paid for to learn these different things so then you can portray that character well. So that always fascinated me about not doing the same thing every day that you always get to play-- be something else, be a different profession for a little bit. I’m like, I always liked that about it. So I just jumped into it without no knowledge, and then I soon found out that it takes a lot. There’s a lot of things that the regular people don’t know that it entails to really learn this craft.

(TL): Yeah, I mean, so what was something—give us an example of something that, um, that sorta took you by surprise on what it took to be an actor, to be a part of that industry.

(OR): Um, like, just opening up. Um, like, on the first three... Um, like, during the process of me getting my Bachelor’s degree, um like, and taking all these classes from film history, I’m like just... You always see the finished product. And, I’m like, I didn’t know that there were so many behind the scenes, like, especially set etiquette. How... Hitting your mark, looking at camera, which side of camera to look on. I’m like, all these different acronyms and things that we learned in the military, there is also inside the film industry. And when you’re on set and working, which guys are doing what jobs, what wires not to step on. I

didn't know it was all that. I thought it was they put a camera to your face, and you just say some words, and that's it. I'm like--

(OR) and (TL): (Laughter)

(OR): That's what I expected. I was like, man, if that guy can do it, and I did all this crazy stuff in the military, I can do this. I'm like, "This ain't that hard." (Laughter) Yeah, I was very surprised on, like, on all the knowledge that you need to have to be not 'green' anymore and actually be a professional when you walk on set. And people notice that from someone not knowing anything to actually knowing what you're doing, and how do you present yourself on that set. So, yeah, that was an eye opener, and just the memorization of lines. I'm like, that you gotta learn a lot of pages of dialogue that I was never accustomed to remember word by word, and I had to get used to that. I had to get that muscle in my brain to work it out every day to be able to get a script, work on it for a little bit, and be able to retain all that information, and be able to share it back with my fellow actor with the same emotion and everything. I need to do with the walking, and where to look at, to be able to give the perfect performance to the director. So, there's a lot of moving parts that actors need to do that people are not aware of. We're multitasking just like I did in the military, so I was like, "Okay. This is just like the military, just different." (Laughter)

(TL): Yeah. I noticed from your acting resume you've done some film, some television, you've done theatre, you do some stunts and whatnot. Which one of those do you find yourself enjoying the most?

(OR): I love the acting, man. The acting was what I came out here to do and then all these other things started popping up once I started learning more about it, but acting is my first, is my number one passion. I love playing different characters, trying different things. It's just a good to explore and then you just get into. . . You really start noticing and going back into certain events of your life to really understand the character on the page to be able to relate and not criticize on what they're doing. I'm like, just to see, try to find the humanity in them. They know they're not, they feel like they're not wrong, so I gotta go in there, not judging and be-- he feels like he's right, so I gotta play, I gotta find out how we connect and why he's really doing what he's doing in this movie, even though in my personal opinion, I don't agree. My person-- but the character thinks it's not wrong, so I can't judge. So—

(TL): Right.

(OR): That is what I really like. And acting helped me just deal with, deal with the PTSD, deal with all that emotional things that we have coming out because, like, you know, while we're in, nobody helps us with our emotions. We just kinda just shove that down into a little box and we just keep locking it away and keep just shoving more and more of our emotions 'cause its mission first. And this art really opened me up to talk about my past experience with the military, my family experience, all the things that were really weighing me down. They helped me loosen it up and talk about it, and then the weight just got less and less, day by day, um, like-- with the help of these acting teachers-- of opening me up and just working these different characters 'cause I would relate with different parts of my life. And that really helped me out, cope with a lot of things, and come to terms with things, and just let it go, and be more happy and be more grateful that I'm here and trying to do the best that I can. So, I'm grateful for that.

(TL): Yeah that's amazing. What, uh, I know that you are a part of Veterans in Media and Entertainment—

(OR): Mhmm.

(TL): --at least I see you on their site. That's a big movement that happened, about—I think I want to say, about ten years ago, almost.

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): Yeah. As a lot of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans were coming back, and wanted to get into the entertainment industry, I know that they stood this up and it's become a really powerful network for Veterans in Hollywood and in the entertainment business, in general. How did you get connected with them, and how has it benefited you?

(OR): Um, like, uh, yeah. It was a good thing to get with a couple other Vets. Some of the original founding members like Mike, Mike Dowling, and Kyle Stokes that founded it at the beginning are going... One was an actor and one was a film maker, and they were going through the same struggles of ex-military. Coming out, trying to figure out, navigate these waters of L.A. and Hollywood and the entertainment industry, and not having any support from anywhere, or support that actually could understand you and understand how we talk and how we interact with each other. So, they helped us kind of piggy-back off ideas, be able to uh, them open up different doors to be able to go audition for certain things. I'm like also connecting with other people that are not pursuing

just the acting: the writing, the directing, the producing, and, like, voice-over work. So, a lot of guys coming out also wanted to do—we got some guys doing great special effects work, like editing. So being able to go meet other fellow Vets that are great in these other fields, um like, it's a lot easier to be able to communicate and get your ideas across. Um like, and we understand each other. Instead of talking to a civilian trying to get something across, it takes a lot longer than trying to get it across to a fellow Veteran that knows that field. He gets it with a word or a sentence, that's all you gotta say. And he's like, "Okay, no, I got you. Let's keep moving forward." So, it really helped out to give each other, give us all of us emotional support, 'cause it's a rough business out here. There's a lot of 'no's' and a lot of doors shut in your face, so when one of us gets a win, I'm like, it's good to have a team behind you, giving you a thumbs up, a pat on the back and congratulations because we know how hard it is. So, we all support each other to keep moving forward, with whatever field you're in, in the entertainment industry. So, VME has helped a lot of guys stay in the fight. I'm like, 'cause without them, a lot of guys have quit, so it's good for a lot of guys to join that, to know that there's other people that have been doing it for one year, some people for 15 years. There's all types of different time frames, but we're all here to be able to give you some great guidance and be able to just help you out. Um like, more than we did when we came out here. I'm like, there's way more knowledge to be shared for the new people coming out. So, the path can be a little bit easier than what we went through.

(TL): Yeah, now, I saw that recently at the G.I. film festival—

(OR): Mhmm.

(TL): --A short that you were in, *Let it Go*, won best film.

(OR): Yes it did, and I'm like--

(TL): Yeah.

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): Tell us about that project.

(OR): Aww, man. This producer, uh, Stephanie Helm, director Stephanie Helm, wanted to give back 'cause she's not a Vet— a military, herself, but her family is, her grandfather, other relatives. So, she wanted to

throw a story back and give something back to the community. So I auditioned for this role, um like-- through the VME it came up-- and I went and auditioned for one of the parts. I happily got it. Another VME member, Leafy, played my other lead female Marine.

(TL): Oh, Leafy Kim.

(OR): Yeah, Leafy Kim, yeah. She--

(TL): Yeah, yeah. We know her.

(OR): She played my female lead and, um like, she got best actress for the short. So we got the best film of the festival, best film, best Veteran film, and we got the best actress, um like, film. I got nominated for best actor, but another guy got it 'cause he had a great comedy short that he did. So, I couldn't get mad. He had me laughing so, I'm like, I tip my hat off to him. But our film, *Let it Go*, is just about Marine loss. How we deal with it, especially if you have a significant other that is in the military and they pass away. How do we cope with that? How would I tell my significant other to let it go, don't dwell on the universe and what happened, to just keep moving forward and just try to be the best that you can. I'm like, 'cause, I'm like we don't want our partner to be suffering even more after we're already gone. We want them to push it through like we know how to do. So, that's what the film's about. Just how to deal with that loss, especially when you're with somebody in the service, while you're in the service.

(TL): Yeah. What um, where do you find yourself um. . . What's the right question here? What's a sticking point or what's a challenge that you find right now in your career that you're trying to improve on, or get ahead of to move further in your career?

(OR): Right now, just, I guess, trying to set my brand a little bit more because Hollywood likes to always just put the stigma of whatever on my ethnicity, or certain demographic you are; they try to just stick you into just those same roles. And I'm Hispanic, 100 percent, from Mexico. I speak Spanish fluently, but I don't look. . . I know, I'm like, to them, I don't look Hispanic enough.

(OR) and (TL): (Laughter)

(OR): And then, I'm not white enough. So I'm like in this weird middle that they don't know where to put me because I'm not Caucasian enough

and I'm not Hispanic enough. So yeah, that's a little of the difficulties right now that I'm having trouble to really cement myself into a certain type of character, so then when those parts come up I can, I'm-- they think about me.

(TL): Yeah.

(OR): I'm like, so that's the struggle that I'm having that I'm in this weird limbo, ambiguous thing going that it's, right now, hot. I'm like, good in Hollywood that they're pushing diversity and things, but when I go to these auditions for certain Hispanic roles, yeah these guys are super way more darker than me, and shorter, and I'm like, "Yeah you're going real authentic Hispanic." (Laughter) And, like--

(TL): So, yeah, that's interesting. So you have a difficult time getting Hispanic roles because they feel like you're not Hispanic enough—

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): But yet you clearly are, you clearly have enough pigment in your skin to—

(OR): Yeah.

(TL): -- not be Caucasian.

(OR): Yeah, so that's--

(TL): That's super interesting.

(OR): Yeah, so that's a little trouble I'm having right now, so that's why now I've been focusing on setting up a couple projects for myself and other Vets to really pinpoint what brand or what characters we really portray, that we really want L.A. to know. That this is what we really are good at, so then we can get some more doors open and more possibilities to go audition. So that's what's in the works right now, so I can really push that into their face. Because that's the only way they're gonna learn, um like, of what I can bring to the table. 'Cause if I kept leaving it to them, to their interpretation, then they keep—they don't know. (Laughter) So I gotta keep telling them, "This is what it is."

(TL): Yeah, what's, uh, give me an experience or a skill set that you had in the military that's contributing to your success there in the entertainment industry?

(OR): Thick skin, man, thick skin. (Laughter) I'm like, that has been very helpful because I've seen... The 'no's' and how they, how you just—Aw, man, it's just a hard business, I'm like, and then nobody gives you any feedback. That's the problem. I'm like, so what the military really helped with the discipline of doing what, being on time, saying what you're gonna do, and follow through with it and then just the thick skin to be able to take harsh criticism, but know it's for your best good. They're not trying to just, um like, shit on you. They're just trying to improve you. So, that's helped me out a lot to improve more than most other people because I show up, I do my best that I can do, and I'm not a prima donna like a lot of other actors. 90 percent of the actors, um like, out here how they act. So, I don't bring those different bougie traits to when I act.

(OR) and (TL): (Laughter)

(TL): Very well, good. Tell me about a-- give me a Veteran or a Veteran organization that you're familiar with, other than VME, that you're familiar with that has you excited about what they're doing right now?

(OR): Right now, um like, the American Legion, um like, is doing great things out here in Hollywood. I'm like, they just revamped their theatre here in Hollywood Post-43 in the American Legion. They're doing great things because they understood that the new generation coming through, most of them, the members that are in-- a part of the American Legion, um like, half of them are in the entertainment industry. So, why not have a home with their own theatre, they're own showing capabilities to promote our own work? And, that helps us out, too, um like, to be able to showcase and let people know that Veterans are here, and we got a voice, and we're gonna let you know, um like, that we also are very talented, um like, in these other skills that we're learning. So, being a part of them and seeing, um like, how the theater just came online last month. So, now, if you-- any Veteran has a project, there's something that they can showcase, now you have a base of home, um like, that you-- with beautiful seats, beautiful theatre, to showcase something great on there and have people come and see it. So, that's what I like that they're doing to really help us out, uh, promote our entertainment side, um like, of what we're trying to do, um like, because it's very difficult trying to get something shown at

some of these theatres, um like, but now at least we have a home base that we can promote ourselves, and promote our products. So, I like them. And then, I'm-- I volunteer. I'm part of the American Legion, Post-123, in Santa Monica. I'm the service officer over there. So I do that on my off-time to help out guys, uh, if not-- I'm like, trying to get their benefits, housing, maybe, um like, or even if they're just looking for some advice in the entertainment industry, I can shoot them over to that, to the other post, 'cause I have a lot of contacts to go talk to some people over there. So, the American Legion is doing great things, um like, helping us out.

(TL): Yeah, very well. Ozzy, it's been a real pleasure talking to you, my friend.

(OR): Thank you so much, man.

(TL): Yeah, is there um-- If anybody is listening, they're curious, like, "Ah I want to check out this Ozzy." You doing anything that people can watch, check out?

(OR): Yeah, I'm like, hey, man, I love that. You can Google my name, Ozzy Ramirez, and all my stuff pops out.

(TL): Very well, very well. Ozzy Ramirez, then. Google it and check out his stuff. Ozzy, real pleasure talking to you and thank you so much for joining us on *Borne the Battle*.

(OR): Perfect, thank you so much for having me. Have a great day.

[00:37:09] Music

[00:37:13] PSA:

Man: My grandfather served in World War II. Spending time with him were the best memories of my life. I became a physician at V.A. because of my grandfather, so I can help others like him. I can't imagine working with better doctors or more dedicated staff. I'm fulfilling my life's mission with the help of my team and thanks to these Veterans. I'm proud to be a doctor at V.A. and proud to honor my grandfather every day. Search V.A. careers to find out more.

[00:37:40] Music

[00:37:46] CLOSING MONOLOGUE:

(TL):

It was a pleasure talking to Ozzy and learning about his story. If you search his name, Ozzy Ramirez, O-Z-Z-Y Ramirez on [IMDb](#) [Link to Ozzy Ramirez's IMDb page], you'll find him there and you can see his body of work and what he's accomplished in his acting career. Remember Friday, we will be putting out our fifth and final video on a series of Battle of the Bulge videos featuring World War II Veteran Henry F. Miller. Go to facebook.com/VeteransAffairs [Link to VA's Facebook page] to see that posted and to check out the playlist of the first four videos in that series.

This week's Medal of Honor citation is one that we have done before, but, unfortunately, we have lost another Medal of Honor recipient in Charles Kettles. He just recently was awarded the Medal of Honor. We read his citation then, and he was also featured as our Veteran of the Day that week, but I think that it's only appropriate that in his passing that we remember the great service member that he was and the wonderful inspiration as a postmilitary Veteran that he also was, even before receiving the Medal of Honor. His service was the United States Army, rank of Major, his division 176 Assault Helicopter, Company 14th, Combat Aviation Battalion, Task Force Orion. Conflict was Vietnam War, year of honor is 1967. Citation reads, "On 15 May 1967, Major Kettles, upon learning an airborne infantry unit had suffered casualties during an intense fire fight with the enemy, immediately volunteered to lead a flight of six UH-1D helicopters to carry reinforcements to the embattled force and to evacuate wounded personnel. Enemy small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire raked the landing zone, inflicting heavy damage to the helicopters. However, Major Kettles refused to depart until all helicopters were loaded to capacity. He then returned to the battlefield with full knowledge of intense enemy fire awaiting his arrival to bring more reinforcements, landing in the midst of enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire that seriously wounded his gunner and severely damaged his aircraft. Upon departing, Major Kettles was advised by another helicopter crew that he had fuel streaming out of his aircraft. Despite the risk posed by the leaking fuel, he nursed the damaged aircraft back to base. Later that day, the infantry battalion commander requested immediate emergency extraction of remaining 40 troops, including the four members of Major Kettles' unit who were stranded there when their helicopter was destroyed by enemy fire. With the only one flyable UH-1 helicopter remaining, Major Kettles volunteered to return to the deadly landing zone for a third time, leading a flight of six evacuation helicopters, five of which were from

the 161 Aviation Company. During the extraction, Major Kettles was informed by the last helicopter that all personnel were on board and departed the landing zone accordingly. Army gunships supporting the evacuation also departed the area. Once airborne, Major Kettles was advised that eight troops had been unable to reach the evacuation helicopter due to intense enemy fire. With complete disregard for his own safety, Major Kettles passed the lead to another helicopter and returned to the landing zone to rescue the remaining troops. Without gunship, artillery, or tactical aircraft support, the enemy concentrated all firepower on his lone aircraft, which was immediately damaged by a mortar round that shattered both front windshields and a chin bubble, and was further raked by small arms and machine gun fire. Despite the intense enemy fire, Major Kettles maintained control of the aircraft in situation, allowing time for the remaining eight soldiers to board the aircraft. In spite of the severe damage to his helicopter, Major Kettles once more skillfully guided his heavily damaged aircraft to safety. Without his courageous actions and superior flying skills, the last group of soldiers and his crew would have never made it out of the battlefield. Major Kettles' selfless acts and repeated valor and determination are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army. We honor his service." That wraps up episode 131. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen. I know there's a lot of options out there for podcasts. The podcast industry is saturated with so much great content that I do appreciate you spending this short bit of time here with me and these powerful Veteran stories. Be sure to follow us on Twitter [Link to VA Twitter page: https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor] and Instagram [Link to VA Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/?hl=en>] @DeptVetAffair and on [facebook.com/VeteranAffairs](https://www.facebook.com/VeteranAffairs) [Link to VA Facebook page]. You can also follow the Secretary @SecWilkie, that's @SecWilkie, on Instagram [Link to Secretary Wilkie's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/secwilkie/>] and Twitter [Link to Secretary Wilkie's Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/secwilkie?lang=en>]. We will return shortly with another episode here on *Borne the Battle*. Until then, I am Timothy Lawson, signing off.

[00:42:53] Music

(Text Transcript Ends)