

*Borne the Battle*

*Episode # 183*

NYPD on 9/11 to Actor, Marine Veteran Hiram Murray

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/71898/borne-battle-183-nypd-actor-marine-veteran-hiram-murray/>

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music:

### **[00:00:11] Opening Monologue:**

**Tanner Iskra (TI):** Oh, let's get it. Monday, February 24, 2020. Borne the Battle. Brought to you by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The podcast that focuses on inspiring veteran stories and puts a highlight on important resources, offices, and benefits for our veterans. I am your host, Marine Corps veteran Tanner Iskra. Hope everyone had a great week outside of podcast land. Outside of the podcast, the VA is starting to tap me to moderate a lot of Facebook lives across the VA social media landscape. You know, we have all- all kinds of different Facebooks. VA Careers, uh, Veterans Health Administration, Veteran Benefits Administration. I just did one for the VA Military Spouse Employment program, over at the VA Careers Facebook page. And, we will be doing one on our page for Vet Resources, uh, it's titled "Finding Vet Resources Through Online Communities." That will be airing tomorrow, as of this podcast drop, on February 25. Just go to the US- just go to the US Department of Veterans Affairs, click on Events, and you'll find it. Or if you're hearing this podcast a couple days later, you can still view it on our Facebook Videos tab.

Currently, we are up to 169 total ratings and reviews for the Borne the Battle podcast on iTunes. And thank you for that. In addition to the US, we're still holding strong on the Ireland charts. Uh, on the Ireland podcast charts. So, if you're an expat out in Ireland, thank you for listening. Or if you're not, if you're just an Irish citizen, appreciate it. Uh, remember, the more you rate and review, not only lets me know how we're doing so far as bringing you what you want as far as content. The ratings, reviews and subs give us a better chance to climb the iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher, uh, et cetera, et cetera, algorithms, which in turn allows us to reach more veterans out in podcast land. And gives them a chance to listen in and hear not only these great stories, but the benefits breakdown episodes and that information that is provided in the news releases.

## [00:02:13] News Release:

(TI): Speaking of news releases. Let's take a look at 'em. We got one this week. Says, For immediate release. VA partners with Verizon, Medivis- and I hope I'm saying that right- and Microsoft, to advance health care services for veterans. The US Department of Veterans Affairs partnered with Verizon, Medivis and Microsoft effective February 12, as part of its efforts to deliver VA's first advanced, 5G-enabled clinical care system at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System. Of course, Silicon Valley, right? The public-private partnership titled Project Convergence will be led by VA's National Center for Collaborative Health Care Innovation, and worked to help identify potential clinical uses for technology that combine emerging health care innovations with 5G capabilities. Project Convergence will- Project Convergence will unveil and demonstrate initial clinical uses of the combined technology at the upcoming Health Information Management Systems Society Conference in Orlando, Florida, March 9 through 13. For more information on that National Center for Collaborative Health Care Innovation, visit [www.va.gov/INNOVATIONECOSYSTEM](http://www.va.gov/INNOVATIONECOSYSTEM) and its all-caps, I don't think you need all caps, I don't know. And it's all one word. /views/explore/ncchi.html [Link: [www.va.gov/INNOVATIONECOSYSTEM/views/explore/ncchi.html](http://www.va.gov/INNOVATIONECOSYSTEM/views/explore/ncchi.html)].

## [00:03:43] Opening Monologue:

(TI): All right, so we have an actor that was on our episode 177, Military and Film Panel, as this week's guest. He started out his acting career in New York, where he was also an NYPD officer during 9/11, and was also involved in the recovery effort shortly after. After that, he went into the Marine Corps, got out, and went to the LAPD. So, he went from the NYPD to LAPD, where he has started acting again, and he has been- and he has been a technical advisor for some films. He's had speaking roles or guest appearances on shows like Modern Family, General Hospital, Lethal Weapon, and Animal Kingdom. And recently, has had featured roles in films *Tango Down* and *The Great War*. So, without further ado, I bring to you, Marine Corps veteran Hiram Murray. Enjoy.

[00:04:35] Music

## [00:04:42] Interview:

(TI): So, Hiram as a- as a fellow Marine, uh, you started acting before you joined the Marine Corps.

Hiram Murray (HM): That's correct.

(TI): How did you- how did you get your start?

(HM): Uhm, I- I started acting when I was 17 years old. Uhm, I'm 38 right now. Uhm, I grew up born and raised, Brooklyn, New York. I got into the business by way of, like, music videos and commercials. And then I got my first television role in 1999, on a television show called *Now and Again* with, uh, Dennis Haysbert on CBS.

(TI): Okay.

(HM): And I fell in love with the business, all aspects of the business. Creation, all of that. And I decided, you know what? I am going to go to film school. And so, I went to- I was- I was attending the City University- City College. And, I majored in film directing and screenwriting. And while I was going to college, I was also part of, uh, New York City Police Department.

(TI): Like full time?

(HM): Yeah. I would work in the nights and go to school during the day.

(TI): Wow.

(HM): And, 9/11 happened on my watch, in my backyard. And I put everything on hold, and I went to the Marine Corps, served my country.

(TI): So, 9/11 was the impetus for you joining the Marine Corps?

(HM): Very much.

(TI): So- so did you answer on 9/11? Did you- were you down there on Ground Zero?

(HM): Uh, yes. I was down there on Ground Zero. I actually almost died on, uhm, on September 14th.

(TI): Oh my God.

(HM): Uh, we were- every morning, all the police officers we would meet. And there was this Burger King and a part of the wall was broken down, which in hindsight, it was, you know, structurally unsafe. I don't know why we would have our roll call meetings there, but, we had it there. And, uh, one of the things- there was a structural engineer there, and our captain at the time was like, this is the structural engineer, you know, if you see him run, you run.

(TI): [Laughter]

(HM): And [Laughter] on September 14th, my partner and I, you know, like we were tasked with, you know, like, finding pieces of airplane, trying to locate survivors, stuff like that. And my partner and I, uh, female, name was Tamera. Uh, we were digging a hole, coming out with, you know, parts and stuff like that, and she was down in the hole still. I came out the hole and I saw a couple firemen run past me. Then I saw a couple of policemen run past me. Then I saw a structural engineer run past me, and so I just took off running and about 50 yards away, I was like, oh shi- I forgot to, call my partner. So, I look back, and in the background, you see a building swaying from left to right, like it's about to come down. And I just ran back, and I jumped on top of her and she was like, "What the hell? What's going on?" And I just told her, you know, just be quiet. Just be quiet, you know. And I just held her, and we just stayed quiet and for what was actually probably five minutes felt like five hours, of silence, you know, just expecting for life to end for this building to fall on us, you know? And in that mo- in those moments, you know, I was going through my head, I was like, you know what? I just had my second- my second kid, you know, I've been a good husband, a good partner, a good son, you know—

(TI): Whole life flashed through your eyes.

(HM): My whole life flashed in my eyes. It's like, if it was my time to go, then you know what? I have no regrets. And then after about five minutes of silence, I looked up, by the grace of God, the building stopped shaking. I grabbed my partner, picked her up, and then we just booked it out of there. And that was, you know, the first of many, you know, near calls in my life. But—[Laughter]

(TI): Sure, sure.

(HM): But—

(TI): Never forget the first, I guess.

(HM): You'll never forget the first, it was one of the most peaceful times in my life. And you're just- you're just laying there. Accepting what is about to happen and it's something I will never forget. And to this day, my- my partner and I, we call each other on September 14th, and we wish each other happy second chance day.

(TI): Interesting.

(HM): Yeah.

(TI): Interesting that you said it was peaceful.

(HM): Yeah. It was peaceful. It was the- it was, you know, when I first went into the Marine Corps, you know, I was a pilot and you know, like there- there's certain times in my life where I remember peace. You know, it's- it's that moment learning to fly, being up in the air by yourself, and like parasailing, those like, the three most peaceful moments in my life.

(TI): Interesting. So, you are a pilot. What month did you join? Cause obviously I think you- I mean September 11th, '01 you joined in '01 or '02 or?

(HM): So that was my- I had- I had another year of college left. So, I went in- I went in, 'til PLC juniors in 2003, and then I accepted my commission in, uh, 2004. And then I went to- I went to, uh, TBS, uh, December of 2004.

(TI): Got you. Uhm, what- so you are a pilot, what'd you fly?

(HM): Well, I was a pilot for the first part. I was- uh, I- so I went down to flight school. I- I flew to- T-34s down in Pensacola, Florida. And honestly, at the time I really didn't want to be a pilot. I just wanted to go into the Marine Corps to serve my, uh, country.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): And there was- there was only air slots available. And my OSO had told me, he was like, "Oh, don't worry about it. Once you get- once you get into TBS, you can drop the air contract and compete for a ground contract." Not so my friend, you promise the Marine Corps a seat. So, you have to go to flight school, they exclude you from any MOS pickings. You had to go to flight school. So, once I got to flight school—

(TI): Wow.

(HM): I started, and once, uh, once I went through, uhm, the first part, the initial screening and whatnot, and got down to my pipeline. Jet pipeline. That's when I was able to drop—

(TI): Gotcha. And what did you- what was your MOS while you were in?

(HM): Uh, 6004. I was the Aircraft Maintenance Officer, and then I became the operations officer of MALS-14, uh, in Cherry Point.

(TI): Oh, okay.

(HM): Yeah.

(TI): My first duty- my first duty station was- was Cherry Point.

(HM): Oh, sweet.

(TI): Yeah. I came in '03. I was with the MTACS-28, Group 28 and, uh, the Marine Wing Headquarter Squadron.

(HM): Okay. Sweet.

(TI): Deu- the deuce. So, very cool. Uhm, either give me a best friend or your greatest mentor while you were in.

(HM): The greatest mentor that I had, honestly, uhm, was my father-in-law. He was a Sergeant Major of HM-266 over in New River. He gave me- he dropped me off to- to- to boot camp my first day, and he gave me some advice that I, to this day, I use with everything. He told me that the Marine Corps will get tired of dish- should get tired of dishing it out before I ever get tired of receiving it. That's how I have to look at—

(TI): [Laughter]

(HM): At every single day. Don't ever let them get the best of you. You know, it- it- it's all mental games because really, as you know, the physically- there's nothing that we can't achieve in the Marine Corps. They will break you down and build you back up to where you need to be.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): But it's all a mental game and they should get tired of dishing it out before you ever get tired of receiving it. And I told myself that every single day. And it made the difference even- even when I, like when I left the Marine Corps, I became a police officer again for LAPD. And like

every- everything that's been difficult in my life, I always tell myself, you know, whatever the difficulty is, that it will get tired of being hard, it will get tired of being difficult before I ever get tired of receiving it. So, to this day, you know, that's been the greatest advice I've ever had.

(TI): That's a good father-in-law. It's a good father-in-law.

(HM): Yeah [Laughter]

(TI): Uhm, you said you got out- you said- you said you got out and joined the LAPD. What prompted you to get out of the Marine Corps?

(HM): So, in 2008, I, just picked up the rank of captain, Marine Corps just got a new, Commandant, General Conway. And prior to 2008, we had our own Special Ops Force Recon, but we were never under the SOCOM umbrella.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): You know, we always did our own thing, and General Conway came-came aboard and was like, "Nope, we got to learn to play with all the other branches." So, he created MARSOC, and at the time, they were looking for new captains. So, I got recruited, went through the whole indoc, and everything. My deployment cycle, however, would have been every other six months.

(TI): Mhm. Yeah.

(HM): And we just had our, uh, fourth kid and my wife was like, she's not having that [Laughter].

(TI): Sure. No, I understand that.

(HM): She wasn't- she wasn't having that, you know? And so, at the time, and I don't know if they still do it, but at the time LAPD used to travel around to different military bases, recruiting people. I mean, I already had a top-secret clearance. I was physically fit, you know, brand new captain in the Marine Corps. So, I was good to go. And they came on base and they hired me. You know, for a normal civilian, the background process and everything else to join the police department is about a year and a half. It only took me—

(TI): Yeah, it takes a while.

(HM): Yeah, it took me two weekends. I flew in one weekend to, uhm, do the polygraph, physical fitness test, and then I flew in another weekend to

have my psyche eval and finish up some paperwork. And I got a letter in the mail saying I was hired.

(TI): Wow. What, uhm- so that- that's a pretty smooth transition, I think—

(HM): Yeah, it was a pretty smooth transition. And I knew- I knew that I wanted to, uhm, eventually come back to my first love, which was acting. And so, w- w-

(TI): LAPD—

(HM): LAPD is right here, you know? I mean, Hollywood it's the Mecca of- of film and television so I might as well come back to it.

(TI): What- what year was this? What year did you get out?

(HM): 2008.

(TI): 2008.

(HM): Yeah.

(TI): Uhm, so, it- man, you had a pretty smooth transition. But in 2012 you started acting again. From what I can tell on your IMDB ab- you probably started acting before that, before they actually started getting released.

(HM): Mmhmm.

(TI): Uhm—

(HM): So- so what I did, so, when- when I left, when I left active duty Marine Corps, because then I dropped down to the reserves. Uh, when I left active duty and I joined LAPD, I said, I'm going to focus on, you know - cause LA and New York are two different beasts—

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): So, let me focus on, knowing my job and get to that point where I'm not on probation anymore. Secure in- in- in my job and I get to pick my schedule at that point.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): So, and then, although other thing that I wanted to do, cause I- as soon as we moved to California, like I got back into it. But I started working behind the scenes. I went to a film school called Film Connections, and I started PAing, which is production assistant. On movie sets and stuff like



that. And the one thing that I kept hearing while on various movie sets, where like directors would try to convey a certain meaning to their actors, or they want them to do a certain thing, but they, you know, they weren't trained actors themselves, so they didn't really know how to communicate what they wanted from these actors. And so, they would say one thing, and then the moment the directors would walk away, the actors were like, "This idiot, you know, he doesn't even know what he wants or whatnot." And so, I- I- I swore to myself, I was like, you know what? I- cause up until that point, I never had formal training in acting. And I said, you know what? I never wanted that to be me. You know, if you know, when I turn around and direct stuff, I want my actors- I want to be able to convey everything to my actors and I want them to understand me. So, I decided, in 2010, uh, I- cause at- in 2010, and I was no longer like a boot. I was a P-2. I was working a crime suppression task force in North Hollywood. And so, like, I made my own schedule and had my own partner. And then, you know, like the- the- the gears on the machine, you know, were oiled and moving well. So, I enrolled in a film school called the DW Brow- the Joanne Baron DW Brown Acting Studio. It's like the premier acting studio for the Meisner Technique here in Southern California. And it's a two-year conservatory. And, I dedicated two years of my life to learning my craft.

(TI): What is the Meisner technique?

(HM): So, like, if I wanted to know what it's like to be an alcoholic, I'd have to pick up drinking and like, no—

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): That's- that's unhealthy. The Meisner technique uses your- your imagination, okay? And—

(TI): Okay.

(HM): Honestly, the definition of acting is living truthfully during imaginary circumstances. So, and- and it's more healthy, actually, for the actor. You know, like you- you have—

(TI): Sure.

(HM): You have other techniques, and I'm not bashing, let- let me- let me be clear, you know? I'm not bashing other techniques. I'm just saying what works for me. You have other techniques that—

(TI): Sure.

(HM): You know, in order for you to- to invoke a- an emotional response, you have to think back to a trauma that happened to you, you know, in your past that- that's unhealthy. You know, like that- that's- that's the equivalent of, you know, I have a scar and in order for me to know what it's like to- to- to- to bleed, I rip that scab off. You know—

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): Like th- I don't- I don't have to keep doing that. You know, like I- I can- I know what pain is. I'll use my imagination and I'll get there, you know?

(TI): Yeah. You went for a different method.

(HM): Yeah, definitely a more healthy method, you know? And so, the- the- the Meisner technique, you know, it stresses using your imagination. It stresses you being present in the moment, every single moment. You know, one of the very first exercises is the repetition exercise, okay? And it's- it- it- it's, you know, if I- if I say to you, you know, I like your shirt and you will repeat back to me. "Oh, you like my shirt?" But the exercise is training you to pay attention to the way your- your- your- your fellow actor is saying stuff. So, it's all about being present in the moment, listening to your partner, and then reacting off of that using your imagination, you know? And it's- it's- it's so funny, because my whole life, you know, from, you know, NYPD to Marine Corps, to LAPD, I've always been in a rigid, structured, career. You know, like, there's no time for crying. You know, we have a mission and we'll get it done, you know, by hook or crook. However, you know, like, I don't have time to have my emotions affect the overall outcome of my mission.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): And so, you know, that hardens- that hardens you, you know, and you know, my instructors, you know, they- they would always say, you know, like, I- I- I'm too rigid. I- I need to loosen up. And just stuff like- like, you know, like— Prior to- prior to this- this training, I remembered the last time I cried, and it was in 1999 when I had my first kid, you know [Laughter]

(TI): Wow.

(HM): That was the last time I cried, you know. And so, they made it their mission to break me down as an actor, to chip away at the- at the hard

facade that I- that I had to make me a better actor. And in my second year of- of acting, we- we take a book and it's called Spoon River Anthology, right? And basically Spoon River is, it's a book and it's all about this town where every single person in the town had died, and you- and you as the audience, you sit there and the ghost of different townspeople will come back and tell their story.

(TI): Interesting.

(HM): So, they- they knew that I was a father, and they gave me this town's guy who, he had- he had went home one day after, you know, thinking about his family and thinking about his circumstances in life and realizing that he was poor and he didn't have anything to leave his family. He went home and killed his wife and kids because he wanted to spare them. You know, the pain of- of living in poverty. And so, they- they gave me that character and I had to perform that character and that from 1999 up until 2011 was the first time that I actually broke down and cried.

(TI): Interesting, interesting. Sounds like you learn- sounds like you learned a lot out of this.

(HM): Oh yeah, man. And it- it helped me, it helped me actually be a better police officer because it helped me to listen to people better, you know? Like the- the way people talk, the things that they say, you know, like I'm present in the moment and I'm listening to you, you know? Are you lying or is something really going on? Are you trying to hide something from me? You know it's one of the greatest things I ever did.

(TI): Wow. So, you know, around that time, 2011, 2012, you started acting again after 12 or 13 years, you know, and of course, difference between New York and LA. What was the same about the industry and what was different?

(HM): You know, the same thing- the same thing about the industry was, there weren't enough opportunities for African Americans, people of color in general, Hispanic or whatever. So, it's- it's, you're- you're trying to- you're trying to navigate, and every- everyone's- everyone's way into the industry is different. You know, when I- when I came back into the industry, you know, my way in was through technical advising. You know, I would- the people were hiring me on projects to teach other actors how to be, you know, military members, or teach other actors how to be police officers, you know, and then, you know—

(TI): Got you.

(HM): It was also easier- it was also easier to hire an actor who knew how to do all this stuff so that they wouldn't even have to hire another, uh, technical consultant. So that- that was like my- my- my way into the industry. But the same problem still exist- existed when I came in. Lack of representation on projects and stuff like that. So—

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): I mean, it's- it's only recently things have been getting better, you know, with the whole diversity push in- in Hollywood. But those- those were the same things I was dealing with.

(TI): Got you. You talked about technical advising on films. What do you think is more difficult, teaching a military person to be an actor, or to teach an actor, to become like a military person?

(HM): Hmm. That's a good question. Honest- I think- I think teaching a military person to- to be an actor. Because we have to, when we're in the Marine Corps, you know, we are in the military in general. We're not working off our- our imagination, right? And we're not—

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): We're not relying too much on our feelings. You know, we were trained and- and taught to get the job done by any means necessary.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): So, it's- it's, we're not- we don't tap too much into our emotional feelings where, you know, your emotional feelings is actually what the- what we're trying to capture. But at the same time, too, it's, it's a catch 22 because I've been on sets, you know, and this is the reason why, like I partnered with Veteran Powered Films to do *Tango Down* and whatnot.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): I've been on sets where, you know, the most smooth-running sets are sets that have veterans- veterans on it, because we have that teamwork ingrained in us. There's no egos, we have one mission and we get it done, however. And that mission is to make the best movie, television show, commercial, whatever it is, to make the best project that we can. And everyone- there's no egos. There's no divas or anything. We're all, you know, pulling our- our work—

(TI): Part of a team.

(HM): We're part of a team and we're getting it done. So—

(TI): Talk to me about *Tango Down* and this is- that's going to drop, before this podcast drops, so it'll already be out when this podcast drops.

(HM): Great.

(TI): It looks like a lot of veteran actors took part in that film, both in front and behind the scenes. Julia Ling, Rudy Reyes of *Generation Kill* Fame was the first AD—

(HM): Right.

(TI): And even had like Adam Martin, who was an Army Veteran, his band, Blackbird Anthem provide the soundtrack.

(HM): Right.

(TI): Talk to me about the experience of being in a veteran made, if you will, film.

(HM): It was great. I mean, you know, first of all, not only was it a Veteran made film, it was, you know, the majority of everyone in that project were all Marines they're all my Devil Dogs and, you know, you walk that, you know, the one thing- I- I don't miss the politics of the Marine Corps, but I miss my Marines, you know?

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): And it—

(TI): Oh and I think- I think if you run into any Marine, they'll say that.

(HM): Oh, yes, yes. Very much so. You know, I- I miss that camaraderie. I miss my brothers and sisters. And then when you walk on a set, you know, and it's not like I didn't ask for this or whatever, but when people salute you and they call you, sir, and like, you guys have that shorthand exchange, you know, like, you know, we- we have our own jargon, our own military jargon. It's- it's- it's like heaven, you know? It's like, "Oh, I miss this." You know?

(TI): That's awesome.

(HM): And just being on set with- with my fellow Marines, you know, we- we joke. Marines have like a warped sense of humor, you know, like, you

would see, you know, like, people don't understand our whole crayon addiction and stuff like that, but like, you would see, you know, a little Easter eggs, you see, like, uhm, the movie opens up with me giving them- we're going over our mission plan and I'm- and I'm laying out, you know, parameters and our ROEs and stuff like that. And for you, non- non-military civilians listening, ROEs stand for rules of engagement. I'm just letting them know the rules, before we do this mission.

(TI): Absolutely.

(HM): You would even see in the background, like there's a box of Crayola crayons, you know, stuff- little Easter egg and stuff like that. You know—

(TI): Little Easter eggs. I like it. I like it.

(HM): We do stuff like that for our Marines, and, it's- it's- it's just like- it's like you not seeing a family member or your best friend for- for, you know, X amount of time and then you just pick back up where you left off. That is what it's like with working with military members, working with Marines. It's- it's- it's- it's your family. You know, you've- you've- you've dedicated X amount of years to the service and then, you know, when it's- when it's gone, you know, it's- it's- it's- it's like a hole in your heart. It's something missing and then to be put back into that environment, which bridges what you're doing now. Okay, so you're an actor now, and it's bridging your military life. It's like the best of both worlds, you know?

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): I- I- I loved it. I know. I can't say- can't say anything greater than, I loved it.

(TI): Okay, so it's a veteran group network group out there in- in LA. What's it called?

(HM): So, it's called Veteran Powered Films. And the- the focus behind Veteran Powered Films is we- we bring together, and it doesn't have to be just Marines, it's- it's all branches of ser - all veterans. We bring together veterans. We bring together Leo's, which are law enforcement officers, any first responders. We want to give them the opportunity to- to- to create, you know, we want to be that outlet for them. We want to hear their stories. We want to- we want to highlight veteran owned businesses, law enforcement owned businesses. We want to give them an opportunity where others don't give them an opportunity. You know, it's- it's you know, you have, you—

(TI): You have a network.

(HM): Yeah. You have a network. We have mentorship. You know, we just want to show them that there's something else out there so that when they return from service, they don't feel alone. We- we want to combat the fact that, you know, the- some- the suicide rate is- is skyrocketing. You know, we- we want to show them that there's other avenues out there.

(TI): Yeah, yeah. Very good. So that makes sense. Cause I- I would watch the trailer and on the- in the description on YouTube, it said the mission was to create a community, help fellow brothers and sisters.

(HM): Yes.

(TI): Got you. Makes sense. So, what's the film about? What- and, of course, you talked about your role early on. What's your- what's your main role in the whole film?

(HM): So, I- I play a captain and a major in the film. Actually, if you go—

(TI): Like you get promoted or?

(HM): Well, because there's a flashback scene where- where- the film opens up, I'm a major and there's a flashback scene of me being a captain and actually—

(TI): Got you.

(HM): That- that- that's in some, uhm, some, what's the word? Deleted scenes. There- there are some deleted scenes, that you can see if- if people go to vidispace.com [Link: <https://vidi.space/>] and you can watch the film on vidispace, they have all the deleted scenes, gag reel, stuff like that in order to see like the deleted scenes. The overall story is you have two Marines, you know, a buddy team, you know, who are taking on a mission. Something goes wrong on the mission. Okay?

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): And years later, you know, NCIS comes to question them, you know, they're doing their investigation and they want to make sure that everything was done by the book, because it's not- it's not lining up. And so, the overall film's about brotherhood and-and one of the Marin—

(TI): And digging into that story.

(HM): Yes. They dig into the story and then one- one of the Marines feels that the other maybe, you know, said something that they shouldn't have said. So, it's all about trust and brotherhood and camaraderie and dealing with that. That's- that- that's the heart of the film.

(TI): With an ethical and moral dilemma—

(HM): Yes.

(TI): That- that- that conflicts with that camaraderie and brotherhood.

(HM): Exactly. Exactly.

(TI): Got you. Okay, absolutely.

(HM): Because we want- we want to show the message behind it too, is we want to show people that, in the military and- and- and- and you can co-sign on this. We don't necessarily always agree with everything that we're told to do. But when we are in- when the bullets start flying and we're in the thick of it, we're not concerned really with the mission we're- we're actually concerned with- with our brothers and sisters to the right of us. You know—

(TI): Yep.

(HM): That- that's why we do what we do. You know, we know it's dangerous. We know we have to get this done, but I'm not- I'm not charging over that hill because I necessarily 100 percent believe in that mission. I'm doing it to protect the men and women to the right of me, my brothers and sisters. We have that camaraderie, you know?

(TI): Yep.

(HM): And like I tell- I tell my- my two older boys, like one. My oldest, he wants to go into the Air Force because he wants to be an astronaut. My second oldest wants to- he wants to go in the Marine Corps, you know, and- and I tell- I tell him all the time, and like, you know, it's going to be hard, especially for the one that wants to go in the Marine Corps. But you can go through, the way God made our- our genetic makeup, our- our mindset as human beings. We can go through hell and back and not even worry about it as long as we're going through it with someone else. You know, you can experience the worst thing in life, but if you have someone to your left or right going through it with you, it makes it a lot easier for you to do.



(TI): Oh 100- 100%

(HM): And then afterwards when it's all said and done, no matter what hell you guys went through, you're going to sit back and you're going to laugh at it. You know? And you're gonna, you know, tell stories. And that's how we get through the- the- the- the pain.

(TI): The worst times.

(HM): Yeah. That's how we get through the worst times.

(TI): Yup. Absolutely. 100% that's, uh, so you've got both of your boys that want to be in the military?

(HM): Yeah [Laughter].

(TI): That's awesome.

(HM): I mean it- it- it didn't hurt that you know they grew up on military bases, so [Laughter].

(TI): Yeah, yeah, that's awesome. So, we've had a couple mil- veteran actors on the show before and since I've been the host, and you can listen to Jennifer Marshall and—

(HM): Jen- Jen is a good friend of mine.

(TI): Oh, yeah?

(HM): Yeah. Jen- Jen and I are in a, uh, another militar- another military organization called VME, which stands for Veterans and Media in Entertainment.

(TI): I was just going to ask about it. Are you a part a of that?

(HM): Yes, I am.

(TI): Do you feel- are you getting love from that?

(HM): I'm getting love from that.

(TI): Awesome. You know, her and I are both a part of it- of Veterans and Military in Entertainment. But, unfortunately for me being in DC, the only thing I've been able to do is put my resume up on the site—

(HM): Mmhmm.

(TI): And not take- not take part of some of the events out there in LA or in New York. What does it mean for you to have a group like that out there in LA?

(HM): Oh, it is- it is paramount to like, I've seen so many people come out of the military. They know what they want to do, but they have no way of th- there's no- there's no blueprint. There's no structure to it. You know? I know I want to be in this industry.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): I know I want to ride.

(TI): Yeah.

(HM): I know I want to direct, produce, or whatever it is, but there's- there's no blueprint. There's no one to look to. No- no- no- no mentors or whatnot. And VME is—

(TI): No- no- no MOS roadmap.

(HM): Exactly no MOS roadmap and VME is that, you know, it's- it- once again, it's just like Veteran Powered Films, you know, we have mentors. We have more- we have meetings, we have partnerships with like Lionsgate and Grindstone and all these other production companies that want veterans on their staff that want to mentor veterans and want to help veterans out. So, I love VME. I've been with VME since I've moved out to California.

(TI): Eventually someday I hope to get out there for a- for an event or something. It'd be- it'd be nice to go to.

(HM): Yeah.

(TI): You got another film coming out that'll already have been dropped by the time this podcast drops. It's called The Great War. Stars Ron Perlman, Billy Zane. And- and you, you have a line in the- in the trailer that I watched?

(HM): Yes.

(TI): Now I've played a lot of Battlefield One when it came out, which is a video game based on World War One.

(HM): Mmhmm.

(TI): Is this movie based off the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment? The Harlem Hellfighters?

(HM): No, this is- so it's based off of the Buffalo soldiers.

(TI): Got you. Got you. Okay. So, what's that? What's the film about?

(HM): So, coming down to the Armistice, the last- the final days of World War One, my unit has fought its way behind enemy lines, further, deeper than any other American unit or any white unit. And, during a battle, I get separated from them. The Armistice is about to happen. The ceasefire and the powers that be, the top brass, don't want an all- it's going to be bad press for America if a all-black unit gets captured by the Germans. It's also going to be bad press for America, too, if an all-black unit further and deeper than any other unit. So, it's, let's get these boys out of there, you know, to save face for America and also to bring them home. And so, a- a all-white unit has been tasked with locating my unit and bringing them back in, and so they take me as a scout to find my unit and bring them back.

(TI): Very good. Very good.

(HM): Yeah, that will be- that will be in select theaters on December 13th and also will be on iTunes and VOD, Blu-ray, DVD everywhere else, as well.

(TI): Any kind of- any kind of digital housing unit that you have on your computer.

(HM): Yeah, right.

(TI): Got you. Very cool. What is one thing that you learned in the Marine Corps that you apply to acting today- today- to what you do today?

(HM): My- my discipline. You know, like I- I'm the type of person, that when there is a mission or task, a job, anything to do. Like I see it through its completion and I- I take that discipline with- with my acting. You know, the moment I start a project, like I'm all into it. I don't allow myself to get distracted. I- I learned from my time in the military about teamwork. I try to work with all my co-stars. Uh, the- the powers that be, the directors, the writers, producers, or whatever. I want to create the best project we possibly can make. So, whatever I can do as a team member to make that happen, I'm down for it. So, the discipline and being part of a team. I bring that to every project I- I take on here in Hollywood. And that's really what this whole business is about. It's a collaborative business. When- in

filmmaking, you know. You have, you know, certain movies, you know, you have thousands of people working on it, you know, and- and when you are, especially part of like the main, the core cast, you know, it's, people look to you for inspiration. Like, you set the tone. Like when I show up on set, you know, if I'm having a bad mood, you know, it affects everyone else. So, I don't have bad moods. When I- when I- when I step on- on to set, you know. Like I try to make everyone's day as pleasant and let's get the job done. And then, obviously, you know, in this business, things don't always go according to plan. You know, you know, there's- there's mechanical issues, you know, actors may forget lines or actors may not show up or whatever may happen that throws a monkey wrench in the business. You know, what we've learned in the Marine Corps is to adapt and overcome. So, I take that- I take that with me also on set. There's nothing that can go wrong that- that will throw me off. It's like, okay, this happened. Okay, but I still need to get this done, so let me figure out how to get this done. I'm not just going to sit there and wallow in pity and say, woe is me. No, let's get the job done and we'll deal with everything else later.

(TI): Sounds good. Absolutely. One thing I- [Laughter] when everything- when sometimes if I find a monkey wrench in what I'm doing, I'm like, well, at least I'm not getting shot at, you know? [Laughter]

(HM): Exactly, exactly, [Laughter] exactly, you know.

(TI): You give me the side eye. You're like, what?

(HM): Or someone- someone's complaining about, "Oh, it's too hot," or whatnot. There's a Marine right now humping in Afghanistan in 120 degrees, you know, with like a hundred pounds on his back, so how about we shut up and move on? [Laughter]

(TI): Exactly, it could be worse.

(HM): Exactly.

(TI): That's awesome. Hiram, what is, uh, either a veteran in the veteran community or a nonprofit? And we've already mentioned Veterans in Film and Entertainment. Is there a nonprofit in the veteran space that you think is a good example for others to either seek out or emulate?

(HM): The two- the two places I- I always send veterans to are- are always Veteran Powered Films and Veterans in Media and Entertainment. And,

through- through them, you know, there are other milit- veteran nonprofit organizations that they will be able to point others to.

(TI): Hiram, is there anything else that you'd like to add or is there something that I didn't ask that you think is important to share?

(HM): So, as with everything in life, guys, when you're starting off with something, it's going to be difficult. Do not quit if this is something that you want to do, you march on, no matter how difficult it is, because at some point, at some point you're going to get your break, you're going to get your opportunity. But when that opportunity comes, you have to be prepared. So, keep training, keep studying, keep doing whatever you need to do to be ready for when that opportunity comes. Cause there's nothing worse than an opportunity opening up and you being unprepared for it.

[00:39:50] Music

### **[00:39:57] PSA:**

Man: My grandfather served in World War Two. Spending time with him were the best memories of my life. I became a physician at VA because of my grandfather, so I can help others like him. I can't imagine working with better doctors or a 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 VA, and proud to honor my grandfather every day. Search VA Careers to find out more.

[00:40:36] Music

### **[00:40:31] Closing Monologue:**

(TI): Want to thank Hiram for coming on this week's episode. For more information on Hiram, you can find him on his profile on backstage.com [Link: <https://www.backstage.com/>] In it, it has his filmography and all his social media handles, as well. This week's Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week is by way of our social media's Veteran of the Day program. If you got to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, uh, every day, the VA honors a veteran. This week's Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week is Army veteran and basketball great, Elgin Baylor. Elgin Baylor grew up in Washington, DC playing high school basketball on and off due to poor

grades. However, he received a scholarship to play basketball and football at the College of Idaho. After one season, the college fired the head basketball coach and cut scholarships. Baylor took a year off from school and increased his NCAA eligibility before attending Seattle University in Washington. Alright. Checking out my home state. While at Seattle University, Baylor led the Seattle Chieftains basketball team to the NCAA title game in 1958 and received the Final Four most outstanding player award. I did not know that Seattle University ended up in the Final Four. That's awesome. The Minneapolis Lakers drafted him during his junior year of college. Baylor made the 1959 all-star team, was most valuable player during the 1958-59 season, and voted rookie of the year. After the Lakers moved to Los Angeles in 1960, Baylor's NBA career continued to improve. Baylor also continued to play for the Lakers after joining the Army Reserves in 1961. He was called into active duty that year, serving at Fort Lewis, Washington. Despite being an Army reservist, Baylor played 48 games for the Lakers during the 1962 season and would fly to games during his weekend passes. Despite knee issues, Baylor continued to play for the Lakers until the early 1972 season. Due to continuing knee issues, Baylor retired from the Lakers in 1972. After retiring, he served as head coach at the New Orleans Jazz basketball team. Baylor was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1977. And, the Lakers retired his jersey in 1983. Baylor was a member of the NBA's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary all-time team in 1980, and the NBA 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary all-time team in 1996. He also became vice president of the Los Angeles Clippers in 1986, a job he held for 22 years. In addition, Baylor won the National Basketball Association Executive of the Year in 2006. Baylor, thank you for your service.

That's it for this week's episode of Borne the Battle. If you yourself would like to nominate a Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week, you can. Just email us at [podcast@va.gov](mailto:podcast@va.gov), include a short writeup and let us know why you would like to see him or her as the Borne the Battle Veteran of the Week.

For more stories on veterans and veteran benefits, check out our website, [blogs.va.gov](https://www.blogs.va.gov) [Link: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/>] and follow the VA on social media. Twitter [Link to VA's twitter page: [https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwa](https://twitter.com/DeptVetAffairs?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwa)], Instagram [Link to VA's Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/deptvetaffairs/?hl=en>], Facebook [Link to VA's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VeteransAffairs/>], YouTube [Link to VA's YouTube page:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvOzPLm\\_bzjtpX-Htstp2vw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBvOzPLm_bzjtpX-Htstp2vw)], RallyPoint [Link: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/56052/question-rallypoint-great-place-start/>]. Deptvetaffairs. US Department of Veterans Affairs. No matter the social media, you can always find us with that blue checkmark. All right, and I am reminded by people smarter than me to remind you that the Department of Veterans Affairs does not endorse or officially sanction any entities that may be discussed in this podcast, nor any media, product or services they may provide. I'm saying that because, as you can tell, we got some new outro music this week. Every week, Borne the Battle will go out with something a veteran artist made. Something. Could be a song, could be poetry. Something made by veterans. If you are a veteran and would like to submit your music to the show, hit us up at [podcast@va.gov](mailto:podcast@va.gov) . What you're hearing now is the song "My Country" by Terry Josiah and Guy James from the Ninja Punch Music Album *Sounds Like Freedom, Vol. One*. Thank you for listening and we'll see you right here next week. Take care.

[00:44:32] Music

(Text Transcript Ends)