



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IATSE INITIATES WOUNDED MARINE GRADUATES OF CAREER TRAINING PROGRAM

SAN DIEGO, Jul. 28 – International President Thomas C. Short inducted 19 wounded Marines into three entertainment industry Locals this afternoon at a ceremony on the opening day of the IA's Mid-Summer General Executive Board Meeting being held here at the Westin Hotel.

Emmy-winning documentary filmmaker Kevin A. Lombard, co-founder of the Wounded Marine Careers Foundation (WMCF) and 37-year member of Local 600 (formerly Local 644) accepted the Union membership cards on behalf of the inaugural class graduates of the WMCF Training Center. The 19 Marines are now members of Local 600, Local 700, and Local 495. Graduates on hand representing the class included GySgt Nick Popaditch, Sgt Raul Espinosa, Sgt Roberto Villeda and Lcpl Brett Sobaski.

President Thomas Short said, upon conferring the membership cards, "We are proud to honor the sacrifice that you and your fellow Marines have made on behalf of our country, and our entire membership thanks you for your service. We know you will make a tremendous contribution to our industry and we welcome you to the IATSE. We are looking forward to your class being the first of many to follow."

A 501 (c)(3) corporation, the Wounded Marine Careers Foundation trains disabled veterans to learn new skills in the media arts and helps them start new careers in the civilian world. These Marines can now look forward to working in the entertainment field as editors, cameramen, soundmen and still photographers. The Training Center is located on the grounds of the Stu Segal Production Studio in San Diego.

The inaugural class encompassed a ten-week semester and was taught by IATSE members Chat Gunter of Local 52, and Local 600 members Levie Isaacks, Phil Caruso, Joia Speciale, and Kev Lombard.

The first graduation took place March 20, 2008, and since that time, each Marine has had at least five job offers for work within the entertainment industry. Of the nine medically

retired Marine graduates, five are working on either a full time or freelance basis. Of the ten active duty Marines, six have received job offers in the field of editing/post-production to start immediately upon their military retirement.

IATSE's full endorsement of the training program was key to acceptance by General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps; MajGen (Ret) Leslie Palm, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Marine Corps Association, and Col Gregory Boyle, commander of the Wounded Warrior Regiment.

The IATSE is an International Union that represents members employed in the stagecraft, motion picture and television production, and trade shows industries throughout the United States, its Territories, and Canada.

(For background information on the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees: www.iatse-intl.org.)

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PHOTO CAPTION:

IA President Thomas C. Short swears in 19 graduates from the first class of the Wounded Marine Careers Foundation. The four shown here with President Short (L) are L-R: LCpl Brett Sobaski, Sgt Roberto Villeda, Sgt Raul Espinosa, and GySgt Nick Popaditch.
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