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Adapt and Overcome



The last time we saw Kev Lombard was with a CamTram on page 10 of Film and Digital Times' April 2006 issue. Kev started as an assistant for legendary documentary cameramen Pete Henning and Mike Livesey. Among the incredibly wild and dangerous films they made was an ABC special on rafting the raging headwaters of the Ganges River.

Kev's father, Dick "Duke" Lombard was a marine in World War II. Back in Bridgeport, CT, he became a fireman, and in his spare time shot news for local stations with a Filmo. At age 39, Duke became a fulltime freelance news cameraman, and subsequently got a staff job at NBC in 1964.

Kev has had a distinguished career as a cinematographer. Some of the jobs his colleagues have envied most were his "Making of Victoria's Secret" commercials and fashion shows. Recently, Kev has been doing something very different.

Teaching and Technology

by Kev Lombard

In September of 2006, my wife, Judith Paixao and I were asked by a Navy Admiral to consider making a documentary about the wounded Marines who were recovering at Balboa Naval Hospital. We kicked the idea around and decided that their stories were just that: "their stories". We responded to the Admiral and his counterpart at Camp Pendleton with another proposal—that we put together a team of working filmmaking professionals to train wounded Marines in the various disciplines of film and television production. This would empower these young men to tell their own stories. It was also our belief that storytelling can be a valuable form of therapy.

Current technologies have allowed this to become a viable and affordable proposal. At first the US Navy dismissed our plan, but the USMC jumped on board immediately and asked us to continue to develop the concept. The USMC Command didn't want our school to be an arts and crafts project for the wounded Marines. They wanted to know that the participants in our program could use our training to secure entry level jobs in the industry. After fourteen months of development, the result is a ten-week intensive filmmakers' training program

that is creating new career paths for disabled veterans as they transition to civilian life.

I first gave Tom Weston, current VP of Local 600, a call. Tom liked our proposal (his son is a Marine) and put me in touch with Steve Poster, ASC, president of Local 600, and others. The IA has agreed to accept combat-wounded Center graduates into the Union, offering full accreditation and giving graduating Marines the ability to work as professional crew within the entertainment industry.

Cinematographer Levie Isaacks ASC and stills photographer Philip Caruso started the Marines' basic photography course in Jan '08 by teaching with the Canon Rebel XT_i digital SLR camera. Each Marine is issued his own Rebel XT_i. This tool affords the Marines instant feedback for acquiring composition and lighting skills before moving on to their cinematography training. From early on, Pete Abel, head of Abel Cine Tech, advised us on equipment and instructors. Because of its ruggedness and reliability, the Training Center chose the Panasonic HVX200 camera to teach motion picture photography. Barry Green, the HVX guru, was brought in to run his camera boot camp. For the initial three weeks of the course, Barry put the Marines and their cameras through a comprehensive training session.

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund gave each Marine a complete editing package. The Training Center chose 17" MacBook Pros loaded with Apple Final Cut Studio and Adobe Photoshop. Our post production faculty included Victor Maldonado, Apple Certified Final Cut Pro instructor, and Norman Smith, Emmy Award winning Editor - Director. The state-of-the-art tools, and the know-how acquired at the center, provide promising opportunities in the post production realm of the business.

To round out their story-telling, Professor James Eagan from USC taught a short film screenwriting course for all of the Marines training at the center. This writing class has opened up a new world to them. Sitting in class, listening to their stories, is truly inspiring. We are now at the halfway point in the inaugural semester and everything is starting to gel.