

October 30, 2006

## New Army video a 'humbling' experience

By [Gina Cavallaro](#)

Staff writer

The Army each year makes about a dozen of what it calls "hoo-ah videos," inspirational movie productions depicting motivated soldiers running, shooting or operating powerful equipment in larger-than-life slow motion shots.

The videos are shown in a variety of venues like conferences, meetings, gatherings of soldiers or community outreach events. As a tool for educating people or boosting morale, they usually cast operations and life in the Army in a positive light.

Now, suddenly, there is "Boots on the Ground," which opens with the bombing of a convoy of U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

The viewer's vantage point is from inside a Humvee riding behind the one that gets blown up. As the smoky scene fades, the viewer hears the blood-chilling sound of a soldier's voice desperately shouting, "Get up! Get up! Get up!"

"This is not a hoo-ah video," said Michael Anastasio, senior program manager for SYColeman Corp., under contract with the Army's Office of the Chief of Public Affairs to help design strategic communications.

"It tells a soldier story over time. The idea is to have people better understand the service and sacrifice of the soldiers telling their own story," Anastasio said.

The 12-minute video was produced in about six weeks and introduced Oct. 9 at the annual meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army in Washington, D.C.

It has already been widely viewed on the Web at the Army's home page, and was seen by top Army leaders touring the convention floor exhibits.

Hundreds attending the conference watched the "must-see" video, which organizers described as being "different from any video we've had before." One of those who watched was Gen. Richard Cody, vice chief of the Army.

"It's a very, very balanced video that shows a quick history of the Army and puts in perspective the rigors our soldiers have to put up with, that our family members have to put up with," Cody said.

Unlike the hooting and hollering that followed the recently unveiled "Army Strong" video — a short feature designed to present the Army's new recruiting ad campaign — "Boots on the Ground" engenders a somber silence, a few nods and knowing looks.

"It was humbling for me to watch," Cody said.

After the video's opening explosion scene fades out, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston fades in on screen and delivers the video's theme: "Every operation, if you look around the world today where the American people have committed soldiers ... combat operations, peacekeeping, peace

support missions, guerrilla insurgency kind of fights, humanitarian relief, humanitarian support, all those operations ... their mission's success depends on boots on the ground."

There are scenes from Iraq's streets and door-kicking scenes that evoke tension and fear. An apparently mortally wounded Iraqi soldier is shown laying his head down moments after a previous frame in which a U.S. soldier says, "You never know when it's going to be your time. It could happen in the blink of an eye."

Retired soldiers such as Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Jack Keane, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye and Gen. Barry McCaffrey take turns on camera with the younger faces and stronger voices of today's regular Joes.

"Putting boots on the ground is nothing new," one private first class says on screen. "The Army's been doing this for over 230 years. Putting boots on the ground and making a difference."

One of the most compelling appearances in the video is that of Dana Lamberson, the widow of Sgt. 1st Class Randall L. Lamberson, who was killed April 9 in Ramadi. The attack that claimed his life is recalled by his soldiers, with accompanying footage showing explosions and wounded soldiers being carried on litters.

Videos have been produced following other armed conflicts, such as the January 2002 "Generations" following initial operations in Afghanistan in late 2001. The Army made videos following Operation Desert Storm in 1991, too.

"I think the difference with 'Boots on the Ground' is that, in other videos, a lot of the focus has been on our weapons platforms. There are elements of that in this video, but the focus is on boots on the ground, on the soldier as a fighting machine," said Col. Dan Baggio, chief of the Media Relations Division in the Office of Chief of Public Affairs

"Because of the timeliness of where we're at right now, it's a video that's coming out during the very time we're in this conflict," Baggio said. "With Desert Storm videos, you'd see it after the fact. 'Boots on the Ground' has a more powerful impact because it's an ongoing conflict."

To get a free copy of the video, you can e-mail your name and address — before Dec. 31 — to [bog@maguire-reeder.com](mailto:bog@maguire-reeder.com).

[Back to top](#)



Copyright © 2006

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service.