



News Release

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Oscar Nominated Documentary *The Invisible War*, to Show in Bridgton

BRIDGTON, ME: On March 11th at 6:30pm, Tri-County Mental Health Services and the Maine VISTA Program will be hosting a free viewing of the 2013 Oscar nominated documentary feature, *The Invisible War* at Stevens Brook Elementary School in Bridgton. Family Crisis Services and Rape Education & Crisis Hotline/Sexual Assault Prevention & Response Services (REACH/SAPARS) are collaborating with Tri-County and the Maine VISTA Program on this event. This 2012 Sundance Film Festival winner of the U.S Documentary Audience Award depicts the emotional experiences of male and female sexual assault victims in the military. Professional counselors will be available at the viewing to support anyone who is strongly affected by the film.

A panel discussion will follow. Panelists will address the issue and the positive changes currently underway. Viewers are encouraged to ask questions and share their thoughts. The panel members will be Tri-County Mental Health Services' Executive Director Catherine Ryder, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Terry Moore, Maine Army National Guard Major Young, US Air Force Veteran and member of the National Women's Veterans Advisory Board Jennifer Norris, Ruth Moore DAV, and Client Services/Outreach Coordinator Lauren Dembski.

Tri-County Mental Health Services is Maine's most comprehensive agency dealing with the psychological and social well-being of children, adults, and elders. TCMHS serves about 10,000 individuals each year with innovative programs and services addressing mental health, substance abuse, intellectual disabilities, and more. Its philosophy of building toward recovery and sensitivity to traumatic experiences gives hope to individuals, families, and communities in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin and Oxford counties. For more information, visit www.tcmhs.org.

About the Film

From Oscar®- and Emmy®-nominated filmmaker Kirby Dick (*This Film Is Not Yet Rated*; *Twist of Faith*) comes *The Invisible War*, a groundbreaking investigation about one of America's most shameful and best kept secrets: the epidemic of rape within the U.S. military. The film paints a startling picture of the extent of the problem—today, a

female soldier in combat zones is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire. The Department of Defense estimates there were a staggering 19,300 service members sexually assaulted in 2010 alone.

Focusing on the powerfully emotional stories of rape victims, *The Invisible War* is a moving indictment of the systemic cover-up of military sex crimes, chronicling the women's struggles to rebuild their lives and fight for justice. It also features hard-hitting interviews with high-ranking military officials and members of Congress that reveal the perfect storm of conditions that exist for rape in the military, its long-hidden history, and what can be done to bring about much-needed change.

At the core of the film are often heartrending interviews with the rape survivors themselves—people like Kori Cioca, who was beaten and raped by her supervisor in the U.S. Coast Guard; Ariana Klay, a Marine who served in Iraq before being raped by a senior officer and his friend, then threatened with death; and Trina McDonald who was drugged and raped repeatedly by military policemen on her remote Naval station in Adak, Alaska. And it isn't just women; according to one study's estimate, one percent of men in the military—nearly 20,000 men—were reportedly sexually assaulted in 2009. And while rape victims in the civilian world can turn to an impartial police force and judicial system for help and justice, rape victims in the military must turn to their chain of command. Many rape victims find themselves forced to choose between speaking up and keeping their careers.

The Invisible War exposes the epidemic of sexual assault in the military – one of the most under-reported stories of our generation, a story the filmmakers are proud to be breaking to the nation and the world. They hope the film will help lead a national dialogue about the crime of rape perpetrated on the very people who have pledged to protect our country and are gratified to see the film is already making an impact. Since it premiered at Sundance, the film has been circulating through the highest levels of the Pentagon and the administration. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta watched *The Invisible War* on April 14. Two days later, he directed sexual assault investigations to military commanders of at least the rank of colonel. At the same time, Panetta announced that each branch of the armed forces would establish a Special Victims Unit. While these are promising first steps, much more needs to be done. To that end, *The Invisible War* is a call for our civilian and military leadership to listen. And to act.

For more information about the film, the production and those involved in creating this powerful documentary please visit: invisiblewarmovie.com

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