

Film shows veterans turning to ag

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press

A special screening of an award-winning documentary film about combat veterans engaged in farming is a highlight of the 2016 Northwest Agriculture Show.

Scheduled on the final day of the show, Jan. 28, from 10 a.m. to noon, the screening of "Ground Operations: Battlefields to Farmfields" is expected to include participation by a combat veteran engaged in farming, who will speak and answer questions.

The film follows a group of young men and women who talk about why they joined the military, how war changed them, how they've struggled to assimilate after returning home and how they found farming or ranching to be the answer to a dream.

The film won the Audience Favorite award at DocUtah International Film Festival and Best Solution award at the Cinema Verde Environmental Film Festival.

Producer-Director Dulanie Ellis said that in making the film, she hoped to bring



Courtesy of Dulanie Ellis

Phil Northcutt, a combat veteran who turned to farming after leaving the military, is one of many such veterans who are featured in a documentary film titled "Ground Operations: Battlefields to Farmfields." A special screening of the film will take place at the Northwest Agricultural Show on Jan. 28 from 10 a.m. to noon.

awareness to the growing trend of veterans turning to farming and elicit support for the farmer-veterans.

Since the documentary's release, she's also become a source of information for veterans who are looking to take up farming.

"I get a lot of emails from veterans who will say: 'Hi, I am leaving the Army after 12 years and I really want to farm. Can you help?'" Ellis said.

Ellis provides veterans with links to resources for training, education and, in some cases, funds to help transition from military service to farming in

several levels.

"Farming is helping with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and traumatic brain injury," she said. "There is accelerated cognitive repair for things like balance and hand-eye movement, anger management and other wounds of war.

"It is an amazing solution," she said. "At the same time that we are losing half of our farmers to retirement — and so much acreage is going to change hands in the next 10 to 20 years — we need to train a whole new generation of farmers and ranchers. And, coincidentally, here comes this whole generation of combat veterans who need a place to restore themselves and have a new mission," she said.

a 12-page booklet that comes with the DVD.

Ellis said the experience of making the film and helping veterans has been rewarding on



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