



**FLORENTINE FILMS**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **THE AMERICAN GI FORUM, HACR, AND FLORENTINE FILMS AGREE ON INTEGRATING THE VOICES OF HISPANIC VETERANS INTO “THE WAR”**

**WASHINGTON, DC / May 10, 2007** – The American GI Forum, the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility (HACR), and Florentine Films reached an understanding yesterday that recognizes legitimate Latino concerns about Ken Burns’s upcoming documentary series, “The War,” and equally recognizes that the artistic decisions of what appears in his film are his and his alone to make. They announce today that the narratives and voices of Hispanic World War II veterans will be incorporated into Ken Burns’s artistic vision for his film “The War.”

The upcoming 14½ hour documentary, due to air on PBS in September during Hispanic Heritage Month, tells the story of WWII from the perspective of veterans from four different American towns. “The role of Hispanic American veterans in WWII is one that lends itself to the universality of this film,” said Mr. Burns “and merits being included in my film.”

After listening to the concerns of the Latino community and political leaders about the lack of Hispanic stories, Mr. Burns and his team set out to find personal Latino stories and include them as supplemental material following the documentary. The proposed placement embodied in this approach was, however, universally rejected by Latino groups.

Yesterday in New York, Ken Burns met with Raul Tapia of the Washington, DC-based C2 Group; Mr. Tapia represents the American GI Forum, the largest and oldest Latino veterans group in the United States, and the Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility, a coalition of the fourteen largest Latino organizations. At the meeting, Mr. Burns said he had collected interviews with Latino veterans that he considers very powerful and agreed to include their on-camera testimony, personal archives, and combat experiences into “The War.” As he did in the series, Mr. Burns will personally direct and produce the creation of this new material.

“I believe these additional stories will enhance our series and deepen the nation’s understanding of the sacrifices made by so many Americans during the war,” said Mr. Burns. “And I am confident that they can be incorporated in a way consistent with the film’s focus on individual experiences and in a way that means nothing in the film that already exists will be changed. This has never been about changing my vision for the film. It is adding another layer of storytelling that will only enrich what we already have.”

“We appreciate Ken Burns’s filmmaking skills and are pleased that he will apply his talent to include the narrative and voices of Hispanic veterans into his series,” said Antonio Morales, National Commander of the American GI Forum. “Latinos have never been an addendum to American history. They always have been, are and always will be an integral part of our nation’s military.”

Manuel Mirabal, chairman of the board of HACR, said: “Together, corporate America, Latino leaders and visionary artists can leave a lasting imprint on American culture that will resonate with the vast majority of Americans today and for generations to come.”

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