

EDITOR'S PICK

Heroes and Hospitals



"ONCE YOU'RE successful with one film, related subjects seem to flow to you," says five-time Oscar nominee and two-time winner Terry Sanders '54, M.A. '67. "Certainly, war is a very dramatic theme that everybody is interested in."

Indeed, Sanders' impressive career — he has produced or directed dozens of dramatic features, television specials, films and documentaries, and is co-founder of the American Film Foundation — has

been built in large part on explorations of combat, from all angles.

He won his first Oscar in 1954 for the short *A Time Out of War*, and he won again in 1995 for the documentary *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, the story of Chinese-American artist Maya Lin, creator of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. And the 1962 movie *War Hunt*, produced by Sanders and directed by his brother Denis '52, M.A. '55, marked the film debut of Robert Redford.

Sanders' latest soldier story may be his most powerful yet. His feature documentary *Fighting for Life* is a gripping and emotional look at American military doctors that premiered at the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum in May and is now rolling out special screenings across the country. It will make its wide debut in theaters at the beginning of 2008.

The film shows us military doctors, nurses and medics working in Iraq; wounded soldiers and marines; as well as students at Uniformed Services University (USU) in Bethesda, the "West Point" of military medicine, where more than one-quarter of current active-duty military physicians were trained. *Fighting for Life* goes down to the individual level to portray the heroism of doctors and soldiers in war, following 21-year-old Army Specialist Crystal Davis from Iraq to Germany to Walter Reed Hospital as she fights to, in her words, "bounce back" from the loss of a leg.

Sanders and his crew — which included Jennifer Glos M.F.A. '05, a Bruin filmmaker who applied for

an associate producer position on *Fighting for Life* but quickly rose to become the co-producer — were given what Sanders describes as "amazing cooperation and access" to make their feature, from combat-support hospitals in the Iraq war zone, medevac flights with wounded soldiers, and military hospitals such as Walter Reed and the National Naval Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and Bethesda.

Fighting for Life grew out of a relationship with the subject of one of Sanders' earlier war films, USU Board of Regents chair Everett Alvarez. A POW in Vietnam for nearly nine years, Alvarez was chronicled by Sanders in the 1998 film *Return With Honor*.

The government kept trying to close USU to save money, so Alvarez's wife, Tammy, approached Sanders because, he says, "she knew about the power of film and felt one might help save the school from closure."

But then, "the Iraq War kept mushrooming and growing, and the film morphed into much more," Sanders adds — "an odyssey into the world of military medicine."

— Jack Feuer

Fighting for Life. From Academy Award-winning director Terry Sanders. A feature documentary on American military medicine from Iraq to Washington, D.C. For screening, release dates and other information, log on to www.fightingforlifethemovie.com.

MORE BEST BETS

NEW CHINESE CINEMA: THE UNOFFICIAL STORIES OF TANG TANG, PIGGY, LITTLE MOTH AND OTHERS

Billy Wilder Theater. Oct. 5-28. Tickets: \$10 online; \$9 at window; Alumni Association members, students, seniors, Cineclub members \$8; student or senior Cineclub members \$7. For screening times and information, call (310) 206-FILM or log on to www.cinema.ucla.edu.

The UCLA Film & Television Archive presents a different look in this year's version of its series on Chinese cinema, going beyond mainland China to a selection that encompasses Hong Kong and Taiwan. Co-presented with CalArts, the program includes premieres of Jia Zhangke's *Still Life and Dong*, and Ann Hui's wonderfully tragic-comic *The Postmodern Life of My Aunt*, starring Hong Kong's Chow Yun-Fat and mainland star Siqin Gaowa.

