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For Immediate Release

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MPT to air documentary *The Hello Girls* on Veterans Day

Film is among 12 hours of veteran-focused programming airing November 6-12

OWINGS MILLS, MD – Maryland Public Television (MPT) will broadcast *The Hello Girls* on Saturday, November 11 at 9 p.m. on MPT-HD. The documentary will make its MPT premiere as part of 12 hours of programming broadcast by the statewide public TV network to recognize past and present members of the military and their families during and around Veterans Day.

Directed by Jim Theres, *The Hello Girls* tells the story of the 223 American women sent to France by the U.S. Army Signal Corps to serve as telephone operators – “Hello Girls” – during World War I. By the conclusion of the war, they had connected more than 26 million calls and were recognized by General John J. Pershing for their service.

Hello Girls swore Army oaths, wore uniforms, held rank, and were subject to military justice. When they returned home, however, the U.S. government told them they were never soldiers. For 60 years, they fought their own government for recognition. In 1977, with the help of attorney Mark Hough, Sen. Barry Goldwater, and Congresswoman Lindy Boggs, they were finally recognized as U.S. military and received honorable discharges. In March, Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester, Ranking Member Jerry Moran, and Sens. Maggie Hassan and Marsha Blackburn introduced the *Hello Girls Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2023* to recognize the Hello Girls’ landmark service during WWI.

Director Theres discovered this story while working as a speechwriter for the Department of Veterans Affairs. He worked closely with Elizabeth Cobbs, author of the book *The Hello Girls: America’s First Female Soldiers*, to develop the film, which includes rare, 100-year-old film footage courtesy of the National Archives and never-before-seen photos from the personal archives of Hello Girls’ family members.

The Hello Girls airs on Veterans Day as part of MPT’s program lineup honoring past and present members of the military and their families during the week of November 6-12. Additional programs airing on MPT-HD and MPT2/Create® surrounding the federal holiday include the three-part documentary *Maryland Vietnam War Stories*; the PBS special *Salute to Service: A Veterans Day Celebration*; and *P.O.W.: Passing on Wisdom*, which shares inspirational stories of Vietnam prisoners of war and explores how their experiences can be used as a guide for anyone dealing with contemporary life challenges.

In addition to airing on MPT-HD, MPT2/Create® and through each channel’s livestream, programs celebrating veterans can be found at mpt.org/veterans, on MPT’s [online video player](#), and on the [PBS App](#). MPT’s full Veterans Day broadcast lineup is as follows:

MPT Veterans Day programming lineup

***Independent Lens: Three Chaplains* – Mon., Nov. 6, 10 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Three Muslim chaplains in the U.S. military face resistance and uncertainty as they uphold the First Amendment and practice their faith. They work to rise through the ranks while calling for religious equality. A program trailer is available [HERE](#).

***To Be of Service* – Tues., Nov. 7, 10 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

This 90-minute documentary follows several veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the service dogs helping them return to the world. Through the veterans' and dogs' deeply bonded relationships, viewers experience the duality of violence and redemption through the lens of recovery from the trauma of warfare.

***Salute to Service: A Veterans Day Celebration* – Fri., Nov. 10, 9:30 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

Join host Jon Stewart for a heartfelt Veterans Day celebration with the U.S. Army Field Band. Honor service members past and present alongside a star-studded lineup of musical guests, including country music powerhouse Mickey Guyton, singer-songwriter Amanda Shires, and Broadway star Mandy Gonzalez. More information is available [HERE](#).

***Shrapnel Down: My Korean War Story* – Fri., Nov. 10, 10:30 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

This 30-minute documentary highlights never-before-seen war footage and features an interview with Gunner's Mate Bill Rector, who documented his war experiences using an 8mm camera. The film offers a revealing glimpse into the story of one American war veteran seen through the lens of his camera.

***Dear Sirs* – Sat., Nov. 11, 7 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

After discovering an archive detailing the horrifying journey of his grandfather as an American P.O.W. during World War II, a young man sets out 75 years later to retrace his relative's footsteps across Germany on bicycle, piecing together an untold story to understand the man who helped raise him.

***Maryland Vietnam War Stories* – Sat., Nov. 11, 8 p.m. (MPT2/Create®)**

Over the course of this three-part, three-hour documentary, some 100 veterans tell the story of the Vietnam War in their own words, reflecting on their service in ways that are sometimes heart-breaking but always insightful.

***The Hello Girls* - Sat., Nov. 11, 9 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

In 1918, the U.S. Army Signal Corps sent 223 women to France as telephone operators to help win the Great War. They were intrepid, united in a common cause and they wanted to save France. Their story is told through 100-year-old letters, photos, rare archival footage, and interviews with family and historians.

***Stranger at Home: Healing the Psychological Wounds of War* – Sat., Nov. 11, 10 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

This hour-long documentary weaves the life-altering stories of an Army Ranger involved in the killing of football star Pat Tillman; a Navy psychologist forced into whistleblowing; and a Vietnam veteran turned trauma expert as they work to transform military mental health.

***P.O.W.: Passing on Wisdom* – Sat., Nov. 11, 11 p.m. (MPT-HD)**

Vietnam prisoners of war recall their experiences of not only surviving imprisonment but finding growth and gratitude afterward. In their reflections, the POW's reveal the humanity that belies their circumstances of survival and how the U.S. Naval Academy's principles of leadership and camaraderie helped guide them through the darkness. Their stories are juxtaposed with those of modern-era midshipmen who apply the same foundational principles to their own experiences of trauma and growth.

The 100 Days: Desert Storm - 1991 – Sun., Nov. 12, 6 p.m. (MPT-HD)

On January 17, 1991, the U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 678, giving Iraq an ultimatum to leave Kuwait following its invasion a year before. During the following 100 days, the largest international coalition since World War II was formed to force Iraq out. Operation Desert Shield would become Desert Storm, and a war costing \$61 billion dollars would be over in a matter of weeks, but the war's consequences are still felt today.

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About Maryland Public Television

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service member offering entertaining, educational, and inspiring content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices. A state agency, it operates under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission. MPT creates and distributes local, regional, and national content and is a frequent winner of regional Emmy® awards. MPT's commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through instructional events and Thinkport.org. MPT's year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources on a wide range of topics. For more information visit mpt.org.