



## **“SOLDIERS OF PAINT” DIRECTORS’ STATEMENT**

In 2006 Mike was in a paintball game as part of a friend’s bachelor party. One of the teenage referees asked the group if they were going to go to “D-Day” that year. No one knew what he was talking about. Shocked by their ignorance, he explained that “D-Day” is a massive paintball battle held every year in Oklahoma that re-creates the invasion of Normandy.

Intrigued, Mike researched the event online and sent the link to Doug. We had been talking about making another film together and had been trying to come up with a fresh idea. We agreed it was an interesting subject. Several months later Doug suggested we go to Oklahoma to witness the event and see if it would indeed make good material for a film.

Doug made contact with the owner of the event, Dewayne Convirs, who granted us all-access press passes. We packed up Mike’s car with camping gear, a couple of borrowed mini-DV cameras and microphones, and set out on the road from our homes in Washington, DC., not sure what to expect.

Two days and 1,500 miles later we arrived just in time to see the summer sun set over the rolling hills of the D-Day Adventure Park in northeastern Oklahoma. We were assigned a camping spot and soon slipped into our sleeping bags for the night.

At dawn, we were awoken by the sound of a bugler playing “reveille” amplified through the camp’s sound system. We stumbled out of our tents and discovered we were in the midst of two armies assembling for war. We went around talking to people and it didn’t take long before we realized that this family event—attended by players from all over the world—was indeed worthy of the long drive. We conducted several interviews with people during the days leading up to battle and were impressed by the level of sophistication and commitment the players had in striving to make the battle conditions as authentic as possible. We were moved by several participants who told us they play to honor the veterans who actually fought for those beaches in France. Clearly this wasn’t just a paintball game—it was a literal re-creation of Normandy in Oklahoma, where the opposing armies were determined to achieve victory. We couldn’t wait to see the battle.

In the morning of day of the battle we jumped into the last truck loaded with soldiers heading for the boats at Utah Beach. Doug went into one of the boats to be with and film the first wave of soldiers as they stormed the beach. Mike went to the top of the opposite hill to film from a wider perspective. Several hours later we met up at the Allied communication headquarters. Doug, covered in paint and black and blue welts, walked up with a huge smile. He said the battle was maybe the most thrilling experience of his life. He was sure the footage he had was incredible. We both agreed then that this was a story worthy of telling in a documentary feature film.

Making a feature-length film, however, requires resources beyond our means. To cover this event properly, we need to return to the event in 2008 with high-definition cameras and a much larger crew so we can capture all the different aspects of the event. Additionally, we like to make strong, character-driven films and that requires significant travel expenses so we can be with and film players as they prepare throughout the year for the event.

So we’ve taken what we shot from last year’s event and created a promotion movie trailer to give people an idea of what the film would be about and how it might look. We’ve packaged it with a website that describes what our intentions are. With these materials we hope to build interest in our project and attract investors willing to help us cover the cost of creating the feature-length film. info

