



PAMPLIN HISTORICAL PARK & THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE CIVIL WAR SOLDIER

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PAMPLIN HISTORICAL PARK RELEASES NEW FILM ON COMBAT

Dinwiddie County, Virginia

What do modern visitors see when they stand on Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg, the Hornet's Nest at Shiloh, or the Dead Angle at Kennesaw Mountain? Can they look beyond monuments, park roads, or tourists to visualize the actual events that occurred on that hallowed ground more than 140 years ago? If they do imagine a battle, what kind of mental picture do they draw? Does it really capture the horrors that took place?

These are the questions that motivated officials at Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier when they set out two years ago to create the most honest museum film ever made about Civil War combat. The result, a forty-nine minute movie entitled "War So Terrible," recently debuted at the Park's Breakthrough Theater.

Working with Historical Films of Lansing, Michigan, which produced the acclaimed new movies at Antietam National Battlefield and Fredericksburg National Military Park, Pamplin Historical Park's staff crafted a script that tells a compelling story while teaching visitors how perceptions of combat during the Civil War changed over time.

"War So Terrible" follows the wartime careers of two privates, Benjamin Franklin Meyers of the Union army and Andrew Jackson Stewart of the Confederacy as their attitudes toward battle evolve with their experience in war. Opponents in an 1861 engagement, Meyers and Stewart meet again in a dramatic late-war assault, which provides the occasion thirty-one years later for a ceremony in Stewart's hometown. Through a series of flashbacks, "War So Terrible" graphically depicts the realities of combat and explores how those realities differed from the way subsequent generations portrayed and remembered the Civil War.

Director Brad Graham filmed the movie at Virginia's Fort Pickett in Nottoway County, 35 miles west of Petersburg. "Fort Pickett proved to be ideal for the set," said A. Wilson Greene, the Park's executive director. "Brad's 1864 earthworks are the best I've seen in any movie." Producer Marcia Cipriani led the team in selecting a cast of professional actors from as far away as California to portray Meyers, Stewart, and the other main characters, both as Civil War soldiers and as veterans in 1895. A cadre of seasoned re-enactors (not an overweight soldier among them) supplemented the professional cast. The filming consumed several weeks during the fall of 2004.

Pamplin Historical Park produced two versions of “War So Terrible.” The long version might be inappropriate for younger children. “We euphemistically call it PG-15,” said Greene. “The combat scenes are more graphic than most visitors are accustomed to seeing in a museum film.” A shorter version, only twenty-three minutes in length, is aimed at school groups and younger children and omits the more disturbing depictions of the wages of war.

“War So Terrible” is shown daily at Pamplin Historical Park in the Breakthrough Theater at the Park’s Battlefield Center. In October, the Park will begin showing the film in its new \$900,000 education center. DVDs of either the long or short version of “War So Terrible” are available through Pamplin Historical Park’s Civil War Store, “We hope that after seeing this motion picture, our visitors will never look at a Civil War battlefield in quite the same way” said Greene.

Pamplin Historical Park is located in Dinwiddie County, Virginia, 31 miles south of Richmond. The 422-acre privately owned Park contains four museums, four historic structures, and more than three miles of walking trails through the April 2, 1865 Breakthrough Battlefield. For more information go to www.pamplinpark.org or call 804-861-2408.