

Accidental meeting leads to documentary about Newport's Sgt. Ingram

BY MICHELLE SWARTZ
mswartz@monroenews.com

While filming a documentary about Vietnam veterans, producer Keith Famie stumbled upon a Monroe family who had their own story to tell about an American hero.

"It accidentally happened. I didn't even know the Ingram family at that time," he said about meeting the Ingram family while filming Vietnam veterans in April at Selfridge Air National Base.

But most of Monroe County already knew about the Ingram family from Newport. Days earlier, on April 17, Army Sgt. Michael Ingram Jr., 23, was killed in action while serving in Afghanistan.

On the day Mr. Famie was filming the veterans at Selfridge, Mike and Julie Ingram of Newport, father and stepmother of Sgt. Ingram, were in attendance for the arrival of their son's remains.

Their chance encounter was the beginning of the making of a 20-minute documentary titled "One Soldier's Story," produced by Mr. Famie from Visionalist Entertainment Productions, Wixom.

It tells the story of Sgt. Ingram through interviews with family and friends living in Monroe County. Besides filming at Selfridge, the crew filmed Sgt. Ingram's funeral, where he was he was buried April 30 at St. Joseph Cemetery with full military honors.

"The Ingram family told me his story about him going to war and his experiences there," Mr. Famie said. "They also explained how he could have come home early (due to an injury) but decided to stay."

Footage from the documentary includes interviews at the family's Newport home,

GET TICKETS FOR MOVIE DEBUT

Tickets are on sale for the premiere of the 20-minute documentary "One Soldier's Story."

It tells the story of Army Sgt. Michael Ingram Jr., 23, of Newport, who was killed April 17 in Afghanistan while on patrol.

The documentary will be a part of the premiere of "Our Vietnam Generation" by Keith Famie, executive producer of Visionalist Entertainment Productions based in Wixom.

The premiere will be Jan. 28 at Fox Theatre, 2211 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

Prices are \$25 and \$35 through Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000, www.ticketmaster.com, the Fox Theatre box office at (313) 471-3200 or by calling (248) 869-0096.

One soldier's story



From Page 1C

Movie (cont.)

the war memorial at Veterans Park, and the billboard along N. Telegraph Rd. It also includes interviews of Sgt. Ingram's mother and stepfather, Trish and Ron Kitts of Grand Junction, Colo.

"It's about how one soldier goes off to war, what happens when they die and how a community comes together to wrap their arms around them and embrace their life. It also has personal stories that relate to Michael told by family and friends," he said. "It represents so much for so many who go off to war and who have been killed. It will be one soldier's story."

Mrs. Ingram, stepmother of Sgt. Ingram, said the family appreciates Mr. Famie's effort with the documentary.

"It's very personal but we look at it as more of an honor than anything else," she said.

"(Mr. Famie) came to us. He's incredible and a great guy. He's really been involved."

The family struggles with the loss of Sgt. Ingram, who died six months ago.

"I ask myself every day, why Mikie?" she said. "It's been really hard but we hope the documentary will help people understand what families go through when this happens. I have to say that the community has been incredible to us. Everyone has been great."

While filming the documentary, Mr. Famie was wrapping up a documentary called "Our Vietnam Generation." The film follows Vietnam veterans living in Michigan who have become successful in life but still are haunted by the memories of war.

"Vietnam veterans are caregivers of World War II vets and guardians of the current military," said Mr.

Famie, a nine-time Emmy Award winner.

He traveled throughout Michigan to shoot other related Vietnam markers, such as the Moving Wall, the Rolling Thunder's Ride to Remember in Howell and the replica of the National Veterans Memorial in Hamburg.

Both documentaries will premiere Jan. 28 at Fox Theatre in Detroit. The event will feature speakers from the Vietnam generation, the Michigan Army National Guard band, a candlelight vigil and the names of Vietnam veterans will be shown on the screen while Cornerstone Concert Choir sings "Amazing Grace." Monroenative Paul W. Smith of WJR's 760 will emcee the event.

For more information about "Our Vietnam Generation," visit www.ourvietnamgeneration.com.