



# Gunner Palace

and

## Supporting the Troops

An informal practical guide to helping our soldier's stories be heard.

**“Really supporting the troops is more than just tying a yellow ribbon or putting a bumper sticker on your car. Supporting the troops means learning about their lives and their struggle-and *Gunner Palace* can help you do that.”** - Paul Rieckhoff, Iraq War Veteran and Executive Director of Operation Truth.

As Iraq war vet Paul Rieckhoff says above, *Gunner Palace* can help people learn about the lives and struggles of our troops in Iraq. It does this by allowing them to tell their stories and in their own words. Filmmaker Michael Tucker takes a back seat allowing the experiences and day-to-day reality of the soldiers to provide viewers a window into the world of the war they are fighting on behalf of our country.

This document is meant as an informal guide for you to help spread the word of *Gunner Palace* within your community and circle of family and friends. All of this info is meant to serve as helpful in any efforts you decide you want to take in supporting the film and in bringing the film to as wide as audience as possible. ***The more people who see this film, the more people will really see what our troops are experiencing.*** It provides talking points for emails or letters, information on group ticket sales. In addition, it provides a list of organizations and websites that you can consult for more information and guidance on how to support the troops.

## How to spread the word on *Gunner Palace*...

### **E-MAIL OR LETTERS:**

Sending an email or a letter to your friends or family explaining what the film is and how it touched you or why they should see it is one way to help spread the word on this film and one way to help these soldier's stories be heard.

Materials to include in an email or letter:

### **The film's story:**

In the heart of Baghdad, 400 American soldiers carry out their mission from the ruins of a bombed-out pleasure palace built by Saddam Hussein. With total access to all operations and activities, Director Mike Tucker's film chronicles the day-to-day reality of war for these men and women which involves everything from executing raids on suspected terrorists, enduring roadside bombs and mortar attacks to post-raid parties around the palace pool. Welcome to a place called "Gunner Palace" and a time that the soldiers who live there jokingly call "minor combat" - where the enemy is rarely seen, the danger is all around, and the only thing that matters is surviving. Told first-hand by the troops, *Gunner Palace* presents a thought provoking portrait of a dangerous and chaotic war that is personal, highly emotional, surprisingly amusing and thoroughly fascinating.

The film's official website which has links to the film's trailers. [www.gunnerpalace.com](http://www.gunnerpalace.com)

Be sure to also include a personal note about how the film touched you or what it made you think about. Think of this as your own movie review. You're the critic now and the cameras are rolling!

### **Some talking points to mention in your review could include the following:**

- 400 American soldiers carry out their mission from a bombed-out pleasure palace once owned by Saddam Hussein. This is their story."
- Some War Stories Will Never Make The Nightly News. This Is One Of Them.
- A Different Kind Of War Movie.
- This film tells the truth about the Iraq War without a political agenda from the mouths of the soldiers on the ground.
- *Gunner Palace* offers a raw and in-depth look at the daily activities of our troops.
- *Gunner Palace* is pro-soldier not anti-war or pro-war.
- It's the first film about a war to be released while that war was still happening.

- Soldiers in the film and out of the film endorse the film is a true accounting of their experiences as soldiers in war - whether or not it's WW2, Vietnam, Desert Storm or the current war in Iraq.
- The film shows so much more than that what is on the news. It has an important message direct from the soldiers.
- *Gunner Palace* reveals the humanity of the American soldier. They laugh, they are scared, they are proud and they have doubts.
- *Gunner Palace* is the soldiers' story told in their own words. This film reminds us that behind every soldier there is a story and a human being. This is their own "Fahrenheit 9/11".
- *Gunner Palace* reminds us to not forget about the soldiers. They are continuing to fight in harms way whether or not it is the front page of the news.

## Quotes:

Feel free to put these quotes into your email or letters.

"If you're an OIF vet...**SEE THIS FILM.** If you're family of a soldier...**SEE THIS FILM.** If you've never had any contact with the military...**SEE THIS FILM.** If you're for or against the war, red state or blue state...**SEE THIS FILM.**

This is **a truly amazing piece of work.** The filmmaker, Mike Tucker, went to Baghdad on his own hook and found a unit to follow around. No embeds, no DoD handlers, no PAO supervision...he just showed up and started living with these guys. There are literally no holds barred in this film. Go see it. **It will be the best two hours you spend this year.** -Raymond A. Kimball - Captain, U.S. Cavalry

"**Unforgettable.** A raw, intimate, and improbably funny portrait of the situation in Iraq. *Gunner Palace* is so startling because it shows just how complicated the reality of this war has been. It may not change your mind, but it will certainly deepen your perception and challenge your assumptions, whatever they may be. ***Gunner Palace* is a movie no one should miss.**" A.O. Scott, New York Times

## **THE POETRY OF SPECIALIST RICHMOND SHAW a.k.a. THE PALACE POET**

When we take a dip, we try to stick to the script  
 But when those guns start blazing and our friends get hit  
 That's when our hearts start racing and our stomachs get whoozy.  
 Cuz for y'all this is just a show, but we live in this movie.

## **Where to see *Gunner Palace*...**

*Gunner Palace* will open in NY, LA, DC and SF on March 4<sup>th</sup>. It will expand to the top 10 to 15 markets on March 11 and then to the top 20 to 40 markets on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

If you're curious to see *Gunner Palace*, and the theater in your area is not playing it, feel free to contact the manager of the theater to express your interest in seeing the film. Often, if theaters see that public interest in a particular title has been piqued, it will encourage them to play the movie. You can check [www.gunnerpalace.com](http://www.gunnerpalace.com) to see updated lists of theatrical play-dates, and if your town is not represented, calling your local theater is an option. Feel free to mention Palm Pictures if they ask who to contact to book the film. Neal Block at 212-320-3653 will happily field calls from theater managers or booking companies.

### **GROUP ATTENDENCE**

Another way you can help bring the soldier's stories to more people is to organize a group trip to your local theater. We've created a toll free number for interested parties. Simply call the number, leave a message and you will receive a return call about how to go about arranging sales of tickets to your group. This is a great way for you, your family and your friends to join in the nationwide conversation on what our troops are experiencing. Co-Director and Producer Petra Epperlein has this to say on the subject...

"Another thing that happened to us, we met a father of a soldier- he went to the screening of the film with us and after the film he told me afterwards that he was really glad that this film is in their lives because it gives them a base of communication with their son. His son already left the army, but was not talking about it. He wasn't telling them anything about it because the experience of war is so foreign to normal life. It is very difficult for people who haven't been there to understand anything about it. After the whole family has seen this film, they actually started talking about it together. The father was actually glad that through this film they had a base of communication."

Don't worry if you have seen it once before. Seeing it a second or even third or fourth time adds new perspective and greater insight into the soldier's world. You get more out of it every time you see it.

**Call 1-800-354-4403 for more information on Group Sales.**

## TEEN EDUCATION

Encourage local community groups such as sports teams, church groups or neighborhood friends or high school teachers you may know to make an event out of taking a group to see *Gunner Palace*. Many of today's young men and women are being recruited by the military to join the armed forces. These young men and women are the most sought-after candidates for military duty. *Gunner Palace* shows them the realities of what they're about to get themselves into. It brings them the stories and voices of those soldiers that they will likely replace on the battlefield. *Gunner Palace* can help educate them on the realities of war so they can make an educated guess about pursuing a career in the military.

The language in the film:

*Gunner Palace* received an R rating "For Language". This rating is presently under appeal. There are several reasons for the appeal having to do with censorship and the context of reality based films. Below is a statement from the director of the film Michael Tucker, on this issue:

"Like many of the soldiers featured in the film, I walked into a recruiting station when I was sixteen and went to basic training when I was seventeen. There is something absurd about the idea that young Americans are old enough to consider enlisting in the military, but are not old enough to see a film portraying what life is really like for those that are currently in it.

When filming *Gunner Palace*, all the soldiers asked is that we "tell it like is." We've stayed true to their wishes because we think that it is essential that *their* experience is shared with the American public. That means the good and the bad. This is real war, not the latest Hollywood version of it. Most of the soldiers in the film are just out of high school. This is their language, their reality and their story. In the film, the soldiers are simply doing what they have done since four letter words were invented. As a nation, we talk a lot about supporting the troops, a great way to start would be by letting them tell their story without censoring it.

A 'PG-13' rating would enable mature teenagers to see a film that is incredibly relevant if not vital to their own lives. The traditional 'R' rating sends the message that they aren't old enough to know the truth. If the MPAA insists in giving *Gunner Palace* an 'R' rating, it should be an 'R' for reality. - Michael Tucker

Is there profanity in the film? Yes. Is it worse than anything on the latest CD or what is heard in the hallways of American high schools? No. The soldiers in the film are simply reacting to the violence and intensity they live in.

When a school board in Mississippi banned Tim O'Brien's Vietnam novel *The Things They Carried* from a high school reading list in 2003, George County High School junior student Lauren Brown had this to say , "I think it is very foolish for the school board to

try to candy-coat war. It's not like soldiers in war are saying 'dang it.' Our teacher told us in advance that it would have bad language. But that's war."

We encourage you not to let the language in the film deter you from encouraging others to see it. If you would like to find out more about our appeal or to sign a petition to change the rating for Gunner Palace being sent to MPAA President Dan Glickman, please visit [www.gunnerpalace.com](http://www.gunnerpalace.com).

**RESOURCES:**

The list of resources below link to some websites addressing some of the themes presented in the film. This list is just a sampling of the websites available on the Internet.

<http://www.gunnerpalace.com>

<http://www.optruth.org>

<http://www.fisherhouse.org/>

<http://www.homesforourtroops.org/>

<http://www.operationcomfort.com/>

<http://booksforsoldiers.com/>

<http://www.operationiraqichildren.org/>

<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/>

<http://www.iraqischools.com/>