



*Filmmaker To Honor Local Veterans In El Monte And Glendale With Sneak Peek*

This Thursday, Nov. 10 is extraordinarily special this year for a number of reasons. It is officially the Marine Corps Birthday and the day before Veteran's Day. It is also the day that award-winning independent filmmaker Kyle Olson (Letters To Ashleigh) is honoring local veterans residing at Mercy Housing California's El Monte Veterans Village and Veterans Village Apartments, A Thomas Safran & Assoc. Property, in Glendale, with an exclusive sneak peek screening from his new documentary, *The Last Signal*, which beautifully captures two World War II veterans reuniting for the first time in 70 years.

The story, 70-years-in-the-making, gained worldwide attention last year when the daughter of Chicago-based 92-year-old Raymond "DeVere" Johnson, believed to be the last surviving World War II veteran of the Navy ship LST-218, posted on Facebook asking for help in finding him a fellow shipmate. In just days, the post went viral, garnering over one million hits and attention from media outlets from all over the world. Weeks later, 91-year-old veteran John Heimsoth was uncovered and these two great men scheduled a reunion. While John attended several reunions for the surviving crew of the LST-218 throughout the years, DeVere never knew of the reunions, nor did he seek them out. It was only after the Facebook post went viral that he began to open up to his family about life in the war. Olson and his team traveled with Johnson and his daughter to St. Louis, Missouri and Heimsoth's home in Stover for the historical and much anticipated reunion.

"Every three minutes, a WWII veteran dies. History is lost when stories aren't shared," said Olson who, after learning about it on Facebook, quickly contacted the families, secured the rights to the story, facilitated the reunion and began production on the documentary. "As an independent filmmaker, as an American, I immediately knew I wanted to document this incredible story on film to help educate and inspire people of all ages. We are proud to be able to do that with *The Last Signal* and are honored to share, for the first time, footage from the film with veterans and their families currently residing at Mercy Housing California's El Monte Veterans Village and at the Veterans Village Apartments in Glendale."

The first stop on Olson's mini sneak peek tour will be during the New Directions for Veterans Veteran's Day celebration at Mercy Housing California's El Monte Veterans Village. The landmark partnership between Mercy Housing California and New Directions, creates affordable, service enriched, supportive living for homeless veterans in the Los Angeles area. Close to 40 people are expected to assemble in the facility's community room for the celebration lunch and screening. Olson will introduce the film at 1 p.m. which will then be followed with a Q&A and open dialogue between Olson, El Monte Veterans Village representatives and members of the audience.

At 4:30 p.m., Olson and his team will present another sneak peek screening of *The Last Signal* at the Veterans Village Apartments in Glendale. Following the screening, there will again be a Q&A and open discussion with the filmmakers and attending residents and special guests as well as a reception complete with food and drinks.

"Mercy Housing is grateful to host the screening of this *The Last Signal* for our residents prior to Veterans Day. It's a touching tribute and documentary reminding us of the sacrifice that our veterans make and for which we are so indebted," said Ed Holder, Mercy Housing Regional Vice President of Real Estate Development.

"We are proud to honor these heroes today for their sacrifice and service," continued Yvette Kelley, New Directions for Veterans President and CEO. "This film is a wonderful reminder of that on Veterans Day and all days."

"For these men, this was much more than a reunion. *The Last Signal* proves it is never too late to make history, or share it, even at the end of life," said Olson who is currently securing finishing funds for the film. "The story is also a testament to the power of the internet community and its ability come together to help our nation's heroes."