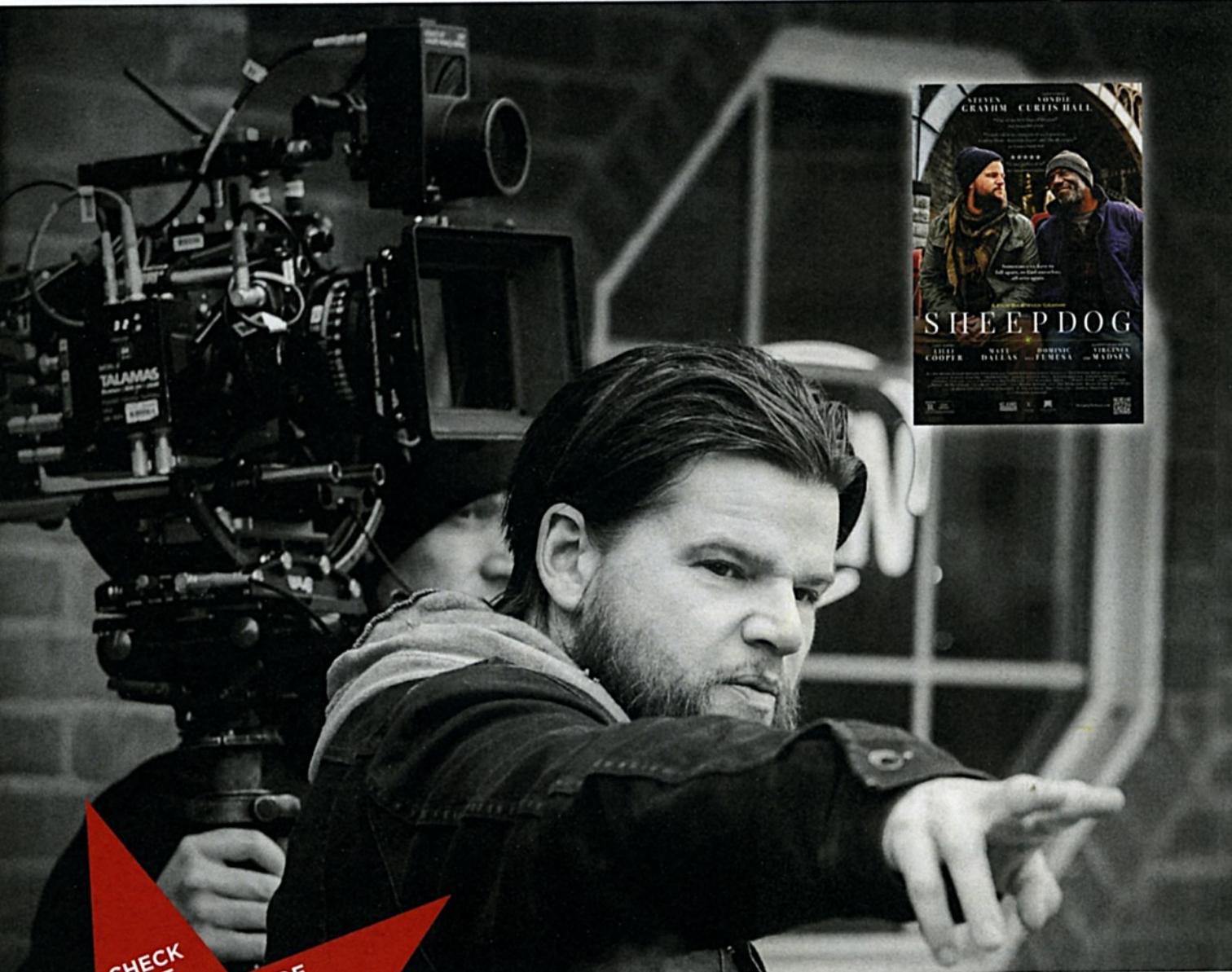


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Delivering A Message of Hope

Award-winning *SHEEPDOG* movie explores recovery, redemption and healing for combat veterans and military families; first film to address Post Traumatic Growth (PTG)

PAGE 13

Cover Story

By DONNA BOYLE SCHWARTZ



Delivering a Message of Hope

Award-winning *SHEEPDOG* movie explores recovery, redemption and healing for combat veterans and military families; first film to address Post Traumatic Growth (PTG)

Many military troops, veterans, and their families suffer in the shadows from a host of behavioral health issues stemming from combat and active-duty service, but a new award-winning movie, *SHEEPDOG*, illuminates their struggles and delivering a powerful message of healing and hope.

SHEEPDOG has been heralded as, "one of the best films of the year," following a sold-out, nationwide film festival run, where it garnered multiple major awards wins in all categories, including Jury Award for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, and Audience Award for Best Narrative Film. The film stars writer/director Steven Grayhm in a breakthrough role as U.S. Army veteran Calvin Cole; along with Academy Award nominee Virginia Madsen (*Sideways*), Emmy nominee Vondie Curtis Hall (*The Recruit*), Tony nominee Lilli Cooper (*Broadway's Tootsie*), Screen Actors Guild nominee Dominic Fumusa (*Dexter*), and Matt Dallas (*Kyle XY*.)

Allen Media Group Motion Pictures released *SHEEPDOG* in select cities in December and is expanding distribution nationwide in January 2026: "We are very excited to partner with filmmaker Steven Grayhm to bring

SHEEPDOG exclusively to theatres nationwide this winter," said Byron Allen, Founder/Chairman/CEO Allen Media Group. "Grayhm's uplifting original story is an inspirational tribute to all those affected by combat-based psychological trauma."

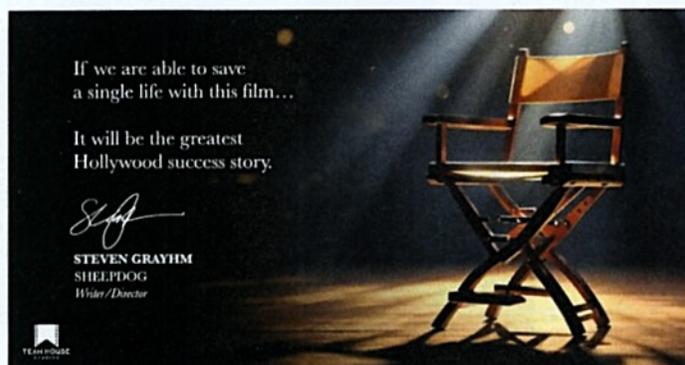
SHEEPDOG follows a decorated combat veteran (Grayhm) who is court ordered into treatment when an ex-convict shows up on his doorstep and reveals that he must put himself back together again. *SHEEPDOG* is the first film that explores the physical and psychological repercussions of trauma, with a focus on Post Traumatic Growth (PTG). It is a story about recovery, redemption, and healing; themes that mirror the post-pandemic zeitgeist.

"Today's military troops and veterans face a range of challenges—many of which aren't visible from the outside," Grayhm explains. "One of the most pressing is the invisible aftermath of service: PTS, moral injury, anxiety and depression – struggles that don't end when the uniform comes off. Veterans often face these battles in silence, weighed down by stigma, isolation, or the belief that seeking help is a sign of weakness or that healing isn't possible.

"Another challenge is reintegration – returning to civilian life after deployment," he continues. "It's more than just finding a job or a place to live. It's trying to reconnect with a world that often doesn't understand what you've experienced, and sometimes, doesn't know how to ask. And we can't forget the burden placed on military families and spouses, who often carry the emotional weight of service without recognition, resources, or support of their own.

SHEEPDOG aims to meet those challenges with honesty, compassion, and hope. This is not a war film – it's a Post Traumatic GROWTH film. It picks up where most stories end: years after the last deployment, when the parades have stopped, and when the real battle for healing begins.

"By telling an authentic, unfiltered story rooted in lived experience, *SHEEPDOG* gives veterans permission to feel, to speak and to seek



help without shame. It reminds them that they are not alone, that their struggles are valid, and that healing—while hard—is possible. For civilians, families, and communities, the film serves as a bridge, helping them understand what service really costs, and what support really looks like. It challenges all of us to do better—to listen, to show up, and to fight for the people who once fought for us. *SHEEPDOG* is more than a film, it's a conversation...a call to action...and, most importantly, a source of hope."

Although Grayhm himself is not a combat veteran, he grew up listening to his grandfather discuss being captured during the Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II. "He endured five years of forced labor, captivity and unimaginable torture in a German camp," Grayhm relates. "I grew up listening to his stories—testimonies of survival, resilience and hope. His vivid recollections of the day U.S. and Allied Forces liberated the camp left a lasting imprint on me. Those stories didn't just shape my childhood—they shaped the man I became."

A chance encounter in 2011 and another veteran's story inspired *SHEEPDOG*. "In 2011, my car broke down about three hours north of Los Angeles," he recalls. "I had just driven through the night from Vancouver, where I'd wrapped on a film. Tired, hungry, and ready to be home, I called a tow company, and found myself in the cab of a tow truck, headed back to L.A. The driver started talking—and somewhere between the silence and the hum of the road, he opened up. He shared that he was a father of three, struggling to hold his marriage together, buried under financial stress. Then he told me about his military service—multiple deployments—and the PTS that he was challenged with. He listed off the medications he'd been prescribed, not with bitterness, just with quiet resignation."

"I barely said a word; I just listened," Grayhm continues. "Throughout the ride, he kept repeating, 'I can't believe I'm telling you this. I've never told my wife. I've never told a therapist.' By the time he dropped me off, I thanked him—deeply—knowing I'd probably never see him again, and that maybe he preferred it that way. But I couldn't stop thinking about him. For weeks, he stayed with me. His honesty. His pain. His courage. And I kept thinking: He's not the only one. There are so many others like him, carrying so much, with no place to lay it down. That encounter didn't just stay with me; it lit a spark. That moment lit something in me. Not just curiosity – responsibility. That summer, I packed up and set out on a cross-country road trip to listen, to learn, to understand. What I found changed me and became the foundation for what would eventually become *SHEEPDOG*."

The movie takes its title from a book by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman's, *On Combat*, where he describes the world as made up of sheep, wolves, and sheepdogs. Grayhm points out, "The sheep live peacefully. The wolves prey on the weak. And the sheepdogs – they run toward danger. They protect. They serve. They fight so others don't have to. But what happens when the battle is over? When the uniform is hung up... and the wolf doesn't stay on the battlefield? What happens when the wolf is at your door—and it's wearing the face of your trauma, your memories, your isolation?"

"For many veterans, that is the war no one sees," he elaborates. "PTS. Guilt. Anxiety. Depression. It doesn't come with medals. It doesn't end with a salute. It follows you home – and waits. That's the heart of *SHEEPDOG*. This film isn't just about the warriors who fought overseas – it's about the warriors who come home and keep fighting. To be fathers. Mothers. Spouses. To stay alive. To stay human. *SHEEPDOG* is a tribute to that kind of quiet heroism—the kind that doesn't make headlines, but changes lives. It's about holding the line when no one's watching. It's about reminding those who served: You're not alone. You're not broken. You're still in the fight—and you're still worth fighting for."



Grayhm says he hopes the movie will spark conversation that breaks down stigma, builds connections that foster support, and inspires a shared commitment to stand with those who've served. "Ultimately, *SHEEPDOG* is not just a film," he declares. "It's a message of hope, healing and the power of human resilience. It reminds us all that no matter how hard the battle, there is always a way forward." 



Free Tickets Available to Support Military Viewers

SHEEPDOG has partnered with Vet Tix, 1st Tix, and Fandango in support of its "Pay-It-Forward" campaign to send veterans, first responders, and their families to see the film nationwide in theaters through donated movie tickets. The team behind *SHEEPDOG* is supported by an impressive national coalition of corporate partners and veteran service organizations (VSOs), which include Holland & Knight and Navy Federal Credit Union, in addition to American Corporate Partners, Blue Star Families, PenFed Foundation for Military Heroes, Carry the Load, Robert Irvine Foundation, Commit Foundation, Warriors' Ascent, National Veterans Memorial and Museum, Dwyer Hudson Valley VETROC, Fill the Needs, Heroes Wellness Collective, INVets, Moral Compass Federation, the NARBHA Institute, Paws & Stripes, Project Welcome Home Troops, Special Operations Warrior Foundation, Team RWB, Valley Hope, Vets Town Hall, Warriors at Ease, At Ease USA, 22Mohawks, 22Zero, and 50 Mile March.

Writer/director Grayhm says the support has been gratifying. "*SHEEPDOG* has been a 14-year journey to the screen – inspired by countless personal testimonials, and an unwavering commitment to tell the truth. The emotional impact that we have witnessed firsthand from our audience, particularly from our veterans, first responders, Gold Star families, mental health professionals, and the communities shaped by their service and sacrifice, has been profoundly moving and deeply humbling. Their response is a powerful reminder that this film is needed more than ever right now. If we can save a single life with *SHEEPDOG*, it will be the greatest Hollywood success story."

"With *SHEEPDOG*, we want veterans to walk away with a sense of hope—to know, deep down, that they are not alone," he continues. "It's okay not to be okay. If you're living with Post-Traumatic Stress, you don't have to suffer in silence. There is help. There is healing. But it takes all of us. Our communities must come together—not just in words, but in action—to support and uplift those who have served. That means funding real resources, offering real care, and showing up with consistency and compassion. The road to healing is not easy. It's a lifelong journey. But it's worth it. Every life is worth it."

"We also want military spouses and families to know: We see you. We honor your strength, your sacrifices, and the silent battles you've fought alongside your loved ones," Grayhm adds. "Through *SHEEPDOG*, we hope you feel seen—and that this story helps illuminate your own journey. Not every veteran faces PTS. Not every veteran has seen combat. But every veteran made a commitment—to serve, to protect, and if necessary, to lay down their life for their country."

That kind of sacrifice is sacred. And it's worth fighting for—and with."

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