



Cast members of “G.I. Joe: Deception” pose after a long day of shooting in spring 2011. Standing are local thespian Irene Waits, Command Sgt Major Jeff Davis, former MS National Guardsman Bryan Wesley Sellers, actress Rachelle Steinhauer, actor Gerald Wansley, actor Kevin Johnson, actress Lindsey Noelle Brown and actor Wesley C. O’ Mary. Kneeling are Air National Guardsman Staff Sgt. Logan Johnson, actor Julian Benson, Capt. Travis Hacker, Tony Steinhauer, Steven Walton, Jr., former Navy SEAL Lance Broome and the late actor and thespian, Tod Lightsey.

G.I. Joe: Deception

Service members lend talents to military-themed film

By **DANA ELIST SMITH**
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Hasbro’s G.I. Joe toy and film franchise has millions of fans, collectors and followers, especially by military service members.

“G.I. Joe: Deception” is a feature fan film that was shot in 2011 and 2012 in Columbia, Poplarville and Hattiesburg. It was produced by local actor and filmmaker Scotty Whitehurst who played alongside Jim Carey in “I love You, Phillip Morris” and Ed Helms in “Jeff Who Lives at Home.”

The film was written by Whitehurst and a former Mississippi National Guardsman, Bryan Wesley Sellers. It stars Scotty Whitehurst as the infamous Cobra Commander and Isa Tauri as his female accomplice, the Baroness. Tauri has starred in many commercials nationwide for renowned retailers such as Nike and State Farm Insurance.

Other actors who played supporting roles were not actors at all. Some were current or former military service members.

Retired Marine Jeff Davis is the command sergeant major of the 3rd Brigade, Mississippi State Guard Security Force. His unit trains monthly at Camp Shelby. He not only



played the role of Sgt. Slaughter in the film but lent many military vehicles to the production from his company, Jeff’s Military Surplus. Some of the vehicles used were the M715, M35, M816, M8818 and the M91, which was the star of a computer generated explosion. The armory of vehicles added production value and believability to the story.

Davis’s experience as a service member also added to the production value by helping the actors better portray their characters.

“Scotty listened to me on a lot of details as he directed,” said Davis. “Some of the actors took my advice on how to play a Soldier

without going too far outside of the script.”

Lance Broome is a former Navy SEAL medic who played the film’s leading protagonist role. He played the emotionally compromised Soldier called “Beachhead” who is still suffering from the loss of a fallen comrade.

Capt. Travis Hacker served as the battalion operations officer with Headquarters, 2nd Battalion, 305th Field Artillery of the 177th Armored Brigade at Camp Shelby. On his days off, he portrayed a character specializing in communications called “Breaker.”

Breaker and Beach Head were among the five-man G.I. Joe team to rescue General Hawk, who was held captive by Cobra Commander’s terrorist organization. Alongside them were the team’s leader, young Lt. Falcon, a feisty red head, Scarlett and the pacifist medic, Lifeline.

The film also features Mississippi Air National Guardsman, Logan Johnson, a member of the 255th Air Control Squadron headquartered in Gulfport, who volunteered his acting talents to Camp Shelby’s “Suicide Prevention Video” in 2011. He portrays the character codenamed “Armadillo.”

Dana Elise Smith, who works as a videographer at Camp Shelby Public Affairs was

one of the film’s producers. She lent her Canon XL-2 camera and funding for the film’s wardrobe.

Most of the character’s appearances were based off the 1980’s cartoon series but Smith drew from Camp Shelby Soldiers for inspiration in designing the costumes for some of the leading women in the production.

“I wanted to bring the 1980’s characters into modern day so I used the modern Army Combat Uniforms pieces for the leading G.I. ladies because the ACU’s are what the majority of Soldiers are wearing today. Of course legally we could not put them in full uniform, so I just used the trousers,” said Smith.

The film has already had four public screenings across the state. It will be featured in several comic conventions and film festivals throughout the U.S. For more information and screening times, visit the group page, “G.I. Joe: Deception” on Facebook or email director, Scott Whitehurst at scott_whitehurst2283@yahoo.com.

This film does not reflect the views or policies of, and is not endorsed by any component of the U.S. Armed Forces or the command leadership of the MS National Guard and the leadership of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center."

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