

***“Veterans Voices is a mighty read, with images that inspire the soul. Giving our service men and women a platform to share their personal stories of resilience is necessary to understand our country’s freedom. It’s because of their courage, loyalty and sacrifice that we can unite to preserve the important values that makes America a beacon of hope.”***  
—American Actor and Director Robert Duvall

# **Veterans Voices**

## **Remarkable Stories of Heroism, Sacrifice, and Honor**

**By Robert H. Miller and Andrew Wakeford**  
**Foreword by Bob Woodruff**

**WASHINGTON (April 1, 2016)**—Following the success of their award-winning book “Portraits of Service,” Robert H. Miller and Andrew Wakeford have outdone themselves with their new collaborative project **VETERANS VOICES: Remarkable Stories of Heroism, Sacrifice, and Honor**. (National Geographic Books; ISBN: 9781426216381; on sale April 26, 2016; \$35; hardcover). The book is a deeply moving, timely celebration of veterans serving during the past seven decades allowing readers to hear the firsthand accounts of these heroes in our midst.

Blending Miller’s and Wakeford’s gorgeous photography with their inspiring storytelling, each vignette of the men and women who selflessly served our country comes alive on the page. The book is organized thematically with chapters showcasing tales of Inspiration, Courage, Resilience, Duty, Gratitude, Wisdom, Loyalty and Honor. Chapter by chapter, this book weaves personal drama with patriotic duty, creating a volume so rich and powerful that these personal accounts will resonate for years to come. Here are some of the highlights of stories contained in this book:

- **Vernice Armour** (Iraq 2004; U.S. Marine Corps): The first African-American female combat pilot, Armour’s quick thinking and bravery saved a group of Marines trapped in a perilous situation.
- **Robert “Rocky” Bleier** (Vietnam 1969; U.S. Army): The football hopeful sustained a gunshot wound to his leg and was told he may never be able to play again. Fighting the odds, Bleier went on to help the Pittsburgh Steelers win four Super Bowl championships.
- **Jim Downing** (World War II 1941-1945; U.S. Navy): Downing witnessed the horrors of Pearl Harbor firsthand. As he fought for his country that day, he was not able to bear the thought of families not knowing the fates of their sons. He hurriedly memorized and later reported the dog tags of more than 100 wounded and dead soldiers.
- **Marissa Strock** (Iraq 2005; U.S. Army): Raised in a military family, Strock served in Baghdad as a military police officer. On Thanksgiving Day 2005, her vehicle struck a roadside bomb killing three of her passengers and leaving her with severe injuries resulting in the loss of both legs.
- **Carlos “Chuck” Norris** (Korea 1958-1962; U.S. Air Force): The world-famous martial artist, actor, filmmaker and activist served as a military policeman in Korea where he was introduced to judo, which set him on a new path.

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- **Bryan Forney** (Iraq 2002-2005; Southeast Asia 2011-2013; U.S. Marine Corps): Trapped in a burning helicopter, the mission to rescue Forney was the longest single-leg medical evacuation in history. Forney's journey to recovery is poignant and inspirational.
- **Jas Boothe** (Iraq 2008-2009; U.S. Army): The disabled Army veteran went on to found Final Salute by charging \$15,000 to her personal credit cards. Today, this organization that helps homeless female veterans has garnered international praise and the attention of Oprah.
- **Robert Barron** (Japan 1963-1966; U.S. Marine Corps): The visual artist and illustrator served his country by becoming a master forger and mask-maker creating artificial documents for the CIA and sophisticated disguises for covert missions. Today, he uses those skills to create prosthetics for those with disfigurements and malformations.
- **Emma Didlake** (World War II 1942; Women's Army Auxiliary Corps): At the age of 110, Didlake held the distinction of being the oldest living veteran in America. She was honored for her service by President Barack Obama in July 2015 only a month before her death.

As Bob Woodruff so poignantly states in his beautifully crafted foreword, "If photographs can help us stand in someone else's shoes and bring their world to our living room, then this book will give you a glimpse of American life that all of us need to respect, no matter what our political leanings."

**VETERANS VOICES** will be cherished by current military personnel, veterans and fans of Americana and military history for its personal look at those who serve every day.

### **About the Authors**

**Robert H. Miller** came to "Portraits in Service" after researching and writing "Hidden Hell: The Story of My Father's POW Diary." Miller met Helen Patton, the granddaughter of General George S. Patton, on Utah Beach in June 2009, on the evening before the 65<sup>th</sup> commemoration of D-Day. From 2010-2012 he served as the executive director of the Patton Foundation in America, which focuses its efforts on putting into practice Patton's concerns for the welfare of American soldiers and their families. Miller has been a professional photographer for 39 years and is the recipient of several international awards for his photography and writing. He and his wife, Colleen, live in Canton, Michigan, and have five children and three grandchildren.

**Andrew Wakeford** was born in England in 1949. He studied photography for two years at the Polytechnic of Central London. Wakeford worked as an assistant for an advertising photographer. He left England to widen his horizons, eventually ending up in Germany. He settled in Saarbrücken in 1972, where he married his wife, Christa, in 1973, and continued his work as a photographer specializing in portraiture. In 2008, Wakeford met Helen Patton at the time when he was moving from assignment photography to personal projects. Patton led him to contacts who helped him gain access to veterans and their stories. Wakeford was the managing director of the Patton Stiftung (Foundation) in Europe from 2010-2012.

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