



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## ***New documentary traces experiences of seven young Portage County soldiers***

*“The ‘Sojer Boys’ of Portage County” will premiere on Western Reserve PBS on Sunday, Feb. 3, at 10 p.m.*

NORTHEAST OHIO — Jan. 17, 2013 — Some 2 million men fought for the Union during the American Civil War. More than 2,000 of them came from rural Portage County in Ohio. In a compelling new documentary, **The “Sojer Boys” of Portage County**, Fred Endres, of Kent State University, tells the story of seven of those young men. The production will premiere on Western Reserve PBS (WNEO 45.1/WEAO 49.1) on Sunday, Feb. 3, at 10 p.m.

As the nation commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, Endres, a professor-in-residence in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, uses the letters and diaries of the men to take a close, personal look at the war. The seven men he follows ranged in age from 17 to 24. One was married with two children; the others were single. One was a blacksmith, one a teacher, the rest farmers. The documentary follows them as they experience the conflict: from their enlistment and early, rudimentary training, through their encounters with different cultures and people in the South, to their reactions to the boredom of camp life and the terror of the battlefield.

Endres keeps his focus on the men in the field, not the generals or politicians. Of the 2,100 men from Portage County who served in the war, more than 300 did not return. Two of the seven “Sojer Boys” were killed, and only one escaped spending time in a hospital for a wound or disease.

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Students from Kent State and The University of Akron were involved in the documentary, which took more than two years to produce. They did research, uncovered old photographs and provided the voices for the soldiers and nurses featured in the program.

Commentary in the documentary is provided by Prof. Leonne Hudson, of the Kent State Department of History; Civil War author Richard Staats, of Suffield; Wayne Enders, president of the Portage County Historical Society; and Jackie Weaver Woodring, great-granddaughter of one of the soldiers in the documentary.

Support for the documentary came from the Kent State School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the College of Communication and Information.

### **About Western Reserve Public Media**

Western Reserve Public Media (formerly PBS 45 & 49) is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation and consortium of Kent State University, The University of Akron and Youngstown State University. A trusted community resource, Western Reserve Public Media uses the power of commercial-free television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire. It serves the largest population (5.13 million people) of Ohio's eight PBS member stations.

Western Reserve PBS (WNEO 45.1/WEAO 49.1), a service of the organization, is the only broadcast television service that reaches all of Northeast Ohio. It is available to 5.13 million people in the Cleveland and Youngstown designated market areas. In an average month, more than 1 million people tune in. The organization also operates three standard definition channels: Fusion (WNEO 45.2/WEAO 49.2), MHz Worldview (WNEO 45.3/WEAO 49.3) and V-me (WNEO 45.4/WEAO 49.4).

Through funding from eTech Ohio, Western Reserve Public Media provides K-12 educational technology training and instructional television programming to 21,500 educators and 256,700 students in eight Ohio counties. For more information about the organization, visit [www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org](http://www.WesternReservePublicMedia.org) or call 1-800-554-4549.

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