

VAU.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

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Award-winning VA video series, *The American Veteran*, receives 2017 regional Emmy Award

WASHINGTON — A [video story](#) produced by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs – focusing on a Navy Veteran and comedian who recovered from a possible career-ending stroke in 2016 with the help of VA doctors and therapists – received an Emmy Award at a ceremony June 23 in Bethesda, Maryland.

The National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized the segment produced for [VA's *The American Veteran* video series](#), and honored the series with its first Emmy since the show was relaunched in 2017 after a three-year hiatus.

The recognition was announced at the 60th annual regional Emmy Awards ceremony and was presented in the Health/Science – Program Feature/Segment category. The segment, titled “[Rodney Perry's Road to Recovery](#),” was produced, shot and edited by VA's digital team, which is part of the Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA).

The production team included lead producer/videographer/editor Ben Pekkanen; co-producer LaTonya Parker, with VHA's Employee Education System; executive producer Megan Moloney, who directs VA's digital team; public affairs specialists Kristen Schabert and Rachel Warden in Denver, Colorado; occupational therapist Phillip Hamrick and the staff at the [VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System](#); with production support from Lyndon Johnson, OPIA's chief of staff.

Perry is a Navy Veteran and stand-up comedian who suffered a stroke before a comedy concert in 2016 and was driven to the Denver VA Medical Center for treatment. His journey through rehabilitation included not only standard stroke-recovery regimens, but individualized therapy, which focused on getting him back on stage and telling jokes.

“Seeing a Veteran recover from a life-changing event and knowing it resulted from the dedicated VA medical and rehabilitative teams we have in place is a story worth sharing, and that's what *The American Veteran* does in a moving and personal way,” said Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke. “This prestigious Emmy Award recognizes that the hardworking and dedicated staff VA has serving Veterans throughout our department remains truly world-class.”

To tell his story of recovery, VA's digital team worked with Perry and staff from the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System, recording interviews with the medical team who helped the Navy Veteran get back on his feet and back on stage.

“We're privileged to be able to share the stories of our nation's Veterans and the dedicated VA employees who serve them,” said John Ulliyot, VA Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. “This Emmy Award is a meaningful recognition of the work our team is doing each day to communicate with Veterans and the general public about the department and its important contributions to our nation's heroes.”

[The American Veteran](#), a half-hour video program that highlights VA's services and the benefits Veterans have earned, is one part of VA's ongoing effort to engage and reach out to the Veteran community directly. The VA digital portfolio includes: more than 150 Facebook pages, most of which belong to individual VA medical centers; the [VAntage Point blog](#); nearly [100 Twitter feeds](#); [Instagram](#); a [Flickr photo library](#); and a [YouTube channel](#). The department also distributes the “[Borne the Battle](#)” podcast.

[The American Veteran](#) was produced by VA for more than a decade before going on hiatus in 2014. During its active season, the show garnered numerous Telly, CINE and Aurora awards, as well as multiple Emmy awards and nominations.

According to its website, the [National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences](#) (NATAS) is dedicated to the advancement of the arts and sciences of television and the promotion of creative leadership for artistic, educational and technical achievements within the television industry. NATAS recognizes excellence in television with the coveted Emmy Award; regional Emmys are given in 19 markets across the United States.

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