



Role of film Timberlane duo takes top award for 'Hometown Heroes'

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PLAISTOW — Maree Magliochetti and Luke Botting are interested in hometown heroes for different reasons — one likes to study them and the other aspires to be one.

But when the two Timberlane Regional High School history buffs collaborated on a project this winter, the outcome was award-winning.

Magliochetti and Botting, both 17 and juniors, filmed a documentary on Tom Cullen and Bill Hallahan, two World War II veterans from Plaistow. "Hometown Heroes" won the New Hampshire Public Television Ken Burns War Stories competition, which included entries from high school and college students.

It was also a Jury Award finalist at the New Hampshire High School Short Film Festival and will be included in a 2008 winning film DVD. Magliochetti and Botting were interviewed for a special, behind-the-scenes section.

In the film, Hallahan, 87, talks about his experience at Pearl Harbor as a sergeant in the Army. Cullen, 83, who was in the Navy, talks about D-Day. At the end, both men come together to give advice about war and history, Magliochetti said.

The Atkinson teen said a number of teachers helped her get into the project, which was geared toward students who excel in history class and want to try filmmaking. Timberlane has a production studio for the district's cable channel, so the equipment was there to use. Dean Zanello, who advises the student production crew, taught Magliochetti to use the software.

Science teacher Steve Rugolietti recommended Magliochetti involve Hallahan because of his experience during Pearl Harbor. The veteran agreed, and Magliochetti organized questions to ask him and the camera equipment to film the interview. The set was simple, with just two U.S. flags hanging behind him.

During his talk, Hallahan mentioned Cullen. Magliochetti looked him up in the phonebook and invited him in, too. She then asked Botting to join her for the interview and choosing footage.

Both men told compelling stories. Botting, who is from Sandown, loved to listen.

He said both World Wars fascinate him, but it doesn't end there — he plans to enlist in the Army after he graduates. Despite the fact that the country is at war, Botting said he wants to take the risk for America and for the experience.

"I'm not nervous that we're at war," he said. "There's a chance I could, I don't know how to say it ... but I'm willing to fight."

Cullen said working with the students and talking about D-Day was just as helpful to him as it was to them.

"A couple of Memorial Days, all I say is, 'D-Day,' and I cry," he said. "It's helped me to talk about it."

Magliochetti and Botting had so much curiosity and so many questions for the veterans that each interview lasted about 90 minutes, she said. Then she had to boil down the veterans' firsthand accounts to six minutes each.

"(Cullen) is one of the greatest storytellers you'll hear," she said. "It was all good. It was hard to shrink it down."

During the editing process, Magliochetti added footage from the National Archives and Records Administration online, as well as footage she filmed at the war memorial in Plaistow. She also had photographs Cullen and Hallahan had saved from their war days.

The 15-minute film cuts between shots of the men talking and the war footage, but their stories stream throughout the documentary.

Her successful first venture in filmmaking has Magliochetti sold. She said she now wants to major in history and minor in documentary filmmaking in college.

Magliochetti and Botting will attend an awards ceremony early next month. Their film will be shown on New Hampshire Public Television later in June.

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Photos



Timberlane juniors Maree Magliochetti and Luke Botting made a documentary film about two Plaistow World War II veterans. Tom Cullen, seated, is one of the veterans. Their film won the Ken Burns War Stories documentary award, and was a jury finalist at the New Hampshire High School Short Film Festival. Staff photo