

# *The Last Full Measure* (2019 film)

***The Last Full Measure*** is a 2019 American war drama film written and directed by Todd Robinson. It follows the efforts of fictional Pentagon staffer Scott Huffman and many veterans to see the Medal of Honor awarded to William H. Pitsenbarger, a United States Air Force Pararescueman who flew in helicopter rescue missions during the Vietnam War to aid downed soldiers and pilots.<sup>[3][4]</sup> Based on true events, the film stars Sebastian Stan, Christopher Plummer, William Hurt, Ed Harris, Samuel L. Jackson, Jeremy Irvine, and Peter Fonda. It was the final film appearance of Fonda, who died before the film's release; and Plummer's final on screen appearance before his death in 2021, though it had filmed prior to *Knives Out*, which was released before it.

Production began in the United States in March 2017, and it premiered in October 2019 in Westhampton Beach, New York.<sup>[5]</sup> It was released in the U.S. by Roadside Attractions on January 24, 2020, and grossed \$3 million against a \$20 million budget. Its title is from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, where Lincoln honored the fallen, saying that they "gave the last full measure of devotion."<sup>[6]</sup>

## Plot

*The Last Full Measure* centers on the true story of Vietnam War hero William H. Pitsenbarger, a U.S. Air Force Pararescueman who personally saved over 60 men during the Vietnam War. During a rescue mission on April 11, 1966, Pits, as he was called, chose to leave the relative safety of his rescue helicopter to aid wounded soldiers under heavy fire, when others on his team declined to go. After saving many, he was ordered to leave on the last helicopter out of what became one of the war's bloodiest battles. He chose to stay, sacrificing his own life to save and defend soldiers of the U.S. Army's 1st Infantry Division.

32 years later, Pentagon staffer Scott Huffman, on a career fast track, is reluctantly tasked with investigating a posthumous Medal of Honor request for Pitsenbarger by his parents and Tom Tulley, Pitsenbarger's partner on the fateful mission. Huffman seeks out the testimony of Army veterans who witnessed or were saved by Pitsenbarger's extraordinary valor, including Takoda, Burr and Mott, who carry their own demons from their experiences.

### *The Last Full Measure*



Theatrical release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Todd Robinson</u>
<b>Written by</b>	Todd Robinson
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Julian Adams</u> <div>Michael Bassick</div> Timothy Scott BogartNicholas CafritzAdi Cohen <u>Mark Damon</u> <u>Pen Densham</u> <u>Petr Ják</u> Robert Reed PetersonJordi Reliu <u>Shaun Sanghani</u> <u>Lauren Selig</u> Sidney ShermanJohn WatsonTJ Steyn

As Huffman learns more about Pitsenbarger's selfless courage, he uncovers a decades-long, high-level conspiracy: as of Pitsenbarger's death in combat in 1966, the Air Force had never put forth the names of enlisted personnel to receive the Medal of Honor.<sup>[a]</sup> This prompts him to put his own career on the line, potentially creating controversy around the company's former commanding officer who ordered the highly dangerous mission, and who is now a US senator seeking reelection.

When a Senate effort to award the medal fails on the floor of Congress due to unrelated political infighting, Huffman goes public with the story, and ultimately the Medal of Honor is awarded to Pitsenbarger by presidential decree. Before the award ceremony, Mott finds the courage to deliver Pitsenbarger's last letter to the airman's former love. Pitsenbarger's father, who is dying of cancer, and mother are in attendance as their son's duty, courage and sacrifice is recounted. The Air Force Secretary presents the medal to the parents, then recognizes everyone in attendance, all of whose lives were influenced by Pitsenbarger's actions, saying, "This is the power of what one person can do." The epilogue points out that as of 2019, of the 3,489 Medal of Honor recipients among millions of US military personnel, only three airmen have been enlisted Air Force.

## Cast

- Sebastian Stan as Scott Huffman (loosely inspired by William Parker "Parker" Hayes Jr.)
- Christopher Plummer as Frank Pitsenbarger
- William Hurt as Tom Tulley
  - Ethan Russell as Young Tom Tulley
- Ed Harris as Ray Mott
  - Zach Roerig as Young Ray Mott
- Samuel L. Jackson as Billy Takoda
  - Ser'Darius Blain as Young Billy Takoda
- Jeremy Irvine as William H. Pitsenbarger
- Peter Fonda as Jimmy Burr
  - James Jagger as Young Jimmy Burr
- LisaGay Hamilton as Celia O'Neal
- Michael Imperioli as Jay Ford
- Diane Ladd as Alice Pitsenbarger
- Amy Madigan as Donna Burr
- Linus Roache as F. Whitten Peters
- Alison Sudol as Tara Huffman
- Bradley Whitford as Carlton Stanton

Christopher Plummer  
William Hurt  
Ed Harris  
Samuel L. Jackson  
Peter Fonda  
LisaGay Hamilton  
Jeremy Irvine  
Diane Ladd  
Amy Madigan  
Linus Roache  
John Savage  
Alison Sudol  
Bradley Whitford

<b>Cinematography</b>	Byron Werner
<b>Edited by</b>	Claudia Castello Terel Gibson Richard Nord
<b>Music by</b>	<u>Philip Klein</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Foresight Unlimited</u> <u>SSS</u> <u>Entertainment</u> BCL Finance Group Boss Collaboration Lightbox Pictures Provocator SC Films Thailand Co
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Roadside Attractions</u>
<b>Release dates</b>	October 19, 2019 ( <u>Westhampton Beach</u> )  January 24, 2020 (United States)
<b>Running time</b>	110 minutes

- John Savage as Kepper
  - Cody Walker as Young Kepper
- Dale Dye as Holt
  - Richard Cawthorne as Young Holt
- Bruce MacVittie as Senator Martin Clayborne
- Julian Adams as Lt. John Quaid
- Robert Pine as Meredith Huffman
- Asher Miles Fallica as Luke Huffman
- Travis Aaron Wade as Lt. Tom Allison
- Martin Copping as Slade

Country	United States
Language	English
Budget	\$20 million <sup>[1]</sup>
Box office	\$3.4 million <sup>[2]</sup>

## Production

It took nearly 20 years to make the movie. Todd Robinson first learned about the William H. Pitsenbarger story while researching another movie in 1999. The character of Scott Huffman is loosely based on Parker Hayes, who worked at the Airman Memorial Museum and pushed for Pitsenbarger's commendation be upgraded to the Medal of Honor.<sup>[7]</sup> The story intrigued him for several reasons, including Pitsenbarger's awarding of the Air Force Cross rather than the Medal of Honor. After he and executive producer Sidney Sherman unsuccessfully pitched the film to more than 50 production companies, Robinson decided to write the script without funding or a studio commitment.<sup>[8]</sup>

After finishing the script, Robinson and Sherman continued searching for a studio. They landed a deal with New Line Cinema in 2007, but not long after, New Line was sold to Warner Bros. and the project was canceled and was again without a backer. Robinson and Sherman spent the next decade finding funding, and production finally began in 2017.<sup>[8]</sup>

It was announced in May 2016 that Scott Eastwood and Ed Harris had been cast, with Laurence Fishburne and Morgan Freeman in negotiations.<sup>[9]</sup> By March 2017, Eastwood was no longer involved, and Samuel L. Jackson, Sebastian Stan, Christopher Plummer, William Hurt, Bradley Whitford, Michael Imperioli, Linus Roache, John Savage and Diane Ladd joined the cast. Filming was to begin between Atlanta and Costa Rica later that month.<sup>[10]</sup> Grant Gustin and LisaGay Hamilton were cast as production commenced, with Amy Madigan and Peter Fonda joining in April.<sup>[11][12][13]</sup> The film was later dedicated to Fonda's memory.<sup>[14]</sup>

In August 2017, filming concluded in Atlanta and moved to Thailand, with Jeremy Irvine (replacing Gustin in his role), Ethan Russell, Ser'Darius Blain, Cody Walker, Julian Adams, Tommy Hatto and Zach Roerig cast as young soldiers in Vietnam.<sup>[15][16][17][18]</sup>

## Release

Roadside Attractions acquired the film's distribution rights in September 2018, planning a wide release in 2019.<sup>[19]</sup>

The film premiered at a special free screening for veterans in Westhampton Beach, New York on October 19, 2019,<sup>[5]</sup> and was released in the United States on January 24, 2020.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Home media

---

Lionsgate released the film digitally on April 7, 2020, and on DVD, Blu-ray and video on demand on April 21, 2020.<sup>[21]</sup>

## Reception

---

On review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, *The Last Full Measure* holds an approval rating of 60% based on 78 critics, with an average rating of 6.1/10. The site's critics consensus reads, "*The Last Full Measure* struggles to capture the incidents that inspired it, but ultimately prevails thanks to strong performances in service of a remarkable true story."<sup>[22]</sup> On Metacritic, it has a weighted average score of 51 out of 100, based on 25 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".<sup>[23]</sup>

## Notes

---

- a. The US Air Force was created in 1948, so the four US Army Air Forces enlisted personnel awarded a Medal of Honor (MOH) during WWII were not from the US Air Force. All four US Air Force MOH recipients in the Korean War were officers. The first nine US Air Force MOH recipients in the Vietnam War were officers. The 14th MOH ever awarded to someone from the Air Force was the first to an enlisted serviceman, Airman First Class John Levitow, received in 1970. Overall, the film's suggestion of a "high-level conspiracy" misses the fact that the MOH has rarely been awarded to Air Force personnel of any rank; as of June 2022, only 19 have been awarded, to 14 officers and 5 enlisted personnel. See also: List of post-Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipients

## References

---

1. Tartaglione, Nancy (January 22, 2020). "'The Last Full Measure's Mark Damon On War Drama's Journey & Why This May Be His Last Picture As Producer'" (<https://deadline.com/2020/01/the-last-full-measure-producer-mark-damon-interview-final-film-roadside-attractions-1202837695/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210226014338/https://deadline.com/2020/01/the-last-full-measure-producer-mark-damon-interview-final-film-roadside-attractions-1202837695/>) from the original on February 26, 2021. Retrieved February 5, 2020.
2. "The Last Full Measure (2020)" ([https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl1617987073/?ref\\_=bo\\_da\\_table\\_17](https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl1617987073/?ref_=bo_da_table_17)). *Box Office Mojo*. IMDb. Archived ([https://web.archive.org/web/20200718183130/https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl1617987073/?ref\\_=bo\\_da\\_table\\_17](https://web.archive.org/web/20200718183130/https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl1617987073/?ref_=bo_da_table_17)) from the original on July 18, 2020. Retrieved August 27, 2020.
3. Young, Robin (January 23, 2020). "'The Last Full Measure' Tells Story Of Hero In Vietnam War" (<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/01/23/the-last-full-measure-movie>). WBUR. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210228223312/https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/01/23/the-last-full-measure-movie>) from the original on February 28, 2021. Retrieved January 26, 2020.

4. Magidson, Joey (January 22, 2020). "[The Last Full Measure Is A Restrained Crusade For Justice](https://www.hollywoodnews.com/2020/01/22/the-last-full-measure-is-a-restrained-crusade-for-justice/)" (<https://www.hollywoodnews.com/2020/01/22/the-last-full-measure-is-a-restrained-crusade-for-justice/>). *Hollywood News*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210108233412/https://www.hollywoodnews.com/2020/01/22/the-last-full-measure-is-a-restrained-crusade-for-justice/>) from the original on January 8, 2021. Retrieved January 25, 2020.
5. Finn, Lisa (October 7, 2019). "[Free Screening Of 'Last Full Measure' For Veterans](https://patch.com/new-york/westhampton-hamptonbays/free-screening-last-full-measure-veterans)" (<https://patch.com/new-york/westhampton-hamptonbays/free-screening-last-full-measure-veterans>). *Westhampton-Hampton Bays, NY Patch*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20191020150009/https://patch.com/new-york/westhampton-hamptonbays/free-screening-last-full-measure-veterans>) from the original on October 20, 2019. Retrieved October 20, 2019.
6. Walsh, Katie (January 23, 2020). "[Sebastian Stan and all-star cast elevate the heroism of 'The Last Full Measure'](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-01-23/last-full-measure-review-sebastian-stan-samuel-jackson)" (<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-01-23/last-full-measure-review-sebastian-stan-samuel-jackson>). *LA Times*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200125072347/https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-01-23/last-full-measure-review-sebastian-stan-samuel-jackson>) from the original on January 25, 2020. Retrieved January 25, 2020.
7. "'The Last Full Measure': What is Real and What is Not" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20220413175852/https://vva.org/arts-of-war/the-last-full-measure-what-is-real-and-what-is-not/>). *Vietnam Veterans of America*. January 27, 2020. Archived from the original (<https://vva.org/arts-of-war/the-last-full-measure-what-is-real-and-what-is-not/>) on April 13, 2022. Retrieved April 13, 2022.
8. Ophirory, Jennifer-Leigh (September 2019). Tobias Naegele (ed.). "[Pitsenbarger on the Big Screen](https://www.airforcemag.com/app/uploads/2019/09/AFM_September-2019-Full-Issue.pdf)" ([https://www.airforcemag.com/app/uploads/2019/09/AFM\\_September-2019-Full-Issue.pdf](https://www.airforcemag.com/app/uploads/2019/09/AFM_September-2019-Full-Issue.pdf)) (PDF). *Air Force Magazine*. Vol. 102, no. 8. Arlington, Va: Air Force Association. pp. 61–62. ISSN 0730-6784 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0730-6784>).
9. Jaafar, Ali (May 9, 2016). "[Scott Eastwood & Ed Harris To Star In 'The Last Full Measure'; Laurence Fishburne And Morgan Freeman In Talks – Cannes](https://deadline.com/2016/05/scott-eastwood-ed-harris-the-last-full-measure-laurence-fishburne-morgan-freeman-foresight-cannes-1201751484/)" (<https://deadline.com/2016/05/scott-eastwood-ed-harris-the-last-full-measure-laurence-fishburne-morgan-freeman-foresight-cannes-1201751484/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180906195656/https://deadline.com/2016/05/scott-eastwood-ed-harris-the-last-full-measure-laurence-fishburne-morgan-freeman-foresight-cannes-1201751484/>) from the original on September 6, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
10. Busch, Anita (March 8, 2017). "[Samuel L. Jackson Joins Todd Robinson's Political Drama 'The Last Full Measure'](https://deadline.com/2017/03/samuel-l-jackson-political-drama-the-last-full-measure-1202039553/)" (<https://deadline.com/2017/03/samuel-l-jackson-political-drama-the-last-full-measure-1202039553/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180825120911/https://deadline.com/2017/03/samuel-l-jackson-political-drama-the-last-full-measure-1202039553/>) from the original on August 25, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
11. Fleming, Mike Jr (March 29, 2017). "[The Flash's Grant Gustin Draws 'The Last Full Measure'](https://deadline.com/2017/03/the-flash-grant-gustin-the-last-full-measure-william-pitsenbarger-1202054385/)" (<https://deadline.com/2017/03/the-flash-grant-gustin-the-last-full-measure-william-pitsenbarger-1202054385/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180718030527/https://deadline.com/2017/03/the-flash-grant-gustin-the-last-full-measure-william-pitsenbarger-1202054385/>) from the original on July 18, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
12. N'Duka, Amanda (March 30, 2017). "[LisaGay Hamilton Books 'Beautiful Boy' & 'The Last Full Measure'; 'Most Likely To Murder' Adds More Suspects](https://deadline.com/2017/03/lisagay-hamilton-beautiful-boy-the-last-full-measure-most-likely-to-murder-dan-gregor-cast-1202055320/)" (<https://deadline.com/2017/03/lisagay-hamilton-beautiful-boy-the-last-full-measure-most-likely-to-murder-dan-gregor-cast-1202055320/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180724084106/https://deadline.com/2017/03/lisagay-hamilton-beautiful-boy-the-last-full-measure-most-likely-to-murder-dan-gregor-cast-1202055320/>) from the original on July 24, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.

13. Busch, Anita (April 4, 2017). "Amy Madigan & Peter Fonda Join Cast Of 'The Last Full Measure'" (<https://deadline.com/2017/04/amy-madigan-peter-fonda-the-last-full-measure-vietnam-1202060511/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180906195615/https://deadline.com/2017/04/amy-madigan-peter-fonda-the-last-full-measure-vietnam-1202060511/>) from the original on September 6, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
14. Alexander, Bryan (January 23, 2020). "Peter Fonda's final role in 'The Last Full Measure' brought icon to tears" (<https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/movies/2020/1/23/last-full-measure-peter-fonda-final-role-brought-him-tears/4542598002/>). *USA Today*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230808161759/https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/movies/2020/01/23/last-full-measure-peter-fonda-final-role-brought-him-tears/4542598002/>) from the original on August 8, 2023. Retrieved September 5, 2020.
15. "Jeremy Irvine among new cast on 'The Last Full Measure'" (<https://www.screendaily.com/news/jeremy-irvine-among-new-cast-on-the-last-full-measure/5120487.article?referrer=RSS>). *Screen Daily*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180906195448/https://www.screendaily.com/news/jeremy-irvine-among-new-cast-on-the-last-full-measure/5120487.article?referrer=RSS>) from the original on September 6, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
16. N'Duka, Amanda (August 1, 2017). "Jeremy Irvine, 'Vampire Diaries' Actor Zach Roerig & More Set For 'The Last Full Measure'" (<https://deadline.com/2017/08/jeremy-irvine-zach-roerig-cody-walker-the-last-full-measure-1202140234/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180712030121/https://deadline.com/2017/08/jeremy-irvine-zach-roerig-cody-walker-the-last-full-measure-1202140234/>) from the original on July 12, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
17. "Jeremy Irvine, Tommy Hatto & Zach Roerig" (<https://ghostarchive.org/iarchive/instagram/jeremy.irvine/1568124177416094946>). Archived from the original (<https://www.instagram.com/p/BXDGKG0IoTi/>) on December 25, 2021 – via Instagram.
18. Parrish, Kate. "Song for an Unsung Hero" (<http://www.sewanee.edu/features/story/julian-adams.html>). *Sewanee: The University of the South*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20230808161834/https://new.sewanee.edu/>) from the original on August 8, 2023. Retrieved June 4, 2019.
19. Tartaglione, Nancy (September 6, 2018). "Roadside Attractions Takes 'The Last Full Measure' Starring Sebastian Stan – Toronto" (<https://deadline.com/2018/09/roadside-attractions-the-last-full-measure-sebastian-stan-toronto-1202458135/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180906195732/https://deadline.com/2018/09/roadside-attractions-the-last-full-measure-sebastian-stan-toronto-1202458135/>) from the original on September 6, 2018. Retrieved September 8, 2018.
20. "The Last Full Measure" (<https://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=lastfullmeasure.htm>). *Box Office Mojo*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190707122306/https://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=lastfullmeasure.htm>) from the original on July 7, 2019. Retrieved October 1, 2019.
21. Prange, Stephanie (March 3, 2020). "Drama 'The Last Full Measure' Due on Digital April 7, Disc April 21 From Lionsgate" (<https://www.mediaplaynews.com/drama-the-last-full-measure-due-on-digital-april-7-disc-april-21-from-lionsgate/>). *Media Play News*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200806165034/https://www.mediaplaynews.com/drama-the-last-full-measure-due-on-digital-april-7-disc-april-21-from-lionsgate/>) from the original on August 6, 2020. Retrieved August 21, 2020.
22. "The Last Full Measure (2019)" ([https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_last\\_full\\_measure](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_last_full_measure)). *Rotten Tomatoes*. Fandango. Archived ([https://web.archive.org/web/20210225192345/https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the\\_last\\_full\\_measure](https://web.archive.org/web/20210225192345/https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_last_full_measure)) from the original on February 25, 2021. Retrieved October 10, 2021.

23. "The Last Full Measure Reviews" (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/the-last-full-measure>). *Metacritic*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200427231643/https://www.metacritic.com/movie/the-last-full-measure>) from the original on April 27, 2020. Retrieved October 23, 2021.

## External links

---

- *The Last Full Measure* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0783640/>) at [IMDb](#)
- 

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The\\_Last\\_Full\\_Measure\\_\(2019\\_film\)&oldid=1225220862](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Last_Full_Measure_(2019_film)&oldid=1225220862)"

▪