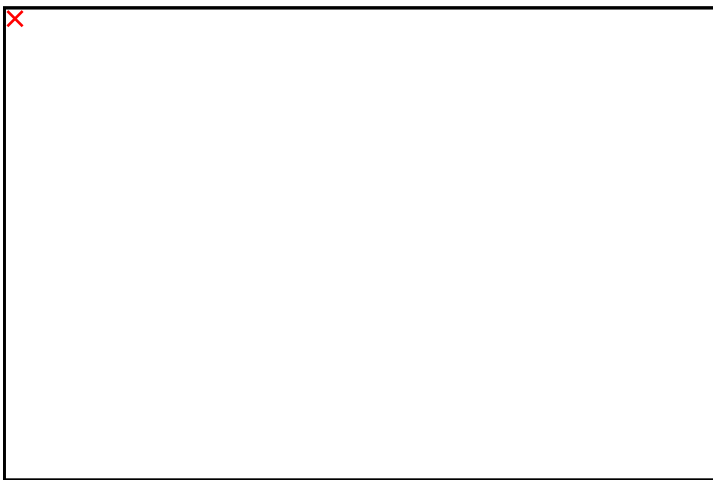


Theater of War reproduces the Greek forum

Carol Kerr, Army War College Public Affairs Office

Theater of War reproduces the Greek citizen-warrior community forum

Story-telling addresses human response to war



Charles S. Dutton, of 'Roc,' 'Rudy' and dozens of film & TV credits, portrays Philoctetes, Nov. 23 in Bliss Hall as part of the Theater of War presentation. By presenting these plays to military audiences, our hope is to demystify and de-stigmatize psychological injury and to facilitate open dialogue about the challenges faced by Service members, Veterans, and their families today, said Theater of War director Brian Dorries. Photo by Megan Clugh.

Nov. 30, 2009 -- The Theater of War will tour military communities in 93 performances this coming year -- and the Army War College was selected as one of the first, as well as the first to feature well-known actor Charles Dutton.

He was joined by three actors of the stage and screen whose performance surprised those -- most of us -- not familiar with Greek plays. They are readings, and yet they are highly dramatic: "inspiring performances" according to USAWC Commandant **Maj. Gen. Robert Williams**. Bill Camp created the character Ajax, who finds himself dishonored after years of committed service. Elizabeth Marvel played several roles, as did Adam Driver, who is both a former Marine and a Julliard graduate.

"We're excited to go where the leadership convenes to address ethical points," said director **Brian Doerries** who translated the seldom-seen plays from 5th century Greece. I don't think they've had audiences that understand them, but you do, he said to the largely military audience.

Sophocles was a general in the Greek military during the long years of the Trojan Wars. He crafted plays about Soldiers -- for Soldiers -- to help the community address the human responses of betrayal, disappointment, pain, and the stress of enduring conflict.

"Today, I was struck by what it was that inspired Gen. Sophocles to write these stories. I wonder if Sophocles found himself thinking, "Who among us fully knows the heart of another human," asked **Brig. Gen. Loree Sutton**, director of the Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, the DoD office that sponsors Theater of War.

"By witnessing these stories, maybe this was his way of showing that the human heart can be led or inspired," said Sutton.

British Fellow Col. Phil Sheridan joined in the 'townhall' style discussion to describe the British Army's "Decompression" program following deployment.

"I could relate to this," said Sheridan. "These are things that are happening to Soldiers now. The quiet irony now is that the British drop soldiers on a Greek island now for three days of 'decompression.'" On the first day they want

merely to leave and get back to family, he said. By the third day, they tend to ask for another 24 hours.

“Even if they don’t get it fully out of their system, they’ve cried and they know who [of their fellow soldiers] they can go to in the next six months.”

“I wish this had been presented to my class,” said **Air Force Lt. Col. David Bolgiano**, now a USAWC faculty member. “Having been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, it resonates with me.”

Audience member **John Frewen** identified himself as having PTSD from the Vietnam War. “For me, reunions with troops who served with me in Vietnam are very helpful,” said Frewen, who served in Vietnam with the Australian Army.

“Everybody there knows what you did and share the same experiences. It is easier to discuss things,” he said – echoing the community-focus of the Theater of War experience.

U.S. Army War College Archives - News Article - 01 December 2009