



# Media Release

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*“Malama na Koa”*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Ancient Greek Soldiers Speak to Today’s Warriors

**SCHOFIELD BARRACKS, Hawaii** – U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii will host a series of “Theater of War” performances, April 19-22, at Schofield Barrack’s Sgt. Smith Theater and Tripler Army Medical Center’s Kyser Auditorium, to help Soldiers and family members deal with the emotional and psychological effects of combat and war, and the challenges of facing them after coming home.

“Theater of War” consists of dramatic readings from two ancient Greek plays, Sophocles’ “Ajax” and “Philoctetes,” by Hollywood notables Amari Cheatom, Chad L. Coleman, Elizabeth Marvel, and John Ventimiglia who are best known for their television and big screen performances in Law and Order, The Sopranos, Burn After Reading and Disparity of Forces.

Since 2008, “Theater of War,” a project of the Department of Defense’s Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE), has conducted performances and town hall meetings in military communities across the nation in an effort to reduce stigma and encourage service members to seek needed assistance for psychological health concerns.

“While warfare has radically changed over the centuries, the human element remains constant in its emotional impact and suffering. By bringing this truth to the stage, we invite Soldiers and families to share their feelings about the effects war has had on them in a deep and meaningful way,” said Col. Michael R. Brumage, commander, Schofield Barracks Health Clinic. “Acknowledging normal reactions to abnormal circumstances is a strength. We hope that people will use this opportunity to seek the care they need with self-compassion.”

The follow-on townhall discussions invite interaction between the audience and a panel consisting of Soldiers, former Soldiers, military spouses, and behavioral health experts who will offer their personal insights on deployment and reintegration.

“Ajax” tells the story of a fierce warrior who slips into a depression near the end of the Trojan War. After failing in his attempt to murder his commanding officers, he takes his own life. It is also the story of how his wife and troops attempt to intervene before it's too late.

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The play speaks to service members, veterans, and their families today with a directness and immediacy rarely achieved by war narratives.

“Philoctetes” is a psychologically complex tragedy about a famous Greek warrior who is marooned on a deserted island by his army after contracting a horrifying and debilitating illness. The play was first performed in 409 B.C., yet the title character’s sense of abandonment and search for meaning in his pain still resonates strongly with today’s physically and psychologically injured combat veterans.

“Theater of War” was founded by Bryan Doerries, noted New York-based writer, director and educator who translated and directed the performance. The two plays read like textbook descriptions of wounded warriors, struggling under the weight of psychological and physical injuries to maintain their dignity, identity and honor, according to Doerries.

Military audiences today will likely relate to and understand the impulses behind these ancient stories, Doerries added, emphasizing that he also believes these stories have something important and relevant to say to military audiences.

“The performances offer powerful opportunities for the audience to safely discuss and constructively reflect on physical and emotional injury; death and life-threatening experiences; stigma; grief and loss; supportive relationships; and the timeless relevance of these lessons in prolonged combat,” Doerries said. “The ‘Theater of War’ is a powerful public health tool for joining today's Warriors, their loved ones and our Nation with the lessons of ancient Greek culture - we are not alone.”

The first performance will be at Schofield Barrack’s Sgt. Smith Theater, April 19, 9 a.m. A special performance for female warriors will be held at Sgt. Smith Theater, April 21, at 1 p.m. Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC) will host a performance April 22, at 9 a.m., in its Kyser Auditorium.

The performances are open to the public and admission is free. Due to limited seating, it is recommended that guests arrive early. Parents are advised that some of the material discussed may be unsuitable for children under 13.

Those wishing to attend the Schofield Barracks performances must enter through Lyman gate, and those planning to attend the Tripler Army Medical Center performances should enter through TAMC’s main gate.

Guests without military identification are required to show valid photo identification. Drivers must possess a valid vehicle registration and proof of insurance to enter the installations.

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**MEDIA NOTE:** Media wishing to attend any of the performances should contact Loran Doane, Media Relations chief, U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs at (808) 656-3157 or cell (317)-847-2222 for additional details.