

Glamour of army life, with its bravery and feats of derring-do

Peter Burdon, The Advertiser



THE slew of reality TV shows showing the grittier side of life have awakened the wider community to the truth that underpins so many social constructs, not least the glamour of army life, with all its bravery and feats of derring-do.

Fast-rising British playwright Pamela Carter's *Lines* is extraordinarily successful in translating these truthful, often brutally honest, stories to the stage, in this case the Bakehouse Theatre in the Australian premiere of the work.

Director Corey McMahon has done a predictably fine job in drilling his accomplished cast (Matt Crook, Rashidi Edward, Stuart Fong and James Smith) to a high pitch of perfection as they work their way through basic training, taken to their lowest ebbs, both physically and mentally, and challenged to rise up victorious.

The repetitive nature of their training is emphasised in their constant dressing and undressing for bed, for drill, for inspection, for everything (cleverly choreographed by Roz Hervey), but the routine is always fraught with disturbances, like the insistence on hospital corners, paranoia about personal space, and emotional numbness, which will ultimately destroy at least one recruit's hopes and dreams. *Lines*, Theatre Republic. Stuart Fong and James Smith Picture: Olivia Zanchetta

And then there are the jibes and japes, both friendly and cruel.

Lines makes an important point for wider society with its resistance to conformity – take the current controversy over the NAPLAN literacy and numeracy tests – which seems increasingly to lead not to routine but to rebellion.

Lines
Bakehouse Theatre
until November 10