



Theatre Republic presents

# LINES

by Pamela Carter

## INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS

*"Peace isn't peace! Peace is just a gap between wars!"*

Four young soldiers lie awake in their barracks.

Their thoughts turn to war, to violence, to heroism. But on the inside, their minds wage a war on themselves and each other.

In 2013, after 12 years of war, the Australian Army ceased active combat duties in Afghanistan. What happens to new recruits, trained up and ready for combat, when there is no war to fight?

Pamela Carter's thrilling new play is about young men who are searching for a sense of meaning, identity, security and family.

Who do we get to fight our wars? And how do we recruit them? These questions sit at the heart of *LINES*.

"(LINES) combines a compelling dream-like intensity with a vigorous energy", The Guardian

Featuring: Matt Crook, Rashidi Edward, Stuart Fong and Jim Smith.

Directed by Corey McMahon

Produced by Manda Webber

Designed by Ailsa Paterson

Movement Choreography by Roz Hervey.

AV and Lighting Design by Chris Petridis

Sound Design by James Oborn

**Please note this production contains nudity, simulated violence and occasional coarse language. It is suitable for people 16+**

Running time: 70 minutes (TBC)

For more information on Theatre Republic please visit our website:

[www.theatrerepublic.org](http://www.theatrerepublic.org)

For more information on the work of Corey McMahon please go to:

[www.coreymcmahon.org](http://www.coreymcmahon.org)

**To book tickets for this show please email The Bakehouse:-**

[pamela@bakehousetheatre.com](mailto:pamela@bakehousetheatre.com)

## **ABOUT THIS PRODUCTION:**

*LINES* by Pamela Carter premiered at The Yard Theatre, London in 2015.

This is the play's Australian premiere.

### **THE PLAY**

*LINES* is a dynamic, formally inventive play that takes the audience inside the world of army recruitment and training in a post-Afghanistan world. The playwright argues that the defence of a country depends on a socially and educationally disadvantaged class of people for whom there is no choice but to join the armed forces.

The play explores the role the army plays in providing a lifeline to young people, particularly men, who feel they have few options left in their lives; the army offers meaning, structure, stability and family to those who might not find it elsewhere. *LINES* is the story of four young disenfranchised men, Perk, Valentine, Locke and Mackay who join the combat infantry undertaking an intense psychological and physical training regime that conditions them to fight, kill and sacrifice their lives for their country.

Juxtaposing the men's empty banter, the actors speak directly to the audience, giving us a third-person account of the characters' inner fears, anxieties and aspirations. It is through this formal device that Carter maintains the authenticity of the world she has created on stage, while also taking the audience beyond the rhetoric and machismo of the barracks to a place of vulnerability and humanity.

But at the end of their training, when there is no war to fight, how do they put their skills into practice? Carter takes her characters into a world of fantasy and mythology as the men, seated at the end of their beds, act out the brutal combat scene from the film *Lone Survivor*. In this dream-like sequence we see the men become legitimate combat soldiers as their training – both psychological and physical – is finally put to the test.

By avoiding a literal playing of the action, Carter invites the audience to imagine the men, beyond the relatively safe confines of their barracks, existing in a theatre of war. As the soldiers' imaginations take them into combat, the audience too imagines the horrors of battle. By doing this, the space between actor and audience closes and we become intimately familiar with the experiences of these young men. We are witness to the dangers they face, we cannot escape them, and we are forced to confront the idea that we, the audience, may be complicit in sending them into a deadly warzone.

### **THE AUSTRALIAN CONNECTION**

Despite being written in response to the British Army, *LINES* relates directly to infantry training culture within the Australian Army. Currently, 90.1% of recruits are men aged between 17-25 and the Army only requires a minimum of Year 10 level Maths and English for entry. In 2013 Australia completed its active combat engagement in Afghanistan, winding up a 12-year mission, with 40 soldiers killed and 261 seriously injured. Like our British counterparts, Australia has not seen active combat since the 2013 withdrawal. And yet, in 2015, with world events rapidly evolving, the Australian Government ordered a

beefed-up recruitment program to find an additional 5000 soldiers. Where does a Government find 5000 volunteer recruits? What inducements are offered to encourage suitable civilians to join the army and train for combat? Despite war becoming increasingly reliant on technology as a weapon, conflict in the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan has shown frontline combat is still one of the main theatres of war and the Army needs soldiers on the ground.

Although definitive accounts of army infantry training are largely kept out of the public's reach, online research reveals numerous examples of extended clips and vlogs, posted by soldiers, that document the experience of Australian infantry training and combat. Through these sources, it is not hard to see the authenticity of Carter's play and its connection to Australian Army infantry training. As a result, we believe the play will sit comfortably in an Australian context, spoken in the Australian voice. By setting the play in Australia we invite our audience to think about the people *we* ask to fight in *our* wars and at what cost.

To what extent are we complicit in the journey of these young men?

### **LANGUAGE: BODIES AND WORDS**

The play authentically captures the language and cadence of young men with relatively little education and life experience. Carter doesn't shy away the character's base mode of speaking; in the highly charged and masculine world of the barracks, where vulnerability is seen as a sign of weakness, their rhetoric shields them from showing their authentic selves. To contrast this, the actors speak directly to the audience, on behalf of their characters, giving us insight into their thoughts, feelings and aspirations. In conversation with Pamela Carter, she expressed her desire to ensure the soldiers remained real, to have no recourse to psychological truths of self-reflective insights. The challenge was how give the audience access to the intimate thoughts and feelings of non-verbal, non-academic men, unaccustomed to articulating those feelings? This formal device transposes those feelings into the third person, preserving the authenticity of the characters, with the actors speaking on their behalf.

In addition to the spoken language of the play, this production will have a unique physical dramaturgy that informs the world on stage. Integral to the soldiers training is routine, discipline, attention to detail and a rigorous physical training regime that will prepare them for active duty. Working closely with movement choreographer Roz Hervey, the cast will create a physical language depicting a world that rarely stands still. From the moment the lights come on at 06:00hrs to the moment their heads hit the pillow, the recruits will be constantly moving, making their beds, dressing and undressing and undertaking physically demanding training runs. Life for the young soldiers in their barracks will be reflected through this physical language. For Act 2, the language will be translated into movement and gestures that speak to the out-of-body experience the men have as they go into battle. The highly active first act will give way to an intimate gestural language that supports the collective mindset of the soldiers.

Theatre Republic's inaugural production, *LINES*, is a vital new play that speaks directly to the times we live. As the world becomes increasingly volatile and major world powers begin to flex their military muscle, we are faced with the very real prospect of another global

conflict. It is in this context that the story of these four young soldiers, training for active combat, becomes alarmingly present. Pamela Carter has written a fast-paced, dynamic, formally audacious and highly entertaining new play that captures the essence of military recruitment and training in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *LINES* is an examination of who we recruit to fight our wars, how we train them and what happens to them when they enter the theatre of war. The play's relevance to our world, as it is now, is undeniable.

TICKET PRICE: \$18 per student and teacher is free of charge (one teacher free per booking. Subsequent teachers or staff charged at the student rate)

School show dates:

Tuesday 30 October 11am (+Q&A)

Thursday 1 November 11am (+Q&A)

Each performance is followed by a 30 minute Q&A session with the cast, director and members of the creative team (subject to availability).