

Fringe review: Shell Shock

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Darkly comic Fringe play Shell Shock gives insight into the nightmares that continue to plague soldiers when they return from a warzone.

★★★★★

Greg Elliott



Shell Shock has been adapted for the stage from the book *Shell Shock: The Diary of Tommy Atkins*, by Neil Watkins, and is performed by Tim Marriott.

It is the story of an English soldier who returns from fighting in the Middle East and who then has to fight his own post-traumatic stress.

Marriott gives a very genuine and compassionate performance of a distressed soldier: he is both comic and convincing.

We experience his difficulties with his girlfriend and his parents, as well as the awkwardness of readjusting to civilian life. Small conflicts are irritating initially, until human contact escalates into domestic violence and aggressive public scenes; things get on top of him until he eventually contemplates suicide.

This is a play that gives civilians tremendous insight into what soldiers experience at war and the nightmares that continue to plague them.

It is an excellent performance and a topic we should all be prepared to give up a night for, because it will lead to greater understanding of what these men and women have been through. A worthy and memorable Fringe play.

Guy Masterton – CIT & Smoke Screen Productions are presenting Shell Shock at the Bakehouse Theatre until March 16.