

## Wounded – the emotional story of two soldiers fighting a century apart

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As British military casualties continue to return from the war in Afghanistan, *Wounded* - an emotional new play by Jenny Stephens - tells the stories of two soldiers, fighting a century apart, but both coping with the aftermath of war. Informed by University research into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, as well as military medical practice in modern conflicts and the First World War, this timely and heart-warming site-specific play takes place at the Territorial Army Field Hospital in Kings Heath, Birmingham from October 30 to November 10.



University being used as a hospital during WWI

Set in 1917 and 2012, *Wounded* follows the stories of Combat Medical Technician Kate Mulligan and Private Alfred Seddon. Nearly one hundred years after the Great War, Kate Mulligan is treated in the same military hospital that nursed injured soldiers during the First World War. Wracked with guilt that she caused her own injuries and the life-threatening injuries of another soldier who tried to save her, Kate begins to experience strange goings on. Perhaps it's the shock, or maybe Kate really can see and hear Private Alfred Seddon. The two soldiers remember and revisit their experiences, allowing them to explore their trauma and help each other recover.

Working with Birmingham, writer Jenny Stephens became increasingly aware of the parallels between the plight of injured soldiers a century apart:

"Living in Birmingham we're painfully aware of the trauma of war, particularly with the **Queen Elizabeth Hospital's** (<http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/new-hospital.htm>) role in the rehabilitation of soldiers who have been terribly injured in war zones, including Iraq and Afghanistan."

Stephens also began to understand the very personal stories behind the medical records:

"I became really interested in how individuals might cope with the trauma of combat in what are, supposedly, very different conflicts. But I soon realised that today's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is basically 'shellshock' by a different name. Thankfully sufferers are no longer shot as cowards, as they often were during the First World War. But the effects can still be devastating."

Dr Jonathan Reinartz, Director of the University's History of Medicine Unit, said "It was a true pleasure to work with Jenny Stephens and the **Birmingham Rep** (<http://www.birmingham-rep.co.uk/>) throughout this project. Jenny was an ideal selection for this piece - she engaged with the history and regularly corresponded with our historical team and continually sent us drafts of the play as it developed. It was a fascinating process from start to finish and we all learned a huge amount from the experience"

The cast for *Wounded* includes Daniel Anderson (Captain Jones), Ben Callon (Alfie Seddon), John Flitcroft (Jacko / Dr Carter), Emma Rollason (Kate Mulligan) and Maisie Turpie (Nurse Gertie Robinson / Rosie Seddon).

*Wounded* is supported by a Wellcome Trust Arts Award.

Following its premiere in Birmingham, *Wounded* will play for students at Imperial College London and the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

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