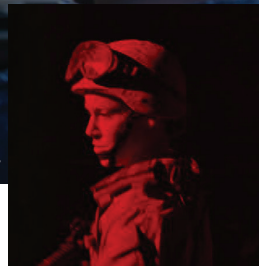


war comes home

women in the military



Story Suzanne Takowsky



The movie, **'Blood Stripe'** is a thriller that offers viewers a ringside seat into women in the military and the anguish some face on their return home. This is the story of a female Marine (played by actress/writer Kate Nowlin) a veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan war. It details her fight for life after she returns to her family from her third tour in Afghanistan only to find herself in the grips of severe anxiety and paranoia brought on by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. With rave reviews from the Hollywood Reporter, LA Times, Variety, Movie Nation and numerous others, plus a 'U.S. Fiction' award at the LA Film Festival, 'Blood Stripe' answers the question: How strong is a woman? As strong as she needs to be. I had the opportunity to interview Kate and not only is her movie an incredible journey, but it's the heart and soul of survival.

ST: We mostly hear about PTSD with regards to men. The subject of your movie is traumatic to think about, but reality for women in the military who come home only to continue waking up every day in their own private war zone.

KATE: It was my impression that the impact of living and working in a hostile environment can have profound and lasting effects on the individual psyche, and the resulting traumas don't discriminate based on gender. There are no front lines in war. The battle comes to the service member regardless of gender. Not only do our women veterans face the same invisible wounds of war as men, they report feeling their service is invisible. In order to make necessary strides in supporting ALL of our veterans by providing equal and comprehensive care, we must RECOGNIZE all who are serving our country. IAVA, our largest post 9/11 veterans organizations and organizational partner on 'Blood Stripe', conducted a survey of its members in which 35% of women veterans reported being survivors of military sexual assault. IAVA also reports women veterans are killing themselves at 250x the rate of civilian women. These statistics formed aspects of how we told this female veteran's story. It is imperative we adapt to the reality of who is serving and sacrificing in our longest war in U.S. history, and help them overcome any obstacles they face upon returning home. My hope is 'Blood Stripe' will raise awareness of our female veterans and inspire necessary cultural and legislative change through the #shewhobornethebattle campaign which IAVA launched last March, and on which we have partnered. We are working to increase recognition around the fastest growing seg-



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