



MYTHS Sophocles

Ancient warrior's anguish

AJAX was a mythical Greek warrior who fought in the Trojan War.

The play named after him starts the evening after Achilles' arms were given to Odysseus. Ajax is furious he hasn't been awarded them.

AJAX: "Alas! My mates, skilled and tried in brave seamanship, Ye who embarking drove the wave-cleaving oar,

"In you, in you alone I see a help and refuge from despair. Smite me, and spill my blood too.

"Behold now the bold, the man stout of heart, Who ne'er shrank in fight against foes-behold, How I have spent my rage on beasts that feared no harm!

"Ah me, the mockery! To what shame am I brought low."

NEW WAR ON STRESS IS ALL GREEK TO US

Theatre group bid to soothe soldiers

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TROOPS from the Royal Highland Fusiliers have become the first UK soldiers to see if 2500-year-old Greek plays can help them cope with combat stress.

Squaddies who have served in Afghanistan and Iraq watched readings of plays including Ajax, by Sophocles, at Glencorse Barracks, Midlothian.

Experts hope the plays can help troops deal with the horrors of war, overcome post-traumatic stress disorder and adapt to life after combat.

The Theatre of War event was presented by Glen Art.

The veterans charity's Fiona MacDonald said: "It went down very well.

"The technological face of war may have changed over the centuries but there are



PLAY Glen Art performers themes in the ancient Greek tragedies that modern warriors can relate to.

"In Sophocles, you have trauma and the impact on families of trauma, mental health issues and suicide.

"It could not be more relevant to a military audience, some of whom have been to places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. This is an innovative public health

project that presents readings of ancient plays as a way to open discussions about the challenges faced by service members, veterans and their families.

"Sophocles can be a terrific way to get military personnel discussing the impact of war on them, their families and the wider community."

American director Bryan Doerries founded Theatre of War and has won acclaim for helping veterans and serving soldiers in the US.

Fiona added: "We're very proud to be involved in Theatre of War, which in Doerries's words 'brings comfort to the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable'.

"It helps members of the forces to understand PTSD can affect the bravest of the brave and, should they experience symptoms of PTSD, that they are not alone now or across 2500 years."



DISCUSSION Members of The Royal Highland Fusiliers. Picture: Callum Moffat