

Two's Company presents

## Forgotten Voices from the Great War –

# MY REAL WAR 1914 - ?

Adapted from "War Letters" by Havilland Le Mesurier  
by Tricia Thorns

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Havilland Le Mesurier (LEM) is played by

PHILIP DESMEULES

Director	Tricia Thorns
Designer	Alex Marker
Lighting Designer/ Digital Imaging	Duncan Coombe
Sound Designer	Adrienne Quartly
Stage Manager	Maggie Bradley
Production photography	Philip Gammon
Producer	Graham Cowley

With the voices of:

Heidi Lawry	as	Cousin Nell
Leo Conville	as	Members of the British Expeditionary Force
Phil Sealey		
Simon Spencer-Hyde		

**Our grateful thanks to** Out of Joint, Gary Beestone, Dulwich Players, Mary Vernon, the Questors Theatre, Jennie Yates.

Particular thanks to Blanche Marvin, without whom this play would never have been written.

Set built by Alex Marker; Projections by Duncan Coombe; Costumes supplied by Angels the Costumiers and Harvey's of Hove. Photographs used by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London, and from private collections. Poster design by Jon Bradfield.

### PHILIP DESMEULES (LEM)



Trained at LAMDA

**Theatre** includes: *A View From the Bridge* (Duke of York's West End), *Love in Idleness* (Bristol Old Vic), *Mary Stuart* (Nuffield, Southampton), *A Christmas Carol* (Dukes Playhouse, Lancaster), *Uncertainty* (Arts Theatre/Latitude Festival), *Hothouse* (Arcola Theatre), *The Cudgel & The Rapier* (BAC); *The Tempest* (Southwark Playhouse). *The Hygiene Hypothesis* (Sincera, Theatre 503/Latitude Festival), *Hamlet* (Greenwich Park), *The Elephant Man*, *Animal Farm*, *Hamlet* (all for Sincera Productions, Brazil & Beirut tours)

**TV** includes: *Gracie*, *Little Dorrit*, *The Tudors*, *Doctors*, *Trafalgar Battle Surgeon*. **Film** includes: *Desaccord Parfait*

### TRICIA THORNS (Director)

Started her career in the West End as part of John Neville's company at the Fortune, after a Classics BA from Nottingham University.

As **Director**: *Red Night* (Finborough), *What The Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse), *Forgotten Voices from the Great War* (Pleasance), *Black 'Eil* (Soho Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Dulwich Picture Gallery), *Peer Gynt* (Alley's Theatre), *Passion Play 2000*, *The Mysteries*, *The Knack*, *Dulwich Cavalcade* and several plays for children which she also wrote.

As **Actress, Theatre** includes: *End of Story* (Chelsea Theatre), *Harry and Me* (Warehouse), *Façade* (Dingley and Dulwich Festivals) *A Kind of Alaska* (Edinburgh, tour and USA), *Time's Up* (Windsor), *The Libertine / Man of Mode* (Royal Court & Out of Joint tour), *Betrayal* (BAC and tour), *Run For Your Wife* (West End) and leading roles in theatres in Salisbury, Ipswich, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Guildford, Derby and many more. Many **TV** appearances including *Dangerfield*, *A Touch of Frost*, *Keeping Up Appearances*, *Rumpole*, *The Bill*, and *London's Burning*, and feature **Films** including *Captives* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

### ALEX MARKER (Designer)

For Two's Company: *Red Night* (Finborough Theatre) and a workshop performance of *The Searcher* (Greenwich Theatre), planned for a full performance in 2010. Trained in Theatre design at Wimbledon School of Art. Resident designer at the award-winning Finborough Theatre where his design credits for new writing include: Nigel Planer's *Death of Long Pig*, Nicholas de Jongh's *Plague Over England* (and the West End Transfer to the Duchess Theatre) and James Graham's plays *Albert's Boy*, *Eden's Empire*, *Little Madam* and *Sons of York*. He has also designed many revivals of rarely seen plays for the Finborough, such as: Rolf Hochhuth's *Soldiers* and *The Representative*, *Hangover Square* (adapted from the cult novel by Patrick Hamilton) and both parts of *Lark Rise to Candleford*. Other theatre includes: *The Real McCoy* – *Reconnected* (Hackney Empire), *The Viewing Room* (Arts Theatre), *School's Theatre Festival* (Young Vic), *Origin: Unknown* (Theatre Royal, Stratford East), *Sweet Charity* (Theatre Royal, Drury Lane), *The Pink Bedroom* (Courtyard), *Cherry Docs* (Kings Head), *An Eligible Man* (New End), *King Arthur* (Arcola Theatre), *Hush* (Arcola and Pleasance, Edinburgh) and *Cooking With Elvis* (Lyceum Theatre, Crewe). His work has been exhibited several times, most recently in Collaborators: UK Design for Performance, Nottingham. [www.alexmarker.com](http://www.alexmarker.com)

### DUNCAN COOMBE (Lighting Designer / Digital Imaging)

Duncan is actively involved in many unique projects. He can often be found working behind the scenes at the larger UK music festivals, behind the lighting desk in some of the West End's finest and is always giving his work 100%. Check out [www.dclx.co.uk](http://www.dclx.co.uk) to find out more.

### ADRIENNE QUARTLY (Sound Designer)

Productions include *Woyzeck* (St. Ann's Warehouse New York & Gate, London), *93.2FM* (Royal Court Theatre), *Hysteria* (Mime Festival 07), *Playing For Time* and *A Touch of the Sun* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Hideaway* (Complicité), *Tejas Verdes* (Gate Theatre), *Mercy Fine* (Clean Break), *Attempts On Her Life* (BAC), *Jarman Garden* and *National Alien Office* (as a cellist) (Riverside Studios), *What The Women Did* (Southwark Playhouse), *Habeas Corpus* and *Quartermaine's Terms* (Royal Theatre Northampton), *Spike Loons* (Circo Reticuloso) and *The Last Waltz Season* (Oxford Stage Company).

### GRAHAM COWLEY (Producer)

Also Producer with Out of Joint. Previously with the Theatre of Comedy Company, the Royal Court Theatre (on whose behalf he transferred a string of hit plays to the West End), the Half Moon Theatre, Joint Stock Theatre Group.

## FORGOTTEN VOICES FROM THE GREAT WAR

The project started as a protest against the US/UK invasion of Iraq in 2003. Two's Company mounted a production of Miles Malleson's *Black 'Eil* at the Soho Theatre. The play shows a young officer, returning from the front, decorated for bravery, but traumatised by his experience and refusing to go back. We felt that this cry of pain and rage written in 1916 expressed better than anything the folly of starting another war.

We had discovered *Black 'Eil* in the course of a search for plays about the First World War which were written during the War or soon afterwards. At the time, the only one any of us knew was *Journey's End*. We were amazed to find not only plays about soldiers but also about those left at home; German, Russian and American plays; plays by Bernard Shaw and J.M. Barrie but also by authors whose names we had never heard. All of them blazed with the real voices of those who had witnessed or themselves gone through the horrors of the War.

The first season, *Forgotten Voices from the Great War* at Pleasance London, consisted of three short plays, *'D' Company* by Miles Malleson, directed by Ian Talbot, and *Brigade Exchange* by Ernst Johannsen and *Black 'Eil* by Miles Malleson, both directed by Tricia Thorns. On publication in 1916, Malleson's plays had been denounced in the House of Commons as "a calumny on the British soldier" and all copies were seized by the police. Johannsen had served in the German Army in the War. Written for radio, his play had achieved international success before being banned when the Nazis came to power.

Shining a torch into this dark, neglected corner of theatrical history, the enterprising Two's Company now present a fascinating triple bill...

Paul Taylor, *The Independent*

...a revelatory evening ... Each contains almost unbearable moments, obviously written from inside the experience. ...it's to director Tricia Thorns' credit that mute domestic moments, such as a father losing his specs when he's handed a telegram, are charged with emotional weight. These discoveries do credit to Fringe theatre.

Susannah Clapp, *The Observer*



Lisa Jackson, Peter Symonds, Daniel Weyman in *Black 'Eil*

The next in the *Forgotten Voices* series was *What The Women Did* at Southwark Playhouse, another triple bill of *Luck of War* by Gwen John, *Handmaidens of Death* by Herbert Tremain, both directed by Tricia Thorns, and *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals* by J.M. Barrie, directed by Ian Talbot. They showed the different ways in which the wives and mothers of soldiers, and the girls who, because of the slaughter of the men, would never marry, spent the wartime years.



One of last year's great discoveries was a furious trilogy of forgotten plays from the first world war. Now the same team follows it up with another neglected great war threesome. ... What comes across most strongly, in Tricia Thorns' production, is something rarely touched on: the sexual ache of the wartime young and their hatred of war-widows who remarried.

Michael Billington, *The Guardian*



In these delicately contrasting stories and the exquisitely detailed productions each have been given, a compelling picture emerges of women facing their own demons and responsibilities in the midst of a very bleak time... the intimate, expertly acted ensemble productions of Tricia Thorns and Ian Talbot.

Mark Shenton, *The Stage*

Emma Callander in *Handmaidens of Death*

The third episode was *Red Night*, by James Lansdale Hodson at the Finborough Theatre, which showed the comradeship and humour, fading to disillusion, of a platoon facing misery and death in the trenches.

Written in 1936, James Lansdale Hodson's *Red Night* has inevitably been overshadowed by *Journey's End*. But revived now by Tricia Thorns in the sequence of *Forgotten Voices from the Great War*, it seems no less moving than Sherriff's play in its hellish vision of trench warfare and the horrors suffered by the ordinary, common infantryman. ... Thorns's production manoeuvres a cast of 10 with great skill around the tiny Finborough stage and complements the action with sardonic Great War songs.

Michael Billington, *The Guardian*

*Red Night* makes you want to howl at the senselessness of the slaughter it depicts. "Took the wood," reports Pte Hardcastle. "Six hundred men killed. Held it for 24 hours. Lost the wood again." Director Tricia Thorns marshals her troops well for this adept reiteration of the horrors of war.

Brian Logan, *Time Out* (Critics' Choice)



Elliott Inglese, Jonathan Warde, Phil Sealey in *Red Night*

## TWO'S COMPANY

Previous productions: *Betrayal* by Harold Pinter (BAC and tour); *A Kind of Alaska* by Harold Pinter (Edinburgh Fringe, tour of UK and USA); *Harry and Me* by Nigel Williams (Warehouse Theatre); *End of Story* by Véronique Olmi (Chelsea Theatre); and the *Forgotten Voices from the Great War* series.

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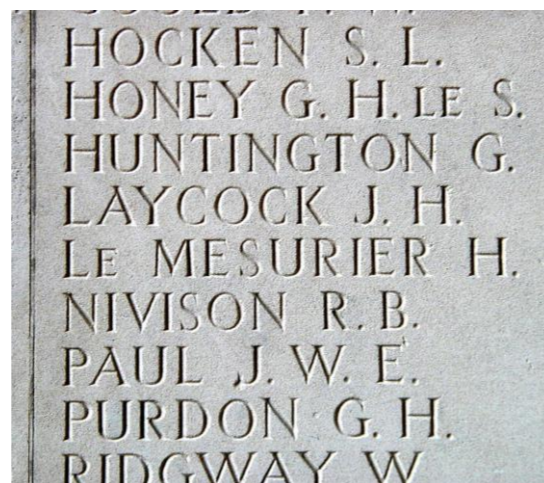
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The Thiepval Memorial in Northern France records the names of 73,357 officers and men of the British Armies who fell on the Somme battlefields between 1915 and 1918, and who have no known grave.



Part of Pier 13, Face A

