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## Danish Film Shows Human Side of 'A War'

By Sophie Braccini

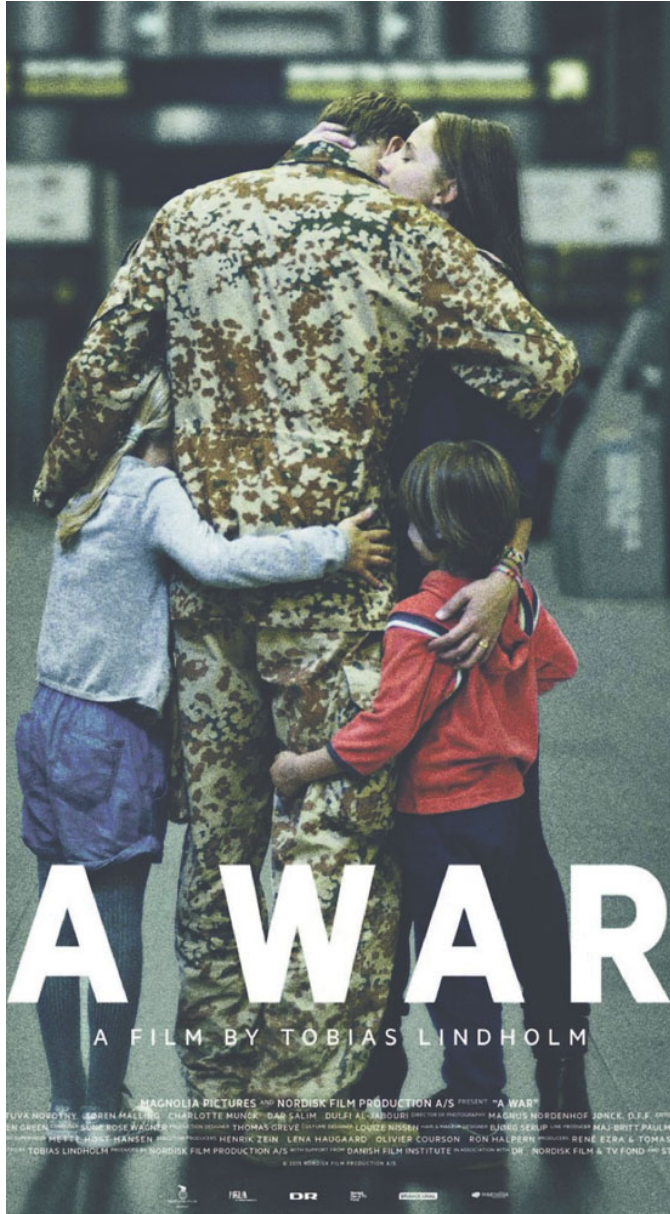


Photo provided

The point of the movie, "A War," is simple: War is a tragedy and even the best soldiers, with the best intentions, cannot escape actions that will haunt them for a very long time.

This movie, along with the also recently released "Eyes In The Sky," doesn't really judge the situations and the people. It doesn't glorify these soldiers that are sent to faraway lands. Rather, it aims to establish facts and expose human vulnerability when confronted with inhuman situations.

"A War" is a 2015 Danish movie written and directed by Tobias Lindholm. It is playing at the Orinda Theater for a week, beginning on April 29, as part of the International Film Showcase.

Danish soldiers were sent to Afghanistan to fight the Taliban in 2002-2003 and try to win over civilians. The movie shows them as good men, most of them very young. Their captain, Claus Pedersen (Pilou Asbæk who plays Euron Greyjoy in the upcoming "Game of Thrones," season), is a more mature family man who feels for his soldiers and wants to be there for them in the most dangerous situations. At some point, he will go out with his men and make a decision to save one of them that will lead to serious collateral damage. Back in Denmark, he is tried under accusations of a war crime.

The movie starts on at the frontline, getting the spectator to live the everyday hard and trying life of the soldiers. For the Afghans, life is also harsh, caught between soldiers from another country they can barely understand and Taliban that spreads another kind of terror.

In an interview with Awards Daily, Lindholm said that in making this film, he wanted the audience to live this story, rather than tell them what was right and wrong.

As the situation spirals and the soldiers go back home, the movie very powerfully shows the contrast and difficulty to come back to a country of peace, where no one can really fathom what the soldiers have been going through. Family issues are no less difficult for the captain and he has to make choices there too that will also have deep consequences.

The last part of the movie is a courtroom drama, very well mastered with a lot of suspense, until a denouement that, like in "Eyes In The Sky," leaves a bitter taste.

The acting is restrained and always feels very true. Asbjoern as the captain is not immediately likeable, but his efforts to make sense of the situation and protect his men gain him the audiences' support. He is a man trapped, so human and fallible, striving to live according to his principles in a world that is very messy.

The direction of the film is controlled, precise and realistic, sometimes a bit too realistic when people are hurt. The Afghan part was filmed in the Turkish province of Konya. Lindholm interviewed several Danish Afghan war veterans, and also conducted years of investigation in the Middle East, interviewing refugees, some of them former Taliban from the province where Danish soldiers fought. He said the process helped his team realize how complex a war situation is. Some of them even play in the movie.

Asbjoern is one of his favorite actors; this is the fourth time they worked together. "A War" was chosen to represent Denmark as Best Foreign Film at the Academy Awards

This is a very strong movie, for adults only, in Danish with subtitles. For more information visit [lamorindatheatres.com](http://lamorindatheatres.com).

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[back](#)

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