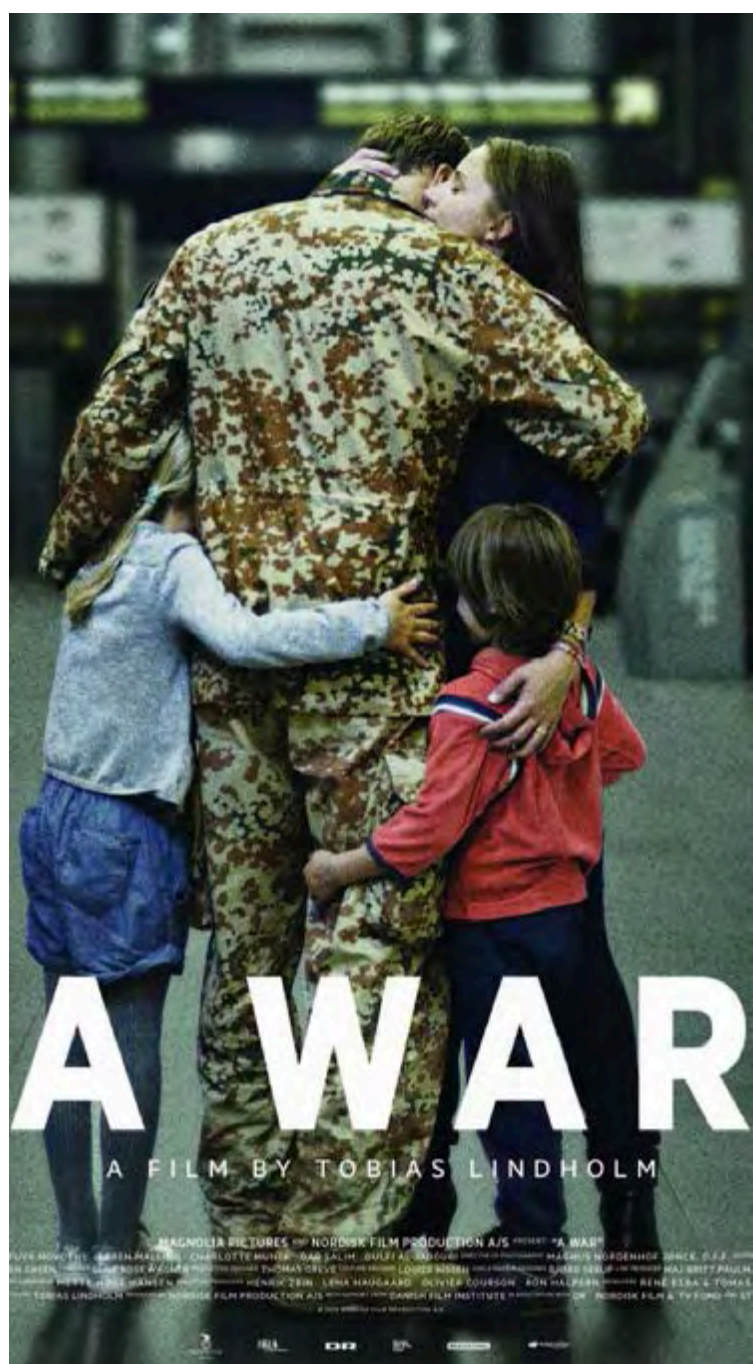


# Danish Film Shows Human Side of 'A War'

By Sophie Braccini



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 Af-

ghans, 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. Asbæk 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.

Asbæk 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.

Photo provided

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## Celebrations

### Singing for 100 Years

Submitted By Kate Elliot



Freda Taylor

Photo provided

Grace Healthcare of Moraga celebrated the 100th birthday of one of its residents on April 9 and 10.

Freda Taylor was born April 10, 1916 in Minneapolis. She, her parents and four siblings eventually moved to Portland, Ore.

As an adult, Taylor was a homemaker and part-time secretary, and she and her husband, Leonard, also worked a small farm.

In later years, she moved to Rossmoor in Walnut Creek, and was active in her church and sang in the Rossmoor Barbershop Quartet.

Taylor had three children: Dan, Michael and Gayle. She has grandchildren and great-grandchildren who visit her often. Her favorite pastime is singing along with music at Grace Moraga.

## Early Intervention Can Help Families Deal With Loved Ones' Memory Loss

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

You may notice that a close family member or friend is having more and more challenges with memory or making sound decisions. What do you do and how should you approach this sensitive subject?

Recently, I was asked to do a podcast interview with a geriatrician. She asked me if there were any books for families dealing with this beginning stage of a dementia that brings on worry and concern. Sadly, my answer is that I could think of none that just addressed this issue.

When my mother first started to exhibit some lapses of judgment or memory I didn't want to confront it head on for two reasons: 1) I did not wish to see this fiercely independent woman (who was driving all over San Francisco with friends a decade younger than her) lose her independence. I needed her to be my strong role model even at 86. This is called denial. 2) My clinical background said I just needed to gather more information before jumping to conclusions. So, I started a log of times she forgot to take the keys out of her garage door as she drove away, or repeated the same story to me five times, or going to see six different doctors with vague symptoms.

I had been providing my mother a personal assistant once a week since she was about 80 years old. She just needed someone to help

her with organizing paperwork and following up on the telephone for her when she had questions regarding a bill or an upcoming medical appointment because her hearing was impaired and phone calls were challenging. The personal assistant came for just two hours a week and was amazed at how well my mother was. She was my gatekeeper as mom's memory and judgment started to fail. Her dementia, we determined, was from small strokes.

Not everyone has this type of information and monitoring of a parent at a distance or even nearby. Often those with dementia like Alzheimer's disease are socially appropriate for a long time into the illness, and even the family doctor might miss it on routine appointments. But, when you have the "red-flags" that safety is at risk, it is time, or probably past time, to jump in. When bringing in a personal assistant, start slowly.

If you jump in and say, "Mom your memory is failing" you most likely will be faced with resistance and denial. How each of us approaches a parent can make all the difference in the success of the intervention.

The best way to design a good plan is to bring in a third-party expert, Aging Life Care Manager (formerly called Care Managers), that will give you the best chance of success with your intervention. You might have a hard time with being

entirely honest with a parent, but a professional care manager can help you to design "therapeutic fiblets." These are sometimes called "white lies" that are to be used to reduce stress for everyone and most of all, protect the self-esteem of the person with the early stage dementia.

If an evaluation has not been done, the care manager will help you make that happen and connect you with the best dementia screening clinic in your area.

At Eldercare Services, we have classes and support groups for families dealing with the early stages of dementia — it is challenging to do this without some good advice and support. These classes are free and open to everyone - friends and family.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management (now called Aging Life Care™) since 1984.