



**Cal Poly  
Pomona**

**College of Letters, Arts,  
and Social Sciences**  
THEATRE AND NEW DANCE

# **HARBUR GATE**

**The events of this play take place in the years 2004 to 2007.**

**Part One, “Orpheus”: 2005**

**Part Two, “Harbur Gate”: 2004**

**Part Three “Veteran in a New Field”: 2007**

**October 10–19, 2025**

**Studio Theatre**

**Building 25–110**

Department of Theatre and New Dance presents

# HARBUR GATE

Written by Kathleen Cahill  
Directed by Bernardo Solano

Featuring  
Dom Carson, Giselle Cruz, Brandon Dieu, Isaiah Londo,  
Gabrielle Manuel, Britain McElrea

Scenic Designer  
Kyla McIntyre

Costume Designer  
Haley Rodriguez

Lighting Designer  
Nita Mendoza

Sound Designer  
Nico Salazar

Props Designer  
Lily Barnes

Stage Manager  
Madison Diaz

Dramaturg  
Alexi Bruton

Associate Director  
Lu Yeh

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**There will be no intermission.**

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*HARBUR GATE* was originally Produced at Salt Lake Acting Company in 2017.

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at Cal Poly Pomona respectfully acknowledge the original caretakers of this land, the Tongva peoples, and all of their ancestors, elders, and descendants, past, present and emerging. We also recognize this land known as Los Angeles County today is also home to many Indigenous peoples from all over, and we are grateful for the opportunity to live and work here as guests on these lands, the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Tongva.

  
**The Kennedy Center**  
THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

  @cpptheatredance  
**More Info: [bit.ly/cpptheatre](http://bit.ly/cpptheatre)**

# CAST

Chad .....	Dom Carson
Carey .....	Britain McElrea
Russo .....	Brandon Dieu
Alyson .....	Gabrielle Manuel
Michelle .....	Giselle Cruz
John .....	Isaiah Londo

# PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Manager .....	Brian S. Newman
Director of Theatre Facilities .....	Jonathan Bastow
Technical Director .....	Kenneth Blenc
Costume Shop Manager .....	Lexy Perez
Faculty Design Mentors .....	Evan Bartoletti, Jesse Portillo
Acting Mentor/Vocal Coach.....	Sayda Trujillo
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Leila Muñoz
Assistant Lighting Designer.....	Jasmine Horn
Assistant Costume Designer .....	Isabella Petrone
LX Programmer/Board Operator .....	Diego Barrera
Audio Programmer/Board Operator .....	Derrick Gutierrez
Scenic Painting Charge .....	Samantha Ng
Scenic Paint Crew .....	Amber Lopez, David Rodriguez
Deck Crew .....	Juanita Linaras, Nico Salazar
Wardrobe Crew .....	Anya Ramirez, Ethan Serrano
Props Crew.....	Jackson Burton, Cherry Serrano
Scene Shop Crew .....	Ellis Buongiorno, Isaiah Maldonado
..... River Myaskovsky, William Phung, Ethan Serrano, Zach Supancheck	
.....	Riley Young-Vahovick
Costume Shop Crew .....	Mattie Flores, Aylin Galvan
.....	Katherin Jasso, Tessa Speck
Electrics Crew .....	Susanna Cho, Sebastian Elkin, Jasmine Horn
.....	Elisee Moreau, Janice Sim, Alyssa Sakaoghli
House Manager .....	Malayah Wilford
Box Office .....	Giselle Aguilar

**Please be advised that this production deals with strong adult themes related to Post Traumatic Stress, sexual assault, and war.**  
**This production uses replica, non-functioning firearms, strobe lights, and loud noises.**

# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It wasn't until we began rehearsals that we started to more fully understand the emotional impact of this play, as it explores Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, sexual assault, gender discrimination, sexual orientation and grief. It takes place in 2005, 2004 and 2007, during the Iraq War in both Iraq and in the United States. Kathleen Cahill, the playwright, was planning to write about women in the military. Her interest led her to get permission to sit in on group therapy sessions attended by men and women at the Salt Lake City VA (Veterans Administration). These led to her writing the play.

The military policy "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) was enacted in 1993 by the Clinton administration, allowing gay and bisexual service members to serve only if they kept their sexual orientation secret. After a lengthy legal and political process, the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" Repeal Act of 2010 was signed into law. In terms of what is classified as Military Sexual Trauma, in 2021, the "I Am Vanessa Guillen Act" criminalized sexual harassment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and removed the decision to prosecute sexual misconduct cases from the service members' chain of command. Also, an Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military was established by the Department of Defense. Executive orders and legislation continued to refine the military's handling of sexual assault and domestic violence cases, with special trial counsels now responsible for prosecution decisions.

This play explores varying ways violence in war affects veterans of different backgrounds and experiences. The meaning and impact of military service in wartime varies as widely as the people who choose to serve. While experiences of loss, trauma, guilt, and betrayal can be universal, the characters depicted here are also particular. We dedicate this production to all "veterans in a new field," as well as to others who can see parts of their own humanity in the veteran lives depicted here.

Special thanks to Liam Corley, Jeremy Manning and other veterans and military dependents at the Veterans Resource Center (Elke Azpeitia, Director), for their thoughts and comments about the play.

**--Bernardo Solano, Director**

# ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

“Pick up your freaking trash, Yeh, Jesus! Disgusting. Drop down, give me ten, right now! Nose to the ground, come on! Give me a lap. Get out of here. Jesus.” -Staff Sergeant Tyr May, US Army, Retired. Active duty 1994-2005.

Whether it's through cracked mirrors and dust, fire and smoke, or white lies and old coffee, no matter what you've done, been through, or convinced yourself of, I hope you all find your fields.

--Lu Yeh, Associate Director

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## DRAMATURGICAL NOTE

*Harbur Gate* is set in a real location in Iraq, a busy border crossing with Turkey. Grounding the play in the realities of modern military service, playwright Kathleen Cahill structures the piece around three distinct time periods. She uses non-linear storytelling to explore trauma, survivor's guilt, and the complexities of returning home. The play's shifting timelines, intertwining perspectives, and use of silence illuminate the ongoing, internal impact of war. Using a non-linear structure, the play draws the audience's attention to the psychological and emotional reverberations that persist long after the visible conflict ends.

Cahill offers the audience multiple perspectives across three acts—each with its own title, time period, and dramaturgical focus.

**“Part 1: Orpheus”** centers on two veterans preparing for a Purple Heart medal ceremony as they navigate PTSD and survivor's guilt. Set in the USA in 2005, their interactions are haunted by the ghost of a fallen comrade, revealing the persistent psychological toll of war and the ways loss shapes memory and identity. This act establishes the motif of unseen trauma and the struggle to move forward, which resonates throughout the play.

**“Part 2: Harbur Gate”** shifts us back in time to 2004, to the battlefield near the city of Mosul in Iraq, revealing the circumstances behind the loss introduced in Part 1. Structured as a memory play, it reconstructs a pivotal past trauma, immersing the audience in the uncertainty and volatility of wartime experience. By highlighting the moment of loss, the act invites reflection on how memory, danger, and fate intersect for those who serve. But it quickly turns deadly, something common in a war zone.

Finally, “**Part 3: Veteran in a New Field,**” set in 2007, uses symbolism to dramatize the struggle to let go of the past. Michelle’s journey, highlighted and broken down by John, a blind painter, embodies the tension between holding on to trauma and seeking release. Unlike the ghosts who linger, Michelle chooses to step into an uncertain future, suggesting that healing requires both acknowledging loss and embracing transformation.

*Harbur Gate* asks us to hold multiple truths at once: that service can be both heroic and brutal, that humor can live beside grief, and that coming home doesn’t mean the war is over. It invites us to listen closely—not just to the language of the military, but to the pauses, the unfinished thoughts, and the silences that carry as much weight as any medal.

--Alexi K. Bruton, Dramaturg

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## MILITARY TERMS AND ACRONYMS

**AEV:** American Exposition Vehicle

**ARSOFF:** Army Special Operations Forces. See “Special Ops” below

**Convoy:** A group of military vehicles traveling together

**DADT:** Don’t Ask Don’t Tell: See the Timeline of Military Regulations and Orders

**Harbur Gate:** U.S. military checkpoint on the Iraq–Turkey border; used here as shorthand for the dangerous convoy route

**IED:** Improvised Explosive Device

**Mortuary Affairs:** Unit responsible for recovering and processing human remains

**On point:** Lead position in a patrol; also means “ready/alert”

**PFC:** Private First Class

**PTSD:** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (frequently used in military contexts)

**Purple Heart:** U.S. medal awarded to service members wounded or killed in action

**Sarge:** Informal short form of “Sergeant”

**Repetition Disorder:** Also known as repetition compulsion, repetitive compulsion, or trauma reenactment, involves repeating physically or emotionally painful situations that happened in the past.

**(SOF):** Special Operations Forces, or Special Ops, are elite military units designed to undertake complex and dynamic security missions within the evolving strategic environment.

### Acronyms Invented by the Playwright

ISO, ROX, BFA, LTP, DFBU

# SEXUAL ASSAULT IN THE MILITARY

## KEY EVENTS & REFORMS

>**1991:** The Tailhook scandal and the public testimony of whistleblower Lt. Paula Coughlin sparked widespread awareness and calls for accountability regarding sexual assault in the military.

>**2003:** An investigation at the USAF Academy uncovered widespread sexual harassment and assault, highlighting a persistent problem within the military system.

>**2021:** Congress passed transformative military justice reforms, signed into law by President Biden, which included significant changes to how military sexual assault cases are handled.

## KEY LEGISLATION

>**118th Congress (2023-2024):** Military Sexual Trauma Retirement Equity Act: This bill expanded special compensation for disabled retirees, renaming it “trauma-related special compensation” to include disabilities resulting from military sexual trauma.

>**119th Congress (2025-2026): May 2025 – Improving VA Training for Military Sexual Trauma Claims Act (H.R. 2201):** This bill, passed by the House and referred to the Senate, aims to improve VA training for employees handling MST claims and ensure VA health professionals do not retraumatize claimants during examinations.

>>**Introduced in April 2025 – Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act (H.R. 2576):** This act provides a broad framework for supporting servicemembers and veterans, including those affected by MST.

>>**Introduced in September 2025 – Military Sexual Trauma Awareness Day Resolution (H.Res. 770):** This resolution expresses support for an official MST Awareness Day to underscore the commitment to eradicating MST.

## KEY DATES, POLICIES, AND LEGISLATION RELATED TO LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN THE MILITARY

>**March 25, 2010 –** The Pentagon announces modified guidelines for the enforcement of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” – providing greater protection from hearsay evidence and accusations based on hidden agendas. Parties providing information about alleged gay service personnel must do so under oath and will be subject to “special scrutiny” to determine their motives.

>**September 9, 2010 –** U.S. District Judge Virginia Phillips rules that the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy is unconstitutional because it violates the First and Fifth Amendment rights of homosexuals.

>**December 15, 2010** – The House of Representatives votes to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” by passing bill H.R. 2965.

>**December 18, 2010** – The Senate votes to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” by passing bill S. 4023.

>**June 26, 2013** – U.S. Supreme Court strikes down a portion of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which restricted federal employees in same sex marriages, including military families, from receiving federal benefits.

>**July 28, 2015** – Secretary of Defense Ash Carter issues a directive stating that no service member shall be discharged solely on their gender identity without personal approval of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

>**June 30, 2016** – Secretary Carter removes the ban on transgender individuals serving openly in the military.

>**July 14, 2016** – Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus notifies Congress that he intends to name a ship in honor of slain gay rights activist and Navy veteran Harvey Milk.

>**July 26, 2017** – President Donald Trump tweets that the U.S. will not accept transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the military because of potential medical costs.

>**March 24, 2018** – The White House releases a memo stating that individuals with a history of gender dysphoria will be disqualified from military service except under certain limited circumstances.

>**Jan. 25, 2021** – Biden Administration Overturns Transgender Exclusion Policy

>**January 27, 2025** – Trump signed Executive Order 14183, “Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness,” which directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to prohibit transgender people from serving.

>**May 6, 2025** – the U.S. Supreme Court granted the Trump administration’s request to enforce a Department of Defense policy banning transgender individuals from serving in the military, lifting a nationwide injunction that had temporarily blocked the policy.