

One-man show honors those who serve

'The American Soldier' on Bannerman Island Saturday

By Kristine Coulter

Bannerman Island will host "The American Soldier" on Saturday, June 17. It is a one-man show put together by Douglas Taurel, the actor in the show. Taurel compiled the show from letters written by those serving, from the American Revolution to present day.

"I created the show after learning about the alarming rate of veteran suicides from PTSD and the increasing amount of veterans who are living on the streets. I was moved to hear about the struggles our veterans were having so I wanted to give back. I feel that the intense sacrifices that veterans and their families have made can never have enough awareness," commented Taurel.

Taurel performed the show at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The show was nominated for an Amnesty International Award, earned 4 stars and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. A performance will be given at the Library of Congress in the fall.

"Performing at The Kennedy Center was unbelievable. It is an actor's dream to be able to perform on that stage," stated Taurel. He went on to add, "We had close to 300 in attendance and the experience will last with me for a lifetime. The audience was extremely moved," he said.

Taurel remarked that "veterans have been incredibly supportive and have always been my biggest fans. Every performance I have veterans who attend and they all thank me for doing the show and for being their voice."

In testimonials that Taurel has received regarding the show, one is from a Purple Heart recipient, who stated, "...most amazing thing I have ever seen on stage. This play is a voice for veterans."

Taurel, who is not a veteran, has a sister who is a Sergeant in the U.S. Army. Two of his nieces have done multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said. He has a nephew who is in the U.S. Marine Corps.

"I started creating this show about eight years ago. I would go to the New York Public Library and research books that contained letters from soldier and their families of all the different wars. Needless to say the research was intense and immense. Then I took a few playwriting classes to help me understand the fundamentals of writing and started shaping the material into a workable script. I have been performing the show for 3 years now," said Taurel.

As for those who visit Bannerman Island and see the performance, Taurel said, "My goal is for audiences to take away a deeper admiration and appreciation of sacrifice. And have a



Douglas Taurel will perform "The American Soldier" on Bannerman Island on Saturday, June 17.

-Courtesy photo

better understanding why it is so hard for veterans to re-enter civilian life when they come back home."

For tickets, www.bannermancastle.org.
To hear testimonials about the show, go to www.TheAmericanSoldierSoloShow.com.