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Northern Stage Hosts Workshop of *Deployed*, a New Play that Examines the Lives of Female Veterans in Vermont and New Hampshire

(White River Junction, VT – March 11, 2019) ***Deployed*, a documentary play about the lives of female veterans by Nicola Smith and Samantha Lazar, will enjoy its first reading at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in White River Junction, VT, March 30 at 1:00 PM.** This reading is FREE and open to the public. Book tickets through the Northern Stage Box Office at boxoffice@northernstage.org or (802) 296-7000.

In 2016, writer and journalist Nicola Smith began interviewing female veterans in Vermont and New Hampshire to better understand the issues that face them and to give voice to their stories. She interviewed women from all branches and ranks of the military and from a variety of ages, ethnicities, backgrounds, and walks of life. **“Female veterans’ perspectives are not often heard. Yet the effect of service on their lives, especially on their identities as women and as citizens, is transformative,”** says Smith. **“I realized that the intimacy and immediacy of theater would be a powerful way for audiences to hear these women’s stories.”** Smith decided to write her first play and approached Northern Stage for advice. Northern Stage connected her to Samantha Lazar, a Yale-trained dramaturg and theater-maker who specializes in devising non-traditional theatrical works. In concert with project producer and Northern Stage Director of Artistic Outreach Amanda Rafuse, Smith and Lazar spent a year shaping the disparate narratives into a cohesive whole while developing the work’s structure, themes, and characters.

***Deployed* explores female veterans’ stories of combat, sexism, racism, ambition, sexual assault, resilience, reintegration into family life and civilian society, and pride in service.** The narratives touch on some of the most pressing issues to confront Americans in recent years, from race to gender to #MeToo to the divide between civilian and military life.

Northern Stage will bring professional actors to White River Junction for one week in March to workshop and rehearse the play with Smith, Lazar, and Director Amanda Rafuse. The week will culminate with a free staged reading at the VA Medical Center on March 30 at 1:00 PM. **“We are honored to provide a platform from which local women Veterans can share their stories of contribution, sacrifice, and triumph. Both Veterans and the community are welcome to attend, and we look forward to a great turnout,”** says Laura Miraldi, Acting Medical Center Director for White River Junction VA Medical Center. **“When we truly listen and hear others, we have the opportunity to deepen our understanding of their stories and strengthen our connections. We return to our communities enriched from the privilege of this shared experience.”**

A post-show conversation with the creative team and actors follows the reading, and due to the nature and content of the stories presented in the play, support services will be available on site.

The reading is made possible through the generous support of the Byrne Foundation, the Vermont Arts Council, the Vermont Community Foundation, and the Pussycat Foundation and is presented in partnership with the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, VT.

Northern Stage (northernstage.org) is a regional non-profit LORT-D professional theater company located in White River Junction, VT. Northern Stage actively engages its audiences with world-class productions and extensive educational and outreach programs in its new home, the Barrette Center for the Arts. Founded in 1997, the company has offered more than 150 professional productions of new works, classics, and musicals. Now in its 22nd Season, Northern Stage serves over 50,000 people. In 2014, the company launched a new play festival that has cultivated five world premiere productions and two Off-Broadway transfers. A robust educational program focuses on professional training in a nurturing and supportive environment for students of all ages. Offerings include student acting ensembles, a summer musical theater intensive, and an expansive theater-in-the-schools residency program. Northern Stage's breadth of programming supports the company's mission to "change lives, one story at a time."

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