



Watch points for war zones

THE National Theatre of Scotland's production of Gregory Tiffany's *Black Watch*, one of the opening events of the UWA Perth International Arts Festival, is more than theatre.

With its choreographed unarmed combat scene, its emotional moment when mates get killed and its barracks language, it's a challenging performance for audiences and both challenging and exhausting for the cast.

And all this takes place in under two hours.

First performed in December 2004, it's based on Gregory Burke's verbatim interviews with members of the Black Watch. The regiment formed in 1881 with the amalgamation of the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot and 73rd (Perthshire) Regiment of Foot. As the 42nd, they were redcoats sent by England's King George III to fight against Americans during their War of Independence. Now in Iraq, they're fighting with the Americans but the relationship's no better. Nicknamed the Black

Watch because of their black and green tartan, the regiment has been hard to kill off in more ways than one. It is now known as the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

From the cast of 10, we hear their hopes, fears and why they joined up. It's real Iraq. With full on realistic light and sound effects, this is about as realistic as any theatrical performance can get. *Black Watch* is playing at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre from February 7 to 17.

Michael Perot