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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 8, 2014

**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble
announces the World Premiere of
WOMEN AT WAR
based on true stories of women in combat**

November 5-December 6, 2014

Chicago, IL—**Rivendell Theatre Ensemble** (RTE), Chicago's only Equity theatre dedicated to producing new work with women at the core, announces the first production of their twentieth anniversary season, the world premiere of ***WOMEN AT WAR***, written by RTE member **Megan Carney** and directed by Artistic Director **Tara Mallen**. The production runs November 5-**December 6, 2014** at Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago.

As a debate rages over whether females should serve on the frontlines, more women are being sent into active combat zones than ever before. Woven from first-person interviews with women who have laid their lives on the front lines, ***WOMEN AT WAR*** is the result of four years of intensive research and development. Working closely with veterans and organizations, Megan Carney explores the multifaceted world of female soldiers—from enlistment to deployment to the often complicated return home.

"Today's American military is nearly 15% female and there are over 1.8 million female U.S. veterans. At the same time, a male perspective has dominated the images and tales of war shared in books, movies, theater, and elsewhere. Thanks to a generous grant from the Chicago Community Trust, Rivendell had the resources to begin to share the perspective of the women who serve in the American Military," **comments Tara Mallen**. "Along with our community partners at VetCAT (Veterans Creative Arts Therapy) we have been able to forge relationships with veteran service organizations across the state, and connect with more than 70 female veterans to create a moving theatrical piece crafted from diverse and complex stories of women during and following military service. The time is now to make the hidden contributions of these women finally visible and their silence resound.

The cast of ***WOMEN AT WAR*** includes: RTE member **Mary Cross**, Navy Veteran **Cynthia Hines**, with **Rengin Altay**, **Danielle Davis**, **Brittani Green**, **Krystal McNeil**, **Paula Ramirez**, **Charli Williams** and **Susan Gaspar**.

The core design team includes: RTE members **Diane Fairchild** (lighting), **Toy Deiorio** (sound), **Janice Pytel** (costumes and lobby installation) and **Shera Street** (lobby installation).

The **WOMEN AT WAR** Production Sponsors are The Chicago Community Trust and The Reva and David Logan Foundation

Title: **WOMEN AT WAR**
Written by: RTE member **Megan Carney**
Directed by: RTE Artistic Director **Tara Mallen**
Featuring: RTE member **Mary Cross, Rengin Altay, Danielle Davis, Brittani Green, Cynthia Hines, Paula Ramirez, and Susan Gaspar**
Previews: November 5-November 7, 2014
Press opening: Saturday, November 8, 2014 at 7:00pm
Gala opening: Sunday, November 9, 2014 at 6:00pm
Regular run: through December 6, 2014
No shows November 26 or 27

Schedule: Wednesdays-Saturdays at 8:00pm
Saturdays at 4:00pm

Location: **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble, 5779 N. Ridge Avenue in Chicago**
Tickets: **General Admission**

Previews: \$25

Pre-sale: \$32

Walk-up: \$35

Student, Senior, Active Military, Veteran

Preview: \$15

Pre-sale: \$22

Walk-up: \$25

Pay What You Can: Five seats (10% of the house) are available for each performance. Reservations are made on a first come first serve basis.

Flex Pass: \$110 (\$80 for Student/ Senior/ Active Military/ Veteran)

Includes four tickets to use in any combination for the season.

Box Office: (773) 334-7728 or www.RivendellTheatre.org

Parking and transportation: Free parking is available in the Senn High School parking lot (located a block and a half from the theatre behind the school off Thorndale Avenue). There is limited paid and free street parking in the area and the theatre is easily accessible via the Clark (#22) or Broadway (#36) bus and a short walk from the Bryn Mawr Red Line El station.

Notes of Interest:

- Today's American military is nearly 15% female, ranging from 7% of Marines to 19% of the Air Force and Reserves. In addition, there are over 1.8 million female U.S. veterans.
- RTE has developed relationships with veteran service organizations, including the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs, Student Veteran's Centers at UIC and Kennedy-King College, Illinois Health and Disability Advocates, Pritzker Military Library, the National Veterans Art Museum, and VetCAT (Veterans Creative Arts Therapy).
- RTE connected with more than 70 female veterans and collected 28 personal interviews. The result of this work is *Women at War*, a devised theatrical piece crafted from diverse, rich, and complex stories of women during and following military service.
- A key element in this project has been to use the play as a catalyst to create a dialogue between civilian and veteran communities. Hence a major element of the programming

at **WOMEN AT WAR** will be “**Town Hall Saturdays.**” Following each Saturday matinee performance, audiences are invited to participate to dive a little deeper through moderated post-show conversations sparked by themes running through **WOMEN AT WAR**. Town Hall Saturdays will be held November 15, 22, 29 and December 6, 2014.

- In 2012, RTE secured a \$25,000 grant from the Chicago Community Trust in collaboration with their Community Partners at VetCAT (Veterans Creative Arts Therapy). With this funding, RTE led an examination of the roles of American women in the shifting landscape of the military and **WOMEN AT WAR** was born. On November 21, 2013, RTE premiered a staged reading of **WOMEN AT WAR** at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Ensuing brief workshop performances were held at the National Association of Schools for Theatre annual conference in April of 2014 and then again at Union League Club in May of 2014.
- Cast member and Army Veteran Cynthia Hines makes her theatrical debut in **WOMEN AT WAR** while also serving as one of the project’s several military consultants. A native of Milwaukee, she joined the U.S. Army in 1994 as a paralegal specialist, where she served 11 years and spent another eight years as a civilian in the Middle East, most notably Iraq and Afghanistan. During her time on active duty, she was deployed to Germany, Korea, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. A graduate of the University of Maryland, she is pursuing a career in theatrical and voiceover acting as well as playwriting.

RTE@20: You Are Here

This year Rivendell Theatre Ensemble turns twenty years old. When it came to planning the 20th season, we found ourselves at a crossroads, reflecting back on the journey so far...and looking ahead to the future. So in honor of this milestone anniversary, we've mapped out three exciting new plays as well as a remount of last season's Jeff-nominated world premiere. Each work explores the tricky topography of personal choice--and the often uncharted biases that drive how--and why--we make our most life-changing decisions.

The season includes **WOMEN AT WAR** (October 30-December 6, 2014) written by RTE ensemble member Megan Carney, directed by Artistic Director Tara Mallen; the world premiere of **Look We Are Breathing** (April 2-May 16, 2015) written by Laura Jacqmin, directed by Megan Schuchman; a remount of **Rasheeda Speaking** (May 30-June 28, 2015) written by Joel Drake Johnson, directed by Sandy Shinner, to be performed in the Steppenwolf Garage; and **How the World Began** (September 3-October 17, 2015) by Catherine Trieschmann, featuring RTE member Rebecca Spence.

About Rivendell Theatre Ensemble

Founded in 1994, Rivendell Theatre Ensemble advances women’s lives through the power of theatre. Rivendell cultivates the talents of women artists -- writers, actors, directors, designers and technicians – by seeking out innovative plays that explore unique female experiences and producing them in intimate, salon environments.

Rivendell fills an important role in the Chicago region as the *only* Equity theatre dedicated to producing artistically challenging and original plays created by and about women. After years of being an itinerant company, we moved into our own theater space in 2010 in Edgewater. As new members of the community, we are focused on becoming an integral community partner and serving as a catalyst to engage our audiences in a discussion of local social issues.

For more information about Rivendell Theater Ensemble, <http://rivendelltheatre.org>. Follow RTE on Facebook at [Facebook.com/rivendelltheatre](https://www.facebook.com/rivendelltheatre) and on Twitter @RivendellThtr

Rivendell Theatre Ensemble is supported by generous grants from The Alphawood Foundation; The Arts Work Fund for Organizational Development; The Chicago Community Trust; The Chicago Foundation for Women; The Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; The Reva and David Logan Foundation; The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust; A CityArts Program 1 Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; and the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Rivendell is also grateful for the support of 100 Women Who Care.

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