



ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORONTO STAR

Barb Stegemann, writer of the documentary *Perfume War*, runs 7 Virtues, a company that buys essential oils from conflict zones and transforms them into perfumes.

Two different fronts in battle for Afghanistan

Documentary captures friendship of wounded soldier and entrepreneur he inspired

MEGAN DOLSKI
 STAFF REPORTER

It's the story of two best friends and their very different approaches to the same fight.

Perfume War connects the dots between the moment in 2006 when a Canadian soldier took an axe to the head in Kandahar province and a later moment when his best friend bought a couple thousands of dollars' worth of orange blossom oil from an Afghan farmer on her credit card.

For years, both Trevor Greene and Barb Stegemann have made headlines across Canada for seemingly separate reasons. Greene miracu-

lously survived having that blade slammed into his skull while serving in the Canadian Forces, and then healed far beyond anyone's expectations.

Stegemann launched 7 Virtues, a company that buys essential oils from conflict zones and uses them to make perfume in Canada.

A former journalist, Greene is already the subject of a biographical documentary, *Peace Warrior*, while Stegemann got her start on CBC's *Dragons' Den* after penning a book that gave her company its name.

"A lot of people don't know that he's the soldier that inspired me," Stegemann said of Greene in an interview with the Star. "And a lot of people don't know that a lot of his healing was me carrying on his mission, because a soldier never wants to leave

his mission unfinished."

She said her friend wanted to protect and empower the people of Afghanistan, so as soon as he was no longer in a position to actively do that, she jumped in to help on his behalf. Her approach, however, was a bit different.

Director Michael Melski said he tried to show who Trevor Greene, a soldier, and Barb Stegemann, an entrepreneur, are as people

In a Maclean's article written by Greene last year, he credited "Abdul's axe" as the reason Stegemann started making perfume.

"She has empowered thousands of women in conflict zones who would

otherwise be hopelessly struggling to provide for their children," he wrote.

Having read much about Greene's recovery and the launch of Stegemann's perfume business, *Perfume War's* director Michael Melski (who went to King's College with both of them) wanted to tie together years of news articles by giving both his subjects a place to tell their stories in their own words.

Hoping to document an "epic platonic friendship that led to personal transformation and into global transformation," Melski said he's tried to show audiences who Greene and Stegemann are as people and together as friends.

Stegemann thinks the film, which got off the ground with a near-\$25,000 boost from a Kickstarter campaign she launched in 2015,

helped provide audiences with helpful content.

As a self-described sometimes cynical filmmaker, Melski has been humbled by the reactions to the story he'd seen so far. Launched at Halifax's Atlantic Film Festival last fall, the film has since appeared at several other North American festivals and Melski has heard viewers state that it has profoundly changed the way they think about the world.

He said it felt good to offer a new take on protecting and advancing peace: "Just through two people who are in their own personal way going out there and doing things that are lights in the darkness," he said.

Perfume War is set to play at the Cineplex Yonge Dundas and other Cineplex theatres across Canada from Friday to Thursday.

> PROJECTIONS ALSO ON TORONTO SCREENS THIS WEEK

CANADIAN FILM DAY SINGS OUR NATION'S CINEMATIC PRAISES

Among the flicks on deck is a 20th-anniversary screening of *Cube*, co-presented by the Royal and NOW

JASON ANDERSON
 SPECIAL TO THE STAR

National Canadian Film Day. Of all of this year's sesquicentennial celebrations, few can compete with the sheer scope of the Canada 150 movie event. On Wednesday, the busy team behind National Canadian Film Day will present more than 1,700 patriotic cinematic events taking place in venues across the country, plus on TV, online and quite possibly on the hides of caribou who've been marshalled for the occasion.

The slate at TIFF Bell Lightbox includes TIFF Kids screenings of *Watermark*, *Ballerina* and *The Legend of Sanjiv*, plus 32 *Short Films About Glenn Gould* with Colm Feore and Don McKellar in attendance. The Royal and NOW magazine co-present a 20th anniversary showing of *Cube*. Meanwhile, POV magazine invites luminaries like Hubert Davis and Anita Lee to the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema for a panel discussion on Canadian docs. Not to be outdone, the Carlton doubles down with a lineup that includes *Sex After Kids*, *One Week*, *How Heavy This Hammer* and *Tower*.

Among the dozens of other highly worthwhile options are *Beel Injun* at the ROM, Alan Zweig's *Vinyl* at Sonic Boom, *Angry Inuk* at the Bata Shoe Museum, *Edwin Boyd: Citizen Gangster* at the Spadina Museum, *Manufactured Landscapes* at the Design Exchange and Cinefranco's slate of francophone fare at the Ryerson School of Image Arts. After all that, surely the fireworks on Parliament Hill on July 1 can only be a letdown. Go to canadianfilmday.ca for details.

Black Code: A new documentary by Toronto's Nicholas de Pencier that opens at the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema this weekend. *Black Code* peers deep into some of the murkiest



The Carlton Cinema will present the film *One Week*, starring Joshua Jackson, on National Canadian Film Day.

corners of the digital world. This is where actors for repressive regimes and activists are using many of the same tools for very different purposes. *Black Code* shows how this new brand of digital warfare is having real-world impacts in Brazil, Tibet, Syria and many other places in between. De Pencier joins Ron Delbert — the director of the Munk School of Global Affairs' Citizen Lab and the

author of the book that inspired the film — for talks after select screenings on Friday and Saturday.

Perfume War: After her best friend Trevor Greene was badly injured in a Taliban attack while serving in Afghanistan in 2006, Barb Stegemann of Bedford, N.S., launched an unusual effort to further his efforts to help people in the country. Her idea —

which she'd famously pitch on *Dragons' Den* — was to make perfumes whose ingredients were sourced from the crops of farmers in strife-ridden nations. A documentary by Halifax director Michael Melski, *Perfume War* charts her efforts to do the right thing while competing in the cutthroat world of fragrance companies. The film plays Friday to Sunday at

Cineplex Yonge-Dundas — Stegemann will be on hand for a Q&A after the screening on Saturday at 4 p.m.

Ella Brennan: Commanding the Table: The Hot Docs Ted Rogers Cinema's arts-centric Sunday morning screening series aims for the hearts, minds and stomachs of the city's film foodies with its latest selection, which profiles a legendary figure in New Orleans cuisine.

Part of the city's most prestigious family of restaurateurs, Ella Brennan was instrumental in the success of both Brennan's and Commander's Palace, the latter of which became the launching pad for Paul Prudhomme and Emeril Lagasse. Director Leslie Iwerks shares more about Brennan during a Skype Q&A after the showing on Sunday — Southern Accent will be there to sell kombrew, too.

In brief:

> Getting a jump on National Canadian Film Day, the Lightbox celebrates two landmarks of Québécois cinema with free screenings of Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Léolo* on Friday and Gilles Carles' *La Vieille nature de Bernadette* on Saturday.

> Signalling its preference for Jean Cocteau's take on *Beauty and the Beast* over Disney's, the Royal's Ladies of Burlesque program presents the French auteur's 1948 version on Tuesday.

> A faith-based drama set in modern-day Toronto, *Adam's Testimony* plays its Canadian premiere at Cineplex Yonge-Dundas on Tuesday. > Daniel Radcliffe stars in Tom Stoppard's ever witty *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in the latest National Theatre Live presentation at participating Cineplex locations on Thursday.

jandersonesque@gmail.com