

Cast of "The Dry Land" talks about PTSD

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Film explores how one soldier's post-war mindset impacts his friends and family

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COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. -- Film maker Ryan Piers Williams said the last five years have been a journey -- a journey to make a film that accurately portrays post-traumatic stress disorder and how it affects soldiers and their families.

The fruits of his labors, "[The Dry Land](#)", is scheduled for wide release at the end of July, but Williams and cast members America Ferrera, Ryan O'Nan and Wilmer Valderrama stopped by FOX21 Morning News Thursday to talk about two screenings of the film - one at Fort Carson in the afternoon, and the other at Stargazers Theatre.

"About five years ago, I read an article about a man coming back from the war with PTSD," Williams said. "It was the first time I had ever heard about it, and it shocked me that I hadn't heard about the struggles soldiers were going through when they come home before then."

O'Nan plays the central character, James -- a soldier who returns home to Texas and is suddenly faced with the psychological trauma from his tour of duty. In order to prepare for the role, he spent a lot of time with real soldiers, some of whom suffer from PTSD.

"They were some of the most incredible and harrowing conversations I've ever had in my life," he said.

For Valderrama, who's visited nine countries on previous [USO](#) tours, getting the chance to be part of "The Dry Land" is something he said he couldn't pass up.

"I've met thousands of soldiers, heard hundreds of stories, and I've really gotten to know them," he said. "When this script came along, it was ideally the one role that I felt I could definitely do something for them."

Cast and crew members of the film went on a USO trip to Iraq in June 2010, and Ferrera talked about he relationship they formed with the troops currently serving overseas.

"They're just an incredible audience," she said. "We were so thrilled and excited to be there and to be gaining such an incredible perspective."

"They kept thanking us for being there to visit -- and we kept thanking them for being there defending our freedom."

"The Dry Land" is being screened for the first time in front a public audience Thursday, July 1 at Stargazers Theatre in Colorado Springs. Tickets are \$10 for the film, but for \$25 you get a combo ticket that gets you into the movie and a pre-film reception. It all begins at 5:30 p.m.

For more information about the event at Stargazers Theatre, [click here](#).

[Click here to watch the trailer](#) of "The Dry Land" online.

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