

## Academy Award-Nominated ‘Beaufort’ Ponders Question of Why We Fight

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CHICAGO – History eludes us. It’s what happens when we’re busy making other plans. In his new film “Beaufort,” director Joseph Cedar turns his lens toward the history and misery of a Mideastern soldier’s outpost eight years ago that was both defended and attacked while highlighting the human element that has to endure when protecting the territory of warfare.



Beaufort is an ancient castle area at the southern border of Lebanon. It has been an energy center for conflict and has been occupied by various armies for more than 1,000 years.

The film is set in the year 2000 when Beaufort is occupied by the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), which has held the position since the 1982 war in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah – the Islamic, anti-Israeli paramilitary organization – is bearing down on the outpost heavily with mortar shelling and guerilla tactics in anticipation of a planned IDF withdrawal.

The film is essentially the story of the last Israeli soldiers assigned to the outpost with all the drudgery, bureaucracy and morality of their so-called “duty”.



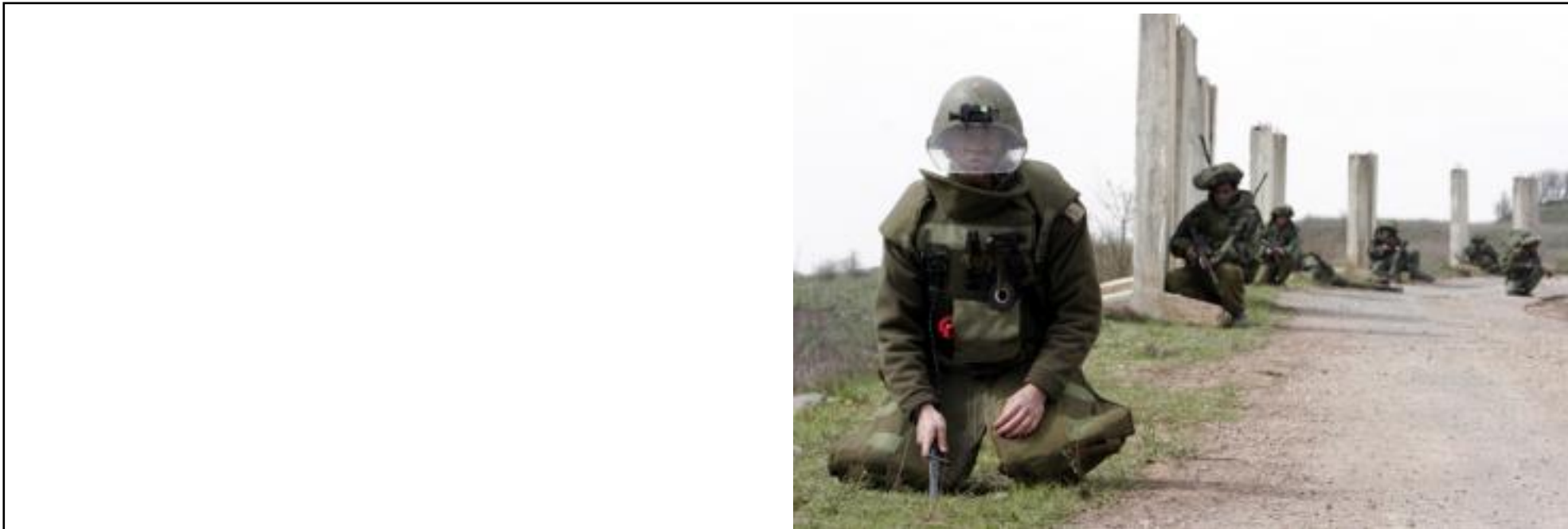
Oshri Cohen (left) “Beaufort”.  
*Photo credit: IMDb*

Cedar deftly uses the soldier’s characters as representations of the conflicted nature of war. The leader, Lizaz (Oshri Cohen), is all about duty despite the crumbling walls and constant barrage.

Bomb expert Ziv (Ohad Knoller) embodies the horror of the moment in his shocking appearance. Koris (Itay Tiran) is the morality who constantly frets and comments on the futility of the assignment.

The dream-like quality of the cinematography recalls Terrence Malick’s World War II film “The Thin Red Line” (1998). The claustrophobic barracks with their maze-like hallways bring to mind Wolfgang Petersen’s closed-quartered U-boat in “Das Boot” (1981).

Both characteristics add to the empathetic experience of the desperate last days of war and the hard-knock lives of its warriors.



Ohad Knoller in “Beaufort”.  
*Photo credit: IMDb*

The heavily armored soldiers also have a “spaceman on an alien world” feeling as the barracks have a modular, futuristic look. The squawks of the radio recall the void of communication to distant planets.

This “stranger in a strange land” sense makes the participants less connected and further strips their human element.

The unseen enemy is the monster stalking the men at every turn while at the same time fighting the other unseen enemy: their own paranoia.

“Beaufort” is a psychological war film that’s trying to answer the question of why we fight. What does territory mean when it becomes a chess match with human beings used as the pawns? The soldiers of Beaufort attempt to answer these questions and live through it simultaneously.

How many deaths have to happen in war – psychological and mortal – until we know it’s too many?

“Beaufort” opens in Chicago on March 28, 2008 exclusively at the Music Box Theatre, which is located at 3733 N. Southport Ave. The Israeli film was nominated for an Oscar for best foreign language film of the year in 2008.

[Click here for our full, high-resolution “Beaufort” image gallery!](#) [14]



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