States of Mind

The Publication of the Mental Health Association in Tompkins County

MAY 2011



THEY ALSO SERVE WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT:

MENTAL HEALTH AND MILITARY FAMILIES

To understand and improve the mental health of our community

advocacy · information · education



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Editor, *SOM*, MHATC 614 West State St., Ithaca, NY 14850.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - BETH JENKINS

COMMUNITY EDUCATOR - CATHERINE WEDGE



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Centerfold photograph: 369th Sustainment Brigade, Spring 2010

by: Amaury Quinones

From the Desk of...The Executive Director Beth Jenkins

A former colleague of mine stopped in today to bring us some material for this issue of *States of Mind*. Her essay, "For God and Country," touched so many of my heartstrings that I've decided to print it here, in place of my usual introduction to the issue. Without further ado, I present to you this moving tribute to our servicemen and women and their families by Rachael S. Pierce.

"I became part of a military family at age one in 1944. My Dad joined the Navy. He was a 32-year-old husband and father of two, a teacher and he volunteered. There was a draft for World War II but he volunteered. When he returned two years later, I didn't even know him and he frightened me. Recently, my 10-year-old great nephew sent me a questionnaire about our family history which was a school project. Among the queries was whether or not any major historical events like the Depression, World Wars or Military Actions had affected the family. A wise teacher included this category to direct a student's analysis of subject matter and even perhaps some family conversation of the topic. I told him of my "separation anxiety".

Michelle Obama and Jill Biden have wisely selected Military families as a focus of their efforts for their service to the Nation. Recent recognition of PTSD as a war wound along with the upwards of 14,000 wounded veterans who have returned have greatly impacted waiting families of several generations. Service by both genders in war zones, sometimes simultaneously, have enlisted the efforts of grandparents to raise families.

The calling up of Reserve Units often from the same community who are only accustomed to weekend duties several times a year has placed additional strains on their families. The shifting of financial burdens, the difficulties of adjustment back to civilian life after being in harm's way, the role reversals for child rearing between husbands and wives and the unbelievable stress on every-

one's mental health in the family are hard to imagine.

So, how can we Support the Troops besides a bumper sticker? By raising awareness of mental health resources and destroying the stigma attached to getting help. By helping single parents care for their children. By recognizing fears of school kids and adults alike. By giving time alone to returning soldiers and their spouses to become reacquainted. By acknowledging that while apart, the teamwork of decision-making that was once common has of necessity broken down but need not threaten the marriage. By realizing that although our desires for a peaceful world are frustrated, we can support those who pay the price for our freedoms.

I often wondered what it was like for my mom while my dad was away in World War II. Knowing she suffered from anxiety and thrived in my Dad's presence, was she angry that he had volunteered? Did she feel overwhelmed caring for two small children on her own? Was she lonely and scared constantly that he wouldn't come home? She never would discuss those times. Like many returning veterans, those feelings were bottled up. Yet after she died at age 89, I found a scrap book of those years placed by itself in a cupboard in the cellar.

That album told the story in official documents, certificates. newspaper clippings, cards and letters from hundreds of townspeople in the church choir that my father directed, the school where he was the band director, the greeting cards sent by friends and neighbors and even Father's Day cards complete with Old Glory and messages from my brother and me lettered by my Mom.

When he left to serve, the community wished him well and kept in touch and welcomed him home. Everyone rallied to support that 'Greatest Generation.' Today's service men and women deserve nothing less. And so do their families."

Meeting America's Commitment STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILIES

"This government-wide review will bring together the resources of the Federal Government, identify new opportunities across the public and private sectors, and lay the foundation for a coordinated approach to supporting and engaging military families for years to come."

-Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States, May 12, 2010

We recognize that military families come from the active duty Armed Forces, the National Guard, and the Reserves. They support and sustain troops fighting to defend the Nation, they care for our wounded warriors, and they survive our fallen heroes. The well-being of military families is an important indicator of the well-being of the overall force. At a time when America is at war and placing considerable, sustained demands on its troops and their families, it is especially important to address the family, home, and community challenges facing our all-volunteer force. For years to come, military families and Veterans will continue to face unique challenges, and at the same time will also have great potential to continue contributing to our communities and country.

Less than 1 percent of Americans serve in uniform today, but they bear 100 percent of the burden of defending our Nation. Currently, more than 2.2 million service members make up America's all-volunteer force in the active, National Guard, and Reserve components. Since September 11, 2001, more than two million troops have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Fifty five percent of the force is married and 40 percent have two children.1 Only 37 percent of our families live on military installations; the remaining 63 percent live in over 4,000 communities nationwide. Multiple deployments, combat injuries, and the challenges of reintegration can have far-reaching effects on not only the troops and their families, but also upon America's communities as well. These challenges should be at the forefront of our national discourse.

In May 2010, the President directed the National Security Staff (NSS) to develop a coordinated Federal Government-wide approach to supporting military families. By harnessing resources and expertise across the Federal Government, the Obama Administration is improving the quality of military family life, helping communities more effectively support military families, and thereby improving the long-term effectiveness of U.S. military forces.

Our vision is to ensure that:

- o the U.S. military recruits and retains the highest-caliber volunteers to contribute to the Nation's defense and security;
- o Service members can have strong family lives while maintaining the highest state of readiness;
- o civilian family members can live fulfilling lives while supporting their service member(s); and
- o the United States better understands and appreciates the experience, strength, and commitment to service of our military families.

This report ... has identified four priority areas to address the concerns and challenges of the families of Active Duty and Reserve Component Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard members; Veterans; and those who have fallen. While the Coast Guard is a component with the Department of Homeland Security, for the purposes of this report, it should be assumed to be included in the initiatives supporting all military families, as applicable. This government-wide effort will:

- 1. Enhance the well-being and psychological health of the military family,
- 1.1. By increasing behavioral health care services through prevention-based alternatives and integrating community-based services:
- 1.2. By building awareness among military families and communities that psychological fitness is as important as physical fitness;
- 1.3. By protecting military members and families from unfair financial practices and helping families enhance their financial readiness;
- 1.4. By eliminating homelessness and promoting home security among Veterans and military families;
- 1.5. By ensuring availability of critical substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery services for Veterans and military families; and
- 1.6. By making our court systems more responsive to the unique needs of Veterans and families.

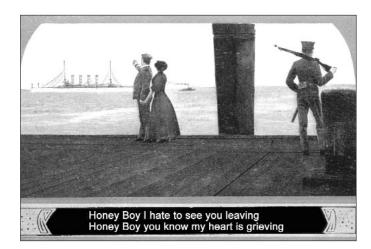
Mental Health Association in Tompkins County

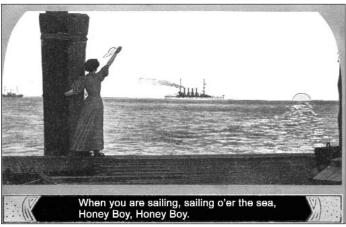
Meeting America's Commitment STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILIES (continued from page 4)

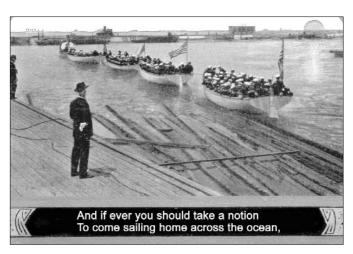
- 2. Ensure excellence in military children's education and their development,
- 2.1. By improving the quality of the educational experience;
- 2.2. By reducing negative impacts of frequent relocations and absences; and
- 2.3. By encouraging the healthy development of military children.
- 3. Develop career and educational opportunities for military spouses,
- 3.1. By increasing opportunities for Federal careers;
- 3.2. By increasing opportunities for private-sector careers;
- 3.3. By increasing access to educational advancement;
- 3.4. By reducing barriers to employment and services due to different State policies and standards;
- 3.5. By protecting the rights of service members and families.
- 4. Increase child care availability and quality for the Armed Forces,
- 4.1. By enhancing child care resources within the Department of Defense and the Coast Guard.

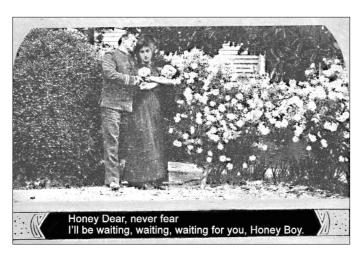
"This is an enduring effort. Each Cabinet secretary has pledged his or her individual commitment to this important task. Together as a team, we are committed to implementing our plans, assessing our **results** on a recurring basis with continued transparency, seeking constant feedback, and ensuring the Federal Government has the capacity to support and engage military families throughout their lives."

1. Flake EM, Davis BE, Johnson PL, Middleton LS. The psychosocial effects of deployment on military children. J De Behav Pediatr. 2009; 30: 271-278









Interview with Kevin Dockstader— a Dad Whose Son is in Afghanistan.

by Catherine Wedge

Thank you for making time to talk with us. I know you are a busy person.

- **Q.** Kevin, I understand you have a son in the military. What branch is he in?
- A. He's in the Army.
- Q. How old is he?
- A. Just turned 22 in January.
- Q. Is he married? Have a family?
- A. He just got married in February and his wife is pregnant. His wife is in Germany and he is in Afghanistan.
- **Q.** When did you first learn he wanted to enlist? Did he share his reasons with you?
- A. He was open in telling me about his enlistment. It was two years ago when he was 19. He enlisted to have the Army help with his college tuition, and they paid back his previous three years' tuition. Now he is earning money under the GI bill toward the future tuition. But he has also decided he wants to make the service his career.
- Q. What was your reaction to the news?
- A. I was scared for him.
- Q. Where has he served so far?
- A. So far in Germany and Afghanistan.
- Q. What are his job duties?
- A. He's in the infantry. He outranks other people in his unit because of his college. Beyond that he is not allowed to talk much about his assignment or specific duties.

- **Q.** Two years later, what are your feelings about his being in the Army? Have they changed at all?
- A. Oh I'm still scared for him because he is in the most dangerous part of Afghanistan.
- Q. How long will he be stationed there?
- A. His tour of duty there is for 18 months. It began in February.
- Q. How are communications?
- A. He can use Facebook and he also calls (He has an I-Phone that works from over there.)
- Q. How does he sound?
- A. He's not going to really say...some parts are really scary, and other times he sounds bored. They have been nervous. He has had some to do with life and death...very hard experiences since being there. He can't really say more. He may be changing jobs soon but there are ups and downs to his possible new assignment too.
- Q. When might you see him again?
- A. I don't think I'll ever see him again. Probably after this deployment he will join his wife in Germany. He said: "I'm not putting my child on an airplane."
- Q. Why not?
- A. He doesn't like airplanes!
- Q. But aren't there other ways?
- A. I would go to see him if I could afford it.
- **Q.** Have your feelings changed again since he was deployed to Afghanistan?
- A. I don't like him over there. It's dangerous over there.

continued on page 7

Interview with a Dad continued from page 6

Q. How do you feel about the Christian denomination that has been picketing the funeral services of deceased military?

A. I think it's awful these young men and women are giving their lives for this country just so those people can be able to picket. It's ridiculous. I think those people should be arrested First of all, you're invading someone's privacy with their loved ones; second of all, what if it was their loved one that got killed?

Q. What would you like the reaction of the American public to be toward our service men and women and their families?

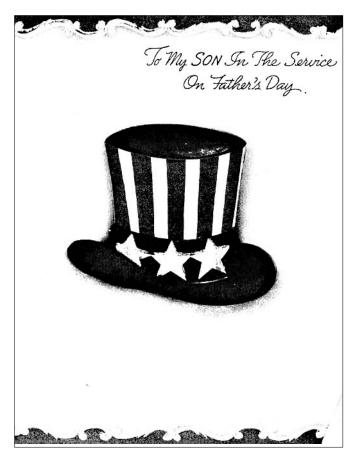
A. You would think they would give them the same kind of reception they gave them in World War I and World War II...that they be respected and that people would be glad they have someone looking out for their country, not like it was during Vietnam.

But I don't want people to think I agree with this war because I don't. But the troops are doing what they are ordered and doing what they think is right. But I don't agree with protesting at people's funerals either. That's crazy.



You can put my son's name in here if you want.

- Q. Great! And his name is...
- A. His name is Nicholas C. Aho.
- Q. You're not a proud father or anything, are you?
- A. Oh, I'm very proud of my son.



Our Veterans and Their Families: 21st Century Challenges on WCNY-TV

A locally-produced documentary will explore many of the stresses and challenges faced by returning veterans and their families on Monday, May 24 at 9 p.m. on WCNY-TV. the program will air a second time over the Memorial Day weekend, Sunday, May 30 at 9:30 p.m. The documentary will feature stories of Central New York veterans and their families as well as discussion with a mental health professional, physician, transition advocate and veterans.

The focus will be on four broad areas: mental health needs, redeployment stresses, reintegration needs and special needs of female veterans. Liz Ayers, WCNY-TV Vice President of Broadcast Development, will moderate.

This project is the culmination of a three-year grant from Excellus Blue Cross and Blue Shield to help educate veterans and their families about mental health issues and services and encourage them to seek help if they find they have a need.

THE JULY 1919 AUGUSTA MAINE





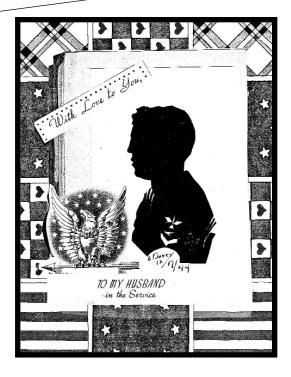
I don't feel my
life would be worth
living if my son
living killed in the
was

copyright: post-your-own-secret

Thanks to vet2vetusa.org, for sharing a site to which people send their anonymous secrets on postcards in order to share them (and presumably thus relieve some of their hidden feelings). This site may be found at URL: www.postsecret.com. The postcard depicted above is real and was made in 2011.

The postal mailing address is: PostSecret 13345 Copper Ridge Rd., Germantown, MD 20874 Vet2Vet crisis line: (toll free) 1-877-838-2838





VA boosts medical care for female vets

...The number of female veterans in the U.S.has doubled since the end of the Vietnam, War and is projected to double again in the next 5 to 10 years, says Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant for women veterans' health in the USA.

Women today make up 15% of the activeduty military and 18% of the reserve forces and National Guard. There are nearly 1.9 million female veterans in the USA.

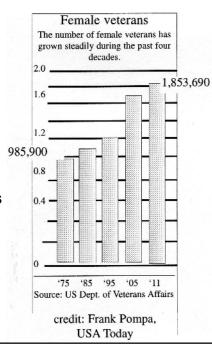
"There is an attitude that women didn't serve their country," says Alyce Knaflich, an Army veteran. "A lot of it is from the veterans themselves, but some is within the staff (of the VA). They think veterans are men, not women."

The VA will spend \$241 million this year on gender-specific care, like cervical cancer screenings and gynecology, for the VA's 300,000 female patients, an amount up nearly 30 million from last year as more women seek care from the historically

male-dominated

VA.

"We are promoting a cultural change," says Hayes, "which of course, takes time."



Recent studies indicate practice of mindfulness useful in depression treatment, stress reduction

A recent study in the journal Neuroimage entitled "Impact of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Training on Intrinsic Brain Connectivity" involved a group of healthy women who were trained for eight weeks in mindfulness meditation skills compared to a group that did not participate in the training. Functional MRI studies at the end of the eight weeks showed "increased functional connectivity" between various areas of the brain in the women who studied mindfulness. The training changed the brain in ways thought to relate to how the brain pays attention and how it processes sensory information.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction has been shown by other studies to indicate that "experts" in meditation have strong neuro-circuitry in areas of emotional regulation. Additionally, the practice of mindfulness was able to reduce ruminative thinking and trait anxiety in otherwise healthy people.



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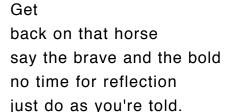
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Suffer in Silence

By D.T. Kelly

Broke
down in her office
feared going back
reassured and counseled
and set 'back on track.'

She called to check in your voice weak and cracked she says to be strong but you can't, so you act.



On the front line twitchy and cold keep up appearances fall back in the fold.

Suffer in silence is the mantra repeated stand firm and tall don't dare be defeated.

Yes something is wrong but push it down deep 'cause it's not right to voice it what are you, a sheep?



can't show emotion it's just not the way be stone-like and rugged with no visible decay.

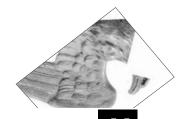
But gargoyles crack and statues fall and whose life is in peril if you're the one on call?

Family
is there
to share in your pain
but opening that flood gate
is not rational or sane.

So shut them all out with nary a groan they can't understand the seeds that are sown.

And
suffer in silence
just like a good drone
And suffer in silence
behind your wall

Alone.



The Minefield by Kenneth Richard Fielding

A person with Dysthymic Depression is like a soldier crossing a mine field. Initially, he isn't even certain the meadow is mined. Yet he soon learns that beneath the sun-filled meadow lay mines of every size and shape. He therefore must proceed with caution.

Brief therapy is not effective against so chronic a disease as Dysthymic Depression. A brief scan of the meadow affords no help to the soldier. To survive, the soldier must employ a long-term solution that will help her differentiate true mines from clumps of rock and earth; similarly the depressed person must establish a relationship with a counselor who will help him understand the terrain and its complex dangers. Patient and counselor confer frequently, not only to discuss the battle's progress, but also to analyze new dangers as they occur. For many indeed are the patient's difficulties.

Often Dysthymic Depression is married to Anxiety and a divorce is not possible. The soldier carries a mine detector to help locate mines; similarly, within each patient is the machinery of intuition. Yet, the detector often signals the presence of non-existent dangers or is silent when real danger is encountered.

At times, the mine detector finds danger in every stone, every patch of earth, every bush—the soldier experiences intense gunfire from the surrounding woods. Often the soldier becomes enraged with those who've planted the mines, the depressed person at the gunfire from friends and relatives, at the never-ending struggle against despair.

Sometimes, the soldier and the sufferer alike contemplate retaliation against the world, or seek to plunge into the abyss to his death, the ultimate release from pain.

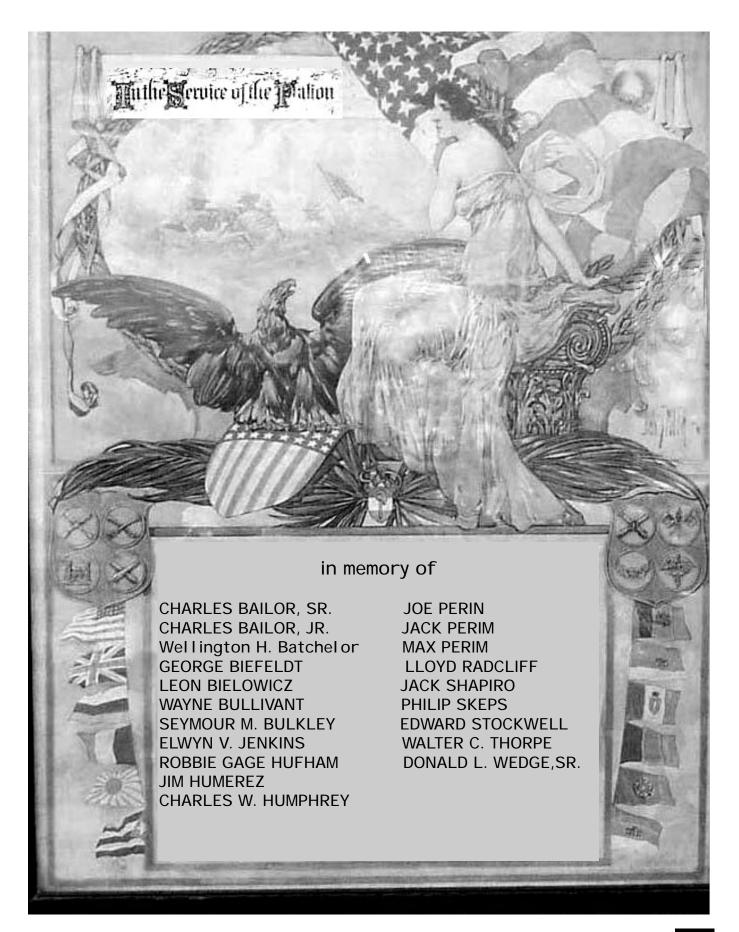
With the counselor's help, the patient calms, rediscovers courage, and continues forward. She learns that living in a flawed, imperfect world involves great suffering, and that even our biology conspires against us. The soldier in him learns that perseverance against such odds is itself a victory. Just so, our soldier slowly crosses the field, at times maneuvering around the dangers; at other times, exposing the mines to sunlight and making them disappear.



Pictured: 369th Sustainment Brigade, Spring 2010, New York City. (Descended from the 369th Infantry Regiment, the first World War I African-American regiment...a.k.a. "The Black Rattlers.") Photo courtesy Amaury Quiñones.

When Johnny comes marching home again,
Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'll give him a hearty welcome then
Hurrah! Hurrah!
The men will cheer and the boys will shout
The ladies they will all turn out
And we'll all feel gay when Johnny comes marching home.

Get ready for the Jubilee,
Hurrah! Hurrah!
We'll give the hero three times three,
Hurrah! Hurrah!
The laurel wreath is ready now
To place upon his loyal brow
And we'll all feel gay when Johnny comes marching home.



The Ripple Effect by Lucy Smith

On an unusually warm spring day, I was lying on the floor of my bedroom in my small, suburban home. The long-awaited sun warmed my legs as it shone brilliantly through my dingy windows. I was doing my homework, frustrated after a long day at my intensely academic high school. My tired mind wandered away from my tedious Chemistry homework, and over to the conversation that was happening just outside my room between my eldest brother, Caleb, and my parents. I first heard my mother's voice. I only hear this particular tone of hers when something is wrong. I then heard the grumble of my father's calm, reassuring voice. The conversation was about my brother's decision to join the Army after dropping out of college and being laid off from his job. My stomach went from normal to knotted, my eyes from clear to blurry, and my mind from curious to distraught. Caleb joined the United States Army in March of my sophomore year of high school. His consideration of joining the Army was news to me. In fact, if I had not overheard the conversation the day he joined, I would not have known until he left for basic training. Maybe this would have created a more sound conscience though, because as it happened, the day that he told my parents his plans I began worrying about his life, or lack thereof.

This past summer, I was running around a campfire being a good counselor, singing old campfire songs. I was anxiously awaiting the arrival of my brother, after not seeing his face for more than two years. My mind was struggling to be present in the moment, and my heart would not stop its fast, drumming beat. As I talked to a camper of mine, someone yelled out my name. I looked up, and I saw him. Before I could think, my feet were in fast paced motion. Within seconds I was clutching to his body like a barnacle on a whale. My heart was soaring, and I was struggling to breathe.

Caleb stayed at the summer camp where I worked for two days. After that short amount of time, he, my other brother, and sister left at night so they could make it home by the morning. I left my cabin in a frantic rush to say goodbye, but upon my return I could not shake the feeling of emptiness. I blindly went through the motions of putting my campers to bed. When I got into bed, before I could think, like the rash action I made the moment I saw his face, hot tears started pouring down onto my pillow.

Over Spring Break, I desired to go to the Harry Potter Park. As an avid Harry Potter fan, this had been a dream of mine since the time of the park's existence. It just so happened that the time that I would be gone was when my brother would be coming home for the last time before he was deployed. When I asked my dad, he responded, "The Harry Potter



Ripple Effect (continued from page 14)

Park will always be there, but..." I knew what he wanted to say. My father and I speak a certain language together. Although we both enjoy the art of twisting syntax on a page, this language is not depicted through direct words.

Our dialect is shown through our actions, our lack of words, our hesitations and gestures. I knew that, at the moment when he denied my request to go to Florida, he was pleading with me in our language that my brother may not always be.

Afghanistan is a country I barely knew existed, and now it gives me nightmarish images every moment it comes into my mind. The funeral, the flag, the last shot ringing out like a cannon through the trees.

The War on Terror is not being fought in our country, and Americans are not directly affected in that sense, however the war touches everyone in some way. In the course of the eight years that our country has been fighting, people have also been affected because of me. If my brother were to die in Afghanistan, my family would not be the only people affected. Everyone who works under my father, all my mother's friends, my sister's boyfriend, the people who view my brother's artwork, all would be affected. Thus, at some point war affects everyone.

Due to this gathered information, a conclusion about the American Administration can be drawn. That is, that the President does not go to war for the good of his people, he does it to better the country: its economic standing, its reputation in the world. The spreading of democracy is what matters most to the American Administration. Citizens are forced to spend excessive amounts of money on wars that are being fought. What is more, they pay for a war without the faintest idea of how it is bettering their life.

My life has been affected by the War on Terror. My family is one of millions of families with Army, Marine, Navy and Air Force members fighting for the United States. As I fight to find solace about my brother's deployment, I hope that Barack Obama realizes that there is more than just the country's reputation at stake. Each second has the potential of another bullet shot, another life lost, another family in turmoil, another stone thrown that ripples into others' lives, another chance that my brother will never come home.



Traditional Dance for Soldiers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder



by Deborah Denenfeld

In November of 2010, soldiers who suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury danced to the tunes of a fiddle and guitar at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Ten sessions of traditional dance were held for one and a half hours each. It was hoped that the soldiers would improve in mood, memory and the ability to function well in a group setting as a result of the dancing. A military psychiatrist who worked with affected soldiers had seen positive effects of traditional dance on the lives of dancers. including his own son who became more outgoing and happy as a result of involvement with the Berea Festival Dancers. The doctor wondered if these effects could be produced in the lives of the soldiers he treated. In February, 2010 he asked me to call for con-

I worked with a small group of Fort Knox staff and we envisioned the dance series as a form of dance therapy. Although we found it impractical to conduct the dances as a scientific study, we held them as a Wellness series for affected soldiers, their spouses and partners. The ten sessions were soldiers with PTSD and TBI are stationed at Fort Knox to receive treatment while Army personnel are determining whether they are fit to be returned to the battlefield or be discharged.

tra dances for the soldiers. I was excited about the possibilities and assumed project leadership and fund-raising responsibilities,

along with dance calling.

Funding Expenses:

Dance Caller \$1,000

Fiddler 750

Guitarist 600

Child Care 205

Expense Total \$2,555

Final expense per soldier per one-and-one-half hour session = \$59.42

Final expense per military family member (soldier, spouse, child included)

per session = \$31.54

Income:

Eric Hall Memorial Foundation \$600 Country Dance and Song Society 500 Louisville Country Dancers 550 Lexington Traditional Dance Association 550 Private donations 355 Income Total \$2,555



The Eric Hall Memorial Foundation was founded by the parents of a soldier who died as a result of PTSD. The Country Dance and Song Society donated funds through the New Leaders, Good Leaders Fund. Louisville Country Dancers and Lexington Traditional Dance Association are organizations that sponsor traditional dance events in Kentucky.

... Dance for PTSD (continued from page 16)

In order to keep expenses low, I donated my project management and fund-raising services. The fiddler, Tom Cunningham, donated his time for half of the sessions. The guitarist, Ben Anderson, played for a reduced fee. We carpooled the one-hour drive from Louisville and donated our transportation expenses.

Most of the dances I called came from the New England Dancing Masters' books *Chimes of* Dunkirk, Listen to the Mockingbird, and Sashay the Donut. I found these to be invaluable resources for simple, traditional, fun family and community dances. I supplemented these with Sheehan's Reel, Cumberland Square 8, a Scatter Promenade, and some Kentucky Running Set figures. One session was initially attended by only one couple, so I taught them the basics of dancing a one-step and waltz. Every dance was carefully and slowly taught, walked through at least twice, and repeated many times. Most dances were repeated later in the series twice or more, some being requested specifically. By request, we also danced the Hokey Pokey.

Every session began with all attendees donning a red yarn bracelet on their right wrist, to be used as a memory aid: Red = Right side. The musicians tied them to their instruments in a sign of solidarity. Later in the series, these were referred to as our "Red Badges of Courage" and everyone wanted one, whatever the state of their memory. We were a team, all in this together, and this was our uniform.

Spouses mentioned how comforting it was to know others were going through the same things they were experiencing, having to care for injured partners. I allowed extra visiting time between dances for the informal communication. This resulted in at least one person telling another how to negotiate the regulations to get needed treatment and benefits for their spouse.

One couple said the sessions were like dates for them. The child care being provided gave them an opportunity to be together having fun. They also networked for babysitters. Soldiers quickly learned the dances and remembered most of the moves from

session to session. They were able to request dances learned previously, remembering even the titles.

Soldiers told me they felt anxious during the first dance of each session, and suggested I begin with a simple dance done slowly, then, as I saw everyone succeeding, pick up the difficulty and tempo. This I did. They told me that when they first arrived they didn't remember any moves from other sessions, but as soon as we started dancing, they would remember

them. They requested harder dances for the last five sessions.

We observed physical transformations in soldiers who initially looked pale and anxious, but after dancing appeared relaxed, healthy and smiling. Several individuals picked up literature from the Country Dance and Song Society. One requested information about the local contra dance.

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... Dance for PTSD, (continued from page 17)

The family with teenagers who attended said the program brought their family together and gave them something to talk to each other about. They are now considering attending a Country Dance and Song Society Family Camp together.

The psychiatrist, who attended every session, said he never saw a frown on any face. He felt important connections were made and that seeds have been sown for this to happen again somewhere both sooner and later. He said, "I am really short-sighted to think that mere words will convey how much this has helped the different soldiers that I have seen later in my office. Partner bonding and family bonding was an outstanding benefit of at least two families. Anxiety reduction was clearly a benefit that several

soldiers commented on." He also mentioned his own personal anxiety level being reduced and his memory improving as a result of the dancing.

I created a simple evaluation form for attendees to voluntarily complete. All soldiers reported they 'Agreed' or 'Strongly Agreed' that they enjoyed the dancing, would have liked to be able to attend more dances, believe the program should be continued and be offered to soldiers at other locations. Their outlook on the future and physical health improved, their sense of anxiety decreased, and they felt more at ease around a group from participating in the dances. They said they benefited from the networking with others at the dances.

About half said their pain level decreased.

Spouses enjoyed the dancing, believed they benefited from the program, felt more at ease around a group, would have liked to be able to attend more dances, and believed the program should be continued and offered at other locations.

All Fort Knox staff, volunteers and musicians were totally positive about the effects of the series on themselves and the soldiers and their families

On behalf of everyone who participated in this program, the soldiers and their families, a heartfelt "thank-you" to all the organizations and individuals who donated money or time to make this healing possible. I would be interested in creating a similar series at any location. Please contact me for further information at:

DancinDeborah@gmail.com.

Deborah is a dance artist-in-the-schools, dance caller and dance leader. She loves English Country, Contra, Irish Set, Square and Argentine Tango dancing, and specializes in teaching dance as a reflection of culture and time period. Summers she can often be found working in the Dining Hall at Pinewoods Dance Camp, when not teaching or dancing.



RUSS

Key West—east Texas—Rockford, Illinois—and now he's here on my front porch, blue macaw on cotton shoulder, talking about stone crab. Sweeter meat than any New England lobster he says, though he's on his way to Cape Cod. Ithaca tonight—a waterfall camp—then a northern highway tomorrow, dreaming a woman under southern palms, a man where swamp and crawdads rise, the child who carried polished bats for baseball players in short skirts while war tore safe homes apart and taught a boy to travel.



OCTOBER 2001

Will there always be elbow macaroni with melted butter and cheese?

Hush, my daughter:
the woman who sold me
Vitamin C today
at the Rite-Aid drugstore
three blocks from our house
wore thirty flags
across her sweatered chest,
some made of plastic,
some made of glass,
some hoping her true love's
name
will finally be
spoken

WINTER

I can't even imagine where you are as this thick April snow cancels ballgames, drags down planes,

fills the chapel pond with white and white that sinks beneath smooth water's

fragile skin. I can't begin to think of you as anywhere except the farm, the long fields turned.

apples curled inside curved branches waiting for hunger's sun. For one

clear moment I can travel back to hot sweet barn, black raspberries tumbling heavy in noon sun, dusk a triumph of fireflies along the dark slow road (I told

you nothing, uttered nothing, brought books and wine and furniture, then drove away, always away) before summer turned to goldenrod and first frost touched worn eaves, and you

moved your days without a thought that I might wonder how the trees will gather light without you there, blossoms fisted against dark leaves, ice a weight on time, on prayer.

Rupert Brooke's Grave

Black goats surround the site where he now lies in monument of words on polished stone beneath slim olive trees where few bird cries disturb the desert silence. Here alone his mortal self was buried, dead at sea and brought to this small isle he'd just begun to love as soul's clear haven, poetry a bold blue breezeswept sky of hot gold sun. We've come here quietly today to share a poem in thankful tribute, and to walk where he last walked on land, the arid air reminder of our frailty as we talk. My daughter finds a stick and stirs dried leaves, unearths a horned white skull where spider weaves.

FOUR POEMS BY: KATHRYN HOWD MACHAN



News about our men and women in uniform, their families...,

Suicides of Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers more than doubled to 145 in 2010, up from 65 in 2009, while the suicides of soldiers on active duty declined by six—or 4 percent—to 156 last year, down from 162 in 2009, top Army officials reported Wednesday. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army vice chief of staff, told reporters at a Pentagon briefing he could point to no single causal factor for Army suicides, but said they were the result of high operational tempo, relationship issues, and abuse of alcohol and prescription drugs when troops return from combat deployments.

Psychological Needs of Military Personnel and their Families are Increasing Reports Task Force—American Psychological Association 2/2011

The Task Force examined several studies and surveys of military personnel and their families completed over the last four years to determine the effect of deployments on them (spouses, children and significant others), the significant barriers to receiving mental health care, and the availability and effectiveness of current programs. "Deployment can be a complex, and for some families, overwhelming process," says Michelle Sherman, co-chair of the Task Force. "Deployment means extended separations and the uncertainty of having a loved one in a combat zone. The situation creates an environment in which the development of significant emotional problems for military personnel and their families is a real possibility."

According to the APA report, a growing number of military personnel and their families are reporting emotional problems stemming from deployment stress. "More than 30% of all soldiers met the criteria for a mental disorder but less than half of those...sought help."

More than 1 out of every 5 young veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are unemployed, according to the Department of Labor and reported in the Washington Post. The Chair of the Senate Veterans' Affairs committee says vets are keeping military experience off their résumés because employers think they have PTSD.

2010 Top 20 Employers of Former Military Personnel

Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)

Booz, Allen and Hamilton

Northrop Grumman Corporation

L-3 Communications

United States Government -

Department of Defense

BAE Systems, Inc.

Lockheed Martin Corporation

Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC)

CACI International, Inc.

The Boeing Company

Department of Veteran's Affairs

Allied Barton Security Services Inc.

Raytheon Company

Securitas Security Services USA, Inc.

Deloitte Consulting LLP

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Exelon Corporation

General Dynamics Corporation

General Electric Company (GE)

Stryker Corporation

Source:

Online salary database PayScale.com
AOL 4/12/2011

Websites to visit for resources and assistance:

www.vfw.org

VFW Operation Uplink

VFW Unmet Needs

VVW Military Assistance Program

www.vetjobs.com

www.vet2vetusa.oig

www.vetsfwd.org/site (service dogs for veterans)

www.RealWarriors.net

www.nationalresourcedirectory.org



1-800-959-8277 (TAPS); www.taps.org © 2011 TAPS, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc., 1777 F Street NW, Suite 600,

Washington D.C. 20006

SERVICES:

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Send a message of thanks and encouragement to a service person overseas. Go to: www.LetsSayThanks.com

Department of Defense Takes Steps to Stop Bullying

By Elaine Wilson

American Forces Press Service. Reprinted/Excerpted with permission.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2, 2010 – It can begin with a single, seemingly harmless act: a taunt at recess, a snub in the lunch room or a juicy piece of gossip posted to Facebook or Twitter. But each act, multiplied over time, can equate to some devastating consequences, including shattered self-esteem, depression, fear and, in the worst cases, suicide....

What once was an issue that most chalked up to an inevitable rite of passage is now being re-examined for its true impact, from Defense Department schools all the way up to the highest echelons of the nation's leadership. Last year, the departments of Education and Health and Human Services joined with four other departments, including the Defense Department, to create a federal task force on bullying. And in August, the task force held its first National Bullying Summit to bring light to the issue and to find a path to stop it for good.

"It's gotten the attention of the country just how invasive any type of bullying is to the well-being of a victim," said Barbara Thompson, director of the Pentagon's office of family policy, children and youth. Although they're extremely adaptable, military children may be particularly susceptible to bullying in public schools, where they tend to be the "new kid on the block," Thompson said, especially when moving to an area where their classmates have been living since kindergarten. According to national statistics, about 32 percent of students ages 12 to 18 report being bullied in school. They most commonly said they were made fun of, were the subject of rumors or were pushed shoved, tripped or spit on. However, only about a third of the victims notified a teacher or another adult about it. "It's important for all parents to be vigilant and to ask their children how things are going in school," Thompson said. "Create an open forum where a child feels comfortable to say, 'I'm scared' or 'I don't like the way I'm being treated."

Bullying happens to some extent in all schools, but that doesn't make it acceptable, said Patricia Cassiday, director of pupil personnel services for the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). "Complicating the matter, bullying no longer is relegated to cafeterias and locker rooms. Bullies now can take their taunts worldwide via the Internet. Cyberbullying can have an impact that extends far beyond the school's walls," Cassiday noted.

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DOD takes steps against bullying, (continued from page 22)

"To prevent online bullying, Defense Department schools are using a variety of computer training tools to emphasize the importance of online safety and responsibility to students," she added.

Outside of school, parents should monitor computer use and let children know they're doing so. "However, there's a fine line between protecting children's online privacy and a parental responsibility to protect them against a possibly unsafe environment," Thompson noted. "Children really do need to have parental and adult involvement regarding how they receive information and post it," she said.

The Defense Department's Military OneSource site at http://www.militaryonesource.com offers free online resources and printed materials that are aimed at helping parents and children deal with bullying, whether the traditional or digital kind. The information also is directed at helping bullies change their behavior. Bullies, studies indicate, often were bullied themselves.

Thompson said she recently learned about a military child who went to a bullying prevention workshop. He realized there that he'd become mean to others because he was angry about his father's deployments. "We need to work to break the bullying cycle," she said. "The Defense Department will continue its efforts to shed light on the pervasive problem, not just for military children, but for all children," Thompson said.

TAKING STEPS to STOP BULLYING from Mental Health America <www.nmha.net>

- —Start early. Parent/child talks are critical. Teach kids to respect others before they start school and continue to talk about this topic on an ongoing basis. Even small acts of teasing should be stopped in their tracks. Don,'t fail to correct this kind of behavior due to a child's young age. This is exactly when to stop it.
- —Teach your children how to be assertive. Encourage your children to express their feelings clearly, say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured, stand up for themselves without fighting, and walk away in dangerous situations. Bullies are less likely to intimidate children who are confident and resourceful. Stop bullying when you see it. Adults who remain silent when children are bullying others give permission to the behavior and thereby encourage it.
- —Tell your children to take action when they see bullying behavior. Tell them to speak out against the bully and inform a teacher if the behavior doesn't,'t stop. Bullying continues only when we allow it to. Communicate clear policies and consequences. Bullying is less likely in schools where adults are involved and firm about stopping bullying behaviors. Send out a clear message at your school that bullying will have negative consequences.
- —Team up. Work with your PTA or local mental health association to make sure that schools treat bullying as violence. Help them develop programs to prevent bullying and promote safe school environments.

You can find more helpful information about bullying:

KidsHealth for Parents: http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/bullies.html



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May is Mental Health Awareness Month

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY POPPY PROGRAM
The poppy has become a nationally
known and recognized symbol of
sacrifice and is worn by Americans to
honor those who served and died for
their country.

The poppy distribution program provides disabled veterans with an income and rehabilitation activity, and reminds Americans of the sacrifices of their veterans over the years. Donations received by Auxiliary volunteers for the poppies are used exclusively to assist and support veterans and their families.

The American Legion Auxiliary was founded in 1919, and is the world's largest patriotic women's service organization. With a membership of over 850,000, local ALA units have a strong presence in more than 9,500 communities nationwide. The ALA's mission to serve veterans, their families and their communities is carried out through its hundreds of outreach programs delivered by its members, volunteers and National Headquarters.

May 30, 2011 is Memorial Day. This Memorial Day, buy a poppy. (www.legion.org)