

A White Paper...

The Sgt. Brandi Solution

More Effective Solutions to Overcoming Combat Trauma and Preventing Suicide

A Primer on How to Use *The Warriors Guide to Insanity*

July, 2009

Sgt. Andrew Brandi, USMC

Tom Hayes, MBA, US Marine for Life

Mentoring Combat Warriors, Empowering Positive Futures

P O Box 574

Cerrillos, NM 87010

505.660.7473

sgtabrandiusmc@gmail.com

Overall Purpose

As a Supplement to *The Warriors Guide to Insanity*

The Warrior's Guide, which teaches us the causes and effects of combat trauma, then offers solutions to dealing with the experiences of war in ways that make us stronger and more productive citizens. Its been widely accepted and endorsed by various stakeholders in the challenge to overcome the effects of Combat Trauma, PTSD, Combat Veteran suicide and homicide in the active military, Guard and Reserves:

- **By Warriors**, struggling with PTSD and other Combat Trauma related issues because it is written by a Warrior, in the battlefield language each of them understands;
- **By Clinicians**, working with Warriors on their Combat Trauma challenges, because it allows them to reach into the hearts and souls of their patients, to develop a "trust bond" that is critical in therapy, and help the Veteran transition into a productive future. It established a communication link between two worlds: the gray world of civilians and the life and death world of the Warrior;
- **By Military Mental Health Care Administrators**, struggling with solutions to the growing suicide and homicide issues because it allows them to reach into the hearts and souls of their patients, developing a "trust bond" that is critical in therapy, and helping the Veteran transition into a productive future. It established a communication link between two worlds; the gray world of civilians and the black and white world of the Warrior;
- **By Military Commanders**, struggling to deal with the Combat Trauma and suicide issues and to get their Warriors the help they need because it offers Troops an insight into the effects of their war experiences, helps them to feel normal and reinforces the importance of getting counseling assistance;
- **By Veterans Organizations**, full of Veteran Warriors still challenged with their own Combat Trauma issues or wanting to understand how they can help their brother Warriors to avoid all the problems they struggled through. Additionally, it offers them a way to reach out to this new generation of Warriors with mentoring support to enhance their futures;
- **By Collegiate Counseling Centers**, attempting to prepare themselves to deal with the challenges returning veterans will be going through as they struggle to make the transition from the military to successfully completing their education;
- **By Military Dependents and Family Members**, as well as average civilians who want to know more about the struggles and challenges their loved ones are going through. Hundreds of responses have been, "I just didn't understand Combat Trauma or PTSD before!"

As a Primer to Use The Warriors Guide as a Teaching and Counseling Tool

This White Paper has been developed to assist those who are just now getting up to speed on this critical issue today. It provides:

- An explanation of the Causes of Combat Trauma and provides solutions;
- A clear analysis of the symptoms of war related trauma;
- A clear understanding of the obstacles preventing a successful treatment program;
- Proposed solutions to reaching our Troops and reshaping their lives;
- A warning for inaction; the unintended consequences and alternatives;
- Background information on the cause and effect of Combat Trauma and suggested solutions;
- A Best Practice Approach for Counselors to consider in using *The Warriors Guide* in their counseling activities;

As a Guide to Influence the Need for Change in how we train and support our Combat Warriors

If we are to address the needs of this new generation of Warriors, we must not only understand the causes and effects of Combat Trauma, and the special needs of our Young Troops, but we must also change our approach in dealing with the realities of training and deploying our Troops and fighting war. We offer suggestions to change how we handle our Combat Warriors and their emotional needs over time so that we can better shape their destiny and the effectiveness of our country's fighting forces.

As a Foundation for the Solutions to Follow

We're working on the following Solution Papers which will be released in the near future:

- **A Combat Warriors Decompression Program** – A recommended template for a post deployment decompression program for Combat Warriors and their families. This includes specialized components for those planning to remain in the active military service and for those leaving active military service. The key is to develop safe ways to get them set up with the VA Mental Health Care System, educational advisors, personalized Combat Veteran Mentors so there is never a time when don't feel supported in or out of the service.
- **Saving the Military Family** – What military families need to know and how they all can work together to heal and work toward a productive future while keeping the family unit together.

Privacy Information

This document may contain information of a sensitive nature. This information should not be given to persons other

than those who are involved with counseling or become involved in developing strategies for helping Combat Veterans overcome Combat Trauma and prevent suicide.

Table of Contents

OVERALL PURPOSE	I
PREFACE	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
CRITICAL ISSUES AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	8
UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF COMBAT TRAUMA	11
THE EFFECTS OF COMBAT TRAUMA	14
PRIMARY SOLUTIONS	18
MILITARY SOLUTION	21
THE CONSEQUENCES OF NO CHANGE IN DIRECTION	26
HOW TO USE THE BOOK	29
IMPORTANT LINKS	32
THE AUTHORS	33
APPENDIX A – COMBAT STRESS: RESILIENCE AND RESTORATION	37
APPENDIX B – GLOSSARY	41

Diplomacy: The Art of saying “Nice Doggie” until you can pick up a rock.

Will Rogers

You don't need to be hit in the head with a rock to figure out there is a major problem with helping our Combat Warriors deal with Combat Trauma culminating in suicide for some and impacting the lives of all survivors forever, no matter how high the rank or august the achievements. What follows is my testimony, our attempt, to contribute to the dialogue.

The bottom line is there have been enough of politics, diplomacy, skirting the issues and denying the causes. It is past being late in solving the problem. There is no more time! And effective solutions must be devised now, if the lives of our Troops and their families are to be spared from the horrors of war becoming the horrors of life after war. This is the time for Action! The time to Improvise, Adapt and Overcome!

This White Paper is the result of having talked to thousands of active duty Combat Warriors, many redeploying on their fifth tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, hundreds of Vietnam Era Veterans, hundreds of clinicians, many of whom are brilliant in their own fields. And, my own understanding of Combat Trauma, spanning more than 40 years of living in the two separate realities of present day life and haunting memories which never go away.

The traumatic issues affecting our Troops are complex and the alarming rate of suicides demonstrates the need for new approaches to education and treatment. The lives of hundreds of thousands of this nation's youth – the young men and women our nation sends to war - are at stake. Therefore we will discuss issues that are both demanding and for many, uncomfortable, requiring a new approach to maintaining Combat Readiness in the Military and continued assistance to our Veterans once they return to civilian society.

We will discuss “why” it is that Combat Warriors will delay dealing with personal problems until they reach a point of crisis, and even then, these same Warriors will be “Risk Aversive.” The short version is that they're not going to be willing to expose themselves in any way that will risk their present situation or future opportunities. This same reluctance persists when they are discharged into civilian society. It's more complex than that and we will offer our opinion as to the real “why.”

Our approach will be to break this study into four main topics; The Causes, The Effects, The Recommended Solutions and The Consequences of Taking No Action, discussing effective ways to deal with Combat Trauma in order to begin to understand the need for

alternative treatment approaches. The ultimate objective is to develop proactive methods to prevent suicide, homicide and family abuse.

The bottom line is, for the Combat Warrior, there are no cures for the experiences of war, only ways to deal with them in a manner that shapes a productive or destructive future.

Failing to proactively and objectively develop and use more effective procedures to deal with Combat Trauma and the accompanying acts of suicide, homicide and family violence, has long-term unintended consequences on present and future Combat Warriors. It follows that the same applies to the VA Health Care System, achievement of the military mission and to the residual impact on military families and society as a whole.

NOTE: This White Paper is written to benefit our Combat Warriors by addressing critical issues to the clinicians who treat them, the non-coms and officers who command them and the politicians who send them into combat. In addition, our failing support systems and all of society are left with the consequences of the failure to deal with the needed change whose time has come.

This paper is written in the direct language the Combat Warrior understands without a dictionary. It introduces and memorializes new proper nouns, nouns that Combat Warriors will understand as significant to their reality.

Executive Summary

...Here's the thing about the future... when you look at it, it changes, because you looked at it. And that changes everything else...

Dialogue from the movie "Next"

Overview

The military is struggling with the most effective way to deal with the growing Mental Health issues impacting hundreds of thousands of active Combat Warriors. The Army and the Marine Corps are reporting the highest numbers of combat related mental health problems. The other branches of the military are reporting a rise in Mental Health issues, although to a lesser extent.

The various branches of the military are each aware of the problem and are independently working on solutions from a command driven top-down training orientation. Each has its own cultural perspectives, orientation and limitations:

- [The Army Battlemind Program;](#)
- [The Marine Corps Combat Operational Stress Control Program \(COSC\);](#)
- [The Navy COSC;](#)
- [The Air Force Landing Gear Program;](#)
- [The National Guard Yellow Ribbon Program.](#)

The VA Health Care System is also struggling to meet the combat related Mental Health needs of veterans of campaigns past. No one has totally figured it out yet and various approaches and [modalities](#) are competing for traction and budgets.

My Perspective

Is Bottom-Up

I was focused on this issue from a bottom-up perspective when I wrote [The Warriors Guide to Insanity](#) in 2007. Since then, I have been invited to speak to thousands of active duty Combat Troops, many redeploying on their fifth tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, hundreds of Vietnam-Era Veterans and hundreds of clinicians about how to understand and overcome the challenges of Combat Trauma.

My approach to this challenge is unique, as I come at this from the perspective of a Combat Warrior, and from my own developmental odyssey of successfully overcoming

Combat Trauma and preventing my own suicide spanning more than 40 years of living in two separate realities. My main objective is to help the active Combat Warrior and Combat Veteran Improve, Adapt, Overcome and live a productive life.

My Mission

My Mission of **Mentoring Combat Warriors, Changing and Saving Lives** continues today and in an attempt to contribute to the dialogue within an enhanced Military Readiness perspective, contributing to the Combat Warriors effectiveness, and benefiting their families and society, I offer the following perspective. This can be achieved by rethinking the approaches now in practice and implementing new strategies to address a new generation of Warriors who have experienced more Combat Stress than any in the history of this nation.

My Key Focus is on Increasing Awareness

- By the Combat Warrior and the **NCO and Mid Level Military Hierarchy** (in that order) that **Combat Trauma is normal**;
- Understanding, accepting and adapting effective strategies to Improve, Adapt and Overcome are the answers to a productive Military Career and civilian life;
- Overcoming the barriers to obtaining Mental Health Care on an ongoing basis is paramount to the Warriors successful accomplishment of his mission in the military, concern for his family, achieving his education and advancing in his career when he moves on to civilian life;
- Adapting Mental Health Care processing procedures to overcome barriers to obtaining and maintaining ongoing treatment;
- Incorporating a Combat Warrior to Combat Warrior Mentoring Program can be the key to increasing acceptance of seeking and continuing to accept help on an ongoing basis;
- Dealing with Root Causes of the rising Mental Health Care issue is paramount to the achievement of the Military Mission;
- Developing new approaches to Mental Health Care as a critical component of the Military Mission is the key.

Potential Systemic Changes

- The way in which troops are trained with respect to Combat Trauma in boot camp, through their term of military service and followed through the term of VA assistance.

- Developing an attitude among Warriors that you are expected to help your friend, as a battle buddy, with issues of Combat Trauma in the same way as watching their six in combat.
- Expand the education of the Command Structure that Combat Trauma is normal and that the steps and procedures offered in this paper will benefit not only building a more effective fighting force thereby enhancing achievement of their Military Mission, but also benefiting the Veteran returning to civilian life and society as a whole.
- Implement a Combat Stress Educational Program from a Squad to Brigade level, while expanding the Pre-Post deployment education of Combat Stress.
- Implement a Warrior-to-Warrior Mentor Program for active duty personnel and a Veteran-to-Veteran Mentor Program once discharged from the military.
- Expand the clinician embedding program in combat field units, while enhancing NCO and Officer Education in identification of and dealing with Combat Stress symptoms.
- Re-establish the Walk-in, Drop-in Program at all Vet Centers and VA facilities, while developing and expanding a mental and physical health follow-up program through the DOD and VA.
- Train Troops to use Improve, Overcome and Adapt skills and discipline in civilian society.
- Expand the understanding that seeking the advice of mentors and coaches in their Military, personal and professional development will benefit Troops throughout their lives.

Challenge

- To overcome the old paradigms (methods and models for making decisions) that are ineffective in dealing with the new generation of Combat Warriors.
- Our current approach and treatment must change if we are to be effective in developing the needed coping skills and tools to enhance the lives of our troops.

Major Benefits

To the Achievement of the Military Mission

- Reduction of Mental Health Care issues and overall costs;
- Enhanced knowledge of how to combat Mental Health Care Issues and how to overcome the stigma which causes the reluctance to obtaining help;
- Reduction in the impact of non-combat attrition;
- Improved effectiveness of the Combat Fighting Force;
- Reduction in the negative impact on the Military Family;
- Reduction in the negative impact on the Civilian Society.
- Reduction of negative stereotyping of Military suicide and homicide by the media due to positive procedures being implemented.

To the Combat Warrior

- Helping the Troops become better Warriors in military service;
- Helping to break the cycle of failure due to the impact of negative mental issues;
- Helping the Troops to become better citizens in society;
- Enhancing the potential of a better future;
- Preventing suicides, homicides and family abuse in their future;
- Developing within each of the Troops a sense of self-worth and confidence to face and overcome future obstacles in their lives.

To the VA Health Care System

- Increasing the effectiveness of the Mental Health Care System;
- Reducing the load of Mental Health Care claims among aging veterans and active Troops;
- Reduction of the agonizing and detrimental waiting time to get help when someone is under stress;
- Reduction in additional costs caused by delays in getting timely help.

To the Military Veteran

- Help in breaking the agonizing cycle of failure throughout every job, every relationship and every goal;
- Reducing the need to remain on medication;
- Enhancing their ability to be a more productive member of society.

To the Military Family

- Reduction in the Combat Stress-related cases of domestic abuse;
- Enhancing the potential of maintaining family cohesion;
- Interrupting the legacy of family abuse among dependents and their families.

To Civilian Society

- Reduction of Combat Stress related crime;
- Reduction in the cost of veteran related social services;
- Enhancing the perception of the Military amongst the civilian population.

Next Steps

- Relate this information to the Command Structure and Peer Networking;
- Take responsibility to initiate action to implement change.

Critical Issues and Key Recommendations

Every Obstacle Must Yield to Stone Resolve.

Leonardo Da Vinci

Critical Issues Impacting the Combat Warrior

Causes of Combat Trauma

1. Killing our own species goes against the laws of nature.
2. Killing women and children has a profound impact on the Warrior's mental state.
3. Sustained Combat Trauma creates permanent scars. Even Combat Warriors have a maximum limit of endurance.
4. Losing Brothers and Sister Warriors creates trauma.
5. Just being exposed to war creates trauma.
6. All Warriors walk off the Battlefield Changed. There are no exceptions.

Effects of Combat Trauma

1. Warriors live with the "experiences" of war every second of their lives, for the rest of their lives.
2. The conflict between the two realities of the Warrior and civilian worlds rips the Warrior apart.
3. The reactions to Combat Trauma reach into every aspect of the Warrior's life for his entire life.
4. Grief, depression, multiple levels of guilt, anger, hyper-vigilance, and adrenaline deprivation are the normal reactions to Combat experienced by everyone I've ever talked to – some are just better at hiding it than others.
5. Family, friends and society are the unintended victims of the failure of the Warrior to get adequate treatment for the effects of war.

Critical Factors

1. Warriors are terrified of being "outcast" from their clan, tribe, unit and/or society.

2. Perceived weakness from any source is life-threatening to a Warrior.
3. The “Sacred Warrior Bond” is stronger than life itself.
4. Unit deployment strengthens the Warrior Bond and yet increases the fear of loss and of being banished from the unit.
5. Multiple deployments deepen and compound the effects of Combat Trauma.
6. There is not enough effective decompression time to truly wind down between deployments.
7. Death is not feared by Warriors. It’s expected.
8. Suicide is more honorable and acceptable than disgrace.

Primary Solutions

1. The title PTSD promotes the stigma of weakness. Change it!!
2. A Combat Warrior to Combat Warrior Mentor Program is critical to validate the decision to get help.
3. Combat Trauma is normal. Warriors really need to know and accept this and their leaders need to validate their decision to get help.
4. Military access to civilian Vet Centers must be available in the case of emergency or there must a path to be able to get help without risking the stigma of weakness.
5. Return the Walk-in, Drop-in Vet Center policy.
6. Military leadership and clinicians need to understanding the intense Warrior Trust Bond of Combat Warriors.

The Active Military Solution

1. Combat Trauma Education must include acceptance and adaptation training from boot camp through their entire term of military service.
2. Change the focus of Warrior Transition Units to Combat Warriors only.
3. Establish eleven-month tours (or less), with one month of debriefing and readjustment counseling.
4. Establish immediate NCO and Officer education programs, using the currently accepted Combat Stress Symptoms.
5. Develop pre-and post-deployment education in Combat Stress.

6. Consider embedding of clinicians in all field units.
7. Develop post-discharge follow-up and counseling.

The Consequences of No Change in Direction

1. Weakening Military Mission Readiness.
2. Repeating Vietnam.
3. Abandoning our Warriors and their families.
4. Overwhelming the present health care system.
5. Compounding the numbers of suicides, homicides and domestic violence.
6. Continuing the impact on the VA system, families and society once Warriors leave the military.

Key Recommendations

1. Implement a Combat Stress Educational Program from a Squad to Brigade level.
2. Implement a Warrior-to-Warrior Mentor Program for active duty personnel.
3. Implement a Veteran-to-Veteran Mentor Program, once discharged from the military.
4. Expand the Pre-Post deployment education of Combat Stress.
5. Expand the clinician-embedding program in combat field units.
6. Re-establish the Walk-in, Drop-in Program at all Vet Centers and VA facilities.
7. Develop and expand a mental and physical health follow-up program through the DOD and VA.
8. Train Troops to use Improve, Adapt and Overcome skills and discipline in civilian society.
9. Encourage the use of mentors and coaches as a safety net throughout life.
10. Advertise the Mentor Programs through the Internet along with Public Service Announcements on Television and Radio Networks.
11. Advertise that Combat Stress is the normal reaction to war, thereby reducing the stigma and encouraging Warriors to come forward and get help.

Understanding the Causes of Combat Trauma

Man cannot remake himself without suffering, for he is both the marble and the sculptor.

Dr. Alex Carrel

The Primal Nature of Our Society

We must first consider the primal nature of our society, and extend this understanding to the Combat Warrior. As anthropologists have stated, humans, being a gregarious race, deeply need to feel acceptance of others in a tribal sense. This acceptance instills a sense of belonging and comfort; it makes us feel “safe.”

Being “outcast” from our society, community, tribe, or military unit is the greatest punishment imaginable. It denotes failure in our duties, mission and ourselves. Only re-establishing acceptance can restore, in part, a sense of belonging. Guilt and fear remain however, to remind us of past retribution.

The Operant Conditioning of Boot Camp brings out the Primal Side of our nature. The late Dr. Donald Rossi, Ph. D., ABPP, while at Fort Hood, called this the Beast. It must be developed if we are to survive war. It is what allows us to kill without compassion, and without hesitation. When we walk onto the battlefield, it then hones us into the Predators we must become and instills the Sacred Warrior Bond that allows us to function as a single unit, with a single focus; to accomplish the mission. The Beast develops the Killer Instinct in us, it heightens our senses, it makes us feel alive and it attempts to seduce us with the opiate of Combat Adrenaline.

The Military Units Are Not Individuals

Military units are a team, acting in unison. Our training repeatedly emphasizes that death is better than dishonor, better than failure of the mission. There cannot be moral judgment in actual combat engagements; there isn't time. It's kill or be killed. And through combat and the baptism of blood, a bond of friendship develops between members of the unit that goes beyond all forces of nature, beyond biological families, beyond past friendships, and you will die to protect it and the ones you now love so deeply. The thought of losing these Trusted Friends is terrifying, the thoughts of betraying them and breaking the Sacred Warrior Bond is unthinkable. Death is far better than being separated from them for any reason. Your level of Trust and Friendship has taken on new meaning. You now belong. You now live by Honor, and nothing in this world is more

important.

With this in mind, consider the NCO (non commissioned officer) in charge of a squad of Warriors. He is the Mentor, the counselor, the War Guide of his Sacred Warrior Group. The Line Officer in charge of several squads holds the same responsibility, and so on. Mission Readiness is the focus. Trusting your fellow Warrior with your life in combat is demanded. There can be no weakness, no hesitation. Death before dishonor is the creed on the battlefield.

We're Never Prepared for Killing

Regardless of our training, we are never prepared for the first kill. It truly feels good to kill the enemy, and in that act something irreversible changes inside of you. It does not feel good to kill women and children, and that cuts deeply into your morality as an American. And yet, given enough killing, the guilt of these actions begins to move more to the back of your thoughts, and the Primal Self, the Beast, begins to be your gauge of Right Action. Rage and Anger become the norm. It is the "kill or be killed" attitude that will bring you back alive, and protect your beloved Friends in battle. And that feels Good.

When We Lose a Member of Our Family Unit

When you lose a member of your Unit Family, you are riddled with guilt over "What could I have done to prevent that?" You feel survivor guilt because you're alive and they are not. You feel tremendous Loss and Helplessness because nothing you can do will change that event. And that event remains locked in your mind forever.

Our Troops have now been on multiple Combat tours. Each tour makes the feelings of the Sacred Warrior Bond stronger. Their need to belong becomes stronger. They judge all relationships by the Code of Honor they live by in war. They can trust no one but their fellow Warriors, who will die for them without hesitation. Their fear of being cast out of the unit is stronger than death itself. In fact, to a Warrior who has faced death on the battlefield, death is not something they fear at all. It is expected.

Our Troops are now deployed as units and return as units. This also intensifies the Trust Bond in the Warrior mind. Their units are their battle-hardened families; these families become sacred to each member. Unit Bonds are stronger than life itself.

This is why spouses and biological families do not fit into the Warrior Trust Bond any longer. First of all, if they weren't on the battlefield they don't understand war. This is a very difficult concept for family members to deal with. They expect the same son, daughter, husband or wife to walk through the door after 15 months in combat, being the same as when they left. It is expected that they will begin where they left off and continue with planning their lives together. That is not the case. The Warrior's reality of life has changed. The loved ones remain in a world which, for the most part, the Warriors have grown to hate. In some cases, it would be similar to being sent to high max prison for vacation; you are forced to go and you hate it. It's also like coming back from battle and

everyone speaks a foreign language; no one understands each other.

Impact of Multiple Tours

Even the number of tours makes a difference to the Troops. A Warrior having been on one tour will not be treated the same by a Warrior having been on five tours. Those who were deployed to Afghanistan are different than those from the Iraq deployments. There is also a class distinction between the branches of the military.

Consider now how difficult it is for a Warrior who has reached the breaking point to leave his or her family and be disgraced by weakness.

We're Changed Forever

- ▶ Killing the enemy is both satisfying and rewarding. You get medals for it, but it still bothers you. It is not normal for a species to kill its own kind.
- ▶ Killing women and especially children can be alarming even if they "are" the enemy. Guaranteed, you'll remember their faces and their ripped-apart and exploding bodies for the rest of your life.
- ▶ When you lose the most beloved friend in your life, it will affect you for the rest of your life.
- ▶ Trust has reached a new standard after combat. You trust no one but a fellow Warrior. All others are under suspicion.
- ▶ You now live in a black-and-white, no-bullshit world and are intolerant of anyone who doesn't.
- ▶ In combat, the Sacred Warrior Bond is the most cherished part of your life. It is your life.

The Effects of Combat Trauma

That Which Does Not Destroy You Only Makes You Stronger.

Friedrich Nietzsche

No One Walks Off the Battlefield Unchanged

It is not possible. If a Warrior makes it through the first several months of combat, he or she will have become a new and different person. The Primal Side of our nature is in full control by that point. We live through the eyes of the Beast, the Predator. We are the judge, jury and executioner. The more friends who are violently ripped out of our Warrior Family, the more killing we do, the more we change, and the more justification there is to continue the same focus of rage and anger. It has kept us alive. Think about it. How do you “gently, peacefully, calmly” kill someone? You need to raise the adrenaline, the anger, the memories of loss, and the payback of controlled rage to kill effectively. We, as Warriors, have been conditioned to do just that. And the longer we’re in war, the easier it gets, until eventually we are “numb” to any other way of living.

Death Was a Calling

I was told by a “Spec. Ops” Soldier, who had been witness to and participated in horrible atrocities, that to him “Death was a Calling.” He went on to say that “There is nothing more intimate between two people, two Warriors, than to walk onto the Battlefield and face Death together” and “In that moment, Trust, Friendship, Honor and Love go beyond the understanding of those not by your side.” He continued by saying that “When you lose your fellow Warrior, your brother, your sister, you feel Cheated. You want to follow them over the threshold and continue to protect them, to love them as you have.” This Soldier said that he was not afraid of death in the slightest, but until called to leave this world, he would honor his fallen Soldiers by not killing himself.

Suicide Is an Honorable Alternative

Although Suicide is a terrible thing for those left behind, to the Warrior, it is simply an honorable alternative. This attitude of being unable to live with “Disgrace” is clearly exemplified in the historical accounts of the Japanese Samurai. Honor, Trust and Unconditional Love for your fellow Warrior are timeless elements of War...always have been and always will be. And indeed, the same applies today.

Getting Rid of the Stigma

People talk about getting rid of the “Stigma” of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Stigma means disgrace and is seen as disgrace. To a Warrior, it means you have been disgraced if you admit to this. You have voluntarily admitted that you have reached your

limit of endurance, of tolerance, and if others in your Family Unit do not admit the same, you then feel weaker, and ashamed of your admission. That's one of the reasons for saying nothing until you "Hit the Wall" and then take your own life. It seems the honorable thing to do. If you think about it, a Warrior never expects to live through war in the first place, so why not live by honor, in your family, until the last moment when you become an "Emotional Casualty"?

Homicide, as well as "Suicide-by-Warrior" is increasing at an alarming rate, as is military domestic violence. There are approaches to dealing with each, which will be discussed further on in this study, but for now, let's focus on the causes.

The Trust Bond Is Life Itself

Remember that the emotions connected to killing, loss, guilt, survivor guilt and the need for combat adrenaline, do not leave the mind of the Warrior when he or she leaves the battlefield. The primal side, the Beast, is still in full control.

The attitude of Distrust is firmly in place, and any attack on the Military Combat Family is perceived as a direct attack on the Warrior. We look for any excuse, any hint possible to disqualify all those we confront outside this family unit. If our Trust is betrayed in the slightest degree, it then reinforces our perceptual set of who and where the enemy is.

Afghanistan and Iraq are very similar in this respect. "Trust No One" but your fellow Warrior, and you "may" survive to kill the enemy, protect your family unit, and return together from battle with honor.

To Engage Is a Solution

There have been far more homicides and suicide incidents than publicized, all of which are clearly understandable from the Warrior perspective. When we reach our own individual emotional limit, our breaking point, or as the Troops now call it "Hitting the Wall", we look for an honorable solution to ending the pain.

In a state of trauma-induced rage, we consider immediate un-thought-out options. Luring police into a firefight is one such alternative. Feeling the "adrenaline hit" of combat is an acceptable solution, and the process of killing the now-established enemy is just cause. If we've disqualified everyone in our life, they all become the enemy. And we as Warriors are trained and conditioned to kill the enemy without compassion, without hesitation. Once the Primal Side, the Beast is unleashed in battle, which it must be for the Warrior to survive, it is ever-present, evaluating the "threat level." waiting to defend its keeper.

The Conflict of Two Realities

When we walk off the Battlefield, having killed the enemy, having been witness to our beloved family members being ripped apart and killed in front of us, we "leave as two separate beings in the same body," the gentle, civilized human being, screaming inside from the anguish and atrocities of war, the other, unmerciful, uncivilized side, longing for more emotional trauma to bathe within, relishing its own power and dominance over that

gentle soul all humans possess.

We are caught in Two Realities, two dimensions, two worlds. We have been baptized in the blood of combat and paid the boat keeper passage across the River Styx. Our boots are now firmly planted in these two worlds.

It is the “Snapping” back and forth between these two realities that causes the Warrior mental collapse. We are comfortable in the Warrior World of black and white, of duty and honor, of mission objectives. We take nothing for granted, not a hot shower, a porcelain toilet, a good meal, and most importantly, the company of battle hardened and Trusted Friends. We live life completely, one moment at a time, one day at a time. And the Angel of Death is ever-present on the Battlefield to remind us of our mortality, and that life well lived, is life itself.

There are no roller coaster effects, no ups and downs of emotions. It is that *“Snapping”* back and forth between two realities that rips us apart. The two worlds do not mesh. Why else do you think it is, that we tolerate, yet often loathe, civilian society? Very little in the civilian world has true meaning to the Warrior, and yet we are forced to live within it. That is why we isolate and insulate ourselves from it as much as is possible. That’s why we turn to alcohol and drugs to numb the trivial world we hate. That’s why we feel comfort and safety only around other Warriors; only they truly understand.

Reactions to Sustained Trauma

The phantoms come at night and in the emotional waves of *flashbacks*. We are not only caught in two worlds simultaneously, we are tormented by the past in our sleep and *waking nightmares*. We long to return to our past, to the horrors of war, because at least there we understood who we were, what was expected of us, and how to live within Honor. We had pride and self-esteem holding a rifle, surrounded by battle tested Warriors who would die for each other.

What is commonly called “depression” is actually being mentally “stuck” or fixated like a deuce-and-a-half in the mud; we can’t move, don’t want to move, feel helpless, victimized and are unable to see a way out. In other words, sometimes when we’re stuck or fixated, it’s between “realities or Worlds”. Sometimes it’s the battle between the primal part of the brain and the higher-mind part of the brain. To a Warrior, these two regions are in “constant conflict”.

Besides fighting the two regions of the brain, the Warrior also deals with the multiple waves of emotions from the experiences of war; the many forms of guilt, loss, and intense visual recurring memories of traumatic events.

Loneliness Intensifies the Effects of War Trauma

When we are discharged from the military, after a brief time we realize *how alone* we are, *how different* we are, compared to the average citizen. We feel like an “outcast” in a society we fought to protect. And it’s not much of a stretch for a Warrior to quickly come to the conclusion that no one understands, that few truly care. This of course is *Not True*,

but appears to be the case as seen through the eyes of a Warrior, recently returning from the battlefield.

When we are discharged from the military, it is the same kind of Culture Shock that we felt after first being away from this country on deployment. No one in my time ever prepared me for that, and we need to prepare our Young Warriors for this experience. They may frantically race off base to get to an apartment when not on duty, but the cord has not been cut until they now have to make a life away from the Military Family Unit and among aliens.

Primary Solutions

The main thing is keeping the main thing, the main thing...

Unknown

Begin With the Trust Bond

If you consider the implications of the preceding discussion, it is paramount to focus on the “Trust Bond” as a critical factor to initiate communications with our Veterans of war. And to clarify the term Veteran, to a Warrior, if you have survived battle, then you’re a Veteran, whether discharged from the military or still on active duty.

Back in the late 1970’s and early ‘80s, the Vet Center Program had a “Walk-In, Drop-In” policy. It was extremely successful because many of the counselors at the time acted as “mentors” to establish a *Trust Bond* as quickly as possible. In fact, not all of the counselors had degrees in psychology. But the program worked! I know, because I was in it in 1980.

Walk-In, Drop-In Worked Quickly

When I walked into that Vet Center for the first time, I was terrified and ashamed to admit I had a problem, even though my life was being torn apart. I lost all civilian friends, family, was drunk most of the time and thought the only honorable way to end the emotional waves, the nightmares, guilt, and flashbacks was suicide.

The Walk-In, Drop-In program turned things around quickly. And why? Because there was *no initial paperwork* to fill out for at least the first five visits and several group sessions and the Trust Bond was established. *The counselor just listened*, allowed me to “vent,” and showed me that I wasn’t alone, that I was “Normal” for what I had experienced. After a time, when I felt comfortable with the Center, I was invited, if I felt good about it, to fill out some paperwork together with him by my side. He was also a combat Veteran, which increased my comfort level and decreased the threat level. It quickly became a “Safe Zone,” and the healing process began.

Today can be much better for Veterans once the “Trust Bond” is established. Approaches such as Exposure Therapy (reliving the experiences), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (transferring thoughts, forming new mental habits) and understanding the Primal Self (getting the Beast under control) gives our Young Warriors a chance for a productive life. That is, if they choose to participate.

Vet Centers have been and remain the front line of assistance for our Veterans. The GWOT (Global War on Terror) is a fine example of the continued efforts of the Veterans Administration to **Adapt** to the times. Readjustment Outreach Specialists or “GWOTs” as

they are called are all combat Warriors from Afghanistan and Iraq. They are employed by the VA and as the name implies, they are the liaison between the Veterans and the Vet Centers. "GWOTs" go into the field and make contact with Warriors living in remote areas or in urban environments. There are also Mobile Vet Centers that help to accomplish this mission more effectively. These fine young men and women are Warriors helping Warriors and an example to us all.

The Pain-or-Pleasure Conflict

Consider that "Emotions are reactions to experiences." and as physicists will say, "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." Behaviorists also suggest, that "Every emotion is a reaction resulting in Pain or Pleasure." And if we apply this to our Combat Warriors, we see the results of Battle. For example, killing children results in Pain, killing the enemy results in Pleasure, losing Military Combat Family members results in extreme pain with the negative emotions of grief, rage, hate, helplessness, guilt and vulnerability added in for bad measure. Therefore, if we compound the emotional reactions of battlefield experiences, adding in multiple levels of painful actions and memories, the "reaction" is not surprising. And where is the pleasure? It's not hard to understand how the Military Combat Family supplies the stimulus, the pleasure of unconditional love in an environment of unbelievable pain. It is equally clear how important this concept is in dealing with All Warriors. Pain avoidance is seeking out Pleasure. Being accepted by society (the tribe), being respected by society and by new, non-judgmental friends, being acknowledged as a Warrior for the sacrifices we make, is all that we ask. Remember, also, that Trust Is Earned.

Therefore, if you can get the Warriors through the door, you've got to keep them coming back. They'll keep coming back, **IF they feel "Safe" and they "Trust" you.** It's just that simple, black and white. Now of course, they may have to "Start Over" in shaping their new life, new relationships and new goals. But once a "Safety Net" is established through good "mentoring practices." with a trusted friend by their side, the prospects of healing are good indeed.

Self-Esteem and Belonging

Self-esteem is critical, as is making the Warrior feel a sense of belonging to a group. This is why there are so many gang members in civilian society. We all need to feel like we belong to something, that someone cares about us and will stick by us when times are difficult.

Not only do all Warriors in civilian society need a sense of belonging, they need to be "Thanked for their Sacrifices" and to be validated and acknowledged for their skills in surviving war. It is no small thing to survive combat. To survive multiple tours is even more outstanding. And as they feel more self-esteem, they will realize their strength. When they realize their strength, and adapt their military skills to civilian society, they will be able to sustain themselves emotionally.

Even with the best therapy, producing the greatest control, there are no cures...only levels of focus and control. Often, when someone says they feel good, what that really means is

that he or she is in focus, in control, feeling better than they did, and/or that they are in denial. The objective in working with Warriors is not to “repress” the painful emotions but to desensitize these emotions to the degree that they become strength-building tools, the assets needed to overcome future obstacles.

The point here is that even if a Warrior goes through therapy with successful results, which by the way takes a lot of effort, honesty and a great deal of determination, he are still left with the experiences. Those cannot ever be removed, nor should they be. The reactions to war experiences must be transformed into something different, something acceptable. We change our thinking, and it changes our lives, our future, and gives us a reason to continue. Goals are important to the Warrior. They are missions.

Higher Education Is the Answer for Some

Speaking of goals, for some, education is a promise of the future. College or Trade School is a break from becoming fully immersed in civilian society. At least it was for me. College gave me a “pause” from jumping back into full-time civilian life. It gave me a promise of a better job in the future, and it was free with the GI Bill at the time. Now, it’s even better with the new revised GI Bill for education.

With a mentor or coach in college, it can now be even safer. I’m working a lot these days with [Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado](#), as well as with other schools around the country. The term being used is “Vet- Friendly-Colleges”. In such a program, the Warrior has a fellow Veteran mentor the moment he or she walks onto campus. You can explore this more on my website under [“Vet-Friendly-Colleges.”](#) Trust and a safety net are critical to the success of our Troops.

Therefore, with a Trust Bond secured, with plenty of time to Talk about how they are feeling inside with someone who understands, or at least cares, with developing a confirmation that “I’m normal for what I’ve been through” and with combat mentors and goal setting, life can be better than good for our Warriors. Life can be excellent.

The bottom line is “The Trust Bond is critical. If you violate that Trust to any degree, in any fashion, you lose them.”

Failing to effectively deal with more effective ways to deal with Combat Trauma and preventing suicide has long-term unintended consequences on present and future Combat Warriors, the VA Health Care System, achievement of the military mission as well as the residual impact on military families and society as a whole.

Military Solution

Real Change Requires Real Change.

Newt Gingrich

Overview

Taking into account the essential demands of Combat Readiness and the Military Combat Family Unit, we are faced with obstacles requiring long-term implementation.

The Stigma of Terms

First and foremost, the stigma of PTSD will remain in place until we change the terms, making it honorable. In my time, Battle Fatigue had more credibility. It just meant you got tired from war. No shame in that. To get fatigued from battle doesn't mean you're an outcast if you Hit the Wall.

I guarantee you that any Warrior who has been through multiple tours of combat has issues to address. If we feel "Normal" and know that everyone of our fellow Warriors feels the same, and we're not going to be driven out of the family we love, we'll talk. There is no shame in feeling horrible when you kill children. I know this because I've done it. There is also no shame in feeling the loss of the Brothers and Sisters you cherished. That's part of war.

The Combat Trauma Model

I will now refer to the late Dr. Donald Rossi and his Combat Trauma Model (See Appendix A), which he developed while at the U.S. Army Base, at Fort Hood, Texas. Dr. Rossi was a brilliant clinician and mentor, having worked all of his adult life in counseling Law Enforcement and the Military.

Since his death, I have repeatedly confirmed his conclusions with others in the field of Combat Trauma, and all agree. The following is a brief outline of his model. To see more of his work, you can go to www.sgtbrandi.com and click on the "overcoming trauma" icon.

Inoculation

Dr. Rossi proposed that we "inoculate" the Troops during or right after boot camp, explaining to them what to expect when they walk off the battlefield. We then have the NCOs and line Officers well trained in identifying the symptoms of combat trauma in the field, with embedding programs in Combat Brigades if possible. The embedding program, simply stated, is having qualified professionals well educated in combat trauma and

therapy in the field in combat units.

Pre-and Post-Deployment Training

Dr. Rossi's Model also describes the critical need to administer Pre-and-Post deployment classes on adapting to civilian society once on block leave and upon discharge. The need for family orientation and understanding of combat trauma for their spouses and/or family members is also extremely important. This awareness may in fact help to reduce suicides, homicides and domestic violence.

Not only is pre-discharge civilian orientation necessary, but post-discharge evaluations are needed as well. This procedure is presently being implemented by many of the National Guard units stateside. Dr. Rossi and others have indicated that up to 70%, or more, of our Troops would have learned, better and more appropriately, how to deal with combat trauma through such a program.

Decompression Is Mandatory

At the end of our tours, we are all anxious to get home at any cost. We've made it through battle and through war. We long to return to the States and what we perceive as safety. If we stage the Troops at a decompression site, the time they spend there "must" be part of their tour of duty. If we tell them before they deploy, that "you have an 11-month tour in country, and one month in transition for debriefing," they will accept that as a mandate and hold off getting anxious until they get close to the end of the required transition month. By doing this, it will allow the Troops to accept the mission with its built-in "Decompression Time" as the norm.

Take the Slow Route Home

I have also been pushing for "Bringing the Troops home on Ships". This one factor was crucial in WW II with returning Troops. It gave them time to decompress. But let's go one better. Bring our present Warriors home on Civilian Cruise Ships giving them three weeks to relax, eat real food, watch movies and get de-briefed by counselors on board. When they get stateside they go on the usual 30-day block-leave. It would be cheaper than flying and/or bringing home the fleet.

Convert Guantanamo

It has been suggested that we convert Guantanamo into a resort staging area, where Troops could surf, scuba dive and relax before coming back to deal with society.

After speaking to Troops and to clinicians who have spoken to Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans about this, the response has been overwhelmingly in favor of such a "decompression" base. They have stated, " If we had a chance to spend a month at a place like that, it would have changed our lives." This would allow several outcomes:

One being that Warriors would be allowed to transition from the Battlefield to society, slowly and in a controlled environment. They would participate in readjustment

counseling approaches, including critical family issues. Those leaving the military would then be pre-registered with the VA Vet Center Program in their home towns, with follow up evaluations scheduled in advance.

This Transition Base would involve recreational therapy and readjustment counseling for developing the trust bond necessary for continued assistance in civilian society. For those remaining on active duty, it would allow them to deal with the traumas of battle, prepare to re-enter society for a short time, and give them the tools to take back on re-deployment. They would also have something to look forward to, a goal for survival at the end of the tour.

Other Issues

One factor that is not so obvious to those not having talked with the Troops is the issue of alcohol. They get two beers at Christmas, wait 12 months (it used to be 15) to get stateside, and then they binge for a month.

Other factors are caffeine (new power drinks) since it gives them a hit and addiction to pornography as a result of confinement "In-Country" with access to the Internet.

As the saying goes, "Fore-warned is Fore-armed." In combat, we need to stay focused on the mission to be effective. That is extremely difficult when fighting two enemies, one on the battlefield and another in the confused and troubled mind.

Warrior Transition Units

The most important recommendation I can make is to remove anyone from the WTU who is "not" a Combat Warrior. As it is now, non-combatants (on something like sick-call duty) are placed with Warriors suffering from Combat Fatigue. First of all, the Combat Troops are ashamed to be isolated from their Unit Families. They are in the WTU with Troops who have a broken ankle or similar physical problems. That implies that our Combat Warriors have issues no more important than a torn ligament. It also implies they are sick. And they are not! They are simply fatigued from the experiences of battle.

In any such unit or program, the notion that a Combat Warrior can be returned to his or her prior state of mind after combat is ridiculous and naive. There is no restoring or resetting. There is only adapting to a new life. It may be called a transitioning unit, but as the word implies, it is moving from one state or form to another. It is learning how to live in two realities while creating a new identity that is critical.

"Bucking Up" Is not Only Ignorant But Life Threatening

To tell a multiple-tour Combat Warrior to "Buck Up," "Man Up," or "Suck It Up" is pure unadulterated denial of the Truth! And, by using shame, intimidation and ridicule to evoke avoidance behavior sabotages the Warrior's ability to get timely help. It sends a message to other Warriors that being impacted by human emotions is a sign of weakness and therefore wrong. This only compounds the problem.

It also means the NCO or Officer is looking for a promotion, concerned about job security, is ignorant, or is just plain stupid. This attitude is killing our Troops! It is guaranteeing suicide, homicide, family abuse and a dishonorable discharge for our Heroes. Not only this, but it also reduces our military's combat effectiveness and our future mission readiness.

By saying the Warrior is just feeling Combat Fatigue from killing human beings, from watching his or her Combat Family members die, feeling the loss and multiple levels of guilt (they are simply tired of war) gives them an honorable way to seek counsel, to remain in their Combat Family Unit, to strengthen their Sacred Warrior Trust Bond. The bottom line is that through counseling, they will become better Warriors and eventually better citizens.

Knowledge Makes Us Stronger

When every Warrior understands and accepts that he or she can and should discuss the deep emotions of battle, without fear of criticism or threat of banishment, they will be more effective Combat Warriors.

Preparing for the Future

If we do not implement a new course of immediate action, we stand to lose this new generation of Warriors to these present wars. We must prepare for sustained conflict now and in the future.

Current estimates are that we will be in Afghanistan for at least five more years. Many of our present fighting force will participate in this conflict. And many of them have now been on their fourth combat deployment, preparing for their fifth.

It has been stated that "The military is in uncharted territory." How much more can we expect of them, how much more combat, killing and loss before they "hit the wall"?

Our present Warriors are caught and struggling within two realities, two worlds. They are terrified of losing their status in the combat family they hold sacred, yet at the same time, being ripped apart by combat trauma and afraid to ask for help. One immediate and viable alternative is to establish a Combat Warrior Mentor Program. The United States Marine Corps and Army have already made headway in such a program, and all branches must follow if we are to succeed in this mission.

Mentoring Will Help

Several key advisors and I are presently working on a Warrior Mentor Program for active military and discharged Veterans. The program will be similar in some ways to the early Vet Center Program. It will allow a Warrior instant access to another Combat Warrior, by phone, in person, or both. All meetings and conversations will remain private and confidential and no records will be initiated, kept or administered to without absolute

consent.

I don't know of anyone who overcame tremendous obstacles and became truly successful who didn't have specialized mentors at various stages in their lives.

Tom Hayes, MBA

U. S. Marine

Strategic Marketing, Business Development Advisor,
Mentor, Coach

The Trust Bond is a critical priority if we are to be effective. A Warrior-to-Warrior Mentoring program has the highest possibility of success, because we have all been down the same trail, all shared the same mud and the same blood. And as our new Warriors say, "We've chewed the same dirt or have the same sand and blood on our boots."

The Consequences of No Change in Direction

Insanity: Repeating the same thing time and time again and each time expecting a different result.

Albert Einstein

History Is Prologue

We have only to look back over the past 40 years to understand what will occur if nothing is changed for our Young Warriors. And for those without a sense of deep compassion for our Troops, perhaps the issue of money will heighten an interest. These two new wars will impact this nation far more than we presently suspect.

A Responsibility We All Share Like It or Not

If we as a nation choose to send our young men and women to war, the very least we can do is to take care of them when they return. We can do that by understanding them, thanking them, and educating them in the ways to adapt to society, while in the military and out. Benefits would be nice too, but many of the Troops I've talked with don't want anything from the government for the reasons that have just been discussed. They want their guns and want to remain anonymous.

With PTSD tattooed to their foreheads, they not only feel like "outcasts" but they also can't apply for good-paying jobs that require a Q Clearance such as government positions, law enforcement, fire fighters, etc.

Vietnam Is To Be Remembered and Not Repeated

Many of our Troops are angry. They feel betrayed. And they are confused. They are still functioning in the Primal Side. And this must be diffused immediately. Besides the suicides, homelessness and homicides of Vietnam, veterans from that era have been called the generation of "abusers" (child abuse, family abuse, drug and alcohol abuse and self-abuse.) We cannot allow this to be repeated.

Vietnam veterans were not organized like the Warriors of today. We didn't go to battle in units and return as units. The Sacred Warrior Bond was there of course, but not to the degree it is now. This is a new generation, and we must approach them with respect and in a unique way.

I have been warning about this for more than two years and it is not intended to create

fear, but what I'm hearing from Law Enforcement reinforces the urgency of the message.

Facing the Reality

Let's openly and honestly look at the reality of the situation.

As I've stated, the Sacred Warrior Bond is life itself to these young Troops. And any kind of outsider Trust Bond is very difficult to establish. They, in fact, trust only the Warriors in their units, and when discharged, they stay in communication via the Internet and phone. That is, even those out of the military stay in touch with their friends still in the military, even when deployed. These are highly trained Warriors, with four to five times the amount of combat that anyone has ever seen before, and they're all armed. It would be unwise to give them a reason to vent their trauma in any way but through counseling.

More Sustained Combat Equals More Trauma

In WW II, the average Warrior saw about 40 days of combat. The Vietnam Warrior saw an average of 240 days each tour...most did one or two tours. But today, I have talked to Warriors who have seen as much as 1000 days of combat or more, and some, five times the amount of anyone in history. Think about it. How much can one human being stand before breaking down? And they are starting to rotate back in huge numbers this summer.

You do the math. There are 900,000 now discharged since the wars began. We will have hundreds of thousands leaving the military in the coming years. Of the millions that will serve, it is estimated that between 800,000 to more than one million will have a Combat Trauma issue that needs attention. If left unaddressed, this translates into BILLIONS of dollars from an already troubled economy and over-taxed VA System.

There just isn't enough money or staff to handle the coming storm. And it is coming. We are out of time!

An immediate and effective plan of action will reduce the number of disability claims with the VA and will enhance Military Combat Readiness for active personnel. If we make the effort now, everyone wins. And the majority of our Troops will go on to live productive lives.

Long-Term Impact

The unintended consequences of inaction on a program similar to what's outlined in this White Paper are as follows:

- To our Combat Warriors, suffering from the experiences of battle, to do nothing more than is being done will devastate their lives. They will have no foreknowledge of the effects of Combat Trauma and will continue the cycle of failure throughout every relationship, every goal for employment and every

future goal.

- To the Health Care system: Inaction will burden the entire system with overwhelming responsibilities, denying hundreds of thousands of Warriors the benefits which they deserve and have **earned** with their sacrifices. It will strain the system beyond its limit to provide psychological health care for those in need, and add to the demise of our Veterans.
- For the Military: Inaction will lower the vital achievement of mission readiness and mission completion. It will deplete our fighting force and weaken its ability to maintain sustained global deployments, creating an irreversible moral issue, and lack of military careers due to stigma issues.
- For families of Military and Veterans: Inaction will subject them to Combat Trauma in all its forms, causing increased domestic violence, divorces, child and spousal abuse, substance abuse, suicides and homicides.
- For our Society: Inaction will affect the very structure of our society by depleting the number of productive citizens who will build the future. Who better to serve this nation than those who have put their lives on the line to defend it? We cannot afford to lose this valuable resource. We cannot afford to lose those with the strength and determination to solve the problems that now face us. We need those with the military training to Improvise, Overcome and Adapt to the issues in our future. Those ready and capable are the young Warriors now nobly serving this nation. America needs them to become the leaders of this new generation.

How to Use the Book

Best Practice

The following is an explanation of how the book is being used by Guy M. McCommon, MSW, LICSW, Team Leader, at the Las Cruces Vet Center, Las Cruces, New Mexico:

Using “The Warriors Guide to Insanity” as a tool for therapy is not rocket science. I have been using this book as a therapy tool for approximately 1 year and have found it to be one of the most effective tools available to help combat Veterans.

*The book helps develop personal insight into how Veterans have been negatively affected by their war experience and how they can deal with it in positive ways to make changes in their lives. It develops a way to enhance self-esteem. Most of the Veterans I have had the opportunity to work with, in using this tool, have shared with me they find that **they can understand what Sgt. Brandi is saying to them in the book and thus they benefit immensely.** The way it is written, they do not need a dictionary beside them when reading it to look up words.*

When I share the book with a Veteran, I tell them, “This book is not written in clinical terms and that at times it does get a little rough”.

***The first approach,** depending on the individual and where I determine they are in dealing with their PTSD issues, is to read the book chapter by chapter. Then we discuss how they feel they have been impacted by each chapter’s topic.*

We then explore the correlation between the chapter’s topic and how they feel about the same issue they face, or how they have been affected and how they are dealing with it at this time. The main point is for the Veteran to develop an understanding that they have been affected and that have the resources and the personal power to deal with the negative impact that war has had on them and in their lives.

It is important that the Veteran admits the ways they have been dealing with issues have not been helping them. Some individuals need to go over this repeatedly and others are able to comprehend it rapidly.

One of the most important that things that it is necessary for the Veteran to understand is that they are the catalyst for change and growth in their lives and they have to do the work to make that change occur.

*The Veteran needs to accept that they are capable of change and no one else is going to do it for them. **They** must be willing to make the efforts to help themselves get healthier, and use the tools and skills to which they have been introduced. They must*

also accept that repetition is one of the most important aspects of success in this process, especially in internalizing the coping skills and tools.

The second approach is to have the Veteran read the entire book and then come back and discuss the insights gained; what they have learned about how PTSD has affected their lives and if they really want to make changes. I then have the Veteran outline what coping skills and tools they have learned from the book to make changes in their lives and how they are going to use them.

It is important that they look at how they deal with things now and that these ways of doing things have not been working for them. This approach is used for a Veteran who is more intellectually capable and who has the ability to process things more on their own. It is also necessary to have this individual realize the importance of repetition and self-esteem enhancement for success.

The most important aspect of using this tool, or any other tool, is to first gain and builds the ***Trust Bond*** with the Veteran. Then help them realize they are capable of making change. And that change, although scary, will improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their families.

Additional Insight...

To follow up on Guy Mc Common's discussion, it may be helpful to know just what's in the book that makes it so different...

First of all, it is written in the language of a "Grunt", combat rifleman, an Old Sarge, sitting around with his squad. The talk is between true friends and fellow battle hardened Warriors. The discussion leads into the topics of killing the enemy, killing women and children, the loss of our friends in battle, the guilt, survivor guilt, rage, helplessness, desire to continue killing, combat adrenaline, and issues of trust, friendship and suicide that we as Warriors all feel.

We also discuss additional education and family issues as well as adapting to society. That is, what to expect and how to get on with life.

Briefly stated, the book follows a sequence of stages, all set in stories and example.

Section One

How we lose the innocence of youth through battle enter another world (or dimension) of reality, the Warriors World. How war changes us forever; the duties and responsibilities of a Warrior; how we develop a numbness to human worth; how we reach a point and we

burn out; and how we deal with the loss of members from our Sacred Warrior Family.

Section Two

Deals with readjustment to society, being aware of how our war experience will affect our lives and the society around us. How we feel like strangers in our own country, and how to deal with the pain we feel on multiple levels.

Section Three

Explains how our reactions to war are normal for what we've been through. It explains what these reactions are and why we have such a difficult time in civilian society. We also discuss just who the enemy is now, and how to put things in perspective.

Section Four

Focuses on getting help, controlling our feelings, which often end in violence, and discussing suicide, homicide and domestic violence.

Section Five

Talks about our Medical Heroes, defines Combat Stress (PTSD) and discusses why it occurs. It defines the symptoms and suggests getting help. Here we also discuss the Gifts of War.

Section Six

Encourages the Troops on setting goals, where they go from here, and inspires them to succeed in life as productive citizens of society.

There are now thousands of [*The Warrior's Guide to Insanity*](#) in print and an [Audio Version](#) on the web that goes hand in hand with this White Paper.

Important Links

On Dealing with Combat Trauma

- [*The Warriors Guide to Insanity*](#), Sgt. Brandi, USMC; 2007.
- [*The Warriors Guide to Insanity*](#), Sgt. Brandi, USMC; Free Audio Version; 2007.
- [*Healing Hidden Wounds: The Mental Health Crisis of America's Veterans*](#), Col. Drew T. Doolin, USMC: NDU Press, 3rd Qtr, 2009.
- [*Vietnam Vet Shares Coping Skills*](#), *Military.com*, August. 2009.

On PTSD

- [A National Center for PTSD Fact Sheet](#)
- [Incremental Change-Fighting for PTSD War Casualties](#), *The Sirens Chronicles*, January, 2009.
- [Army May Stop Notifying COs of Counseling](#), *USA Today*, January, 2009.

On Suicide Prevention

- [Generals Find Suicide a Frustrating Enemy](#), *Washington Post*, May, 2009.
- [Suicide Prevention Amongst Veterans](#), *CRS Report to Congress*, May, 2008.

The Authors

Sgt Brandi, USMC

Credentials on Combat Stress Issues

Co-Author



Of *The Warrior's Guide to Insanity*: Thousands of copies are now in the hands of Active and Inactive Military personnel, families of Veterans, Clinicians, Media and Civilians supporting our Troops.

Endorsements

The Warrior's Guide to Insanity has been endorsed and purchased by the Department of Veterans Affairs; is in the process of being purchased by the Veterans Administration; has been purchased by the United States Army at Fort Polk; has been endorsed by the Health Science Center, College of Medicine, Round Rock Texas; is endorsed and recommended by Col. Dave Grossman, a National Speaker and Director of the Kilology program for Veterans and Law Enforcement; has been purchased by many concerned citizens; and has been purchased and is in use by many private psychologists and psychiatrists working with Veterans and their families.

National Speaker

- Invited to speak at the American Medical Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS) Conference, San Antonio, Texas, by the Defense Centers of Excellence.
- Invited speaker at the Warriors Resilience Conference, Washington. Invited by the Defense Centers of Excellence, DOD and VA.
- Invited to the Suicide Prevention Conference, San Antonio, Texas. Invited by the Defense Centers of Excellence. A Joint DOD and VA Conference.
- Invited to the United States Army Base, Combat Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana, (Major General Yarborough) March 2nd, 2009. Spoke to approximately 3,700 Combat returning from their fourth, 15 month tours in Iraq.
- Invited to the United States Army Base, Fort Carson, Colorado, (Major General Graham) to speak to Combat Troops May 6-7 of 2009.

- Invited to the United States Army Base, Combat Training Center, Fort Polk, Louisiana (Major General Yarborough) to speak to Troops returning from Afghanistan in mid May, 2009.
- Invited to Washington DC by the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Amos, to discuss his presentation and approach to addressing Combat Trauma.
- Scheduled to be a guest speaker at the Pentagon, Memorial Day weekend at the Run for The Wall, Rolling Thunder Rally. 500,000 Bikers were in attendance last year and many more observers, along with national media and Officials from Washington DC.
- Sgt. Brandi has spoken on New Mexico Media: KUNM Radio, Quoted on NPR, KKOB, KNME (PBS), Channel 4, (NBC), Gov-16, and others.

Personal History

I was born in San Francisco, California, growing up an Italian in the Puerto Rican and African-American slums of the city. Most of what I remember was running from gangs that outnumbered me and my Native American friend. My Father and Mother served in WWII. He was in the Army, and a POW; she was an aviation mechanic for the Navy.

Because I could run, it only made sense to become a jock. I played football in high school, between race wars. I joined the Marine Corps one week after I was 16 and went active at 17.

After the shit bath in Vietnam, and an honorable discharge in 1969, I logged in over 65 jobs, five major career changes and three wives in 39 years. It took me 20 of those years and five colleges on the GI Bill to get a degree. I finally graduated from Ohio State University in 1997. I have a Bachelor's (plus 150 units toward my Masters) in science and education. I taught for six years (fourth grade and junior high, History and English). I liked the kids and teaching, but had to get out after bring'in my rifle to school for parent conferences. Some of them were just too difficult to deal with.

Now besides giving a 100 percent effort to help our Young Warriors, with my ex-wife and trusted friend, I'm running a State Licensed Animal Sanctuary for abandoned and abused farm animals. It's called [*The Olde Windmill Trail Farm Animal Sanctuary*](#) in the beautiful high desert of New Mexico, near a little village called Cerrillos.

Today, life is damn good.

Tom Hayes, MBA, *US Marine for Life*

Co-Author



An accomplished business effectiveness professional with a diverse background in hands-on strategic marketing, business development counseling, project and financial planning, and more. With over 35 years experience as an internal and external consultant, he has gained a well-earned reputation as a bold strategic thinker, effective trouble-shooter, creative strategic marketing specialist, mentor and coach.

His “generalist” background is broad as it is deep, and besides general business consulting, includes extensive under-performing real estate project turn-around, strategic planning and marketing. He’s managed real estate joint venture capital investment operations and consulted real estate development companies with respect to gaining competitive advantage and optimizing returns on a wide range of residential and commercial projects exceeding \$3 billion.

During the last lending crises Tom served as a consultant nationally to lenders and federal banking regulators. Tom advised the FDIC/RTC with respect to its oversight of the assisted sale of American Savings and Loan in Stockton, California, the second largest S&L in the nation. This five-year assignment involved monitoring of asset management and disposition activities of the Robert Bass Group and advising the FDIC regarding the effectiveness of their management and disposition of over \$3.5 billion in commercial real estate foreclosures and non-performing assets around the country.

Today, he serves as a consultant, coach, mentor and advisory board member involved in a broad range of professional development and start-up business effectiveness related situations as well as student veterans dealing with transition to college issues. His prime focus is on developing strategies, turn-around initiatives, interactive online marketing and highly targeted one-on-one strategic data-base marketing programs geared to cost effectively enhancing business development, optimizing profits, and gaining competitive advantage while building customer loyalty, repeat sales and referrals.

His current advisory board activities include:

- Fort Lewis College, Professional Associates; Executive Committee member, Founder and Chairman of the Veterans Relations Committee
- Fort Lewis College Student Veterans Club, Durango, Colorado – Co-Founder and Co-Advisor
- Colorado Small Business Development Center, Durango, Colorado - Business Advisory Network
- San Juan College Enterprise Center, Farmington, New Mexico – Business Incubator Lease Advisory Committee, Entrepreneur Mentoring Program Developer
- Mentor and Strategic Business Advisor to the Sgt. Brandi Project, a national effort to help

returning combat troops deal with transition to civilian life and college issues including proactive combat trauma and suicide prevention initiatives.

Tom is a *US Marine*, holds BA in Finance and MBA Degrees from California State University Fullerton where he was awarded Outstanding Student honors.

www.Business-DevelopmentCoach.com

tom@Business-DevelopmentCoach.com

Appendix A – Combat Stress: Resilience and Restoration

Dr. Donald Rossi, Ph.D., ABPP

*Resilience and Restoration Center
Department of the Army
Headquarters, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center
Fort Hood, Texas*

Explain: (1) PTSD (a) misnamed (b) myth c) disease vs. wound model (d) events driven vs. GAS model.

Define: (1) Trauma (2) Stress (3) Combat Stress vs. PTSD.

- I. There is one program which is in two dimensions:
 - A. Prevention or inoculation - a training function for War-Fighting Mind Set.
 - B. Recovery-a clinical intervention for the casualties who are wounded by Combat Stress.

- II. Prevention-inoculation is ongoing throughout the service time of a soldier. Beginning during recruit training, it continues in advancing and more complex forms throughout a career. These stages are designed for level of responsibility within the Army:
 - A. Pre-NCO;
 - B. Junior NCO;
 - C. Senior NCO;
 - D. CO Grade Officer;
 - E. Field Grade Officer;
 - F. Flag Officer.

- III. Clinical intervention (Recovery) is to be conducted in keeping with an injury or wound rather than

an illness or pathology. This calls for a new set of techniques which are consistent with health rather than illness. These methods will be identified and discussed when appropriate.

- IV. The Phenomena considered from a Cognitive-Perceptual perspective rather than a disease or illness model.
- A. Shift from event as cause to personal meaning of event as cause.
 - B. Explanation for differences between soldiers.
 - C. Significance of “homeostasis” for understanding the dual environment model.
 - D. Significance of each environment to the other.
 - E. Significance of arousal to stimuli.
- V. Significance of the difference between “stress management techniques” and expanding the primal base of understanding and functioning properly with a broader range of the natural human capability.
- A. Understanding and operationalizing of the conflict between the primordial and civilized.**
 - B. Mental health issues originate from the process of harnessing the instinctual with the civilized.**
 - C. War fighting requires the ability to “regress in the service of the ego” and utilize “instinctual” levels of behavior and when completed appreciate the humanness of the totality of one’s self.**
 - D. Understand that the “Monster” is not an enemy but rather an important part of our self. The “Monster” is the primordial part of our self that has been banished through the process of civilization.**
 - E. War fighting requires the awakening of the “Monster” and afterward it is to be integrated into the whole of the person.**
 - F. At present the “Monster” is generally regarded as the enemy and is to be returned to its cage.**
 - G. This is a technical error.**

- VI. **There must be realization by the soldier that he/she has not only changed but will never return to the past and that, in fact, to attempt to return will only make the situation worse.** The new or changed person now has the expansion of the totality of self. Contemporary methods tend to compartmentalize, isolate and remove what, in fact, is critical for the healthy integration of the whole person.
- A. **What many soldiers and clinicians attempt is to avoid is the painful. This is a technical error.**
 - B. **The soldier needs help to confront that which is painful and realize that the pain is the result from a dissonance in thoughts and beliefs which make him appear to himself as a “freak.” Recovery from Combat Stress is achieved through the resolution of the dissonance.**
 - C. **This is not the same as treating anxiety or any neurotic condition.**
 - D. **A re-programming and expanding of beliefs and values is required (treatment of the conscience developmentally rather than clinically).**
 - E. The soldier also learns to integrate himself rather than fragment himself.
 - F. Resulting from the integration, the soldier comes to the realization that he is different from the rest of society, and in a “superior” way. He comes to peace with the wholeness of his person.
 - G. **The soldier is then able to see that the proof of his recovery is in how he uses his achievements to help others who are at other points along their journey.**
- VII. Soldier needs to know his heritage and ethos, both personal and Army.
- A. What is his meaning as the person he is.
 - B. How is he related to the ethos of the Army
 - C. How is the ethos of the Army the key to the meaning of the military in a constitutional democracy.
 - D. The soldier discovers his real meaning which is far beyond war-fighting.
 - E. This includes the primordial and evolutionary process of mankind.

- F. Without a command of one's past, the future is limited.
- VIII. The inoculation or resilience program achieves the preparation of the soldier, while the restoration program is the rehabilitation from the wounds of Combat Stress.
- IX. **Sgt. Brandi's book is the only one of its kind and speaks to the unconscious. When used correctly, it is both a manual for resilience, and in the rehabilitation context, a manual for restoration of the whole person.**
- A. Sgt Brandi emphasizes restoration and that the Beast is oneself.
 - B. This is an essential concept for restoration.
 - C. Additionally he focuses on the journey to restoration and clearly points out that it is the soldier's responsibility to do the work to make change occur.
 - D. Sgt Brandi's book needs to be translated into a manual for clinicians.
 - E. **Sgt Brandi's book needs to in-formulated into an SOP for NCO's and Officers.**
- X. **Truth is the key to resilience and restoration.** Both programs emphasize the truth about the human condition and the confrontation with War Fighting. **That truth requires that the soldier visit places within and about himself that are not normally a part of one's development or training.**

Appendix B – Glossary

Advisor – An expert in a field of knowledge, hired to ensure that an area of knowledge is portrayed, understood or adhered to.

Advisory Board – A body of experts that advises a board of directors or management but does not have the legal responsibility or authority to make ultimate decisions on corporate or organizational governance matters.

Coach – Someone who supports someone in achieving goals and objectives, what they want, etc. A “high-touch” service that helps clients achieve more than they can do on their own. A coach helps clients stay focused so they can produce results faster than they could on their own. **A coach stays with you to help you implement a solution.**

Combat Warrior – Someone who has actually served in battle/combat operations.

Consultant – One who gives personal or professional advice or performs a unique function for a fee, in many cases performing functions on a contract basis requiring specialized expertise only needed for a specified period of time.

Counselor - A person concerned with giving professional advice on various things such as academic matters, business or vocational issues and personal relationships. Generally, a professional and an expert in his field. Often used interchangeably with attorney for an attorney-at-law or lawyer.

A counselor’s job is to counsel on his area of expertise. A counselor helps his clients to recognize their problem, analyze it fully and also assist them in facing the problems and handling them effectively. **He charges a fee for his services, as he is a professional and counseling is his occupation.**

Customer – The prime or secondary target of our products or services.

Delegation – Per Answers.com... Delegation is the practice of turning over work-related tasks and/or authority to employees or subordinates. Small business owners often have difficulty with delegation for a variety of reasons, from concerns about the abilities of subordinates to long-standing "hands-on" management habits (a common characteristic of successful entrepreneurs). Indeed, "businesses founded on the creative talents of the owner often struggle with [delegation] because the success of the enterprise depends on the owner's style," wrote Linda Formichelli in *Nation's Business*. **But small-business consultants warn that owners who do not learn to delegate responsibilities and tasks often end up stunting their company's growth.**

Efficiency – See Effectiveness.

Effectiveness – In the comparative business context:

“Efficiency” is doing things **right**.

“Effectiveness” is doing the **right things**.”

Stephen Covey

“Efficiency” is **climbing the ladder** as fast as you can.

“Effectiveness” is making sure it's leaning against the **right wall**.”

Peter Drucker

Friendly-Fire-Panel – A group of experienced experts in various fields that act as a safe-harbor or sounding-board for the Warrior to safely discuss what is on his mind, float new ideas, critique plans or strategy, or brain-storm sensitive issues in a confidential, risk-free environment.

Goal – General philosophy or ideal ambition with respect to the goal area.

Know-How-Network – Or, How-to-Network, which is a network of “for-fee” or pro-bono professional service providers with entrepreneurial start up experience available to provide advice, council or specialized services to business incubator center staff and or clients.

Learning Styles – It’s recognized today that the effectiveness of each person’s ability to learn is impacted by their particular [learning style](#) or technique. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some find they have a dominant style while others find they are more effective using different styles in different situations. Understanding an individual’s most effective style is important to enhancing the ability to learn and method of disseminating knowledge. A traditional classroom may be effective for some, and one-on-one mentoring may be more effective for others, or a combination of both.

The learning styles (see Online Resources) are:

- [Visual \(spatial\)](#). You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
- [Aural \(auditory-musical\)](#). You prefer using sound and music.
- [Verbal \(linguistic\)](#). You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
- [Physical \(kinesthetic\)](#). You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
- [Logical \(mathematical\)](#). You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
- [Social \(interpersonal\)](#). You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
- [Solitary \(intrapersonal\)](#). You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

Leverage – The increase in management effectiveness achieved as a result of the delegation of responsibility to or the utilization of the talents of others with specialized expertise. The expansion of the ability to get things done. The use of credit to expand to increase financial capacity.

Mission – The overall organizational purpose. Answers in one sentence or less ... Why does this organization exist?

Mentor – A wise and trusted, friend, counselor or teacher; usually someone with more “real world” experience, often a “generalist.” A mentor is an individual, usually older, always more experienced, who helps and guides another individual’s development. **This guidance is typically not done for personal gain.**

MOPH – [Military Order of the Purple Heart](#).

Modeling – Imitating or learning by observing the behavior of others or something else that is working.

Muse – A source of inspiration, guiding genius.

NCO – [Non Commissioned Officer](#).

Objective – Measurable results to be achieved by a date specified.

Proactive – Used in respect to management decision-making, and Stephan Covey’s [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#), proactively is about taking the initiative to stop-think-choose.

Reactive – Used in respect to management decision making, the antithesis of being proactive. Making quick, emotion-driven decisions without effectively thinking them through.

Real-World – Anywhere outside an educational institution, participating in real commerce, actually doing something as opposed to teaching or talking about it.

Sacred Warrior Bond – The tribal family bond created out of the war experience of facing death together and sacrificing for each other. It produces unconditional love as a result of sharing life-threatening experiences that even a marital commitment cannot compete with.

Shadow-Board - A group of seasoned, unaffiliated people appointed to provide management, sage counsel and advice prior to establishing a formal board of directors vested with the legal responsibility for performance of the organization.

Social Media – Primarily online and mobile-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings. The term most often refers to activities that integrate technology, telecommunications and social interaction in the exchange of words, pictures, videos and audio as people share their stories and experiences.

Tribal Mentality - An innate, underlying acceptance that you belong to a specialized clan, group, family or class, bonded by common experiences, history and traditions, guided by a leader.

Value-Added – The additional market or perceived value of a product or service over the

cost of production or effort used to produce it.

Veteran – Someone who has honorably served his or her country in the military service.

White Paper - White Papers are almost always [marketing communications](#) documents designed to promote a specific company's solutions or products. As a marketing tool, these papers will highlight information favorable to the company authorizing or sponsoring the paper. Such white papers are often used to generate sales leads, establish [thought leadership](#), make a business case, or to educate customers.

There are three main types of commercial white papers:

- Business-benefits: Makes a business case for a certain technology or methodology
- Technical: Describes how a certain technology works
- Hybrid: Combines high-level business benefits with technical details in a single document