

## GI SPECIAL 7D8:

# VIETNAM 1975 – THAILAND 2009



A Thai military helicopter leaves a roof top evacuating unidentified Asian political leaders escaping angry demonstrators April 11, 2009, in Pattaya, Thailand, following the storming of the 14th ASEAN Convention Center by anti-government protesters. (AP Photo/David Longstreath)

**Thai Soldiers Don't Stop  
Anti-Government  
Demonstrators:  
“We Showed The World Today  
That The People Can Win”**

**Uprising Against Generals And  
The “Bangkok Elite” Forces  
Government To Cancel  
International Conference:  
“We Will Stop The Corrupt Puppet  
Government”  
“The Thai People Have Lost Patience  
With The Aristocrats”**



Anti-government demonstrators push past soldiers to enter the 14th ASEAN Summit convention center April 11, 2009, in Pattaya, Thailand. A Thai government official said the summit of Asian leaders has been canceled for security reasons. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

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**The current crop of protesters say Mr. Abhisit is a puppet of Thailand's armed forces and bureaucratic elites, who have controlled the country for decades and many of whom are implacably opposed to Mr. Thaksin and his populist policies.**

APRIL 11, 2009 By Charles McDermid, L.A. Times & JAMES HOOKWAY, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Reporting from Pattaya, Thailand –

The shattering of glass as the doors of a luxury hotel heaved, then gave way. The whup-whup of helicopter blades as regional leaders were evacuated from a rooftop. The humiliation in the voice of a Thai leader apologizing to his guests.

Those were the sounds today as thousands of anti-government protesters forced officials to scrap a key Southeast Asian summit in the resort city of Pattaya and raised new fears about Thailand's political stability.

Capping a week of anti-government protests, red-shirted demonstrators swarmed past police barricades and riot police to demand that Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva step down and dissolve the government.

Many were waving flags, blowing whistles and horns and chanting “Thaksin,” the name of their exiled leader and benefactor, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

They raged through several buildings in the sprawling Pattaya Exhibition and Conference Center before gathering outside the meeting hall where leaders of the Assn. of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, were having lunch.

**Leaders from China, Japan and South Korea were left huddled in a hotel while the leaders of other countries were evacuated by helicopter from the summit site.**

**Other protests were reported in the northern city of Chiang Mai, where protesters have blocked a road, and in Udon Thani, where demonstrators have surrounded City Hall.**

In Pattaya, Abhisit apologized to his regional counterparts in an impromptu news conference in the abandoned venue hours after the protesters' assault.

He had insisted for weeks that he would not allow protesters to disrupt the summit. Instead, they were able to humiliate the Thai leader in front of regional powers, including China, Japan and South Korea.

**The protesters, known collectively as the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship, or UDD, claim that Abhisit and his 4-month-old coalition government came to power undemocratically in what they call a “silent coup” abetted by the military and Bangkok elite.**

The demonstrators have given Abhisit until the end of the three-day Thai New Year beginning Monday to resign. The group's leader, Arisman Pongreungrong, has said that

if the government remains silent on its demands to step down, it will apply more pressure through social protests.

**Throughout the last week, 100,000 supporters staged protests in Bangkok, the capital. On Tuesday, the vehicle carrying Abhisit was attacked by protesters while stopped at a red light in Pattaya.**

“We showed the world today that the people can win. It's a victory, but it's just the first step,” said Chatchai Suksom, one of many Bangkok taxi drivers who drove the roughly 90 miles to Pattaya to support the anti-government protesters.

“We will stop the corrupt puppet government. We have shown the government's weakness to the world.”

**Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political science professor at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University, suggested that Mr. Abhisit's position as prime minister was now “untenable” after up to a thousand red-garbed demonstrators streamed into the lavish Pattaya convention center.**

“The red-shirts won't stop now until something happens and, after declaring a state of emergency, an outright suppression of the movement could be in store,” Mr. Thitinan said.

“That could inflame the protesters further and they could call for an uprising in northern Thailand, where they are popular. That would be unprecedented and terrifying.”

**Thailand has been locked in political crisis since a military coup ousted populist Thaksin Shinawatra from the prime minister's post in 2006.**

**The current crop of protesters say Mr. Abhisit is a puppet of Thailand's armed forces and bureaucratic elites, who have controlled the country for decades and many of whom are implacably opposed to Mr. Thaksin and his populist policies.**

**Recently, [Mr. Thaksin] raised the political temperature here by accusing the chief adviser to King Bhumibol Adulyadej of helping to plot the coup that unseated him – a bold move in a country where any criticism of anybody associated with the revered monarchy is extremely provocative.**

Jakrapob Penkair, a red-shirt leader, condemned the government and armed forces for allegedly allowing the weekend's clashes with the blue-shirted militia to take place.

“The Thai people have lost patience with the aristocrats,” he said, and added that the protests would continue.

**The impromptu nature of Saturday's invasion generated fears that even their leaders will find it difficult to contain the demonstrations.**

## **Mission Accomplished**



Anti-government forces capture the conference hall at the 14th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits in Pattaya April 11, 2009. (AP Photo/David Longstreath)

## Tears Of Victory



Anti-government demonstrators cry after storming past Thai soldiers to take 14th ASEAN Summit convention hall April 11, 2009, in Pattaya, Thailand. (AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)

**MORE:**

## **100,000 Anti-Government Demonstrators Flooded Bangkok; “Hundreds Of Demonstrators Broke Through Police Barricades”**



Anti-government protesters fill up the street during a protest outside the government house in Bangkok, Thailand April 11, 2009. (AP Photo/Apichart Weerawong)

April 9, 2009 By Charles McDermid and Jakkapun Kaewsangthong, L.A. Times

Reporting from Bangkok, Thailand

A sea of red-clad anti-government protesters flooded into central Bangkok on Wednesday to demand the resignations of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and a key advisor to King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

City officials estimated that 100,000 supporters of exiled former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra filled the capital's government district.

The protesters from the United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship are demanding the resignation of Vejjajiva and his 4-month-old administration because they say he gained power undemocratically.

In the afternoon, hundreds of demonstrators broke through police barricades and surrounded the home of Privy Council President Gen. Prem Tinsulanonda, who they say was behind the 2006 military coup that ousted Thaksin.

Prem, a close advisor to the highly respected king, has denied any involvement in the coup.

On Tuesday, the so-called red shirts attacked Abhisit's motorcade in the resort town of Pattaya, pelting his vehicle with bottles, smashing the rear window and punching his driver and guards.

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?**

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Roadside Bomb Kills Local Soldier**

04/11/09 KSDK

A Missouri native died fighting in Iraq. 25-year-old Sergeant Edward Forrest Jr. died Friday when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

Sgt. Forrest lived in Colorado with his wife, three year old son and two month old son. Sgt. Forrest was a graduate of Northwest High School in High Ridge. He grew up in Fenton.

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## **This Is What The U.S. Multi-National Corps Iraq Public**

# **Affairs Office, Camp Victory, Never Reports: Not Once Do They Issue News Bulletins When A Soldier Like This Is Wounded In The Fighting: “California Soldier Loses His Leg” [MRAP Hit March 27, 2009]**

[And if you think the headline is an exaggeration, go look for yourself:  
[http://www.cjtf7.army.mil/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=category&sectionid=1&id=1&Itemid=224](http://www.cjtf7.army.mil/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=1&id=1&Itemid=224) If you can wade through the ocean of happy-talk propaganda, that is. See what you can find about Pvt. Abraham Odisho. They even have a search window for your convenience. Type in his name and see the stupid shit that pops up. T]

April 10, 2009 By Michael Doyle, McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — On March 27, Pvt. Abraham Odisho was part of a team pulling security for Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen, the commander of the Army's 25th Infantry Division (Light), who was visiting the Iraqi farming town of Ad Dawr.

The 20-year-old from Modesto, Calif., was driving an armored fighting vehicle called an MRAP, for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. It's sturdy, but it's not invulnerable. At 12:30 p.m., Odisho was crawling along at about 5 mph on a divided four-lane road.

His vehicle was the third in a convoy. They'd just passed an intersection when the gunner swore and dropped down out of the turret. Odisho heard an explosion.

An insurgent, or whoever it was, had tossed a grenade at the passenger's side. A superheated copper slug tore through the armor, grazed Odisho's right leg and then obliterated his left shin.

Odisho's legs no longer obeyed orders. On a scale of 1 to 10, the pain was a 10. In the moment, he knew but one thing.

“I have to get out of the kill zone or we're going to die,” Odisho thought to himself.

Odisho manipulated his right foot with his hands so it was back on the gas pedal. Then he used one hand to push his leg down and get the vehicle rolling again. He finally caught up with the rest of the convoy, where he could be pulled out, hauled back to base and flown to the first of a series of hospitals.



Odisho lost part of his left leg in Iraq, but he considers himself lucky in every way.

On Friday, he endured his eighth surgery since he was wounded on March 27. Now bedding down on Ward 57 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the Army private has a long march ahead of him.

He'll need grueling physical therapy. He'll get a prosthetic. He'll face the prospect of phantom pain and, one presumes, nightmares. Yet for all that, he sounds remarkably composed; content, even, particularly with his decision to become a soldier.

"I've done things that 90 percent of Americans haven't done, let alone raising my right hand and taking the oath," Odisho said in a telephone interview Friday.

He may not have absorbed the totality of his circumstance. A potent nerve block dulls the lightning bolts from his traumatized legs. Celebrities keep swinging by Ward 57 for a morale boost. On Friday, Miss Maryland wanted to meet him. His mother, Catherine, and his 13-year-old sister, Edail, are in town to offer hands-on solace.

"I've been in the hospital, standing by him," Edail said Friday, "and every single time he's in pain, I will hold him."

Still, Odisho sounds like a glass-half-full kind of guy. He can tick off his advantages. Yes, he's now one of 700-plus amputee veterans to have come out of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars — but the amputation was relatively modest, about eight inches below his left knee.

While he's no longer with his comrades in Hawaii-based Bastard Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, but they're lauding him for his adroit behavior under fire.

"They're saying I saved everyone," Odisho said.

Odisho is an Assyrian Christian who was born in Iraq and moved with his family to California's Central Valley in 1991, when he was 3. In time, his parents became naturalized U.S. citizens.

His father died of a heart attack five years ago. His mother now works as a caterer. Odisho always knew he'd join the Army. Slender and tall, standing a little over 6 feet, he wanted hardcore: 11 Bravo, Infantry all the way. He imagined kicking down doors, sweeping through towns — a modern incarnation, he thought, of the warrior Assyrians in the Bible.

"I felt like it was in my blood," Odisho said. "I really wanted to fight for this country."

Now, he has plans. He wants to be assigned to San Diego for his serious rehabilitation. He intends to get some fierce-looking tattoos on his prosthetic leg. He'd like to finish his four-year Army tour — after all, why would he leave before his job was done?

"I am Assyrian by blood," Odisho said, "and American by choice."

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## **BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: COME ON HOME, NOW**



A U.S. soldier from 82nd Field Artillery Regiment in eastern Mosul, 360 kilometers, April 2, 2009. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Chesco Marine Dies In Afghanistan**

Mar. 25, 2009 By Edward Colimore, Inquirer Staff Writer

A 21-year-old Chester County man who realized his longtime dream of joining the Marines after high school was killed Sunday “while supporting combat operations” in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan, the Marine Corps said last night.

Cpl. Anthony L. Williams of Oxford deployed to Afghanistan last month after serving in Iraq from August 2007 to February 2008.

Williams graduated from Oxford High School in 2006 and immediately enlisted in the Marines. Yesterday, students and friends were “shook up” by the news of his death, school officials said.

He died along with Cpl. Michael W. Ouellette, 28, of Manchester, N.H. They were assigned to the Third Battalion, Eighth Marine Regiment, Second Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, in Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Williams was trained as a combat engineer and had looked forward to military service.

"I had conversations about his intention to join the Marines in his senior year," said David C. Madden, principal of Oxford High School and a former Marine. "He had basic questions - what was boot camp like?"

"What stuck for me was that it [the Marines] seemed to be a passion for him," said Madden, 39, of Oxford. "He knew this is what he wanted to do. Nothing he ever said stays in my mind; it was what he did. I see kids say they will join the Marines and don't do it. He said he was going to join, and he did it. He followed through with his plan." Madden said he has had conversations with students about the Marines. "I tell kids it was very good for me," he said. "It helped pay for college and my first house. When you join the Marines now, you know you're going overseas, so it's pretty noble for kids to do that nowadays."

Madden said Williams was a "hardworking small-town guy who carried himself in a dignified, mature manner. . . . I find it difficult to accept the fact that he's gone. It's a tough thing."

Williams also made an impression on Raymond A. Fischer, superintendent of the Oxford Area School District, who was Williams' principal in the fifth and sixth grades at Elk Ridge School. He also remembers Williams as he grew up in middle school and high school - and sometimes chatted with him in the cafeteria and in hallways.

"He was a fine young man and model student," said Fischer. "I have nothing but fond memories of him. I remember he was outgoing and humorous.

"I tried to get to know all my children. We were very saddened when we heard the news. I absolutely knew him . . . knew him for years. Our condolences go to the family. That's a big loss when one loses a child."

Williams' military awards included the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, the Iraq Campaign Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal, the Marine Corps said.

U.S. deaths in Afghanistan have increased dramatically in recent months: from eight in the first two months of last year to 29 during the same period this year after ramped-up winter operations against the insurgency.

President Obama has announced the deployment of 17,500 additional troops to bolster the record 38,000 already in the country as the United States draws down its forces in Iraq.

Part of the increase in deaths is due to the increased number of troops. In early 2008, about 27,000 were in the country.

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# Fuel Supplies For Occupation Destroyed By Resistance In Peshawar



Burning oil supply tankers for occupation military forces in Afghanistan were attacked on the outskirts of Peshawar April 10, 2009. Militants blew up five oil-tankers, supplying fuel to Western forces. REUTERS/Adil Khan

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION  
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**

**NEED SOME TRUTH?  
CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! ([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))

## **Here's Who You're Dying For: This Is The Twisted Freak Ally Of The U.S.-Backed Occupation Government Who Says Rape And Child Sex Is The Will Of God**



Ayatollah Mohammad Asef Mohseni, a top Shi'ite cleric and political ally of Afghan President Karzai, during a news conference in Kabul April 11, 2009. Mohseni said on Saturday the Afghan government had no right to change a law President Karzai signed that allows men to rape their wives every four days, and allows men to marry girl children. REUTERS/Omar Sobhani

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***Good News For The Resistance!!***

# Occupation Commands' Stupid Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



A group of Afghan citizens are forced at gunpoint to get out of their car and line up as Canadian soldiers search their bodies, their car and personal belongings and a photo is taken of their public humiliation by a reporter traveling with occupation troops in the Arghandab district in Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan, March 30, 2009. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

**[Fair is fair. Let's bring 50,000 Afghan troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]**

**[Those Afghans are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people.]**

**[How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by Barack Obama. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]**

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION  
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**

**TROOP NEWS**

**NOT ANOTHER DAY  
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR  
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



The body of Marine Lance Corporal Blaise A. Oleski at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, April 9, 2009. Oleski from Holland Patent, New York, died while serving in Afghanistan. REUTERS/Tim Shaffer

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**After Years Of Drug  
Induced Horrors Inflicted  
By V.A. For PTSD,**

# **Veteran Finds The Right Answer On His Own: “The Vande Burgts Recently Started A Support Group For Veterans Suffering From PTSD” “They Share Support Strategies, War Stories And Wry Humor” “There Are No Pills To Make PTSD Go Away” “His Wife Repeatedly Called To Report His Increasingly Violent Behavior While He Took The Medication”**

April 11, 2009 By Julie Robinson, Staff writer, West Virginia Gazette

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Tom Vande Burgt's daughter was turning 6, and he was in Iraq. He would have to say "Happy Birthday" to Destiny by phone. It's a call that probably saved his life.

His Army National Guard company was entrenched outside Baghdad. He was wrapping up the phone call and on his way to a meeting when his daughter asked one more question, keeping him on the phone for a bit longer.

Minutes later, his intended destination was wiped out by a mortar, killing one of Vande Burgt's friends. His unit was under a round-the-clock mortar threat for 10 weeks..

Vande Burgt's first assignment was perimeter security. Later, in Baghdad, his unit shared an open-bay warehouse with a medical unit. Stretchers holding wounded and dying soldiers were lined up in their living space.

"Our TV room was a triage unit and morgue," he said.



Then, suddenly, he was home in his own TV room. For those serving in the National Guard, the quick return to peaceful civilian life can be a surreal transition.

“It was nine days from the time I was on the ground in Iraq to when I returned to my cube at the job I had before I left,” Vande Burgt said. “I’d been gone a year and a half, and it looked just the same as when I left.”

Vande Burgt was in Iraq for about a year, from 2004 into 2005. Earlier in life, he served with the Marines for 15 years, then with the Guard for eight years.

About six months after his return from Iraq, he and his wife, Diane, sought marital counseling. They fought frequently. Vande Burgt routinely carried a knife. He ran red lights, a common behavior for veterans trained to avoid sabotage while driving. The couple used to socialize often, but he preferred to stay home.

A private-sector marriage counselor suggested that Tom might be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

She recommended he make an appointment with the Veterans Affairs center in Kanawha City. During his first appointment, the counselor diagnosed him with PTSD.

**A VA psychiatrist prescribed Klonopin (an anti seizure/panic medication), Seroquel (an anti-psychotic medication) and Celexa (an anti-depressant).**

**At least four local veterans have died in their sleep while taking Klonopin and Seroquel and other prescriptions for the treatment of PTSD.**

**The pharmaceutical cocktail made him less emotional, but Tom already felt numb.**

“I haven’t cared for four years,” he said. “I didn’t cry when my dog died. You just don’t feel anything.”

As time progressed, his short-tempered responses made co-workers wary.

The eight people who reported to him were unnerved by his unpredictable transitions from lethargy to anger and were reassigned.

“I still did my job, but I couldn’t get too worked up if an order didn’t get to the job site on time,” said Vande Burgt, a purchasing manager.

“After what I’ve seen and done, do you think I really cared that much about a pallet of bricks?”

Although Diane was relieved that her husband was receiving treatment, she suspected the drugs were causing him to be overly sedated.

He began sleepwalking and developed other sleeping problems. During the day, he was irritable and tired.

Doctors discontinued the Klonopin.

"You might wonder why I'd keep taking these drugs that made me feel like that," he said. "In the military, you're trained to keep following instructions until told to do otherwise."

Protocol for PTSD treatment through the VA involves patient evaluation, education, coping skill training, counseling and possibly medication, said Robert Huwieler, clinical psychologist at the Huntington VA clinic.

"There are a lot of people who have been conditioned to believe that they can take a pill and they'll be fine," he said. "There are no pills to make PTSD go away."

**From 2006 to 2008, Vande Burgt was shuffled through different counselors and psychiatrists at the Charleston VA clinic.**

**He was seen six times by psychiatrists for medication reviews, and never by the same doctor more than twice, according to his records.**

The Charleston clinic is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., so he had to take time off from his job in St. Albans to attend appointments.

Vande Burgt's other appointments were with social workers and primary-care doctors.

**His wife repeatedly called to report his increasingly violent behavior while he took the medication.**

**The sedation, sleeping problems and unexplained behaviors were also getting worse.**

She also requested therapy for their family, but was told none was available.

Both the Vande Burgts were previously married and have nine children between them, four who live at home. They have two sons who are serving in the military.

**As Diane tracked appointments, phone conversations and prescriptions, she noticed discrepancies between prescription orders and medicine that arrived through the mail from the VA.**

Last October, Diane's sister visited and the two discussed Tom's behaviors and medications.

**Her sister was surprised he was taking Seroquel, which is used to treat bipolar disorder.**

**"I told her the VA docs prescribe lots of medicines for off-label use," Diane said. Seroquel was prescribed for Tom as a sleep aid.**

**Diane threw the Seroquel away.**

**An FDA panel recently recommended Seroquel's approval as a supplementary treatment for depression, despite medical experts' testimony about a possible relationship between the drug and sudden heart problems and diabetes.**

On Jan. 23, the Vande Burgts filed a complaint with the VA Office of the Inspector General regarding Tom's treatment. The case is under investigation. "It amounts to the VA investigating itself," Tom said.

On March 4, Tom and Diane met with William Lanning, administrative assistant to the chief of staff at the Huntington VA facility, to request authorization for Tom to be seen by an outside provider for counseling and dermatological care.

Permission was granted for one year of outside care, paid for by the VA.

**"They told us we were a special case," Diane said. "Why are we a special case? Why can't everyone get the care they need?"**

The Vande Burgts, and other veterans and families such as Stan and Shirley White of Cross Lanes, whose son Andrew died while undergoing treatment for PTSD, say the VA needs to increase counseling services available to veterans.

The Whites led a delegation of families who have lost soldiers while being treated for PTSD to Washington, D.C., in March to make their case to legislators.

In February, Vande Burgt started meeting with Ted Grindstaff, a licensed therapist who volunteers through the Give An Hour program. Volunteers in this program provide free mental health care to soldiers and their families who served in current military conflicts.

Tom attends weekly talk-therapy session with Grindstaff.

**The Vande Burgts recently started a support group for veterans suffering from PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.**

**Their support group, "Lest We Forget," meets at 6 p.m. Thursdays at 1031 Quarrier Street in the offices of the Kanawha County Wellness and Recovery Center.**

**Veterans of the Korean and Vietnam wars, as well as more recent conflicts and wars come to the meetings, where they share support strategies, war stories and wry humor.**

**Vande Burgt encourages the veterans to bring family members to the meetings.**

"We're trying to get the guys and their families together to heal," he said. "There's still a stigma in the military to seek help for PTSD."

"We don't want this to happen to any other families," Diane added. "It's inexcusable that they don't receive the help they need."

**MORE:**

**Tom Vande Burgt Got It  
Right:  
“Only One Treatment Method —  
Exposure Therapy — Has Been  
Proven To Help PTSD In Studies  
By Objective Researchers”  
Previous Research Finding  
Confirmed By Atlanta V.A. Test  
Program;  
“81% Showing ‘Clinically Significant  
Improvement,’ Which Was Still At 81  
% Six Months Later”**

[From GI Special 6G17, July 2008]

July 28, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times

Three new studies looking at combat stress have found group exposure therapy seems to work, that troops with traumatic brain injuries are more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder, and that stress debriefings held after traumatic events don't appear to prevent PTSD.

The research comes as the Department of Veterans Affairs works to find the best treatment methods for combat veterans.

**It follows a report by Rand Corp. that showed only one treatment method — exposure therapy — has been proven to help PTSD in studies by objective researchers.**

The first study looked at a program that had been in place for four years at the Atlanta VA Medical Center. The center's Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team began researching group-based exposure treatment.

**Past studies have shown group therapy to be ineffective on veterans with PTSD, but authors of this study, published in the April issue of the Journal of Traumatic Stress, said the amount of exposure therapy — 60 hours — in this group may be the key to why it works.**

First, nine to 11 people get to know each other and talk about their experiences before they joined the military. Then, they spend several weeks talking about their wartime experiences.

**A total of 93 Vietnam veterans, four Gulf War veterans, one Korean War veteran and two Iraq war veterans took part in the study, with 81 percent showing “clinically significant improvement,” which was still at 81 percent six months later.**

And the study found something else: VA clinicians indicated to researchers that they do not use exposure therapy out of concern for possible increases in suicide ideation, hospitalizations and dropout rates, but “we found the opposite to be true,” the study’s authors said.

**Many patients said hearing others’ traumatic experiences evoked painful recall of what had happened to them, but “none reported any negative lasting effects, and many indicated that this process helped them put their own experience into better perspective,” the study said.**

For example, one-third of the group members said they had frozen under fire. “Learning how common this was helped reduce the shame and guilt that many patients had felt for decades,” researchers said.

**MORE: From GI SPECIAL 6E15: 5.24.08:**

**This Information Could Save  
Your Sanity, Or Your Life:  
If Somebody Tries To Drug You Or A  
Buddy Or Family Member, The Fact  
The Information Below Appeared In  
Army Times Can Be A Powerful  
Weapon Of Self-Defense**

Comment: T

Because of the extreme importance of this information to every member of the armed forces, for or against the war, it is being reprinted again from a previous GI Special.

This news report below makes clear that there is now new evidence based research about what works and what doesn't work for troops experiencing PTSD.

The credibility and importance of this research -- initiated by the Department of Veterans Affairs -- is underlined by publication of the findings in Army Times, rather than appearing on some obscure web site or other as somebody or other's opinion.

The V.A. has long practiced drugging troops with all kinds of very dangerous pills as a "treatment" for PTSD. As this article documents, that's useless. And dangerous: overdoses can kill. Benzodiazepines [Valium & Librium are well known examples] are viscerously addictive and potentially deadly drugs handed out to troops like bags of popcorn.

As the article below reports, the only effective treatment for PTSD so far is "exposure therapy; reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it."

A lot of quacks, including at V.A. facilities as well as privately, are hustling other bullshit phony treatments, ranging from moving your eyeballs around to eating herbs and weeds.

Excuse a personal note, but I've been working professionally with traumatic stress survivors for over 30 years, both military and civilian, both at VA and private facilities, and can testify that the research finding reported in this article is 100% right: the only effective treatment for PTSD so far is "reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it."

But you don't have to believe that.

Here's the report, from Army Times.

Assuming you give a shit about whether troops live or die, send it around, word for word, and be sure to mention it comes from Army Times in case some idiot thinks you sucked it out of your thumb.

Most important, if somebody in command or at the V.A. tries to drug you or a buddy or family member, the fact this information appeared in Army Times can be a powerful weapon of self-defense:

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## **“Research Has Not Shown Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors, Such As**

# **Prozac, Zoloft Or Celexa, To Be Effective In Treating PTSD”**

## **“Exposure Therapy -- Reliving A Traumatic Experience By Writing Or Talking About It -- Is The Only Therapy Proved Effective By Independent Research”**

**April 14, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]**

“Problems related to getting troops adequate mental health treatment cannot be resolved unless two issues — stigma and access — are addressed,” Todd Bowers, director of government affairs for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, told the House Veterans’ Affairs subcommittee on health on April 1.

Almost 59,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with PTSD by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Army post-deployment health assessments have found that 20 percent of active-duty and 40 percent of reserve-component troops had symptoms of PTSD, and some experts say the real numbers could be much higher.

But because PTSD hasn’t been addressed until fairly recently — the first scientific paper about the disorder in veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War didn’t come out until five years after that war ended — VA and Pentagon officials say much needs to be done to determine good screening techniques and therapies.

“This is the first war where DoD and VA recognized the psychological impact going in,” said Army Col. Charles Hoge, chief of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Walter Reed Institute of Research.

Combat vets are not sleeping, experience startle reactions and are hyper-alert.

“All of these things that we label as symptoms are things they need in combat,” Hoge said. “No sooner are they transitioned back home than they’re right back in rotation.”

At the House hearing, Hoge said an Army assessment last summer showed that the numbers of soldiers with PTSD is going up with each deployment.

“There’s a direct connection between mental health and multiple deployments,” he said, adding that troops also need more time between deployments.

**David Matcher, of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, said a recent study found that research has not**

shown serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, such as Prozac, Zoloft or Celexa, to be effective in treating PTSD.

Exposure therapy — reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it — is the only therapy proved effective by independent research, he said.

Other treatments exist, but they have been tested mainly by the same people who developed them.

That's an important point because the Defense Department and VA use several such methods, including group and drug therapy, to treat combat veterans.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Get The Message?**



Iraqi citizens wave national flags as they march in a street against the occupation in Baghdad April 9, 2009. Tens of thousands took to the streets of Baghdad calling for U.S. troop's withdrawal from Iraq on the sixth anniversary of the fall of Baghdad after a U.S.-led invasion of the country. REUTERS/Kahtan al-Mesiary

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**





**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”  
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**“The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!”  
-- Camille Desmoulins**

**“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”  
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

**Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.  
-- George Washington**

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Afghanistan:  
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Betrayal And Lame-Ass Lying Bullshit  
Shift Their Focus To “Beyond War”**

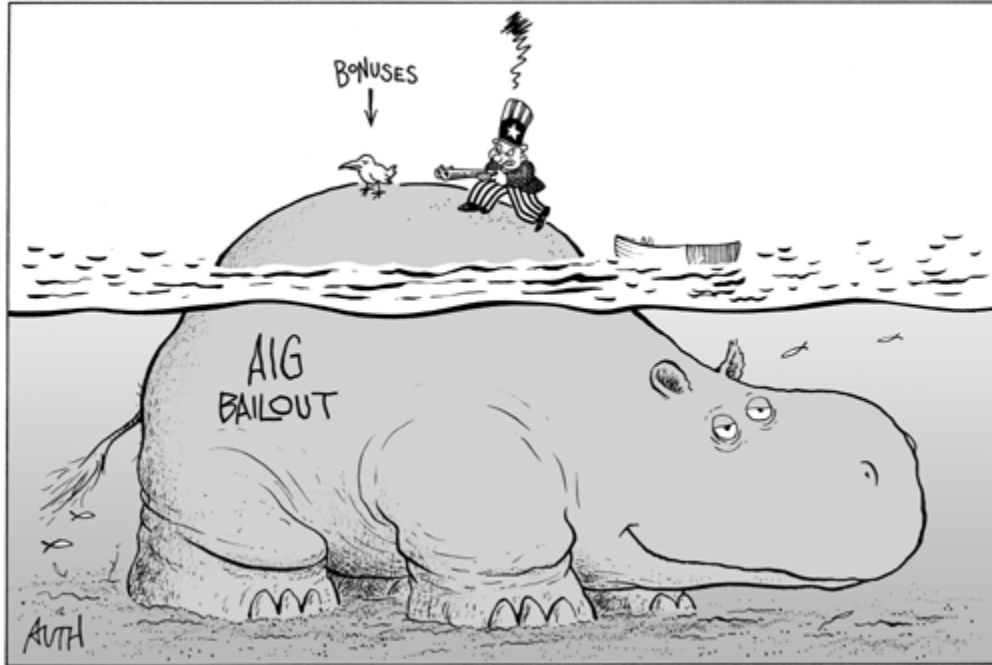


UFPJ In New York City 4.4.09 Photo: Len Tsou

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