





For Vietnam veterans, most of them served 12 months overseas. One year in hell caused a lifetime of suffering in far too many. According to a 1978 publication from the Disabled American Veterans' study, Readjustment Problems Among Vietnam Veterans by Jim Goodwin Psy.D, there were well known issues that have since been forgotten as if none of these studies had ever been published. While veterans wait, millions are wasted on repeating what was already known. By 1978 there were 500,000 Vietnam veterans suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder even though the VA had no yet accepted the term. These men and many female veterans ended up fighting to heal at the same time they spent years trying to get the VA to help them heal, which made it all worse.

Trauma is Greek meaning "wound" and it was used because PTSD comes from an outside force after exposure to life threatening events. It really means a wound to a person's emotional part of their brain caused by the stressful situations creating disorder. In other words, had they lived without the traumas of combat, or in the case of civilians without exposure to other causes, they would not be suffering. But the process of filing claims with the VA and then waiting for their claims to be approved adds more trauma into their lives instead of easing their already wounded minds. If help was waiting for them there would have been less chronically ill lacking the ability to support themselves. It all gets worse as time goes by because what happens in their lives adds to it. The last thing they need is a prolonged battle with the VA.

It was also in this study that WWII was addressed going on to say that,

Yet there were changes made by the Korean War

This response time factor has been known for many years and has been practiced in the civilian world when trauma teams respond immediately after a crisis for the survivors as well as the first responders. The military however has forgotten this lesson which has created more and more troops in need of help but not getting it. When they are lucky they are given medications that include warning labels suggesting it is dangerous to even drive while taking them but these soldiers are not only driving, they are firing and targeted by weapons. Very few receive help from a clinician offering therapy.

Vietnam was different

With troops in Vietnam, older veterans were experiencing the revisiting of ghosts.

Even with what was known all these years there are studies being redone to death. A recent study suggested there is no tie between PTSD and sleeplessness but this would mean that millions of family members must not be hearing their veteran scream in the middle of the night or wander around the house in the dark on patrol. This report just came out.

This would also mean that troops deployed with medications to help them sleep are no longer needed since the headline says there is no tie between PTSD and sleep problems. Just goes to show what was known back then has been forgotten now. But this is nothing new.

Vietnam had several unique things going on. One was DEROS, Date of Expected Return from Overseas, which was 12 months for soldiers and 13 months for Marines. This kept them thinking that if they survived until DEROS, they could just go back to the lives they had before. It was also termed a war fought by teenagers, which came with the additional problem of the part of the brain controlling the emotions is not fully developed until the age of 25.

Back to the DAV study and Vietnam veterans

We still see this happening today when deployments begin right out of high school in many cases and continue on until enlistments are ended. Redeployment study by the Army found that redeployments increased the risk of PTSD by 50% for each time back. Yet this practice goes on when we still have not taken care of the older veterans.

Vietnam Veterans of America have filed suit on behalf of soldiers discharged under "personality disorders"



but the hidden truth is, they were victims of this practice as well but no one was fighting for them. To this day it is hard to grasp how many were given less than honorable discharges from Vietnam when it was PTSD just as we see today.

That was what we knew yet it is still going on. The claim backlog is the direct result of two major storms colliding. A congress that was not concerned with the number of casualties who would need to go to the VA and a military with no plan to address the redeployments of young troops. The truth is they were willing to accept the loss of their lives due to enemy forces as well as being wounded by them, but they were not asked if they were willing to suffer because the government was not ready for them. To ask them to come home after care was denied while in the military is reprehensible but it is not new as we can see by what the Vietnam Veterans faced yet they still wait for help, for healing, for justice and care this nation promised them at the same time they fight to make sure no veteran from another war has to suffer the way they did. In the claim backlog pile are new veterans but along with them are veterans waiting and suffering for all these years. Some may say they can wait longer than but considering we lose 18 veterans a day to suicide, time is running out and the pile will get smaller because more will die waiting.