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General Peter Chiarelli Discusses Post War Trauma

[Patricia Murphy](#)

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The Army's Vice Chief of Staff is in Seattle Monday to discuss post-war trauma among troops. General Peter Chiarelli says communities can do more to understand and support military members and their families. KUOW's Patricia Murphy reports.

TRANSCRIPT

General Peter Chiarelli won't talk about post traumatic stress (PTS) without mentioning traumatic brain injury (TBI). Both share common risk factors, symptoms and functional impairment.

Chiarelli says the Army has instituted new protocols to screen soldiers for both PTS and TBI while they're deployed. He says any soldier that's in a vehicle that gets damaged or is within 50 meters of an explosion gets screened for concussion. Chiarelli says even if the soldiers pass the initial screening they are held out of the fight for another 24 hours and screened again to determine if further treatment is needed.

The general adds that Army medics are being trained to pick up on some of the early signs of post traumatic stress.

Chiarelli: "Because we know that post traumatic stress treated soon after whatever the initiating event, is the cure rate is much, much higher. And that's what we're trying to do. The National Institute of Mental Health will tell you that it's 12 years between the initial event is and someone seeking help for post traumatic stress. And the issue is all the bad things that happen in between."

That's a bit of a paradigm shift for the military, which has traditionally dealt with post traumatic stress after a soldier's return home.

A recent military study says US troops fighting in Afghanistan are experiencing some of the greatest psychological stress and lowest morale in five years.

I'm Patricia Murphy, KUOW News.

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