

For every US soldier who dies, there are about 60 more who suffer in other ways. Youth who are considering joining the military need to know the gamut of risks, and the truth about possible lifelong impairments from the Invisible or Hidden Wounds of War.

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER - PTSD

“**The incidence of PTSD is on the rise** as two wars drag on. In April 2009 a RAND Corp. study concluded that 1 out of almost every 5 military service members on combat tours – about 300,000 so far – return home with symptoms of PTSD or major depression.”

“Its symptoms include the abuse of alcohol and other drugs, an overall emotional numbness punctuated by outbursts of rage, severe depression and recurring nightmares. In extreme cases, it can lead to suicide or murder.” [Source: “How One Army Town Copes with Posttraumatic Stress”, TIME, Nov 30, 2009]

As one Bay Area Iraq/Afghan War Veteran suffering PTSD/TBI said: “I am a lot slower than I used to be. I have a hard time trying to take in what someone is saying... Worried how it’s going to be getting a job. I am 27 years old. Who in his right mind is going to hire someone like me.”

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY – TBI

“Military Personnel with Traumatic Brain Injury at risk for serious long-term health problems; More studies needed on health effects of blast injuries”

“Studies link both moderate and severe TBI with other long-term consequences, including increased risk for Alzheimer’s like dementia, symptoms similar to those of Parkinson’s disease as well as vision problems and seizures....” [Source: Office of News and Public Information, National Academies (Science, Medicine, Engineering, Research) Dec 4, 2008]

“At least 20,000 U.S. troops who were not classified as wounded during combat in Iraq and Afghanistan have been found with signs of brain injuries, according to military and veterans records compiled by USA Today. The data, provided by the Army, Navy and Department of Veterans Affairs, shows that about five times as many troops sustained brain trauma as the 4,471 officially listed by the Pentagon through Sept 30. These cases also are not reflected in the Pentagon’s official tally of wounded, which stands at 30,237.” [Source: USA Today, 11/23/2007]

SUICIDE

Suicide Epidemic Among Veterans

“**Veterans were more than twice as likely to commit suicide in 2005 than non-vets.** ... One age group stood out. Veterans aged 20 through 24, those who have served during the war on terror. They had the highest suicide rate among all veterans, estimated between two and four times higher than civilians of the same age. Paul Sullivan, a former Veterans Administration analyst confirms ‘Those numbers clearly show an epidemic of mental health problems.’ ” [Source: CBS News Investigation 11.13.2007]

18 Veterans Commit Suicide Each Day

“Troubling new data show there are an average of 950 suicide attempts each month by veterans who are receiving some type of treatment from the Veterans Affairs Department.”

“The numbers, which come at a time when VA is strengthening its suicide prevention programs, show about 18 veteran suicides a day, about five by veterans who are receiving VA care.”

“Suicide attempts by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans remains a key area of concern. In fiscal 2009, which ended Sept. 30, there were 1,621 suicide attempts by men and 247 by women who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, with 94 men and four women dying.” [Source: Army Times, Apr 26, 2010]

POSSIBLE INCREASED RISK OF BIRTH DEFECTS

Although controversial, there are reports of significantly higher incidence of birth defects in children of soldiers and civilians in war zones.

A Major Study Funded by the Dept of Veterans Affairs: “A 2001 study of 15,000 February 1991 U.S. Gulf War combat veterans and 15,000 control veterans found that the Gulf War veterans were 1.8 (fathers) to 2.8 (mothers) times more likely to have children with birth defects.” [Source: "Pregnancy Outcomes Among U.S. Gulf War Veterans: A Population-Based Survey of 30,000 Veterans". Annals of Epidemiology, Oct 2001, 504–511]

Huge rise in birth defects in Falluja: “Doctors in [Iraq](#)'s war-ravaged enclave of Falluja are dealing with up to 15 times as many chronic deformities in infants, compared to a year ago, and a spike in early life cancers that may be linked to toxic materials left over from the fighting.” [Source: Guardian, Nov 13, 2009]

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA - MST

“Another cause of PTSD in the military can be military sexual trauma (MST). This is any sexual harassment or sexual assault that occurs while you are in the military. Among veterans using VA health care, about 23 out of 100 women (23%) reported sexual assault when in the military and about 55 out of 100 women (55%) and 38 out of 100 men (38%) have experienced sexual harassment when in the military.”

[Source: United States Dept of Veterans Affairs, National Center for PTSD, 2.23.2010]

HOMELESSNESS

“Veterans make up 1 in 4 homeless”

Veterans make up one in four homeless people in the United States, though they are only 11% of the general adult population, according to a report to be released Thursday.... And homelessness is not just a problem among middle-age and elderly veterans. Younger veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan are trickling into shelters and soup kitchens seeking services, treatment or help with finding a job. [Source: USA Today, 11.7.2007]

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, as many as 200,000 veterans are currently living on the streets or in shelters.

“While some experts have questioned the degree to which PTSD causes homelessness, more than 70% of homeless veterans have some sort of mental or substance problem that stems from PTSD.” [Source: Dept of Veterans Affairs, “Homeless Veterans: Overview of Homelessness”, 2006]

“People just assume that the VA takes care of all vets, but they don’t”. [Source: Linda Boone, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans]

For more information:

Organizations: Iraq Vets Against the War, Veterans for Common Sense, Campaign Against Depleted Uranium.

DVDs: “The Ground Truth” (Iraq Vets describe reality of war, PTSD, struggle), “When I Came Home” (Experiences of a Vet who became homeless)

Blogs: <http://www.ptsdasoldiersperspective.com/>

Books: “Moving A Nation To Care: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder And America's Returning Troops”, Ilona Meagher.

This flier was prepared by the Youth and Military Committee, www.mtdpc.org



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WHAT MILITARY RECRUITERS
DON'T TELL YOU

THE HIDDEN WOUNDS OF WAR

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