

July 31, 2009

In my 30 years of being a medical doctor, I have never come across a project as exciting and potentially therapeutic as Remember My Service! This project has the potential not only to save a great many lives by the prevention of suicide, but to also improve the quality of the lives of our active duty and veteran soldiers. PTSD is a devastating illness that affects not only the person suffering from the symptoms but also their immediate and extended family and friends.

PTSD is quite often a result of one's inability to discuss their experiences. I have treated many veterans from several wars for PTSD and an outstanding commonality amongst them all is the fact that they did not want to discuss their wartime experiences. They all suffered unbelievably from their symptoms, as did their families. This can lead to suicide as well as other major health and emotional problems including serious substance abuse. Every member of the military is screened for PTSD before deployment, and yet 20% of our soldiers are returning from their service with this disorder. As a tragic result, the suicide rate of the American soldier has surpassed the casualty rate.

After 5 years of research and development, Remember My Service (RMS) has developed a tool that significantly helps a stressed Service member deal with the pains of war and the effects of PTSD. By documenting each unit's historical record, together with personalized accounts, RMS allows an individual to easily share this experience with family and friends. This helps the individual to decompress from the horrors of war and remember his/her service based on actual experience rather than just the emotions that were a result of answering the call to duty. The end result of this sharing of their story with family and friends will reduce the burden of PTSD not only on these brave individuals but also on their families and friends.

Support of the RMS program is integral to the success of mental health initiatives in the US Military to help Service members process their collective and individual legacy, and permanently shape what they will remember of their service for the rest of their lives.

It is my firm professional and personal recommendation that this project receive immediate action through our Military Command and be put into widespread usage by all branches of the military as rapidly as possible. The potential benefit to our entire nation is immeasurable, as the lives of the many patriotic and brave soldiers who are fulfilling their duty to our great country deserve to have this unique form of intervention available to them as they return to civilian life or continue to pursue their military careers as an integral tool to help them successfully handle the burden of PTSD.

P.S. From January 1, 2009 to June 1, 2009 there were 85 casualties in the war and 88 suicides among active soldiers. Recent data shows that an average of 14 suicide attempts occur daily among all veterans. This is completely unacceptable and likely preventable through the efforts of RMS. I wholeheartedly and without reservation support the efforts to expand and make this service available to every active, reserve duty, and veteran soldier in our military. If this program prevents even one suicide, it is worthwhile! Suicide is extremely traumatic to the surviving friends and family of the victims of this needless act of desperation.

Sincerely,

Nathan R. Currier, M.D.
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