

From: Morong, Scott Andrew CTR (US)
Sent: Tuesday, November 20, 2012 3:35 PM
To: Booton, John, CTR, WSO-RWTF [<mailto:john.booton.ctr@wso.whs.mil>]
Cc: McKelvin, David C CTR (US); Booton, John L CTR (US)
Subject: submitting comments

Here is a little background on me. I enlisted in January of 2001. I received my first duty assignment with the 101st Airborne. I deployed and with the 101st in February 2003 lead by General Petraeus. I would return to the middle east for a 2nd tour in December of 2004. Towards the end of my tour I complained of pain in my neck. I would return to Fort Gordon for a MOS school. Again my neck was giving me problems.

This is where my career path and my perception of the military changed. I went to the sick call clinic and was run through therapy. It would be a confrontation between myself and therapist which would prompt me to approach his superior the clinics doctor. An insinuation was made and supported by the therapist and the doctor I was faking. This appeared to be common as they assumed most soldier's were faking injury I suppose to get lighter duty. In the end after an X-Ray and an MRI, the attitude towards me changed as they found I wasn't faking. However I also learned my career in the military may be coming to an end. I would spend the next year dealing with being treated like damaged goods and dead weight.

Well about a year later the process of Medical discharge began. Lots of therapy, chiropractors, spinal epidurals and medication. During this time I was embroiled in a dispute with my company level command. I knew I couldn't confront my commander, so I had to turn to the channel's that I could to include the Inspector General, the chain of command, and even my congressional rep Gabrielle Gifford's who wrote me back and hand signed the letter.

In the end I was discharged. 10%. I submitted a written rebuttal, I didn't agree with the rating or that it wasn't combat related. I went through the now infamous Fort Lewis/Mccord MEB which is now embroiled in controversy over its treatment of soldier's with PTSD.

I filed a claim with the VA and subsequently appealed. Then the PDBR. 5 years later I was granted a 30% rating and medical retirement.

Ok now to my comments to the task force.

*PTSD

I saw many soldiers who were clearly exhibiting signs of PTSD in which the command was ill equipped to deal with. Often the response was non-judicial punishment which I think only made the situation worse. I saw soldier's driven to substance abuse and even going AWOL. Often they probably need to feel the command and there leadership was a little more supportive and maybe offered the right kind of help. I had a friend who after 2 back to back tours took his life. I had army buddies who are heavily medicated, who had been sent to DC for shock treatment. PTSD is serious and needs to be better understood.

*WTU

Warrior transition units. These were stood up in 2007 as a way for soldier's pending either MEB/PEB outcomes or on temporary profile need time to rehabilitate a way to not take up slots in their respective units especially if that unit was pending deployment. Unfortunately I have a read reports these units were often treated as punishment for broken soldier's. I don't have firsthand experience, but the intention is good the execution and oversight of these units is poor.

*MED/PEB

I think requiring all Branches to rate disabilities following the VASRD was necessary. Before each branch had separate rating system and according to reports published in Military Times in 2007 based on numbers provided by the DoD there was huge disparities in ratings between ranks and services. With a captain in the Air Force much more likely to get a higher rating for the same disability a private in the Army also has. Clearly this has changed. However some concern that things like PTSD are being misdiagnosed for things such as personality disorder. Or as in my case a simple range of motion test was overlooked and I was given a lower rating. Also my daughters prescription was submitted and went through the board with at least 3 people overlooking this. I pointed this out they issued a administrative correction. This raised concerns because it demonstrated that the paperwork submitted is clearly not reviewed very closely.

*PDBR

A great concept which clearly the intention is to offer justice to soldiers how maybe have been wronged. I am a case in point. I was recently granted medically retirement with 5 years back pay. There is some ambiguity and maybe some guidance needs to be provided to the soldier post decision as well as DEERS and DFAS.

I would certainly would to provide more detailed insight to the task force. Please feel free to call me 520-903-8799

I very well read up and have experienced many of the topics discussed and being addressed.

Thanks,
Scott Morong