

June 30, 1995

Memo to file on PTSD:

I received a letter the other day that brought me up short. It caused me to ask, "Why can two perfectly healthy men face the same terrible battle together and have one come home to life almost as it was and the other be so badly "traumatized" that he is unable to return to normal living?" It then occurred to me that it might be something similar to why two men raised in similar homes and living among the same groups of friends and relatives can have one become an alcoholic and the other not. Our research group developed a theory that seems to answer this. But first let me show you the letter changed just enough to preserve the writer's identity:

I hope this letter finds you and yours doing well and in the best of health. As for myself, I'm doing a great deal better than I have been for the last 12 months.

As you know I am a disabled vet. with P.T.S.D. (Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder.) I don't know how much you know about P.T.S.D. but, it makes life in general, harder to cope with. In my case, for instance, my family seems to think 'ah he'll get over it'.

Al, most of the time a person with P.T.S.D. is in their own little world. At least I feel that I am. The only people I can relate to and feel compatible with are brothers in arms (fellow vets that have or relate to P.T.S.D.) For us (me) life in the civilian world is a jungle and I don't trust anyone! Not even my own family, for fear of inadvertent betrayal, exploitation, mockery, ridicule, etc.. I've been married several times, numerous relationships, and so on.

My friend, life is really hard when you get out of the army! In the military there's a code of ethics and there are standards that we go by. The old saying, "Watch my back & I'll watch yours". . .says it pretty well. In the military it doesn't matter what color you are or where you came from, i.e. foreign, poor, rich, American Indian, white, black, brown, it doesn't matter -- we are brothers in arms." In a sense we were "color blind". . .In civilian life no one hardly trusts anyone.

For me, being out of the army has heightened my stress, paranoia & anxiety. These three titles include a lot of other emotions. i.e. rage, lack of trust, scared all the time, depression, suicidal, lack of sleep due to paranoia, homicidal response to little things, and always on guard. I randomly wake-up nightly. Each night it is a different hour of the night. My compulsion is to check out the windows and look around the house with my light and shotgun. I walk outside as quietly as possible to see if anyone's around. Since I no longer have my dogs, I pull "guard duty." I'm married now & have a 2 1/2 year old son, which makes me more stressed in trying to protect them from harms way.

Son -- it is hard! I have a 20 acre farm with lots of geese and birds that act as my watch dogs. Laugh if you want but, it works!! I live in the woods as far away from the town as I can get. But, the people keep moving in around me and my family. I feel like

I'm smothering with people! It's a full time job trying to mind your own business with people trying to help you out! To tell them you want to be left alone just doesn't work! So life goes on with this terrible burden of stress, anxiety, and paranoia. It doesn't take much to trigger me into rage.

I stress out, every day and night. The feelings are with me 24 hrs a day. I go to therapy every week at the V.A. hospital or private therapy. Life in general is hard to cope with!

You see Al, few people have any knowledge of what many vets went through until they have been in the military and seen people killed before their own eyes. The non-vet (other than, maybe, law enforcement officers) cannot begin to know the feeling of looking at the business end of a M-16 assault rifle with someone on the trigger end that has just flipped out. It therefore follows that almost none have any knowledge of what it is like for the returning vet. If they did, I doubt that they would be so quick to say, "Ah, he'll get over it."

As the saying goes, "When you've walked the walk, . . .

You can talk the talk!".

Perhaps some might better understand if they saw the list of medications that the V.A. has been prescribing for me since October 18, 1997:

- (a) Chlorpromazine 200 mg 2 ea 4 times a day.*
- (b) Clonazepam 2 mg. 2 times a day*
- (c) Haldol 3 mg (shot) constacte 3 times a month.*
- (d) Cogentin (Benzotropine) to be taken as needed for muscle spasms.*
- (e) Levothyroxine 0.15 mg. 1 time a day (for headaches) There's enough for 30 days (30 tab) I run out by the 10th of the month.*
- (f) Florinal 1, 2 times a day or as needed.*

About a month ago one of my counselors suggested that I start taking beCALM'd stress formula, 2 ea. 3 to 5 times daily, it seems to really work. Here are some facts now:

- 1. I sleep peacefully at night with less stress and anxiety when I'm awake.*
- 2. I'm able to talk to other non-military persons without feeling paranoid. (I still don't thoroughly trust anyone except my wife.)*
- 3. The days aren't so hard on me.*

4. *AND, I don't need to take the medications I had been:*

Al, If I can be of any help to you, please write to me.

Sincerely,

{Name withheld for reasons of privacy}

Our theory is based on the well known fact that all five of the fight or flee neurotransmitters are interrelated. That is, in stressful situations the Opioid levels are forced down, they force GABA levels down and Dopamine levels up. GABA going down forces Norepinephrine down which in turn forces Serotonin down. Serotonin going down forces the Opioids further down, etc. The dynamic range of this system is large enough that normal stress levels can be tolerated. However, when the stress reaches trauma levels, the system "hits bottom." That is, each component is so low that it forces the others to stay low indefinitely. This happens because as quickly as normal diet provides new Neurotransmitters, this system uses them up . . .P.T.S.D. is the result.

Consequently, it would seem that the only way to bring the victim "up out of this hole" is precursor loading. Thus, when the letter writer used two to three times the normal quantities of beCALM'd, he enabled the system to "get up off of the bottom" and begin a return to normal. Our belief is that such a post traumatic stress disorder might call for a 185 lb. man to take 10 to 12 capsules a day for the first month and then titrate down to 4 to 6 over the next year. The expected result would be a nearly normal fight or flee system with unwarranted anxiety, lack of a sense of well-being (paranoia in the extreme case), and inability to sleep all being things of the past.

Sincerely,
NeuroGenesis, Inc.

Albert H. Bieser,
President