

Veterans Corner  
September 2007  
By: Robert G. Mitchell

Traumatic Brain Injury

A hidden menace follows our troops home from the combat zone. About 2,100 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with traumatic brain injury, but medical experts estimate that up to 150,000 troops may unknowingly suffer TBI.

That's about 10% of all troops who have served in combat in the past six years.

Many cases are the result of roadside bombs. Though these troops have no obvious wounds, the force of the blasts shakes and bruises the brain in ways that are not always immediately obvious, leaving many cases of "mild" brain injury undiagnosed.

Some 70% of hidden brain injuries show no symptoms by the time they're screened by a doctor. When there are symptoms – depression, confusion, anger, sleep problems – they are too often dismissed as psychological in nature or misdiagnosed as post-traumatic stress disorder.

It's bad enough to lose one's health; worse yet to be in the dark about what is causing it or how to treat it.

Some vets seeking treatment and compensation have been treated like malingerers and cheats. Meanwhile, marriages fail, jobs are lost and lives are cast into turmoil as the afflicted struggle to cope with an unseen and mysterious injury that alters personalities and diminished the ability to function as before.

Those who come home with TBI are not the same people they were when they left, and they need help.

Medical and military leaders are just now beginning to realize the scope of the problem and taking steps to raise awareness among troops and the public.

The Army has begun educating all soldiers on TBI as the Pentagon and VA have begun pushing TBI awareness.

That's a good start. Now the Pentagon should adopt the Army program for all services and craft a program to educate all spouses on the signs of TBI.

Congress, meanwhile, must enact legislation mandating TBI screening and follow up care throughout the services, and ensure all TBI-related claims in the VA system are quickly processed – with the best interests of service members as top priority.

Source: [http://www.armytimes.com/community/opinion/army\\_editorial\\_TBI\\_070813a/](http://www.armytimes.com/community/opinion/army_editorial_TBI_070813a/)

For more information contact Robert Mitchell for an appointment 518-884-4115.

### Honor our Deceased Veterans Program

Each month the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors hold a ceremony for a deceased veteran from their community at the County War Memorial on McMaster Street in Ballston Spa. If you have a deceased veteran that has not been honored, submit his/her name to your supervisor for consideration.

### Many Troops Have Never Deployed

Almost half of all active-duty troops in the U.S. Military have never deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan or surrounding countries, according to Defense Department figures. At the same time, nearly 400,000 troops have served multiple tours. Some 53% of the active-duty Air Force, 50% of the Navy, 45% of the Marine Corps and 37% of the Army have yet to deploy to the war zones.

### Shortage of Psychologists

An April report by the American Psychological Association found that the Army and Navy have nearly 40% shortage of active-duty clinical psychologists. It noted that the “alarming pace” of attrition – which has seen the total number of active –duty psychologists in the armed forces drop to 350 – was creating such “negative outcomes” as reduced access to care for troops and families and increased stress among those psychologists still on active-duty.

A Senate bill introduced April 23 seeks to remedy the problems. S. 1196 would create at least two “centers of excellence” in the military health care system that would treat mental health disorders such as PTSD “with urgency similar to physical ailments.” If approved, the bill would require the Defense secretary to report to Congress within 45 days with recommendations for attracting more mental health workers. At press time, the bill had been referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

### Flag Pole Dedication

September 11, 2007 at 8:30am at St. Peters Church there will be a flag pole dedication honoring Saratoga Springs WWII Veterans that died during service from St. Peters Parish. After the ceremony there will be a reception at the K of C Hall on Washington Street (Route 29) in Saratoga Springs. Family members and friends of

- James J. Brackett
- John A. Begnel
- Geo J. Biffer
- Michael R. Dechants
- Jeremiah E. DeLaney
- Frank F. DeRossi
- James A. Dunnigan
- Stephen A. Desidoro
- William J. Flanagan
- Albert W. Izzo
- Paul V. McGhan

- James W. McGirr
- Frank Parisi Jr.
- Paul J. Phillips
- John J. Ponzer Jr.
- Paul E. Roth
- Joseph A. Smaldone
- John L. Winney

Are invited.

For more information call Gene Corsale at 518-584-4715.

### Free Concert

September 21, 2007 at 6pm at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC) in Saratoga Springs, the official U.S. Army Band from Washington D.C. will be performing. This concert is free to the general public; tickets are available at your local Stewarts Shops or at your Town/City Supervisors Office. For more information call the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors at 518-885-2240.

### Army/Navy Football Game

September 22, 2007 at 10:30am at Saratoga Springs High School on West Ave a sprint football game. Activities include a fly over, parachute team, drill team, and much more. Bill Parcell will do the coin toss; Tickets are \$5.00 for more details call Scott Perkins at 518-584-4191

### Veterans Assistance Night and Job Fair Expo

October 9, 2007 from 6-10pm at the Saratoga Springs City Center. Approximately 95 organizations, which provide services to veterans, VA Pension, Social Security, Employment, Counseling, Education, VA Loans, Small Business Loans, Medical, Mortgage Company's, Services, Housing, Vocational Training, Military Recruiting and many more.

The USO Show from New York City will be performing that evening. All veterans, active duty, and OIF/OEF are welcome. The event is free and open to the general public. Don't miss this event!