CHECK NEWSLETTERS ON INDIVIDUAL WARS!

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:
http://www.omnicenter.org/newsletter-archive/ For a knowledge-based peace, justice, and ecology movement and an informed citizenry as the foundation for change.
See Blog, “IT’S THE WAR DEPARTMENT” http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/


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Dear Dick,

Last night, President Obama stated that he is "heartbroken" about the shooting on Fort Hood Army base in Killeen Texas. **We, too, are heartbroken, because this shooting could have been prevented.**

The United States military is an institution that teaches us to devalue the lives of others and to devalue ourselves. When combat stress and other injuries are added to that environment, the result is volatile.

Fort Hood's base commander, General Mark Milley, would like us to believe that this incident is about one unique individual and his inability to shoulder the stress of combat. Based on our own experiences and 4 years of extensive research and analysis, we are well aware that there is nothing particularly unique about Ivan Lopez's story. A full report on this research will be released next month on Memorial Day.

When we first went to Killeen in 2010, we met with many soldiers who were suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from combat and from sexual trauma. Instead of being treated, their commanders overturned their doctors' orders and sent them back to war. In some cases, those who reported these injuries were punished or given bad discharges, which create a permanent barrier to care. It is no wonder that this phenomenon manifests as rage and violence. **We cannot allow this to continue - U.S. service members must be provided the right to heal from the invisible wounds of war.**

Please support our movement by making a donation today.

Lopez was already being treated for common symptoms of PTSD - anxiety, depression, and insomnia - and was being evaluated for PTSD. Even after his death, the leadership at Fort Hood is going out of their way to deny any relationship between Ivan Lopez's mental health and his actions. The army claims that PTSD is difficult to diagnose. It would be much more accurate to say that it's difficult for veterans and service members to get a diagnosis from a
military or VA doctor.

The U.S. government and the Department of Defense are doing everything they can to avoid paying - whether in dollars or labor - for the invisible injuries they have caused to those they use to fight on their behalf. The number of US service members who suffer from PTSD due to (often concurrent) deployments ranges from 20% - 50% depending on the source. A lifetime of care for that many veterans is incredibly expensive. Affirming high numbers of incidences of PTSD requires acknowledging that trauma is a common and normal response to war, not a unique and individualized affliction that results from personal weakness and failure.

We collected testimony from 31 soldiers during our time at Fort Hood and are confident that these experiences are quite common. One of these soldiers, Rebekah Lampman, testified about attempting to get mental health support and justice after being sexually assaulted near the end of her 7 years at Fort Hood. She stated, "I went and did everything I possibly could to advocate for myself. And I was getting the run-around, people were telling me that they were working on it, and the paperwork was delayed. They just gave me excuses. And in the meantime, they kept reprimanding me for my emotions and my actions and for everything."

As long as soldiers continue to be punished for seeking care, tragedies will continue to occur. **We must demand the right to heal.**

**Please join us by making a financial contribution today.**

In Solidarity,

Joyce, Matt, Maggie, and Julia

IVAW Staff

P.S. Our work at Fort Hood over the years would not be possible without Under the Hood Cafe and Outreach Center. They continue to play a vital role to the local community in the wake of this tragedy. A portion of all donations received by IVAW today will be donated to Under the Hood. Please consider making a generous donation so that we can continue to do this important work together.

Iraq Veterans Against the War is a 501(c)(3) charity, and welcomes your tax deductible contributions.
I contacted your Veterans For Peace chapter last year about my Emmy-winning documentary, WHERE SOLDIERS COME FROM. The film focuses on the four-year journey of childhood friends, from teenagers stuck in their small town, to National Guard soldiers looking for roadside bombs in Afghanistan, to 23-year-old veterans dealing with the silent war wounds of PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

As an organization that helps the families of soldiers and veterans, I thought you might be interested in using the film as a community-based tool. Some Veterans For Peace chapters and other veterans and military family groups have organized community screenings of WHERE SOLDIERS COME FROM to build understanding of what soldiers, veterans and their families are going through, in a workshop setting to open up a dialogue between veterans and their families and loved ones, and as a fundraiser for their organization.

You can watch a trailer at www.wheresoldierscomefrom.com/trailer.php. It is a different war film in that it follows the full experience – over the course of the film, we see the young men before they become soldiers, during their deployment, and after they come home and work to reintegrate back into civilian society. It would be a great film to organize a Memorial Day or Armed Forces Day event around.

Community and veteran groups can purchase Where Soldiers Come From to for screenings from our educational distributor New Day Films. Feel free to share this information with others. If you have questions or want to discuss a possible event in detail, please email me at quincyhillfilms@gmail.com, or call me at 512-565-1628. Also, we are very flexible on price so lets us know what works for you. Thank you for the important work your organization does, and I look forward to hearing from you.

AUTOPSY OF WAR: A Personal History
John A. Parrish, M.D. Thomas Dunne Books

On the outside, John Parrish is a highly successful doctor, having risen to the top of his field as department head at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. Inside, however, he was so tortured by the memories of his tour of duty as a marine battlefield doctor in Vietnam that he was unable to live a normal life. In Autopsy of War, the author delivers an unflinching narrative chronicling his four-decade battle with the unseen enemy in his own mind as he struggled with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Parrish examines his Southern Baptist childhood and the profound influence of his father, a fire and brimstone preacher turned Navy chaplain, while offering a candid assessment of the “God and Country” ethos that leads young men to rush wide-eyed into war. He describes the unimaginable carnage and acts of cruelty he witnessed in Vietnam, experiences that shattered his world view leaving him to retreat from his family upon his return stateside. Living virtually homeless at times, he visited veteran shelters and relived the horrors of war in a series of harrowing flashbacks as he dealt with suicidal thoughts. The author writes honestly and probingly of his episodes of infidelity and battles
with sex addiction. Readers follow his steady journey toward recovery and his professional contributions in the field of medicine and technology, as well as a joint program with the Boston Red Sox and Massachusetts General Hospital to aid returning veterans. Perhaps most poignantly, Parrish speaks of his quest to discover the identity of one particular soldier in Vietnam he could not save—and whose memory has haunted him ever since.

Autopsy of War is a soul searching memoir that is both an intensely personal narrative and a universally relevant trip through the world of war and recovery.

John A. Parrish, M.D.

MACMILLAN NEWSLETTER
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When she heard the news of his arrest, she was thunderstruck. As she told a reporter from KFSM, “They said ‘animal cruelty’ and I said ‘what, you've got to be crazy’.” She added that he had animals in his own home.

John Christopher Short of Fayetteville was arrested this week on suspicion of aggravated animal cruelty. It seems that a dog which had belonged to his girlfriend died some months ago under conditions which can only be described as suspicious.

The dog Esther’s rear left leg was fractured, an injury so severe that its left leg had to be amputated. Even that was not enough to save her life, though.

Soon after, his girlfriend took in a new puppy, Hector, to replace - what a stupid word to use - Esther, her dead dog.

According to the police report, the woman came home from work one day only to find her new puppy dead. Short is said to have told her that “It is not breathing.”

He added that he thought the puppy was dead.

Hector was indeed dead, the victim of multiple skull fractures.

I don’t know John Christopher Short, and I don’t know anything about him, save for what I have heard on the news.

But this is what I do know about John Christopher Short, and I will tell you in the reverse order that KFSM told the story.

In 2005, Sergeant Short was in Afghanistan, when his Humvee was hit by an IED. Besides having his own leg amputated, according to his aunt, in addition to undergoing several surgeries on his elbow, he suffered a traumatic brain injury.

Returning stateside, Short has been no stranger to legal troubles.

In the past two years, two women have filed protection orders against him.

In February of this year he entered a plea of guilty to assault and domestic battery.

In 2012, he shot and killed a man while struggling over a gun at his home. No charges were ever filed in that case.

So, just who is John Christopher Short? A violent man, evidently, but at least one relative loves him and has nothing but kind words for him. Is it possible she sees only the man who left for war, but not the
man who returned?

Was he always the man he is today?

Or is John Christopher Short just another cast-off from a terrible war, a man whose victims in peace time are like the fast-moving ripples in a pond?

rsdrake@cox.net

**SUICIDE**

The martyr of Danville Mountain

*Jacob George*, 'moral injury' and one soldier's losing struggle against the encroaching darkness of war [while living in Fayetteville]

By *David Koon*


From Larry W 10-24-14

**RICHARD BAKER on SUICIDE**

“Suicide by Appointment.” *In These Times* (April 2013). “The Current practice is to treat the injury, not prevent it. Preventing PTSD would be simple: Don’t send people to war. Treating the injury is more difficult, and currently, the VA’s efforts are a failure.” [Did he intend to over-generalize; did he mean to say the VA’s efforts to treat suicide have failed? Baker apparently has written a novel, entitled *Incoming*, about soldier suicide, but I was unable to find it in Google. --Dick]

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**Facing 9th Deployment, Soldier Commits Suicide** - Vanguard News...

www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/.../facing-9th-deployment-soldier-c...

Aug 16, 2011 – 13 Responses to “Facing 9th Deployment, Soldier Commits Suicide”. bjt

Says: 16 August, 2011 at 3:37 pm. Why do these white Humans keep ...

A series of articles and multimedia about veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have committed killings, or been charged with them, after coming home.

AUDIO INTERVIEW
Playwrights who know it all can often provide first-rate entertainment. But the very best plays usually come from writers who don’t necessarily have all the answers, who don’t insist on telling us what to think about the developments onstage and who don’t offer neat solutions to their characters’ problems.

Donald Margulies, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 2000 for “Dinner With Friends,” has been writing that kind of play ever since “Sight Unseen” in 1992. And “Time Stands Still,” the 2010 Tony nominee currently in an outstanding production at TheaterWorks in Hartford, is his finest work to date. Like the earlier plays, it asks us to ponder the intricacies of love and friendship and the emotional perils of professional success. But this one, expertly directed by TheaterWorks’s producing artistic director, Rob Ruggiero, goes beyond the personal to explore the moral ambiguities of journalism, a subject that both producers and consumers of the news media tend to avoid.
Mr. Margulies isn’t worried here about journalists’ ethics; his concern is the very underpinnings of the enterprise. “I live off the suffering of strangers,” says Sarah, the conflict photographer at the heart of the play. “I built a career on the sorrows of people I don’t know.” Is she, as she sometimes feels, “a ghoul with a camera”? Or is she a crucial witness to truths that would pass unnoticed without her, as she believes in her less anguished moments? In the no-nonsense performance of Erika Rolfsrud, Sarah is clearly driven by both high ideals and an addiction to danger.

When the play begins, she has come a little too close to the latter. With one arm in a sling, one leg in a cast and a face pitted with shrapnel scars (the work of the makeup artist Joe Rossi), Sarah has returned home from a German hospital after falling prey to a roadside bomb in Iraq. Carrying her gear and watching her every painful move is James, the war correspondent who has been her companion for some eight years. Their Brooklyn loft has been designed by Luke Hegel-Cantarella with a keen appreciation for their shabby-chic taste and their extensive travels. And Harry Nadal’s costumes make it apparent that they prefer to dress for war zones.

The play’s title accurately describes what happens when a camera shutter clicks, but “time stands still” is also a lie. Time moves right along, and as John Lasiter’s sterling lighting takes the loft through the days and nights of Sarah’s recuperation, and her many mood swings, we learn that James, in the sympathetic performance of Tim Altmeyer, has war wounds of his own — and that the two of them appear to have very different definitions of healing.

We also meet their dear friend Richard, a photo editor who arrives with his latest flame, the much younger — “embryonic,” snarls Sarah — Mandy. His serious themes notwithstanding, Mr. Margulies is an astute social satirist, and Mandy is a delicious comic creation. The personification of perkiness, she’s a party planner who lets slip that an event set among the Egyptian sarcophagi at the Metropolitan Museum was “really intense” — this to people who chase gunfire for a living.

Liz Holtan gives Mandy an airheaded sweetness that is the stock in trade of many a pretty young blond actress. But Ms. Holtan also knows how to listen onstage. We see her Mandy taking in the barbs launched in her direction, both spoken and unspoken, and weighing their worth. For all her callowness, she’s no bimbo, and her sense of right and wrong is at least as well developed as Sarah’s. It’s a wonderful role, and Ms. Holtan makes it entirely her own.

As Richard, Matthew Boston has the rueful air of a man who knows he should know better, but who simply cannot resist the illusion that time will indeed stand still for him and Mandy. In his own way, he’s flirting with danger as recklessly as Sarah and James do when they head off to Sudan or Sierra Leone or Kurdistan. But the question of how best to stay safe has
different answers for different people, and Mr. Margulies lets us decide whether, in the end, the one with the plane ticket or the one with the bicycle helmet has the better shot.

In the street-level lobby above the auditorium, TheaterWorks has installed a display of wrenching news photographs, including classic images by the famed combat photographers Robert Capa and Eddie Adams, that illustrate the issues raised by the play. They look very different on one's way out than they do on the way in, before Mr. Margulies has moved us to think hard about the people who take them.

“Time Stands Still,” by Donald Margulies, is at TheaterWorks, 233 Pearl Street, Hartford, through Sept. 15; (860) 527-7838 or theaterworkshartford.org.

Dr. Jonathan Shay on Returning Veterans and Combat Trauma

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

By DEBORAH SONTAG and AMY O'LEARY

Published: January 13, 2008

Dr. Jonathan Shay is a psychiatrist who specializes in treating the psychic wounds of war. He is also the author of two books, "Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character" and "Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming," which examine the experiences of combat veterans through the lens of classical texts.

Jason Threlfall

Dr. Jonathan Shay

Related

Book Excerpt: 'Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming'

"Across America, Deadly Echoes of Foreign Battles" (January 13, 2008)

Over 20 years ago, Dr. Shay, then a medical researcher studying the biochemistry of brain-cell death, suffered a stroke. During his recovery, he moved from research into clinical work, taking a temporary job substituting for a vacationing psychiatrist at a Department of Veteran Affairs clinic in Boston. When that doctor died, Dr. Shay stayed on, challenged and inspired by the terrible psychological injuries of the combat veterans.

During his stroke recovery, Dr. Shay also began, as he put it, to fill in the gaps in his education by reading the classics: "The Iliad," "The Odyssey," and "The Aeneid." And it was clear to him that his patients at the V.A. clinic were echoing many of the sentiments expressed by the warriors in those ancient texts: betrayal by those in power, guilt for surviving, deep alienation on their return from war.

“I realized that I was hearing the story of Achilles over and over again,” said Dr. Shay.

For this series, Deborah Sontag spoke with Dr. Shay, who recently won one of the MacArthur Foundation's coveted “genius awards,” about his unique perspective on the psychological
impact of war.

What happens when someone who has adapted to war comes home?

What others view as a mental disorder — post-traumatic stress disorder, that is — Dr. Shay prefers to see as a psychological injury of war. Initially, when a service member returns from war, he or she often retains the behaviors that they adopted for their own survival while in a combat zone, he says.

“Most of it really boils down to the valid adaptations in the mind and body to the real situation of other people trying to kill you,” he said.

On PTSD, sleep and a breakthrough in treatment.

Dr. Shay has written about the connection between criminal behavior and combat trauma. He refers to the problem as "staying in combat mode." In his writing, he points out that the first adventure of Odysseus after the Trojan War was to sack the city of Ismarus — essentially a pirate raid where the soldiers applied their hard-earned wartime skills to a civilian environment. If this kind of behavior is common, should the courts consider combat service when a veteran has been charged with criminal activity?

On whether the effects of combat trauma should be considered in criminal cases.

Dr. Shay has become an advocate for preventing psychological war injuries as much as possible through a variety of methods. For example, he believes that soldiers should be deployed together, rather than trickling in and out of combat zones individually as was the practice during the Vietnam War. A sense of community and stability are key, he says, in preventing further damage.

On seeing another generation suffer the psychological aftermath of war

"The Legacy of WW1 Shell Shock for PTSD-TBI"

By Jerry Lembcke, CounterPunch.org, posted October 22, 2014

The author is a Vietnam veteran who teaches sociology at the College of the Holy Cross

Germans in the Woods (WWII)

Joseph Robertson was an infantryman in the U.S. Army during World War II, where he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The stark black and white images in this short haunt the viewer, just as Robertson is haunted by his memories from that battle.

FUNDING PROVIDED BY

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http://storycorps.org/animation/germans-in-the-woods/
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Animated Film about WWII Battle of the Bulge PTSD

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Contact Arkansas Congressional Delegation

Arkansas is represented in Congress by two senators and four representatives. Here is how to reach them. None of the senators or representatives publishes his e-mail address, but each can be contacted by filling in forms offered through his website.

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END US WARS AND PTSD NEWSLETTER # 4

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Dick Bennett

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