

Coming Home

What to say?

This is the last of the excerpts from LTC Dave Grossman's new book - "On Combat". All together there have been four articles of David's in the Signalman magazine. This particular excerpt is probably the most important of all for those who have not been involved in a conflict, and gives advice as to how we can help those returning from conflict. Particularly important as it is "current", ie we have our own members returning from Afghanistan, Iraq and various other "hot spots". Again we are indebted to Dave for allowing us to publish his work in this magazine.

Dave's book "On Combat" has now been published and is available from his site (<http://www.killology.com/>), and a relevant viewing of Frontline's "Soldiers' Hearts" - also featuring Dave Grossman - is available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/heart/view/>

Hooah and, "thanks", Dave.

*He who did well in war just, earns the right
To begin doing well in peace.
Robert Browning
Luria*

As a writer, sometimes you are lucky enough to find something that perfectly and powerfully communicates what needs to be said on a vital topic. When it comes to the question of "What to say to a returning veteran?" Col. Timothy C. "BT" Hanifen, USMC, wrote that "perfect" piece upon returning from Iraq in 2003. With his kind permission, Col. Hanifen's vital, wise and timeless words are included here.

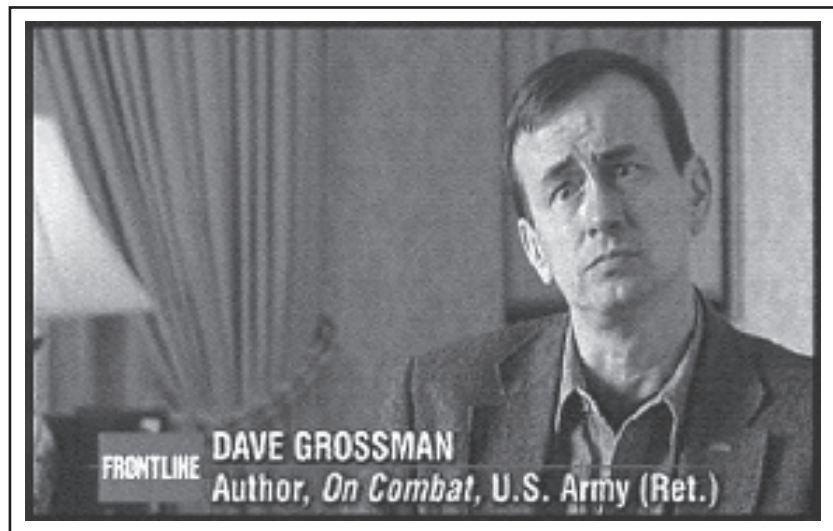
Three gifts you can give returning veterans: That will last them a lifetime...

The combat phase of the campaign in Iraq is winding down and now the hardest job of all begins--winning the peace. Soon many of our fellow citizen-Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsman, both active and reserve, will return home with their units or as individuals. All have served and participated in an extraordinary campaign of liberation that was fought in a manner that reflected not only the determination of the American people to do what was necessary but also reflective of our value to spare life whenever and wherever possible.

As these veterans begin returning home, people are asking themselves what they can do to celebrate their return, honor their service, and remember those who have fallen in the performance of their duty. After every war or major conflict, there are always concerns about the emotional state of returning veterans, their

ability to readjust to peaceful pursuits and their reintegration into American society. People naturally ask themselves, "What can we do or what should we do?" The purpose of this message is to offer that there are three very important gifts that we personally, and collectively as a society, can give to these returning veterans. They are

The truth every combat veteran knows, regardless of conflict, is that war is about combat, combat is about fighting, fighting is about killing and killing is a traumatic personal experience for those who fight. Killing another person, even in combat, is difficult as it is fundamentally against our nature and the innate guiding



"understanding, affirmation and support."

With "understanding," I am not speaking of sympathy, empathy, consoling or emotional analysis. Rather, I offer that we, to the best of our ability, need to comprehend some of the combat truths learned and experienced by these returning servicemen and women. Their perspectives and their personal experiences will shape each of them and our society in large and small ways for years to come. Though we were not there, our comprehension and respect for their "truisms" will be part of the gift that will truly last them and us for a lifetime.

moral compass within most human beings. The frequency of direct combat and the relative distance between combatants is also directly proportional to the level of combat stress experienced by the surviving veteran. Whether the serviceman or woman actually pulled the trigger, dropped a bomb or simply supported those who have, I've yet to meet any veteran who has fought and found their contribution to or the personal act of killing another human being particularly glorious. Necessary--Yes. Glorious or pleasurable--No.

In combat, warriors must psychologically distance themselves from the

humanity of their opponent during the fight. The adversary becomes a target or an objective or any number of derogatory epithets that separates “them from us.” Combat becomes merely business--a job that has to be done, part of your duty and killing--a necessary result. It's a team job that needs to be done quickly, efficiently, unemotionally and at the least cost in lives to your unit, to innocents and with the most damage inflicted in the least time to your adversaries. Then you and the team move forward again to the next danger area and fight. The only sure way home is by fighting through your opponents as quickly and efficiently as possible. Along the way you quietly hope or pray that your actions will: be successful; not cause the loss of a comrade; not cause the death of an innocent; and that you won't become one of the unlucky casualties yourself. You stay despite your fears because the team, your new family of brothers or sisters, truly needs you and you'd rather die than let them down. You live in the moment, slowly realize your own mortality and also your steadily rising desire to cling to and fight hard for every second of it. You keep your focus, your “game face” on and you don't allow yourself the luxury of “too much reflection” or a moment's “day dreaming” about home, loved ones, the future or your return. You privately fear that such a moment of inattention may be your last, or worse, because of you, a comrade's last.

So if I may caution, please don't walk up to a combat veteran and ask him or her if they “killed” anyone or attempt well meaning “pop” psychoanalysis. These often-made communication attempts are awkward and show a lack of understanding and comprehension of the veteran. They also reveal much about the person who attempts either one. Instead, please accept there is a deep contextual gap between you both because you were not there. This chasm is very difficult to bridge when veterans attempt to relate their personal war experiences. Actual combat veterans are the one's least likely to answer the question or discuss the details of their experiences with relative strangers. Most likely they will ignore you and feel as though they were truly “pilgrims” in a strange land instead of honored and appreciated members of our Republic. So accept and don't press...

Don't ignore them or the subject. Please feel free to express your “gladness at their safe return” and ask them “how it went or what was it like?” These questions are open-ended and show both your interest and concern. They also allow the veteran to share what they can or want. In

most cases, the open door will enable them to share stories of close friends, teammates or some humorous moments of which they recall. Again, just ask, accept but don't dig or press.

The second gift is “affirmation.” Whether you were personally in favor of the war or against it no longer matters at this point. As a Republic and a people we debated, we decided and then we mustered the political and societal willpower to send these brave young men and women into combat in hopes of eventually creating a better peace for ourselves, for the Iraqi people and for an entire region of the world. More than anything else, the greatest gift you can personally give a returning veteran is a sincere handshake and words from you that “they did the right thing, they did what we asked them to do and that you are proud of them.” We need to say these words often and the returning combat veteran truly needs these reassurances. Also please fly your flag and consider attending one or more public events with your families as a visible sign of your support and thanks. Nothing speaks louder to a returning veteran than the physical presence of entire families. Those Americans attending these events give one of their most precious gifts - their personal time. Numbers matter. Personal and family presence silently speaks volumes of affirmation to those you wish to honor.

The third gift is “support.” Immediately upon return there will be weeks of ceremonies and public praise applauding the achievements of the returning units and their veterans. But the pace of life in America is fast and it will necessarily move rapidly onward towards the next event. Here is where your support is most needed to sustain the returning veteran and you can make the most difference in their lives for years to come. Continue to fly your flag. If you are an employer, then simply do your best to hire a veteran who is leaving service or if he or she was a Guardsman or Reservist, welcome them back to a new job within the company. All reserve personnel know that the economic life of the company has continued in their absence. It has to do so in order for the company to survive and prosper. They also know it is likely their jobs have since been filled. Returning veterans are always unsure whether or not they will find or have employment upon return. As an employer, if you can't give them an equivalent job because of downsizing then extend them with your company for three to four months so they can properly job hunt. Please take a personal interest in them and their families and use your extensive list of personal and

professional contacts to help them land a better job-even if it is with one of your competitors. The gratitude they will feel for you, your personal actions and your company is beyond words.

For everyone else, the greatest gift you can give to continue support will take 10 seconds of your time. In the years to come, if ever your paths cross with one of the hundreds of thousands of veterans of this or any other conflict, then simply shake their hand and tell them “thanks” and that “they did a great job!” Your words show you understand, you affirm their service and you continue to support them. Teach your children to do the same by your strong example. Though veterans may not express it, every one of them will be grateful. If this message rings true with you, then let us each give these returning veterans these three gifts that will truly last them a lifetime.

*Home of the Free, Because of the Brave! Colonel
Timothy C. “B.T.” Hanifen, USMC*

Who Is A Veteran, Who Is A Survivor and What Is A Trauma?

*What is food to one man may be fierce poison to others. Lucretius (1st century B.C.) De Rerum
Natura*

Many people are not sure how to relate to a fellow human being who has experienced a traumatic incident. One major purpose of this book and books such as *On Killing*, *The Gift of Fear*, and *Deadly Force Encounters*, is to teach you how not be a victim after a traumatic incident, and how to help others in their hour of need.

Traumatic incidents are not limited to those where you have been shot or shot at. Consider the following events that are just some examples of incidents that are so far out of the norm of our daily experiences that exposure to them could be toxic under some conditions.

- * You witness another person shooting someone
- * You witness someone getting hurt or killed
- * You witness a horrific traffic accident
- * You find a dead child
- * You are unable to rescue someone from a fire or from drowning
- * You receive a debilitating or life threatening injury

Here are a few other influences that can affect how a critical incident impacts a warrior. Let us use a police officer as an example, one who has gotten into a shoot-

ing on a day when--

- * he is having problems in his personal life
- * he was chewed out an hour earlier by his sergeant
- * he is coming down with a cold
- * it is a slow media day and the press attacks him
- * headquarters decides they need to make an example of someone
- * he is severely sleep deprived
- * he has not recovered from the impact of his last critical incident

Any one of these, or any combination of them, might be the impetus that causes the officer to be psychologically



impacted by the event. If the shooting had occurred the week before, when the influence as not present, is it possible the officer would have gone through the experience without a problem? Maybe, maybe not. It is hard to say because there are other, deep-rooted, personal issues that exist in every person. We do know, however, as has been discussed throughout this book, that prior mental and physical preparation can dramatically decrease the emotional impact of a critical incident.

Always keep in mind that we are all different. Do not decide which incident should or should not be traumatic and who should or should not be traumatized. Do not think that every person is going to have problems after an incident, and do not conclude that a person should not have a problem because the incident is not one that you consider traumatic. Always remember that what might seem to you to be a “no big deal,” just might be an event that has a powerful, psychological impact on another, and one that seems to be a big deal to you, might not be to someone else.

What To Say To A Survivor: “I’m glad you’re okay,” and “The worst is over.”

The military gives human beings opportunities to be at their amazing bests while doing terribly hard stuff. Personnel get permission to be unabashed, demonstrative friends and helpers to one another. They have to be. They get to be. Jane Toleno
Correspondence to Col. Grossman

Chris Pollack is a law enforcement officer and writer who has written on this very issue. He has “been there” and he has talked to others who have been there. He says that the right response to a survivor is to say simply, “I am so glad you’re okay.”

That the person survived the ordeal and he is okay is all that matters.

I had the honor of training every sheriff in one major state. A few weeks later, one of the attendees contacted me, and said,

“Nobody in our department has ever had to use deadly force and then the week after you trained us, one of my deputies had to kill someone. It was just like you said, social paralysis. I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know yet if it was a righteous shoot. I couldn’t commit myself, so I didn’t say anything to him. Then, I remember what you’d taught us. I walked up to my deputy, put a hand on his shoulder and said, “Hey man, right now I just want you to know what’s important to me is that you’re okay.”

That was all that officer needed to hear. Not, “Good shooting.” Not, “The bastard had it coming.” And not, “We’ll get you a good lawyer.” But, “I give a damn about you, and I’m glad you’re okay.”

I call this the “ready round.” It is the

round in the chamber ready to go when you do not know what else to say or do. You simply let the person know that you care about him and are glad he is okay.

A friend of my co-author’s, called Christensen one evening, and it was apparent in his voice that he was shaken and distraught. An hour earlier, a car full of thugs had, for some unknown reason, pulled up next to him and yelled threats out their windows. Frightened, Christensen’s friend drove off, but the car followed close behind, and continued to follow his every evasive move as he drove down side streets, alleys, and across parking lots. At one point when he got jammed in traffic, the thugs scrambled from their car and charged toward him. A sudden break in the line of cars allowed Christensen’s friend to change lanes and speed off, successfully losing them.

It was clear to Christensen that his friend had made several mistakes in his flight to safety, but that was not the right moment to point out his errors. Instead, Christensen said, “Hey, I’m just glad you’re okay,” and just like that, the simple comment calmed his friend.

What if they are not okay? We used to teach people to provide “psychological first aid,” usually coaching them to say something like, “Hey, man you’re going to be okay.” But we don’t teach that any more, because all too often people are not okay. My brother was a paramedic who had some serious PTSD problems resulting from his job. One time he told me, “Dave, I cannot tell you how many people have died, and the last thing they ever heard was a lie coming out of my lips.” This is a terrible burden to put on our first responders. Authors Judith Acosta and Judith Simon Prager have lead the way to a different response with their book, *The Worst is Over: What to Say When Every Moment Counts*. Although there is much of value in the book, for our purposes here, the title pretty much says it all. In their book Acosta and Prager tell us that:

An altered state is like fertile soil. We can either plant healthy seeds that grow into fruit-producing plants, we can let the weeds overrun it, or we can let erosion wash it away in the storm. We can either say and do nothing, use our words and our presence to heal, or use our words to harm.

These contributions by Chris Pollack, and by Acosta and Prager, help us to determine, ahead of time, what to say at the critical moment in order to, “use our words and our presence to heal.” These are not trite or hollow phrases because

they come from the heart. Since we truly do care about our friends, it is absolutely sincere to tell them, after they have had a brush with danger, that we care and are glad they are okay. And there really is value in reminding someone that the worst is over, because it is the truth and that has power.

Thus we have two ready rounds worked out and prepared ahead of time. If the victim is okay, we rejoice with him in that fact. If he is not okay, we help to put the situation in perspective so they can look to a better future. It is all about working things out in advance.

Assume Nothing...and Treat Everyone With Respect and Compassion

*Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.*

*Cowper
The Task*

You cannot go wrong if you assume nothing and treat everyone with respect and compassion. Here are some tips on how to approach someone who has been involved in a traumatic incident, which has been adapted from the recommendations written by Dr. Alexis Artwohl on how cops can best support their fellow officers after a critical incident.

Initiate contact in the form of a phone call or a note to let the person know you are concerned and available for support or help. Say, "Hey, I'm just glad you are okay..." If the spouse answers the telephone, respect that person's decision whether to let the traumatized person talk to you.

If the person lives alone, offer to stay with him the first few days after the traumatic event. If you cannot stay, help find another friend who can.

Let the person decide how much contact he wants to have with you. He may be overwhelmed with phone calls and it could take a while for him to return your call. Understand that he may want some "down time" with minimal interruptions.

Do not ask for an account of the incident, but let him know you are willing to listen to whatever he wants to talk about. People often get tired of repeating the story and they find curiosity seekers distasteful.

Ask questions that show support and acceptance, such as "How are you doing?" and "Is there anything I can do to help you or your family?"

Accept the person's reaction to his event as normal for him and avoid suggest-

ing how he should be feeling. Remember that people have a wide range of reactions to different traumatic incidents.

Apply nonjudgmental listening. Monitor your facial expressions and simply nod your head at whatever he tells you.

Do feel free to offer a brief sharing of a similar experience you had to help him feel like he is not alone and that you understand what he has been through. This is not the time, however, to work on your own trauma issues. If your friend's event triggers emotions in you, find someone else to talk to who can offer you support.

Do not encourage the use of alcohol. If you go out, drink decaffeinated beverages, not coffee and not alcohol. In the aftermath of trauma, it is best for people to avoid all use of alcohol for a few weeks so they can process what has happened to them with a clear head and with true feelings. For some, drinking coffee immediately after the incident may not be a good idea because it stimulates an already stimulated system.

Do not call him "killer" or "terminator" (even as a joke) or make lighthearted comments about his actions. Even your best buddy, who you often banter with and tease, may find such comments offensive.

Although you are likely to find yourself second-guessing your friend's actions, keep your comments to yourself. Your words have a way of getting back to him and might do additional harm as he struggles to recover. Besides, your second-guesses are usually wrong anyway.

Do encourage him to take care of himself. Be supportive of his need to take time off work and encourage him to participate in debriefing procedures and professional counseling. Support him by going to the right people to talk with them about what your friend is experiencing.

Do confront him gently with his negative behavioral or emotional changes, especially if they persist longer than one month. Encourage him to seek professional help.

Do not refer to a person having psychological problems as "a mental" or other derogatory terms. Stigmatizing someone might encourage him to deny his psychological injury and not get the help he needs.

Do educate yourself about trauma reactions by reading written material or consulting with someone who knows the topic. Get the traumatized person to read this book, as well as *Deadly Force Encounters*. *On Killing* has also proven itself to be of value, having been used by many mental health professionals, and by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs

counselors to educate themselves and their veterans in this critical area.

The person wants to return to normal as soon as possible. Do not pretend like the event did not happen, avoid him, treat him as fragile, or otherwise drastically change your behavior. Simply continue to treat him as you always have.

It is worth repeating: When in doubt as to what to do or say, simply say, "I'm just glad you are okay".

When you care about someone, let him know it; that is the first round in the chamber, ready to go. For example, when my son was in his final year of high school and on spring break, he drove with some friends to Texas. Later in the week I got a collect phone call from him (never a good sign). The first words out of his lips were, "Dad, the car is totaled but everyone is okay."

Well, as a parent there were a lot of things I could have said at that moment, but for once I was able to practice what I preach. I said, "Buddy, I love you dearly, and I'm so glad you're okay." Later on we did discuss the other things, but it was important at that moment that the first words that came out of my lips was that I cared.

When my son came home from Iraq in 2003, I hugged him and told him I was proud of him, and then proceeded to follow Col. Hanifen's advice on "What to say to a veteran," which was fresh in my mind.

Sometimes, having the right words to say can be the most important thing of all.

Survivor guilt: Life not death and justice not vengeance

The Germans were retreating, and there was this raised railroad track. They were going over this track, and the one guy, I hit one guy and – what bothered me – he never, he tried to get up and I took him out again and I – you know, that, that's nasty. I kept thinking, "Don't stand up, please don't stand up." I felt anger that the guy didn't have sense enough to stay down – that's about all that I can – I don't really – you're trained, you're trained for. You knew, I mean, the one thing that an infantryman knows and is drilled into him is that if somebody points a gun at you, kill him first before he kills you... I wonder if he had a family, if he had a girlfriend. I had a girlfriend before I went overseas and I married her – we've been married for 50 some years. You not only wonder about that one person that I killed, but all the young men on both sides that lost so much of the future. David

Weddle

Secrets at the Bottom of the Drawer

Much has been written about survivor guilt among Holocaust survivors, war veterans, police officers, and even relatives spared from an illness that has struck down other family members. It is not unusual for the survivor to think that he was spared at the expense of another and feel a heavy sense of debt to the one who is gone. Some survivors make every effort to stay in the shadows to avoid drawing attention to the fact that they survived. Some may feel some distorted sense of not being worthy, and that their daily concerns are of little matter; they may even feel guilty for having needs at all. Survivor guilt can be extraordinarily toxic.

There is a bond of love among the men and women who put their lives on the line that the average person cannot comprehend. Shakespeare wrote about this when he said,

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, This day shall gentle his condition:

And gentlemen in England now a-bed Shall think themselves accursed they were not here, And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.
King Henry V

That is the bond of the men and women who put their lives on the line every day. Lose one and it is the same as losing a spouse or a brother, and when it is a human who causes the loss of a fellow warrior's life, it becomes personal. If you let survivor guilt destroy you, then you have given the enemy one more life, one more victory. And we will not give them that life!

If you are a survivor and you do not proceed carefully, there are two ways you can spin out of control: through inappropriate aggression towards others and inappropriate aggression towards yourself. Warriors must guard against both. Let us now put two last pieces of the bulletproof mind into place. The first piece is the concept of "justice not vengeance." The other is "life not death."

Justice, Not Vengeance

Don't dehumanize those who disagree with us, or even hate us. Filling ourselves with hate is neither necessary to combat those who hate us, nor is it productive. The professional soldier is one who is cold, dispassionate and regretful in his duty

when forced to kill.

Those Operators, they didn't hate the Somalis anymore than they loved them. They were there to do a job that they didn't question, not because they're mindless cogs, but because soldiers do what they're told to. They were surgically dispassionate in how they executed that job. That is what makes somebody truly dangerous to an enemy, not a berserker rage fueled by hatred for what they did to 19 Americans. The steady trigger finger kills a lot more enemy than the one that trembles with hatred. Take pride in the fact that we live in a country where we should treat Americans from all clans as Americans first and foremost; don't stoop to the level of hating those that hate us. Just keep giving us ammo and we'll take care of them, coldly, dispassionately and without malice.

We don't execute murderers out of a need for vengeance; we do it out of a need to protect others from them. Same reason we put down rabid dogs. The hate mongers of the world should be treated the same way. And we shouldn't become rabid dogs in the process. Respectfully, Souleman
From a Black Hawk Down online discussion group

For our purposes, justice not vengeance simply means that the soldier and police officer swear a solemn oath to justice. Should they violate that oath and seek vengeance, it will destroy them. The surest way to a dose of post-traumatic stress disorder is to commit an atrocity or a criminal act that violates your code of ethics.

Now, as we come to the end of the book, let us "review the bidding" and look at the factors that can contribute to stress disorders so that we can place the impact of atrocities into the equation.

- * First, remember that unmanaged stress is a major destroyer and disabler of warriors.
- * Ahead of time, the way to be psychologically predisposed to become a stress casualty is to be a sheep: live in denial, fail to stay on the warrior's path, avoid training, don't prepare and don't equip yourself for that moment when the wolf comes.
- * Physically, the way to predispose yourself to be a stress casualty is to have your body already stressed when the traumatic moment arrives. This includes malnutrition, dehydration and, most importantly, sleep deprivation.
- * At the moment of truth, the key to avoiding stress casualties is to avoid Condition Black. This is done ahead of time by developing stress

inoculation in training, learning to apply tactical breathing, and through training that develops an autopilot response to insure that even under high stress you will do the right thing.

- * Ahead of time, the warrior must confront that dirty four-letter word "kill" and the responsibility to use deadly force when the situation requires it. This insures that at the moment of truth you will not panic, you will be more likely to deter your opponent, and you will be better able to live with your actions afterwards.
- * Thus the warrior's mind and body must be ready, but there is one other component we have covered: the spirit. Your mind, body and spirit must be prepared before combat, and thus we have addressed the spiritual or religious aspects of killing.
- * Afterward, the key to preventing a stress disorder is to conduct the debriefings, de-linking the memories from the emotions, multiplying the joy and dividing the pain.

There is one last ingredient in the equation, and that is to understand that of all the actions you could take in combat, the one most likely to destroy you is to commit an atrocity or a criminal act. Your unconscious mind, you "puppy" knows that you are not at peace with the "pack" and that can eat you alive. This concept was communicated most eloquently, by a warrior leader on the eve of invading Iraq in 2003:

It is a big step to take another human life. It is not to be done lightly. I know of men who have taken life needlessly in other conflicts, I can assure you they live with the mark of Cain upon them. If someone surrenders to you then remember they have that right in international law and ensure that one day they go home to their family.

The ones who wish to fight, well, we aim to please...

If you harm the regiment or its history by over-enthusiasm in killing or in cowardice, know it is your family who will suffer. You will be shunned unless your conduct is of the highest for your deeds will follow you down through history. We will bring shame on neither our uniform or our nation.

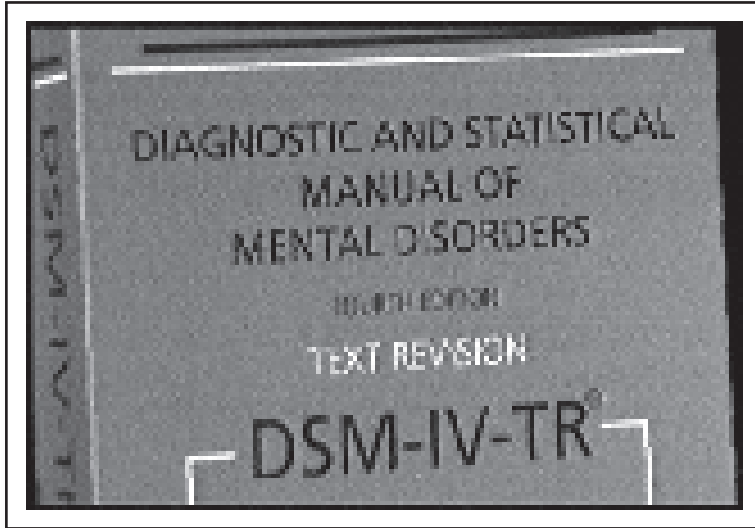
Lt. Col. Tim Collins
1st Battalion of the Royal Irish
22 March 2003

Two centuries earlier Longfellow said:

Every Guilty deed

*Holds in itself the seed
Of retribution and undying pain.
The Masque of Pandora*

You can almost think of “justice not vengeance” as what the Bible calls the



“Breastplate of Righteousness.” As long as you are doing the right thing, as long as you are following the rules and doing what your duty calls you to do, then there is true legal and mental protection in that. Again Shakespeare said it best, calling this “A peace above all earthly dignities, a still and quiet conscience.” For those seeking more information on this topic I strongly recommend Jonathan Shay’s excellent book, *Achilles in Vietnam*, which is a superb analysis of the tragic price that warriors pay for committing atrocities, engaging in berserker behavior, and violating the ancient code of the honorable warrior.

Earlier, I talked about how pain shared is pain divided. This is a powerful tool, but when a warrior commits a criminal act, he cannot share that pain. I also talked about how you are only as sick as your secrets. If as a warrior you commit a crime or an act of vengeance, you cannot share that secret with anyone, and it will only eat away at you.

When we are young and hard, we think we can get away with anything. A World War II veteran once sat across from me, wracked with sobs. He was, to my mind, a magnificent noble American, but he had made one tragic, horrific mistake in his life and it was eating him alive. He looked at me, tears streaming down his cheeks, and said, “Colonel, I’m an old man now, and I’m going to have to answer to my maker soon. I’m going to have to answer for that day it was inconvenient to take those German soldiers back. The day we shot them while they were quote, ‘trying to escape.’ I murdered those men that day; we murdered them. We didn’t have to kill them. We mur-

dered them, and soon I will have to answer to my maker for what I did.”

What do you tell a man like that? No one is beyond redemption, but I know what that old soldier would advise us: “Don’t do it.”

Now, many will say, “Colonel you’re crazy. I’m not going to commit some criminal act.” Good, but the reality is you do not know what you are going to do when your world comes unglued unless you prepare your mind,

soul and spirit ahead of time. You do not know for sure that you can dial 9-1-1 when your world is coming unglued, and you do not know for sure you can make a magazine change in your weapon unless you have rehearsed it ahead of time. Likewise, when you have rehearsed and prepared to always do the right thing at the moment of truth, you are more apt to deal appropriately with whatever comes your way.

The key is to work this matter out ahead of time, because at the moment of truth making the right decision might be difficult.

I had to figure out, am I a cop right now or am I somebody that’s mad because someone did something to my family. You don’t know if you want to go for vengeance or for justice. When it happens to someone you work with, it makes a different impact. — a police officer’s comment after his partner was shot in an ambush

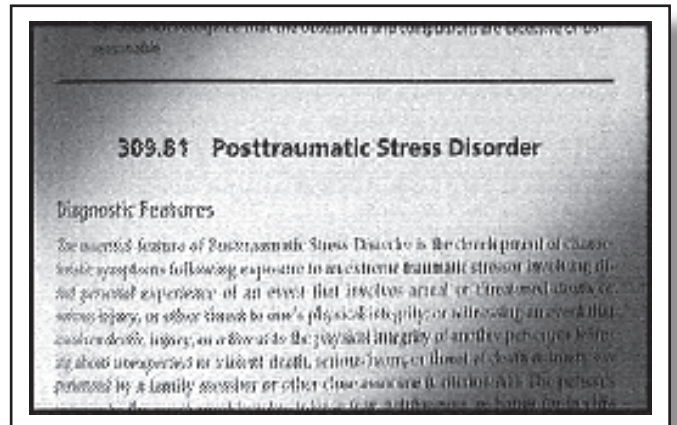
Justice not vengeance. You have sworn a solemn oath to justice. Some of you swore it as a peace officer, but all Americans swore it from their youngest days. It went like this: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God,

indivisible with liberty and justice for all.”

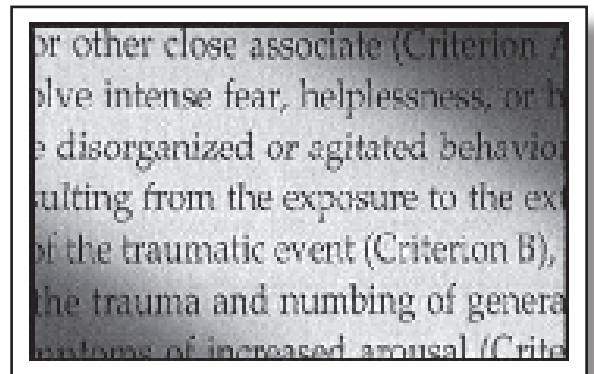
Vengeance will destroy you. Remember, PTSD is the gift that keeps on giving. It impacts not only you in the years to come but also your spouse and your kids. So now, ahead of time, while you are calm and rational, think it through: whoever you think you are avenging would not want you to pay the price of your life and your loved ones lives in the years to come.

Consider this incident that happened to a young Marine captain in Beirut in the spring of 1982. The Israeli Army was advancing, into Lebanon, with tanks in the lead, when word came down to a small band of Marines to stop the Israelis. An entire army, one of the most competent in the world, was rumbling up the road with tanks in the lead, and the American Marines were waiting for them, armed with nothing bigger than M-16 rifles. But orders are orders, and Marines are Marines, so a young captain, holding an M1911, .45 automatic pistol in his hand, walked out into the middle of the road before the advancing army. He stopped the lead Israeli tank, turned it around and sent them all back.

Did that pistol in his hand deter and



frighten the entire Israeli army? No. But that pistol represented the might, the majesty and the authority of the United States of America in the hands of a very brave man who was doing what his nation wanted him to do. Those Israelis knew that if they continued forward, they would have to kill that young marine, and along



with him came all his friends, a whole nation of friends bringing a whole world of hurt, and the price was too high for the Israelis to pay.

As a warrior, understand that when you awaken every morning, strap on your weapon, and take it into combat, it represents the might, the majesty and the authority of your city, your county, your state, and your nation, but only as long as you do what your nation wants you to do. Step out from under the umbrella of your authority and you become just another criminal. As Shakespeare wrote:

*What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted—
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.*
King Henry VI

Not too many years ago a police officer used to be given a lot of leeway. Perhaps there was a day when, if a man was asking for an ass-whooping, it was a cop's job to give it to him. Well, that day is gone. If it ever existed, it is gone today.

The Nazis and the Imperial Japanese in World War II committed many, horrendous, brutal and large scale atrocities. Unfortunately, the allied side also committed some. Many prisoners were "shot, trying to escape" when it was inconvenient to take them back, and that was often winked at. That day, too, is gone. Like the police officer, the modern soldier is likely to have his every act videotaped and reported on national TV, and there is no tolerance for any deviation from the rules of war. Today our soldiers are held to the highest standards, and that is a good thing.

It's as if we had been playing football but now it is basketball season, and some fool is out there trying to tackle people on the basketball court. He is tackling people on the basketball court! What's going to happen? He's going to foul himself out of this game. And if he's not careful, he's going to lose this game.

Whether you are a soldier or marine in close combat, a peacekeeper in a distant land, or a police officer working in the mean streets of America, you are held to a far higher standard than that of the average person. As such, you must dedicate yourself now, ahead of time, to the concept of justice, not vengeance. As individuals and as a society, we must walk the path of justice, not vengeance, lest we wake one day and find ourselves, as Edward Young put it 300 years ago, with:

*Souls made of fire, and children of the sun,
With whom revenge is virtue.*

Life Not Death: "Earn It."

We cannot fill his shoes, nor replace him, but we can do the things that he did. We can remember and honor him by being good officers, good husbands and fathers, and good friends. We can take seriously our life's work and be faithful servants.

Officer Greg Pashley

"Huffy: Cop, friend and hero"

When someone gives his life to save your life, you must not waste it. Let me repeat that: If someone buys your life at the price of his life, you do not dare waste it. Your moral, sacred responsibility is to lead the fullest, richest, best life you can.

Think about this, right now, ahead of time, while you are calm and rational. If you were the one to die and your partner lived, you would want him to have the best life possible. You died to give him that.

Now, should your partner or your buddy die in combat, leaving you to drive on, what would he want for you? The same thing. He would want the fullest, richest life you can have. That is what he died to give you, and that is your moral, sacred responsibility. Your mission.

That means that right now you need to make a conscious effort to set aside all self-destructive thoughts and dedicate yourself to leading that full life. Now, you might say, "Colonel you're crazy, I'm never going to eat my gun." Good. But according to the National Police Suicide Foundation, the number of suicides among police officers is two to three times greater than line of duty deaths. And many other warriors in their hour of despair have done the wrong thing, seeking a permanent solution to a temporary problem. They too would have sworn that they would never consider suicide. At the moment of truth, however, they did the wrong thing because they had not, with all their heart and soul, worked through it ahead of time.

Steven Spielberg's motion picture *Saving Private Ryan* gives us an incredibly realistic depiction of the violence and horror of combat. This movie is something which, like sex, can be child abuse if inflicted upon children, but for adults it can provide us with a wonderful model for behavior when we talk about choosing life not death. Let me tell you what *Saving Private Ryan* means to me. A band of U.S. Army Rangers go behind enemy lines, where each man, one by one, dies to save one young paratrooper: Private Ryan. To me that band of Rangers represents every American warrior who ever willingly

gave his life to give us the freedom, the lives and the liberty that we have today. Those Rangers are the boys who fell at Lexington and Concord, and they are bloody windrows of bodies at Shilo and Gettysburg. They are trenches full of blood in the Ardennes Forest, and they are a bloody tide of bodies at Normandy Beach and Iwo Jima. They are more than 300 police officers and firefighters rushing up the steps of the World Trade Center, and they represent the cop who died yesterday, alone and afraid on a dirty street, somewhere in America. That band of Rangers is every warrior who ever died to give us what we have today.

Private Ryan is us. He is every citizen who is alive and free today because two centuries of warriors have gone before us and purchased at the ultimate price what we have today.

Do you remember the end of the movie, when the last ranger, Captain Miller, lay dying on the bridge? He looks up at Ryan, he looks up at us, and what are his dying words? "*Earn this. Earn it.*"

Earn it. Be worthy. Don't waste it. Two centuries of warriors look up from their graves in this dark hour, they look up from the rubble of the World Trade Center, and their message is, "Earn it." We can never truly earn what has been purchased at the ultimate price, but we can do our best. Our model is Private Ryan.

Do you remember the old man at the very end of the movie standing over the grave of his comrades with his grandbabies and his great-grandbabies bouncing all around him? He looks over at his wife, and says, "Tell me I've led a good life. Tell me I've been a good man."

As a warrior, your mission is to man the ramparts of our civilization honorably and well in this dark hour; to retire honorably and well; to raise your grandbabies and your great-grandbabies straight, tall and true; to raise the next generation, straight and tall and true; to crack the bones and suck the marrow from every single day that you have been blessed with; and at the end of your days, to look into the eyes of your loved ones and say, "Tell me I've led a good life. Tell me I've been a good person."

As warriors, we dedicate ourselves toward a lifetime of service to our civilization.

We make the choice, the conscious decision to take the path of justice not vengeance, and life not death. Almost 2,500 years ago, the Greek poet and philosopher, Heraclitus, talked about making this choice.

The soul is dyed the color of its thoughts... The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you choose, what you think, and what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny... it is the light that guides your way.

In my presentations I show a photograph of a young firefighter wearing his heavy protective equipment and helmet. You can see vasoconstriction causing white areas around his eyes, nose and mouth, clearly the face of a frightened young man. The photo also shows several other people in the background, their backs to the camera as they scramble down a stairwell. What makes this firefighter--this young warrior--different from everyone else in the photograph is that he is going up the stairs. The photo was taken in a stairwell in one of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, where in one horrific morning 3,000 Americans died. Most of them did not have a choice that day, but there was a group of warriors--police officers and firefighters--who did. They were willing to go up the stairs, because that was their job, because that was what they were trained to do, but most of all they went up those stairs because they held the lives of any citizen in that building to be more precious than their own. "Greater love hath no man than this..." They went up, but most of them did not come back down. Many lives were taken on that tragic morning, but some were freely given. How can we equip ourselves, train ourselves, and prepare ourselves so that we will not be found wanting at our moment of truth? How can we "earn" this? As warriors, we can learn, strive and prepare ourselves but in the end we can never truly earn it. None of us can ever be worthy of what two centuries of men like the frightened, courageous young firefighter in that photo have done for us. We can, however, strive to do our best, like Private Ryan, and dedicate ourselves, ahead of time to master survivor guilt and lead the full, rich and productive life that has been purchased for us at such a dear cost.

CONCLUSION

Are warriors leaders? I think so. I think they pretty much have to be. Unfortunately, rank and leadership do not automatically go hand-in-hand. Rank also does not automatically make one a warrior. Here is an example.

Five years ago I was selected to test for a sergeant position with my police department. Part of that process was a long oral board interview with upper-level police supervisors from outside agencies in the area. One of the first things they asked me was this: What is your supervisory

philosophy? I responded that I didn't see this as a supervisory position, which seemed to confuse them slightly. So they asked me what did I see it as. I told them that I saw it as a leadership position. They chuckled politely and asked me what my leadership philosophy was. This is how I responded. This is leadership responsibility. You have to lead from the front. You cannot stand in the back and yell, "Follow me!" You have to stand tall and set an example. You have to take care of your troops and never ask them to do anything you are not willing to do. If you cannot do the job then you must find someone who can and give that person the opportunity to do it. You take responsibility for the actions of your men and you accept responsibility for your own actions. You never ever point a finger at your men for your own shortcomings and you make damn sure they know it when they do something good. If you do these things, your men will follow you anywhere you want to go. This was met with a stunned silence. I was subsequently unanimously recommended for promotion and I have tried my very best to live the words I spoke. It's up to people like you and I to seek out those young men and women and to teach them, lead them, and to provide them with everything they need to become our future warriors and leaders. These people truly are our future. I realize that I haven't got the education and the experience guys like you have, but I have some pretty good ideas that I've learned from guys like you. I try to pass those things on every day to those young men and women I have taken under my wing.

Dave Bergquist

Correspondence to Lt. Col. Dave Grossman

It may well be that we are at a turning point in history, a new era, a time for warriors. In this dark hour, our mission is to rise up and nurture the next generation of warriors. And, as Sergeant Chris Pascoe shows us, there is reason to believe that a generation of mighty warriors is rising to the challenge.

Sergeant Pascoe, a remarkable warrior-scholar working for the Michigan State Police, e-mailed me concerning a book called *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy* by William Strauss and Neil Howe. Chris was rightfully excited about the book, saying that it is an analysis of cycles in human development that have repeated themselves throughout history. I agree with Chris that this book has powerful considerations for today's warrior and for the next generation of warriors. Here is his explanation of the four turning points.

The First Turning is a high new civic order, an upbeat era of strengthening institutions and weakening individualism (i.e., Truman, Eisenhower, and the Kennedy era).

The Second Turning is an awakening and passionate era of spiritual upheaval where the civic order comes under attack (i.e., the turbulent 1960s).

The Third Turning is an unraveling or culture war, a downcast era of strengthening individualism and weakening institutions, when the old civic order decays and new values are planted (i.e., Reagan, Bush, and Clinton era).

The Fourth Turning is a crisis or upheaval that propels a new civic order, eventually leading to another First Turning.

At the time the book was written in 1997, the authors predicted a possible Fourth Turning in the year 2005, initiated by a "fiscal crisis, global terrorism, and growing anarchy."

The result, according to the authors: "Armed confrontation usually occurs around the climax of crisis. At home and abroad, these events will reflect the tearing of the civic fabric at points of extreme vulnerability; problem areas where, during the Unraveling, America will have neglected, denied, or delayed needed action. Many Americans won't know where their savings are, who their employer is, what their pension is, or how the government works. Anger at mistakes we made will translate into calls for action.

"From this trough, and from these dangers, the making of a new social contract and new civic order will arise. National issues will break clear of the Unraveling-era circus, Republicans, Democrats, or perhaps a new party will decisively win the long partisan tug-of-war, ending the era of split government. Trust will be reborn. American society will be transformed. The emergent society will be something better, a nation that sustains its Framers' visions with a robust new pride. Or it may be something worse. The Fourth Turning is a time of glory or ruin."

Then Chris asks: "Are we in the Fourth Turning now?" Could the attacks of September 11, 2001, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the ongoing war on terrorism, combined with all-time record violent crime rates at home and around the world be the crisis period of the Fourth Turning that will open the door for a new period of revival, regeneration and renewal in our society? If so, then warriors may well be the "midwife" of this crisis phase, giving birth to a new era of stability and civic order. If that is our challenge, then now, more than ever, we must become masters of our realm, embracing the warrior concepts of life not death, and justice not vengeance.

In recent years, there has been a

segment of our society that does not like using the term warrior. For them the noble heritage of the knight paladin is not what they think of when they hear the word. They are not bad people, but they do not understand.

So let us all work together to help them see that in a republic or a representative democracy such as ours, the role of the warrior is not to kill; it is to protect, preserve, and defend. Yes, upon occasion, peace warriors may be called upon to take human life, but that is never their goal. The goal of the "moral warrior" can best be summed up in one last model for action, one final true story.

This is not a story about killing. Killing is what we do if we must, and if we must, we do it well. Nor is this a story about dying. Dying is what we do if we must, and if we must, we do it well. It is just a simple story about a young warrior standing in the snow.

During the Battle of the Bulge, the Nazi SS spearhead units had broken through American lines in the Ardennes Forest in December of 1944, and the demoralized American units were fleeing in terror down the little roads coming out of the Ardennes Forest with the Nazis on their heels. My old unit, the 82nd Airborne Division, was brought out of reserve to help stop the enemy advance. The paratroopers of the 82nd marched day and night to establish blocking positions on the roads leading through the Ardennes Forest, and they had the mission, the authority and the responsibility to rally together the fleeing Americans and stop the Nazi advance. And that is exactly what they did.

There was an American tank, 30 tons of death, fleeing down one of the little roads leading through the forest. One lonely paratrooper stood beside the road. A photographer captured the image of this young man with hollow sunken eyes, a three-day growth of beard, an M-1 Garand in one hand, and a bazooka slung over his back. He raised his hand to stop the fleeing tank. After it had ground to a halt, the weary paratrooper looked up at the tank commander, and asked, "Buddy, are you looking for a safe place?"

"Yeah," the tank commander replied.

"Then park your tank behind me, because I'm the 82nd Airborne, and this is as far as the bastards are going."

Do you understand how this story applies to you, my fellow warriors?

For the rest of your lives you are going to be faced with people who are fleeing. They will be fleeing drugs, crime, poverty, violence, terrorism, and the fear that lurks

in the hearts of every man and woman. And you have the mission, the authority and the responsibility to stand up and say, "Friend, neighbor, brother, sister, buddy... are you looking for a safe place?"

And they will say, "Yeah."

So you tell them, "Then get behind me, because I'm a cop--because I'm a soldier--because I'm a warrior--and this is as far as the bastards are going!"

You see, it is not about killing, and it is not about dying. We are not all called to kill, and we are not all called to die, but we are all called to serve our civilization in this dark hour. It's about preserving and protecting. It is about serving and sacrificing.

It is about doing a dirty, desperate, thankless job, every day of your life, to the utmost of your ability, because you know that if no one did that job our civilization would be doomed.

So now as you do that, for the rest of your lives, may God bless you, your families and your every endeavor. Amen.

The Final Inspection

*The warrior stood and faced his God,
Which will always come to pass,
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.*

*"Step forward now, old warrior,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To My Church have you been true?"*

*The warrior squared his shoulders and
said, "No, Lord, I guess I ain't,
'Cause those of us who carry guns
Can't always be a saint.*

*"I've had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough,
And sometimes I've been violent,
'Cause the world is awfully rough.*

*"But, I never took a penny
That wasn't mine to keep.
Though I worked a lot of overtime
When the bills got just too steep,*

*"And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear,
And sometimes, God forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.*

*"I know I don't deserve a place
Among the people here,
They never wanted me around
Except to calm their fears.*

*"If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand.
In life I didn't expect nor need too much,
So if you don't, I'll understand."*

*There was a silence all around the throne,
Where the saints had often trod,
As the warrior stood quietly,
For the judgment of his God.*

*"Step forward now, my warrior,
You've born your burdens well,
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell."*

Author Unknown



In appreciation.....

We are indebted to Lieutenant Colonel (Rtd) Dave Grossman USMC for allowing us to use excerpts of his book, "On Combat" within the pages of the Signalman magazine. And, we hope that the wisdom he has imparted may prove useful to all the "soldier" fraternity - both in giving us a greater understanding of the emotions we "come back with" after operational service, and how to help those of us who may never have "understood" (or have been "understood"), and to assist those who are yet to face operational service.

We hope this last excerpt will also help us to "welcome" home our soldier brothers and sisters, in a much more helpful way than any "parades" may do.

Thanks Dave - onya Mate!

Notes:

1. Daves books and material are available through his website at www.killology.com, and
2. Look out for an Australian/New Zealand Tour, in the not-too-distant future.

Ed.....

