

## William Fielding Stroud

Testimony of William Fielding Stroud given before the  
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs on August 23, 2007

It has become public knowledge through the National News outlets what Vietnam Veterans and Veterans from other previous wars know from experience: The VA system for dealing with Veterans with PTSD issues is pretty much broken. Our VA professionals really do not know how to deal with these PTSD issues as 99% of them have never tasted combat themselves; they can provide pills but are pretty ineffectual/slow/inexperienced in combating active PTSD issues. With a back-log of over 250,000 cases even before the current mid-east crises' arose, and 100's of thousands more current Veterans seeking relief from their PTSD issues, our country is in a crises of unimaginable proportions.

Older Veterans know, from experience, that if PTSD issues are not addressed early upon returning from a combat situation, these internal conflicts will continue to solidify into patterns of behavior which are destructive and can, and do, lead to a downward spiral of damaging personal behavior, many types of family conflicts, large numbers of homelessness and large numbers incarcerated in jails and prisons. And now that there are many women veterans, we are looking at new areas of concern for our society.

This situation is unacceptable to us who have fought in combat in earlier theaters of operation. We cannot sit back and watch as our younger brothers and sisters go through the years of physical, emotional, mental and

spiritual anguish which can be reduced and/or eliminated if approached by people of like experience who have gone through the process of re-integration themselves.

This correspondence is to inform you that there is a credible team of peers, professionals and laymen living here on Maui consisting of many combat veterans who have gone through the process of 'discharging the negativity of the past' and have the knowledge and expertise to take on these veterans with PTSD issues and teach them how no part of their life is so traumatic that they can't learn from it and become a more mature person; using their experience to become a more balanced person and not a conflicted one.

There is a first-rate facility here on Maui which can easily handle a minimum of 75 PTSD claimants every 3 month cycle which can be obtained (if we act in a timely manner) to provide a place to run this professional operation; and the cost of putting one veteran through this 3 month program is infinitely small compared to a lifetime of 100% disability payments. By running traumatized veterans through this program on a continual basis we can pretty much guarantee that our government (and thus our citizens) will save many Billions of Dollars in actual out-of-pocket expenses in taking care of these brave soldiers for the rest of their lives as-well-as the additional social costs of their resulting behavior. More importantly though is the fact that we will be helping these veterans turn their lives around after having undergone such traumatic experiences in such hostile environments; all at the request of our Country.

We stand ready to act - Now! The PTSD issues being experienced are not so hard to deal with for people who have had similar experience and have made it out through to the other side. Please do not hesitate to act! Our only interest is in helping out our fellow combat veterans and their families; their wars continue on internally.

Respectfully,

William Fielding Stroud

Past President - Vietnam Veterans of Maui County Chairman  
of the Board - VVMC Life Member - VVMC, VFW, DAV