



REPLY TO
ATTENTION

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION and FORT RILEY
580 1ST DIVISION ROAD
FORT RILEY, KANSAS 66442-7000

27 April 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR Record


SUBJECT: Brothers at War Documentary

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to document my support of the Brothers at War film and companion workbook. The following reflects my professional opinion but does not necessarily reflect the views of the First Infantry Division, the Department of Defense or the United States Government.
2. As an active duty physician who has cared for patients while deployed, at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and in garrison at Ft. Riley, Kansas as the First Infantry Division Psychiatrist, I have had the opportunity to interact with Soldiers during all phases of the Army Forces Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle. I have had, and to continue to have, the honor of treating patients as they struggle with many of the themes presented in the Brothers at War documentary. I have also been exposed to many attempts by civilians, non-medical military personnel, and various well-meaning organizations to try to understand and help returning Soldiers as they reintegrate with their family and society. Some of these attempts achieve their objective, but a lot do not. I can categorically state that the Brothers at War documentary is the most honest, effective and comprehensive overview of the individual and family experience as it relates to the modern deployment cycle.
3. I have had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Jake Rademacher during 3 separate screenings of the documentary for First Infantry Division units. His insights, combined with the universal themes that are elucidated by members of his family, speak directly to Soldiers who are returning to garrison duties. The companion workbook touches on discussion topics which Soldiers are typically hesitant to approach themselves. Some of the topics have already been emphasized by the military and are starting to make a difference in reducing stigma. These include the "normal" response to "abnormal" situations and how that differs from symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, as well as the far reaching effects of substance abuse and suicide. What makes this documentary unique is that it also highlights the impact of deployments on the family, the misunderstanding of Soldiers by the civilian community, the importance of communication in marriages (and the resultant outcomes), sibling rivalry, the addictive nature of the adrenaline rush associated with missions and killing, and the often ignored bonds that develop between American Service Members and the local military they are often charged to train.

4. The idea that this movie “softens the target” to erode barriers and decrease the stigma of seeking help is an important outcome. The companion workbook takes it a step further and acts as a catalyst to stimulate in-depth discussions potentially to prevent illness from beginning in the first place. This is a critical endeavor when we consider the shortage of professional caregivers and the growing burden of disease perpetuated by this era of persistent conflict.

5. At Ft. Riley we will continue to use this medium in small groups at our Resiliency Campus to stimulate healthy and productive dialogue by Soldiers and Families in order to improve insight and awareness. Thanks to all of the hard-working individuals who persevered to make this project a reality. I would like to extend special thanks to the members of the Rademacher family who bared their soul on camera for the benefit of military.

6. If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the undersigned at scott.g.williams@us.army.mil.



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