The Repetition & Avoidance Quarterly

RAQ Ends Publication

The Repetition & Avoidance Quarterly will cease publishing after this issue. For almost 17 full years the RAQ put out four issues every year, amounting, with Volume 17, number 3, to 67 issues since it began in 1996. A remarkable run, considering that its function was secondary to the goal of WDVA PTSD Program, which was to deliver direct counseling services to veterans and their families. The RAQ began as a newsletter with the idea that proved naïve, that the counselors and contractors of the program would contribute, in the interest of circulating knowledge and news about topics related to PTSD and veterans’ adjustment to civilian life. What proved to be ideologically naïve was the idea that everyone in the program wanted to participate. In the years that followed, as it turned out, very few contributed articles or suggestions. I supplied almost all the content because I loved writing and journalism, and I was intellectually interested in the topic that was growing each year as the wars developed and veterans aged.

There was a hay-day period when I would attend and report on annual ISTSS meetings. I assumed the role of recording the history of our annual PTSD program meetings, taking photos of the gatherings and speakers. I read journals and I enjoyed reviewing the articles I thought interesting. I asked for feedback from readers, and got some. I knew how many issues went out on our mailing list, hundreds, and I had some indications that it was read. Then the budget crunch hit the State coffers and the paper edition was stopped in favor of an on-line release. The newspaper journalist in me suffered from the transition, but I kept on producing, mainly because I enjoyed writing.

A newsletter produced quarterly is a very old-fashioned way of reporting news. These are the days of tweets and hand held computers that are so addictive that people have to be told to turn them off when they go to a movie. They deliver the news as quickly as it can be gathered. People routinely and often unknowingly record historic events, like asteroids exploding overhead. Quarterly newsletters are as quaint as sailing ships.

My thesis has been that we who treat war veterans and their families need to pay attention to the culture in which we live. Veterans write and produce films that tell us about how they view their war and their adjustment to civilian life, so that we need to pay attention, not just to scientific articles, but to artistic expressions by and about veterans. As clinicians and providers of services to veterans, we should know what is common to all veterans and what is unique to any one veteran. Maybe this is obvious, but I view these cultural effects as reciprocal—how society views the veteran who is trying to adjust, and how the veteran views the society.

Institutions have a way of crystallizing. Some veterans’ institutions are so large that they have publicity staff who specialize in communicating in a way that is slick and easy to read. The RAQ has certainly not been slick. Thumbing through past issues, I think there is evidence that the writing and subject matter have matured.

Since 1996 the wars and the subjects have changed and the veteran population has grown. Now that the WDVA program leadership has changed, there is an opportunity to clear out unneeded expenses and make way for new programs and contractors. It is nice that the RAQ was able to record a bit of the history, because the PTSD Program has been unique and has proved to be a direct service uncomplicated by red tape. I hope that the contractors will not forget the cultural underpinnings in the history of our work.

I would like to thank Mr. Schumacher for making the shoe fit for almost 17 years, even if it was often uncomfortable. The RAQ gave me the chance to stay meaningfully connected to the program after I retired from clinical work in 2008. I thank you all for a lovely run. In fact, my cup overflows. Cheers! EE ##
Perceived Institutional Betrayal Exacerbates Psychological Trauma

Two psychologists from the University of Oregon reported on their research into the effects of institutional betrayal. Carly Parnitzke Smith and Jennifer J. Freyd examined the effect of perceived institutional betrayal [Dangerous Safe Havens: Institutional Betrayal Exacerbates Sexual Trauma, Journal of Traumatic Stress, 2013, 26(1), 119-124]. They write, “research suggests that interpersonal abuse experienced in these settings may be more harmful than can be explained by the traumatic events themselves” (p. 120). The authors state that institutions that are expected to provide safe environments would be perceived as betraying trust. “Betrayal trauma theory would predict that sexual assault occurring in a context where one’s safety is dependent upon an institution (e.g., the military) would be associated with more difficulties as one continues to try to function in that environment (e.g., continuing to serve in the military)” (p. 120).

Smith and Freyd examined this issue with a battery of questionnaires surveying university undergraduate students. They reported that 68% (N=233) “reported at least one unwanted sexual experience and many reported several such experiences (…)” (p. 121). The authors reported: “Consistent with betrayal trauma theory, sexually assaulted women who also experienced institutional betrayal experienced higher levels of several posttraumatic symptoms” (p. 122). The authors cited such examples of institutional betrayal outside the military and university settings as those occurring in “institutionalized childcare,” and “cases of domestic violence involving failed attempts to seek help from the justice system”

Smith and Freyd noted that their sample revealed no experience in military service, which, they said, “is arguably one of the most recognizable institutions in the United States.” They wrote: “our results suggest that attention should also be focused on the events leading up to sexual assault. In fact, betrayals occurring in events leading up to sexual assault such as creating an environment that is conducive to sexual assault were more commonly reported than insufficient responses to assault in this sample. This perception may be more damaging to members because it creates a sense that the institution could have done something to prevent the experience from occurring” (p. 123).

Smith and Freyd alluded to the U.S. military as “one of the more recognizable institutions,” but noted that none of their subjects in their study identified the military as a source of institutional betrayal. Nonetheless, the authors identified the military as an institution that should be examined further. They theorized that the strength of identification with the institution would be greater in the military, and theorized that institutional betrayal would be felt more strongly and “act as more than an exacerbative force” in resulting symptoms.

Smith and Freyd emphasized that attention should be addressed to the circumstances in the environment leading up to the sexual trauma. One of the issues that the authors might address is the role of unconscious assumptions regarding the nature of institutions. In early human development survival of the individual depended on the tribe’s viability. In such a case the institution was more important than the individual. It may be that otherwise professional members of an institution feel compelled act to protect the reputation of the institution at the sacrifice of the individual. Smith and Freyd cite Penn State University and “clergy sexual abuse” as examples of institutional betrayal in which the institution failed to provide safety to its members.

Military history is replete with examples of individuals who sacrifice themselves for the survival of their combat unit. Combat conditions enhance the sense that everyone’s survival depends on the viability of the unit. It is possible that the fact that we see institutional betrayal happening across well-formed, long-standing institutions is suggestive of its universality. If such is the case, than it falls upon the institutional leadership to anticipate the problem before it occurs, as Smith and Freyd recommend.

In their 2010 history of women in the military, A Few Good Women, Evelyn Monahan and Rosemary Neidell-Greenlee expressed the same sentiment: “…every commanding officer in the U.S. Armed Forces has the power to stop such crimes in the populations of the military personnel under their command” (p. 415). The authors, two VA and former military nurses, assert that the military lowered its standards for recruitment during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, which allowed convicted felons into the army on waivers, and that the institutional betrayal is evidenced by the proportional increase in sexual assaults and sexual harassment. They write, “Their presence, and the environment their presence conditioned, led to a variety of problems and crimes among military personnel” (p. 379).

The reputation of the institution rides on the behavior of its members and when a crime like sexual assault occurs the unit leader experiences a share of the shame. Smith and Freyd comment that the students in their research sample had rather weak identification with the institution. This is usually not the case in the military, where unit identity is cultivated as a major part of its strength.

If the primitive unconscious response of the leaders is to protect the institution at the expense of the individual, such a response could be corrected through management training. But it is also apparent that sexual assaults occur, especially when action-oriented adolescents and adults are functioning in close daily contact. Smith and Freyd cite “alcohol facilitated coercion” as a “frequently reported” type of sexual assault (p. 122). One of the behaviors that the military and higher education institutions share is a frequent social use of alcohol. Given that unwanted events occur frequently, the institutional failure is that it does not protect and nurture the victim in a fashion that establishes the individual as warranting care.

The authors Smith and Freyd have identified a significant aspect of sexual trauma that they found to be relevant in understanding the symptoms of posttraumatic recovery. EE ##
Two King County Conferences – Unique Ground Breaking Events

On April 30th, 2013, Making the Connections, a King County Veterans Service Provider Conference, was held at the DoubleTree at Hilton, SeaTac. Unique to any other conference of its kind, close to 300 participants engaged in activities to promote connections with each other, share resource information, and engage in professional development in three content areas: Employment/Education, Homelessness, and Mental Health.

The conference began with opening remarks presented by Scott Swaim, LMHC, Director, Valley Cities Counseling, Contractor, WDVA and CEO, Milspec Advisory Group, followed by comments introduced by Joe McDermott, King County Council District 8.

Timm Lovitt, Army OEF/OIF Veteran, WDVA TBI Field Coordinator, and Nikki Davis, USAF OEF/OIF Veteran, Veteran Advocate and Project Manager, WDVA Vet Corps delivered the keynote address. They highlighted their personal experiences in service and the transition out of the military. Their insights revealed a glimpse of the obstacles and challenges experienced by returning veterans, with a challenge to better serve them. Their stories were well received by the audience as was evidenced by applause at the end.

Participants were able to self-select three breakout sessions based upon three content areas.

Facilitated by Peter Schmidt, VTSC Project Director, Employment/Education featured Kelly Robinson, Vocational Rehabilitation & Education, VA Puget Sound, Albert Garza, Administrator Employment Security Department, Auburn & Renton WorkSource, and Nancy Loverin, Program Manager, King County Veterans Program. Participants were given an overview on VA Comprehensive Work Therapy and Rehabilitation, Employment Security Departments/WorkSource, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representatives, Employment and Training, Workforce Investment Act, Unemployment Insurance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Katherine Gerard, Program Manager, VA Puget Sound, facilitated the session on Housing and Homelessness where Dixon McReynolds, Program Manager, WDVA, and Mike Nielsen, Director of Special Projects, Community Psychiatric Clinic, highlighted current needs and trends of veterans in need of housing and services for homeless veterans and families.

Scott Swaim, facilitated the session on Mental Health and Dorothy Hanson, WDVA PTSD Program Director, presented an overview of counseling services available to veterans and their family members. Brief discussions ensued on prevalence, evidence based practices, the availability of treatments, and training and support for providers who serve veterans and their families.

After a working lunch participants were assigned to another series of breakout sessions: It’s Not Easy Being Green, We All Live in a Yellow Submarine, and Orange-Colored Sky. Participants had one of three colors assigned to their nametags in order to diversify the membership to different rooms. WDVA Vet Corps and staff introduced a series of vignettes about veterans where providers brainstormed how to best serve based upon the knowledge base in each group. Special thanks goes to Vet Corps and WDVA staff facilitators: Dennis Brown (WDVA), Ahmad Bennett, Glen Boje, Jorge Cavallo, Roxanne Clark, Melissa Crouse, Nikki Davis, Miguel Escalara, David Green (WDVA), Kara Hayes, Robert Hersey, Duong Huynh, Randy Mulkey, Rebecca Murch, DorSol Plants, Kristina Setchfield, Davin Simmons, Chanan Suarez, and Jaime Yslas.

An Action Plan to Connect was facilitated by Scott Swaim followed by an introduction to the King County Veterans Initiative as presented by Pat Lemus, Assistant Division Director, King County Community Services Division.

On a scale of one (low) to five (high), participants rated the conference 4.37. An average score of 4.36 was endorsed for the item, “I have made connections that will improve our services to veterans” and the “overall effectiveness of presenters” was 4.31.

In general, comments praised the opportunity to connect and meet each other and the need to do more. One provider wrote, “The best part for me was linking with other providers and finding out about the services they provided.” A number of comments centered on the theme to create a centralized database of resource information.

On May 10th, 2013, Be the Connect, a day long conference focused on higher education and student veterans, occurred at Green River Community College, Lindbloom Student Center. The purpose was to inform participants on student Veteran-related issues and increase collaboration and greater connects with the VA, WDVA, and King County Veteran Services.

Close to 200 participants, which represented campus teams, received a welcome and overview from Dr. Peter Schmidt, Project Director, Veterans Training Support Center, Edmonds Community College, followed by greetings and remarks from Dr. Eileen Ely, President, Green River Community College, Mayor Pete Lewis, City of Auburn, a brief video from Senator Patty Murray, and Dow Constantine, King County Executive.

A panel, Emerging Trends with Veterans in Washington State: Who Are These Vets? was facilitated by Al Souma, Director, Services for Students with Disabilities. A review of quantitative data was offered at the local, state and federal levels and was presented by Jon Hoskins, Evaluation and Performance Measurement Unit, King County, Catherine Nichols, Program Manager WDVA, and Dr. Matthew Jakupcak, Clinical Psychologist, Deployment Health Services VA Puget Sound, respectively. The purpose of the data review was to engage participants to consider the impact and implications to services on a campus.

Jamie Yslas, Vet Corps Representative to Seattle University, facilitated a session called, Veterans Experiences on Campus. Ahmad Bennett, Cascadia Community College, Josh Reason, Antioch University, and Mike Thom, University of Washington, Bothell, were guided in a soulful and reflective conversation about their transition and experiences on campus that was witnessed by the audience. A standing ovation at the end spoke volumes about the participant experience.

A networking lunch followed and two rounds of eight breakout sessions were offered concurrently in the afternoon. They were:
The Stigma of PTSD

A recent news article in the Seattle Times (4/10/2013) by the Associated Press has the following headline: “Serbian war veteran kills 13 in shooting spree.” The first subhead gave detail: “Shot family, then went house to house.” The second subhead, however, speculated: “Thousands suffer from PTSD, experts say.” And while no doubt all the headline statements are true, they imply a causality—that PTSD causes or is involved with the killing.

The news article said that the man, 60, killed his mother and his 42-year old son, and then went house to house, killing a 2 year old boy and 10 other neighbors. When police arrived he shot his wife and himself and died a few days later. The man was identified as having taken part in the fighting in Croatia in the 1990s. He and his son lost their jobs two years ago.

The article goes on to state that no motive for the shooting has been identified. The shooter had no criminal record or psychiatric history. It points out that from 1991 to 1999, as Yugoslavia broke up, 200,000 were killed and millions of people were made refugees. “Tuesday’s killings are the worst in modern Serbia where thousands suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.....” The article goes on to detail other mass shootings in the area and notes that Serbia has the fifth highest ratio of guns per citizen, at 38 per 100 people. The U.S. has 88.8 per 100.

The news article implies that if the murderer had adequate health care in Serbia PTSD would have been diagnosed and treated. The subhead could have more accurately stated that an unemployed man with access to guns goes on shooting spree.

The lesson here perhaps is that PTSD is being associated with mass murder as if it were the cause, even though PTSD was not diagnosed and there were a number of other important variables. This is a way in which journalists fail. They go with the sensational aspect of the story.

Another eerie aspect of this story is the way it reminds us of SSgt Bales’ shooting rampage in Afghanistan. His defense attorney is claiming that Sgt. Bales had PTSD and the Army knew it before he was deployed.

What is clear is that PTSD is associated in the news with crimes of assault and murder, even when the association is not established, but is lurking in the background.

What we see in PTSD is a potpourri of symptoms. In war veterans there are many months worth of memories involving killing and destruction. A percentage of veterans develop PTSD, but it is safe to say that they all have the memories. When times get really bad, with unemployment and poverty, perhaps it is enough it say that many suffer and some, a few, explode.

Brian Castner, in his readable, poetic memoir of service as an EOD technician in Iraq, The Long Walk (reviewed in the previous RAQ), featured a debate with his “new shrink,” a VA therapist, about whether he had PTSD. She did not think so after she reviewed his symptoms with him and found that they didn’t add up to DSM-IV 309.81. Mr. Castner appeared recently at Seattle’s Town Hall and confirmed that he had mild traumatic brain injury but not PTSD. As he said, “you can be ‘Crazy’ and not have PTSD.” His “new shrink” said instead, “You’re normal.” One wonders if Mr. Castner or his VA therapist are making a distinction between having PTSD and being normal.

It is an interesting concept, I suppose academic, that a person could be normal and have PTSD. Don’t normal people also have problems and foibles? And then there is the meaning of the term “normal.” A norm along what variable? A person having warts and cysts and distorted toenails might reasonably be considered overall normal. Can a person with a disability be considered normal? Might a person with a diagnosable psychiatric disorder also be considered overall normal? Can a veteran with memories of combat in a foreign country be considered normal, with or without PTSD being diagnosed?

Maybe Mr. Castner’s “new shrink” and I think similarly, that we must consider what is normal for a combat veteran. If a veteran holds down a job for 35 years, pays taxes, raises a family, but then retires prematurely at age 60 because he can’t tolerate the stress anymore, he or she might be considered normal along several variables.

It is apparent that having PTSD doesn’t disqualify one from living a normal life, given that something (by definition) abnormal happened. There is probably an ambiguous distinction to be made between the 60% or more of combat veterans without diagnosable PTSD, compared to the 30% who have PTSD. The likelihood is that many veterans have memories that are disturbing when recalled, have what some have referred to metaphorically as a room that they don’t like to go into unless they have to.

Lots of segments of our society are involved in the stigma of PTSD. Certainly journalists and conveyors of entertainment have a role in sensationalizing PTSD, exploiting combat veterans for action roles. Therapists, too, must look at their role in furthering the stigma bias. Therapists are tied to reimbursement by insurance companies and provider institutions, causing them to focus on evidence to show that a full list of possible pathology was reviewed and that “outcome” behavior was considered. To do this a diagnosis must be reached and a GAF score documented. GAF refers to “global functioning.” None of this speaks to being “normal.”  

EE ##
University of Washington-Bothell Campus Dedicates its Veterans’ Archway Memorial

“...This is a place where we, veteran and non-veteran, conservative and liberal, educator and student come together to remember the sacrifices of the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. We honor them by living, learning, loving, remembering their sacrifice, and by creating a better future together.”—UW Bothell Student Veteran’s Association—2013.

On May 28, 2013 the Veterans’ Archway Memorial was formally dedicated at the University of Washington, Bothell Campus. On the rock in the middle of the Archway is a replica of an American Flag folded as it would be on the casket of a fallen service member. The ceremony featured an introductory welcome by Chancellor Kenyon S. Chan and a moving address by the first UW Bothell Student Veterans Association President Sean Alley.

Pictured below, attending the dedication ceremonies are Casey Hromada, Student Veterans Association President, and Rosa Lundborg, Director of Disability Services and Certifying Official for the UW Bothell. ##

(Photos by Flash, the veterans’ photojournalist.)

(Conferences, Continued from page 3.)

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- **Boots to Books: The Cultural Challenge** — Nikki Davis, USAF OEF/OIF Veteran, WDVA Vet Corps, and Dr. Peter Schmidt.
- **Invisible Wounds: Mental and Medical Health Conditions Associated with Deployment and Implications for Learning** — Dr. Matthew Jakupcak and Dr. Joel Grossbard, VA Puget Sound Health Care System.
- **Military Sexual Trauma: The Elephant in the Room** — Julia B. Sewell, LICSW, Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Coordinator, VA Puget Sound Health Care System and Lead MST Point of Contact for VISN 20.
- **Today’s Women Veteran** — Rebecca Murch, Washington Vet Corps and Diana Hunter, MA, LMHC, WDVA PTSD Contractor.
- **Promising Best Practices: Welcoming Student Veterans into Higher Education** — Timm Lovitt, Facilitator, Veterans Training Support Center; Project Coordinator, Traumatic Brain Injury, WDVA.
- **Helpful Instructor Tips for the Classroom** — Alfred Souma, MA, Director, Disability Services, and Ty Summerville, Green River Community College Student Body President and veteran.
- **Second Mission: Service Learning and Peer-to-Peer Mentoring** — Jason Alves, Vet Corps Program Manager, WDVA, and student leaders.
- **Deb Casey, Vice President for Student Services, Green River Community College, facilitated a session on How to Build Capacity and Team on Your Campus: Creating an Action Plan.** Campus teams shared insights and ideas on what they can do to enhance and improve services for their student Veterans. The Seattle Vet Center hosted a mobile Vet Center on campus where over 35 Veterans were served during the day. This is evidence of how services brought to a campus can make a difference. PS##
Book Review:

The Razor’s Edge, by Somerset Maugham
Reviewed by Emmett Early

There are some assumptions in the mental health treatment of PTSD that seem to stand the test of time. One has to do with the timing of the onset of the traumatic experience. Generally it is thought that the younger the person who encounters the trauma, the more profound it is. Somerset Maugham wrote his novel about a World War I aviator who was remarkably changed by his war experiences. Larry Darrell was 15 when he traveled to Canada and, lying about his age, enlisted in the Canadian army at the start of the war. He was flying in combat by age 17.

The reader encounters Larry after he has returned to life in wealthy U.S. east coast society, only to reject, not only the life style, but many of the values. At a dinner party early in the novel Larry is identified as having been wounded in combat and that he has rejected offers of lucrative jobs, saying that he doesn’t want to work, but only to “loaf.” His declaration stimulates one lady to comment that many Civil War veterans were known to refuse to work. Larry’s doctor says he has “delayed shock.”

One lady, Isabel, an age mate and childhood friend who is in love with him, says to Larry:

“‘You’re so different from what you were before you went out to France.’

‘That’s not strange. A lot happened to me then, you know.’

‘Such as?’

‘Oh, just the ordinary casual run of events. My greatest friend in the air corps was killed saving my life. I didn’t find that easy to get over.’

‘Tell me, Larry.’

‘He looked at her with deep distress in his eyes.

‘I’d rather not talk about it. After all, it was only a trivial incident’” (pp. 51-2).

Maugham’s novel is written from the first person, with Maugham, by name, an observer, mainly in Paris, recording Larry’s comings and goings, until the veteran eventually disappears back to the U.S. The veteran rejects his wealth, reads philosophy, and eventually is influenced by the spiritual teachings traveling in India.

Maugham published The Razor’s Edge in 1943, late in his career. The author himself served in WWI as a Red Cross ambulance driver, along with some other volunteers of literary fame, notably Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, and poet E.E. Cummings. Maugham’s own childhood was marked by the deaths of both parents in close succession: his mother died of TB when he was eight and his father of cancer two years later. Maugham was taken in as an orphan by an unfeeling relative.

The Razor’s Edge is a good example of the war veteran used as a subject to set off a larger forum for commentary on values. Each time the veteran, Larry, appears, he is viewed as refusing to strive for success in the material world. He works at blue collar jobs, like mining, auto mechanics, or farming, for subsistence. He lives like a mendicant monk in environments of spare discipline.

The veterans’ PTSD counselor would recognize that by being involved in years of combat, witnessing the casualties as he did before his own character and values had become established, influenced his values. Ernest Hemingway wrote a similar account in “Soldier’s Home” of a veteran returning home after serving in the WWI and refusing to respond to the desires of his parents to enter the world of work.

Larry tells his friends, rejecting job offers and opportunities to gain influence in high society, that he sees no good reason for him to strive for success. The passage quoted earlier suggests he may be influenced by survivor’s guilt, but his behavior seems, while deviating from the norm, to be positive. Maugham identifies the veteran as someone who is seeking spiritual insight, but who does not believe in God.

The war veteran who is alienated from his home society is not necessarily angry, as Somerset Maugham observes, but is operating from a set of values that have been altered by experience in combat.

James Jones’s Some Came Running, made into a good film, features the same alteration in character, as the veteran, who was a published writer before the war, rejects writing for the benefits of gambling. The WWII marine veteran Cliff in the film Till the End of Time takes the same attitude as he returns to his parents’ house after his discharge and reacts negatively to their advocacy that he quickly enter the work force.

These kinds of dramas feature the veteran returning from combat with an altered perception of time. The veteran doesn’t agree with others regarding the traditional values of work. It is not surprising that this should happen, given the dramatic experiences one has in combat, and it is impressive that it is so often recorded. Recall the attitude of the Vietnam War veteran returning to his homeland in Sean Penn’s Indian Runner. He is greeted by his older brother who is a sheriff’s deputy and rejects his brother’s desire to see the veteran settle down and pay respects to their parents. Instead the veteran hops a freight train and heads off to a life of anti-social behavior.

The veteran, Larry, in The Razor’s Edge, is a friendly, rather passive man with lots of good qualities, but conformity is not his choice. From this picture, the alienation of the veteran is marked by the change in his values from the lad who enlisted to the veteran who returns. All the veterans cited in the productions above turn their backs on material success and decline to act to please their parents, or, in Larry’s case, the wishes of the society and even their love interests. None of them seem to want to make commitments that would bind them to the expectations of others.

Somerset Maugham established a plausible motive for Larry, given his disciplined exploration of philosophy and spiritual doctrine. Larry, like many returning veterans, finds that he now thinks differently about what is important. Seeing others die not unexpectedly has influenced him to look beyond the short term goals of success. ##
Movie Review:

**Renoir—Wounded Veteran Returns to Combat**

Reviewed by Emmett Early

Jean Renoir fought as a French cavalryman at the beginning of the First World War. He was wounded by a gunshot to the thigh and, fortunately for him, spent most of the rest of the war recovering from his wound. He finally retrained, while in rehabilitation, to become a pilot and when he returned to the Front he was flying air observers over the battlefield. After the war Jean Renoir became a filmmaker, and his greatest film that won him international acclaim was *The Grand Illusion*, about French aviators who were captured by the Germans and held in a prison.

The film, *Renoir*, focuses on Jean’s return home in 1915 to his father’s house on the French Riviera. Jean is convincingly played by Vincent Pottiers. We see him arriving on crutches in his uniform. His father is the wealthy and infirmed artist Auguste Renoir (Michel Bouquet), who is working with the aid of several household staff, women who carry him to his easel and help him limber up his hands so that he can hold a brush.

*Renoir* is a film that is filled with lush beauty of the French countryside. Auguste Renoir’s female staff work in harmony cleaning and preparing food. It appears they are devoted to caring for the artist. Just before Jean arrives, the film opens with a young, red-haired woman riding a bicycle over the country road. She arrives at the Renoir estate and applies for a job as an artist’s model, and is immediately hired.

The tone of the film, directed by Gilles Bourdos, is soft but does not hide the painful effort that the painter devotes to his labor. After Jean arrives he devotes himself to assisting his father in his work and gradually falls in love with the model, Andrée, played by Christa Thoret. The suffering of the aged Auguste is difficult at times to watch. It is reflected in the slaughter of animals in the forest, foxes, rabbits, chickens hung in the pantry, and in the wounded French war veterans who populate the country roads in their rumpled, dusty blue uniforms. Many film critics find *Renoir* shallow, but I think they err because they cannot look candidly at the suffering that the film displays. *Renoir* profoundly confronts the age-old fact that beauty comes from suffering and that war plagues everyone.

Jean finally decides to return to the war, retrained as a pilot. His father and the women of the household are all pained by his decision. They all know the terrible grim toll that the war has taken. Jean tells Andrée that he feels obliged to help his comrades in combat. The sadness, particularly strikes a blow to his stoic father to witness his son’s departure. At first Auguste seems crushed by the news, but as his son departs, the painter has again risen to the task before him and embraces his son with warmth.

It is easier for the audience who know that Jean Renoir survived the war and made great movies around the world. His early silent films starred the beautiful Andrée, although they separated before he reached international fame with *La Bete Humaine, La Grande Illusion*, and *La Regle de Jeu (Rules of the Game)*.

The audience of *Renoir* is never shown the war zone destruction, only the staggering wounded who travel the country roads of the Riviera where the wind blows off the Mediterranean Sea. Jean Renoir would later capture the sense of fate that the war entailed, when the lives of the French would be driven back to war again.

In *Renoir* Gilles Bouridos captures something that seems very true about war veterans when the war is ongoing—that many of them want to go back for the very reason Jean gives in the film—to support their comrades. Such sentiment is a major player in wars where a calendar determines fate. In previous wars, like those in Korea or Vietnam, the periods of combat were called Tours of Duty or Rotations. Now they are called Deployments. They seem to all affect combatants-turned-veterans in a similar way, instilling a sense of obligation to comrades still fighting.

What *Renoir* captures so poignantly is the impact on the family of the veteran’s decision to return. Auguste Renoir is struggling to continue to work, to produce art in his deteriorating condition. When his son announces his decision the father is struck, stunned as if by a physical blow. Jean’s lover, the model Andrée, reacts with anger when Jean informs her of his decision. In the kitchen, before the servants know the news, Andrée, erupts with rage, smashing plates—not just any plates, but dinner plates hand-painted by Auguste Renoir.

The household women are obviously saddened by the news, but cannot express their emotions about Jean returning to the war and leaving his ailing father. They lovingly pack his bag with specially prepared foods as he departs.

Another facet of the film, another member of the Renoir family, is the moody adolescent boy who refers to himself as an orphan. This would be Claude Renoir (Thomas Doret), who would later become his brother’s cinematographer in his early films. Claude lurks around the grounds, solitary, behaving like a moody adolescent. His behavior has an ominous portent that never materializes, but seems always to be impending. He is drawn to Andrée who poses nude for Auguste, but cannot express his fascination. In one afternoon scene he approaches the model as she is sleeping nude and casts blue powder over her pale body without waking her.

Director Gilles Bourdos is to be congratulated. His *Renoir* is a visual treat. The love affair between the veteran and the model nicely balances the grim struggle of the painter to produce the art and the war looming unheard. Renoir’s paintings decorate the walls of his estate. They were recreated for the film by a professional art forger and we see the forger’s brushstrokes and charcoal as the old artist creates his works. Bourdos captures the wind on the Mediterranean coast as it blows through the fields around the estate as the servants carry the artist to his place of work.

I think that film critics have a block about mixing art with the struggle to create and survive. The film does cater to our foreknowledge of the lives of Auguste and Jean. When Jean explores a primitive movie projector, the audience knows that much will come of his interest. There is no enemy in this film. The challenges all come from nature. The artist’s struggle to create is mimicked by the veteran’s sense of obligation to follow his powerful fate. ##
The Long Tail of War Costs in Disability Compensation

Mike Baker of The Associated Press reported in the Seattle Times, (3/20/2013) on the AP’s research into the costs associated with war veterans’ compensation. The page one headlines stated in descending fonts: “War costs Linger—Even after 148 years. More than $40B per year to war’s vets, survivors. New veterans filing for disabilities at historic rates.”

Mr. Baker wrote: “With greater numbers of troops surviving combat injuries because of improvements in battlefield medicine and technology, the costs of disability payments are set to rise much higher.

“The AP identified the disability and survivor benefits during an analysis of millions of federal payment records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

“To gauge the postwar costs of each conflict, the AP looked at four compensation programs that identify recipients by war: disabled veterans; survivors of those who died on active duty or from a service-related disability; low-income survivors of wartime veterans or their disabled children.”

About 45% of those leaving service currently file for compensation. The poor economy is a factor.

Current wars, including the first Gulf War are costing about $12B a year, totaling about $50B since 2003 “not including medical care and other benefits provided to veterans….“

Vietnam War veterans receive compensation of about $22B annually, including Agent Orange related diabetes and heart disease.

“A congressional analysis estimated the cost of fighting the war was $738 billion in 2011 dollars, and the post-war benefits for veterans and families have separately cost some $270 billion since 1970....”

World War I, which ended 94 years ago continues to cost taxpayers about $20 million every year. World War II continues to cost about $5 billion a year.

“Compensation for WWII veterans and families didn’t peak until 1991—46 years after the war ended—and annual costs have since then have declined by about 25 percent. Korean War costs appear to be leveling off at about $2.8 billion per year.

Mr. Baker reports many spouses draw widows’ benefits who married the veteran in his old age. “There are 10 living recipients of the 1898 Spanish American War costing about $50,000. There are two children of Civil War veterans making about $876 each.

“Surviving spouses can qualify for lifetime benefits when troops from current wars have a service-linked death. Children under the age of 18 can also qualify, and those benefits are extended for a lifetime if the person is permanently incapable of self-support because of a disability before the age of 18.”

Former Senator Alan Simpson, a military veteran who chaired President Obama’s deficit committee in 2010, stated that he wanted to have a means (“affluence”) test for benefits. Although it was not discussed in the article, one could imagine that a means test for benefits, if the veteran had to be impoverished to receive the benefit, would possibly add to the stigma of having a disability.

Retired West Point psychologist, Dave Grossman, observed in his new classic work On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society, that killing from a long distance was less traumatizing than killing at close range. One wonders, however, if drone pilots get much distance if they have to observe their targets in intimate detail before striking. Col. Grossman writes that “the combat soldier appears to feel a deep sense of responsibility and accountability for what he sees around him” (p. 74).

Mr. Baker’s Times article observed that veterans of the current Middle East wars are filing for compensation at a high rate partly because improvements in emergency medicine are saving more lives, leading to a higher rate of disabilities among troops. One could also note, along with Col. Grossman, the author of On Killing, that the firing rate among troops has gone way up. In World War II, he observed, 15-20% of U.S. riflemen fired their weapons. The current wars in the Middle East report firing rates of 90%. In Vietnam War the firing rate was said to be 95% (p. xx). Col. Grossman attributes this increase to improvements in training, but he also comments on the influence of combat-oriented video games. On Killing makes the point repeatedly that killing at close or medium range has a negative psychological impact on the combatant who pulls the trigger. He caustically comments that negative reactions to killing are now called “acute combat reactions” or “stress” (p. 36).

Regarding the long term nature of disabilities for veterans, Col. Grossman quotes a World War II combat veteran: “‘We thought we had managed all right,’ he told [Richard] Holmes, [author of Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle] ‘kept the awful things out of our minds, but now I’m an old man and they come out from where I hid them. Every night’ (p. 74). Col. Grossman observed that about one third were psychological casualties of the troops who fought in the Arab-Israeli Wars.

The gist of the Times AP article was couched in the issue of the federal government deficit. There was no indication that the long term costs of disability benefits is ever considered when wartime budgets are estimated. Col. Grossman, quoting another military psychologist, Peter Marin, decries the fact that the psychological community does not face these facts. “As a psychologist I believe that Marin is quite correct when he observes, ‘Nowhere in the [psychiatric and psychological] literature is one allowed to glimpse what is actually occurring: the real horror of the war and its effect on those who fought it.”’ (p. 36).

What is further hidden from public view, particularly in the long wars using volunteer professionals, are the costs that are not showing up in the federal budgets year after year, those having to do with trauma-based emotions and lessons passed on to future generations, not just in the families of veterans of the U.S. military, but among the émigrés from countries in which the wars are fought.

One can’t begin to compare the long term costs to tax payers of veterans’ disability benefits with the costs incurred by the veterans themselves. EE ##
Book Review:

Reviewed by Emmett Early

Sean Parnell, in his Afghan war memoir, Outlaw Platoon, uses the actual names of his platoon members. He was platoon leader of Third Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed The Outlaws. He lists all the names of those platoon members and provides pictures of them, in country, in action and at rest. His memoir is a matter-of-fact narrative of the actions engaged in by the platoon over the course of a 16-month deployment, although he states in his “Author’s Note” that he changed the names of some platoon members who “did not live up” to the platoon’s standard.

Sean Parnell retired as a captain. He received a Purple Heart, 2 Bronze Stars and a traumatic brain injury for his time in country. His summary of combat operations are delivered matter-of-factly, with commentary relating mainly to his own anxieties and memories of his childhood. The book cover states that he is currently studying for a Ph.D. in clinical psychology.

Captain Parnell relates several firefights with the Taliban in great detail. Outlaw Platoon rode into battle in armored Humvees, inviting, even daring the enemy to ambush. In one battle, early in his deployment, he survived a nearby mortar blast. He writes (p. 356) “The wounds I had sustained on June 10 had resulted in a traumatic brain injury. I suffered migraine headaches, memory loss, and blurred vision. All of those things grew worse until my cognitive ability began to degrade. I had trouble driving. My motor coordination suffered. I finally got help and was going through intensive neurocognitive rehabilitation. But I knew that I’d never be the same again and my time left in the army was coming to a close. I would soon be medically retired from the career I loved.”

Captain Parnell refused to be medically evacuated in June and had symptoms the rest of his deployment. If he had been a football player, he would not have had a choice, because the football officials are now saying that having sustained a concussion, the judgment of the player would likely be faulty and he would risk exacerbating the injury by further contact. As a platoon leader Captain Parnell had bonded closely with his soldiers and had seen them grow into a close-knit fighting unit. The reader gets the sense that he was regarded as an exemplary officer whose platoon was key to the success of the Company’s mission. His medic and doctor at Forward Operating Base Bermel, in a district near the Afghanistan border with Pakistan, apparently did not order the author to stand down for medical treatment, although he was leaking fluids from his ears after the blast. And, although it may not be fair to compare the exigencies of army combat operations with a football game, the result for Captain Parnell is medical retirement “from a career that I loved.”

As the author asserts in his notes, he had no political or foreign policy agenda in writing his memoir, but wanted only to chronicle as best he could the actions of his troops. It was interesting to me that he noted frequently the influence of movies and American pop culture. He refers to being influenced by Saving Private Ryan and Lord of the Rings as an ideal of behavior in combat. Lord of the Rings and Sling Blade are frequently referenced as a cultural influence on not just Captain Parnell, but also his soldiers. His rendering of conversations between he and his troops was laden with current jargon and slang, which I don’t think will wear well with time. He had help in writing with the assistance of co-writer, and his overall rendering of the scenes of combat and stand-down, although often flat, are delivered with clarity. Some of his observations touch the universal observations of men in combat. His reaction to inspecting bomb damage on enemy positions: “Nobody who walks among such things is ever the same again” (p. 346).

What is new is not the sentiment but the technology. Captain Parnell writes: “Each platoon leader’s Humvee came equipped with a computer system connected via satellite to a military network. Every friendly vehicle in theater was displayed on a monitor. Click on an icon, and the unit’s identity would pop up. Scroll around the map, and even a junior lieutenant could see what every U.S. unit was doing at that moment.

“We could also track enemy movements with the system. Now, as the information was uploaded from our battalion operations center, two red blips popped up about four kilometers away from our outpost. One force, about a hundred and fifty strong, was closing in on the east behind Tur Gundyy. Another hundred men lurked to the north, using Khowt Gundyy to conceal their movement.”

The author notes that all the new technology does not replace the value of collaboration with the civilian population. “Without the village elder’s warning, we would never have seen them coming until it was too late” (p. 343).

Captain Parnell writes about the value of a war veteran writing about the experience of combat—and the value of relationship in healing. “Depressed and lost, I had strayed from the warrior path. You (Laurie, his wife) saved me and gave me purpose. This book was your idea from the start and was ultimately born out of your loving devotion to me and my men.” Reading this sentiment one has a feeling that Captain Parnell’s platoon has become part of his identity and that living with the veteran a spouse had to be reconciled to living close to all of them.

There is an objectivity to the book and there is a sense of dual authorship, with very precise descriptions of troop movement and action, interspersed with the platoon leader’s personal reactions and associations, along with occasional episodes of dialog. Sean Parnell may have the personal style that accounts for the book’s style. His memoirs are welcome and disturbing, when he writes about the injuries and deaths that result from the fighting and the long term disabilities that follow. ##
The “3:10 to Yuma” was a story by Elmore Leonard made into a film in 1957, directed by Delmar Daves, starring Glenn Ford as the robber, Ben Wade, and Van Heflin as the rancher, Dan Evans. It has the rancher volunteering to escort the robber as a prisoner to catch a train to prison in Yuma. The robber’s gang tries to interfere with the plan and a surprise ending has the robber cooperating with the righteous rancher to deliver him to the train. The film was remade and what is remarkable about the 2007 version is what it adds to the plot, indicating a sense of what would speak to the audience of current movie-goers.

The 2007 version was directed by James Mangold, and stars Russell Crowe as the robber and Christian Bale as the rancher. Significantly, it gives Bale’s rancher a history of having been wounded in the Civil War, fighting for the North. He said he had been “standing on one leg for three years waiting for God to do me a favor.” He had been a volunteer with the Massachusetts Guard that was called into federal service to defend Washington DC. He said he was given $198 for his leg. Although the movie implies that the rancher’s leg had been amputated, Christian Bale’s character gives little indication of incapacity from the wound. As one character said, “don’t muddy the past with the present.”

The updated version of the 3:10 to Yuma adds a segment in which the robber is tortured using electricity, as well as elements of racism in the dislocation of Native Americans and the exploitation of Asian railroad workers. The 2007 version gives the Pinkerton Detective Agency a dark image of being a corporate hired gun which operated on the side of big business, and we see the Pinkerton agents shooting women and children at a the railroad tunnel construction site, where the robber was tortured.

Besides the contest between the robber and the rancher, the 2007 version enhances the part played by the rancher’s eldest son, William, played by Logan Lerman, perhaps to give the movie appeal to the youthful movie-goers. He becomes disobedient when his father rides off escorting the robber to meet the train. His father tells him to stay and help his mother and little brother, but he instead follows his father and helps him out in the final gun fight.

Also new, and an interesting added twist, Crowe’s Ben Wade, notorious killer that he is, frequently quotes from the Bible, almost as if it were the only book he had ever read.

These changes add credit to the contention that movies reflect the culture in which they were made. In 1957, the decade of the United States fighting Communism in Korea, of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee probes of Communists influencing Hollywood movies, the censors of movie production were in full force. Van Heflin’s rancher was stressed by draught and watching from her wagon as the train pulls out of the station on the way to Yuma. The 2007 version has the rebellious eldest son visiting his “Pa” and aiding him in his struggle to deliver the robber to the train. This diminution of the wife, with the rancher’s wife and son changing roles, may be an illustration of the cultural change of 50 years.

To our surprise in the 2007 version the rancher is killed and the robber shoots and kills his gang members in a classic quick draw of the pistol, firing rapidly and accurately.

Perhaps the most remarkable change in the movie plots, marking the 50 years of development, is the addition of the wounded veteran of the Civil War. Since the first version was released in 1957, the United States has been engaged in a series of major wars, constantly since 2002. The introduction of the IED as a weapon of choice for the terrorists, coupled with the introduction of effective body armor, has led to significant, lasting wounds, including amputations.

The scenes at the railroad tunnel construction introduced a whole new issue for Twenty-first Century viewers: torture applied by electric shocks to bare skin. And while the use of torture is not new to warfare, what is new is the introduction of the small cell phone cameras which allows the images of the enemy being tortured to be displayed internationally on the Internet, which makes for a coming to collective consciousness for the American public.

Ben Wade in both movies is a notorious killer. However, in the 2007 version the outlaw quotes the Bible in a manner that speaks of cynical hypocrisy as he tries to bribe the righteous rancher like a polished lobbyist to compromise his principles and set the bandit free for an increasingly large amount of cash.

It seems as though the maturing role of the rancher’s son is a sign of the maturing of the public that displays an increasing awareness of what Carl Jung would call collective shadow. The eldest boy would not be kept out of the fight, and took up his father’s cause. He witnesses the use of torture, examples of racism in the exploitation of immigrant workers, racism in the forced resettlement of Apaches, and even the corrupt use of the Bible to preach the robber’s philosophy. The boy is the son of the veteran and in the 2007 version, when his father is killed by the darkest character, the robber’s chief lieutenant and most ruthless killer, Charlie Prince (Ben Foster), the boy cheers his dad: “You done it, Pa!” And it is sour grapes that Dan Evans can’t enjoy his triumph, but the point of the update seems to be an acknowledgement that a new generation has taken up the cause with a consciousness that has absorbed some of the shadow material that has been exposed by our wars.

The 2007 version of 3:10 to Yuma was updated by writers Halsted Welles, Michael Brandt, and Derek Hass. This version downplays the role of the wife, who, in the 1957 version rides to Contention to see her husband at the hotel and watches from her wagon as the train pulls out of the station on the way to Yuma. The 2007 version has the rebellious eldest son visiting his “Pa” and aiding him in his struggle to deliver the robber to the train. This diminution of the wife, with the rancher’s wife and son changing roles, may be an illustration of the cultural change of 50 years.

(Continued on page 11, see 3:10 to Yuma.)
3:10 to Yuma, Continued from page 10.

Elmore Leonard’s short story first appeared in 1953 in Dime Western Magazine and was reprinted in 2006 in The Complete Western Stories of Elmore Leonard. The whole story takes place in and around the hotel waiting for the train, with the brief exit and gunfight. The robber was named Jim Kidd and the rancher was not a rancher, but a cowboy, Paul Scallen, who became a Sheriff’s deputy for the $150 a month, with which he supported a wife and three kids. The story begins in the hotel in Contention across the street from the train station. Charlie Prince, the robber’s lieutenant, is the only character who retains his name.

It is interesting to view how the two movies based on the story have added layers. The 1957 movie made Dan Evans a small businessman, a cattle rancher struggling to survive during a period of draught. Robber Ben Wade stages a holdup and commits murder as the rancher watches. The 2007 movie adds the symbolic Pinkerton as a protector of business interests. The two movies add a character of the female bartender, who is a romantic attraction for Ben Wade and shows him to be playful and charming, and perhaps reckless under such circumstances with regard to his own safety. Both movies also add the rancher’s wife, who takes over for her husband and, in the 1957 version visits him in Contention. But the most important addition that the movies give us is the elaboration of the finale, in which the robber boards the train. Leonard never illustrates the nice twist that the movies show directly in which the robber is converted by the righteous rancher and willingly boards the train. Leonard only writes: “Scallen and Kidd leapt up on the car platform and were in the mail car as it rumbled past the end of the station platform.”

The changes wrought by the movie versions, especially the updated 2007 film, are remarkable. They do what movies should do, present an entertaining story. They add the characters of the women and children. They flesh out the really bad robber, Charlie Prince, with, again, the 2007 version drawing him as a major menace. The core of the Leonard story plot, the stage-like contest of will between the robber and the rancher-deputy, is retained, a credit to the genius of Elmore Leonard.

From story to film, the cowboy deputy becomes a financially strapped rancher. From first film to second film, remarkably, the rancher becomes a Civil War veteran with an amputated leg, who is shot and killed in the last scene—with his son giving the farewell to his father, repeating, “You done it, Pa.”

The most recent film also adds the cumbersome armored stage coach mounting a formidable machine gun, which kills many robbers before it is wrecked, plunging into a ditch, giving the movie perhaps its most glamorous and sensational effects. The effect is similar to what we see when the Humvee with infantry lumbers over the desert trail hoping to engage in a firefight with the Taliban.

These movies give us a sense of where we were compared to where we are now. In 1957, from our 2013 perspective, the story was that the bad guys were not as bad, and the good guy survived to return to his ranch. But in the 2007 version, the rancher-Civil War amputee veteran dies from multiple gun shots. It is his defiant son who survives, praising his Pa. EE ##
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Veterans Training Support Center, Peter Schmidt, Psy.D., LMHC, Project Director 425 773 6292
Training Resources in King County and Washington State: www.veterantrainingsupportcenter.org

The PTSD Program is committed to outreach of returning veterans of our current wars. We work closely with the National Guard, military reserves, and active duty members and families to promote a healthy and supportive homecoming.

To be considered for service by a WDVA or King County Contractor, a veteran or veteran’s family member must present a copy of the veteran’s discharge form DD-214 that will be kept in the contractor’s file as part of the case documentation. Occasionally, other documentation may be used to prove the veteran’s military service. You are encouraged to call Peter Schmidt for additional information, or if eligibility is considered a potential issue.

It is always preferred that the referring person or agency telephone ahead to discuss the client’s appropriateness and the availability of time on the counselor’s calendar. Some of the program contractors conduct both group and individual/family counseling. ##

Other Veterans’ Mental Health Services offered by the Federally funded VA or WDVA PTSD Program

Bellingham Vet Center 360 733 9226
Everett Vet Center 425 252 9701
Federal Way Vet Center 253 838 3090
Seattle Vet Center 206 553 2706
Yakima Vet Center 509 457 2736
Tacoma Vet Center 253 565 7038
Spokane Vet Center 509 444 8387

Gulf War Helpline……………1 800 849 8387
Puget Sound Health Care System
   (VA Hospital)…………………206 762 1010
Seattle VA Deployment Clinic…..206 764 2636
Spokane VA PTSD Program ……..509 444 8387

24-Hour VA Crisis Hotline……1 800 273 8255