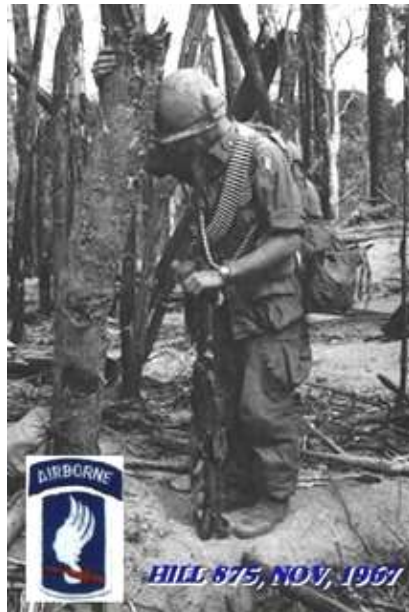


## A Trooper at Dak To

By **Rock Stone**  
B/4/503

I was with Bravo 4th Battalion and I was the first machine gunner up Hill 875 when we arrived. It is a powerful picture and appears all over the net in one way or another. Most people don't know it's me, perhaps a few in the Herd and some of my Charlie Ranger brothers, and of course my family, but most others don't have a clue. You will note in the head band of my helmet is a plastic cigarette case, would you believe I still have it?



This picture was taken on the last day of the battle for Hill 875 just after our final assault.

**Rocky**

LT Larry Moore had come up to me and informed me that there were only 6 out of our platoon left on the Hill and that everyone else was gone, either KIA or evac'd. I walked away in tears and ended up leaning against that tree and crying for my brothers.

Some guy from *TimeLife* took the picture which I did not know about for years until I saw it in one of the *TimeLife* books. When I got a computer I started seeing it all over the place.

Amazingly, decades after the war a buddy found this picture of a vet's arm. He had had the image from the *TimeLife* picture taken of me at Dak To tattooed on his arm!

*Airborne brothers!*



## A Brother of the War Một người anh em của cuộc chiến tranh



I am involved in creating the drawings necessary to replace the electronic control system at Grand Coulee Dam. In the process it has been necessary to coordinate with the engineering department of the Dept. of the Interior in Denver, Colorado.

The "go to" guy in Denver is Vince Hoang and he had occasion to fly out here to familiarize himself with the layout and that's when I met him.

Vince was a fighter pilot in the South Vietnamese Air Force and flew F-5 Skoshi Tigers. On a mission in 1975, he was hit by a SAM missile in the right engine -- it just blew the tail-pipe all to hell. He was fortunate enough to be able to nurse the plane back to Bien Hoa, AFB.



**Vince with his sick Tiger**

According to the web site where I got his picture his is the only known case of an aircraft surviving a direct hit from a SAM. The photo shows him standing at the tail of the plane.

He knows of the 173d and directed me to a website about Vietnamese Paratroopers (text in Vietnamese of course). I get the impression that, like us, he keeps in touch with his wartime comrades.

Vince is an Electrical Engineer and very sharp.

**Jim Bethea**  
HHC/2/503d, '65-'66



## ~ Sky Soldiers March ~

Bend your head, and shed a tear,  
for your son, who serve so dear.  
Faith and Guts and Rifle Butts,  
left a trail, of blood stained dust.

Chorus:

So here we are, where we belong,  
173d, so proud and strong.  
Lift your head, and hold it high,  
173d is passing by.

Aussie Diggers, fight with us too,  
"Duty First" they say, their words are true.  
In jungles deep, they showed us how,  
we say "VC come fight us now".

Chorus

Sweat upon, their sun-burned brows,  
173d has shown them how.  
War zone "D" we met our test,  
Mekong Delta, we are the best.

Chorus

To Nui Dat, the "Tigers" came,  
with the "HERD" they won great fame.  
Dak To and Tet, we won and died,  
"Jungle of screaming souls" the NVA cried.

Chorus

My wife who waits, at home so true,  
I sing this song, my dear for you.  
Tell our son that I fight brave,  
for Freedom Land which we must save.

**Written in Vietnam by a Sky Soldier**



Lift your head and hold it high, 1st Platoon, B/2/503d,  
is passing by.

(Jim Quick photo)

## VA Publishes Final Regulation to Aid Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange in Korea

VA Media Relations  
January 25, 2011

WASHINGTON – Veterans exposed to herbicides while serving along the demilitarized zone (DMZ) in Korea will have an easier path to access quality health care and benefits under a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) final regulation that will expand the dates when illnesses caused by herbicide exposure can be presumed to be related to Agent Orange.



**Brothers....we haven't forgotten.**

"VA's primary mission is to be an advocate for Veterans," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. "With this new regulation VA has cleared a path for more Veterans who served in the demilitarized zone in Korea to receive access to our quality health care and disability benefits for exposure to Agent Orange."

Under the final regulation published today in the Federal Register, VA will presume herbicide exposure for any Veteran who served between April 1, 1968, and Aug. 31, 1971, in a unit determined by VA and the Department of Defense (DoD) to have operated in an area in or near the Korean DMZ in which herbicides were applied.

Previously, VA recognized that Agent Orange exposure could only be conceded to Veterans who served in certain units along the Korean DMZ between April 1968 and July 1969.

In practical terms, eligible Veterans who have specific illnesses VA presumes to be associated with herbicide exposure do not have to prove an association between their illness and their military service. This "presumption" simplifies and speeds up the application process for benefits and ensures that Veterans receive the benefits they deserve.

Go to this web link to learn about Veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure:  
<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/PUBLICHEALTH/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp>

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]



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Picked-up *FloridaToday* the other day, the local paper here in Central Florida, and found a 2/503d Sky Soldier smiling back at me. Steven hails from Rockledge, FL, just across the river from Merritt Island, where I live. Hoping he or one of his buddies sees this and hooks us up. *Steve: Send me an email at [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com) and I'll buy the beer on your next trip home!* Smitty Out

## Specialist follows in family footsteps

By R. Norman Moody



Steven

Steven Williams spent his early years traveling to Europe with his military family. His father was in the U.S. Army.

Now, Williams, an Army specialist stationed at Vicenza, Italy, who hadn't flown in an airplane since he was a small child, is getting to do it all over. He's seeing Europe again, but this time he's the one serving in the Army.

Williams, who was born in Germany where his father was stationed while in the Army, said one of the benefits in the military is getting to travel, not only overseas, but also in the United States.

*"I wanted to get out and see the world,"* he said. *"It's also paying tribute to other veterans in my family."*

Williams' father, aunt and several uncles have all served and retired from the Army.

*"We're a military family,"* his mother Helen Williams said. *"He's following the family footsteps."*

Williams, who said he lingered after high school until he decided to join the Army, is not sure how long he will serve in the military.

The 24-year-old returned in November from a one-year deployment to Afghanistan.

**Rank:** Specialist

**Unit:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne, Army

**Home base:** Vicenza, Italy

**Experience:** Williams has been in the Army since October 2008. He returned in November after a year deployment to Afghanistan.

**Background:** Williams, a 2005 graduate of Rockledge High, is following in a family tradition of serving in the Army. His father, uncles, aunt and others in his family have served.

## PRIVATE BREGER

By Sgt. Dave Breger



*"That soldier's here, Sir, about a new paratrooper uniform to deceive the enemy."*

## ~ Hooking Up! ~

Looking for email addresses for (then) Majors **Don Phillips** and **Willard Christensen**, and Bob **"Doc" Beaton**, all HHC/2/503d. Thanks.

**Lew "Smitty" Smith**, HHC/2/503d, '65-'66, [rto173d@cfl.rr.com](mailto:rto173d@cfl.rr.com)



The son of **Edrick Kenneth Stevens**, 4/503d, KIA on 6 November 1967, is looking for buddies who knew his father. Please contact the son, **Jonathan (Chad) Stevens** at [jonathan.stevens@dhs.gov](mailto:jonathan.stevens@dhs.gov)





# Report: VA Overpaid Disabled Vets by \$1B

By Leo Shane, III  
*Stars & Stripes*  
January 27, 2011

WASHINGTON -- Poor oversight and missing medical follow-ups led to nearly \$1 billion in overpayments in veterans disability benefits over the last 18 years, and could lead to another \$1 billion in improper payouts in the near future if left unchecked according to a new investigation.

The report, from the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General, found mistakes in the processing of an estimated 27,500 cases before the Veterans Benefits Administration, resulting in individuals receiving a 100 percent disabled rating for years longer than they should have.

*“Despite numerous audit and inspection reports since FY 2004 stating that the staff was not consistently processing temporary 100 percent disability evaluations correctly, VBA has not fully corrected the problem,”* the report stated. *“If VBA does not take timely corrective action, they will overpay veterans a projected \$1.1 billion over the next 5 years.”*

At issue are temporary 100 percent disability ratings, given to veterans with service-connected disabilities requiring surgery, convalescence or specific treatment. In some cases, those payouts may be reduced or ended after veterans recover and are able to return to work.

IG officials found that in nearly half of the problem cases, officials simply forgot to schedule follow-up medical visits or update related paperwork, allowing veterans to continue their full payout even after recovery. In about 6,500 cases, those medical exams were delayed or canceled, causing the payouts to continue.

Researchers said the average overpayment for veterans receiving extra benefits for less than a year was about \$10,500., but rises to about \$66,000. for veterans receiving overpayments for one to five years.

*“For each year the overpayment continues, the cumulative financial effect becomes increasingly more significant,”* the report said.

Benefits officials disputed the findings, calling the cost estimates and total number of problem cases exaggerated.

*“VBA makes every effort to ensure that veterans are paid correctly and disability evaluations are assigned appropriately at all levels,”* Michael Walcoff, acting VA Under Secretary for Benefits, said in a statement to the IG office. *“VBA is actively working to resolve these types of errors through system modifications. These system safeguards will ensure correct future review of temporary 100 percent evaluations.”*



In a statement to *Stars and Stripes*, Tom Murphy, director of the Compensation and Pension Service, said the VBA is committed to making sure veterans receive the proper disability benefits.

*“VBA modified training for claims processors to ensure timely oversight responsibilities are completed,”* he said. *“Further training on evaluating evidence to determine permanency for a total evaluation is also being created.”*

## The report does not recommend the VBA attempt to recoup any of the overpayments,

but does urge a review of all 100 percent disability claims to ensure that proper payouts are being awarded. In cases where the mistakes have lingered for more than 20 years, the VA by law cannot change the disability ratings.

[Sent in by Roger Dick, C/2/503d]

*Incoming!!*



Ask the guys if anyone remembers being in a pineapple grove in '66. I had a flash from the past about eating them with some Aussies while out in the bush??

**Harry Cleland**  
HHC/B/2/503d '66-'67  
[hcleland@nc.rr.com](mailto:hcleland@nc.rr.com)





A 2/503d buddy, who is referred to here as G.I. Joe, not his real name of course, who lives with PTSD sent me a note today describing a dream he had recently. Initially, I thought to include only excerpts from our buddy's dream, but instead decided to include his entire recollection of it. Ed

## ~ MY DREAM ~

By G.I. Joe, 2/503d  
7 Jan 2011



I was at a restaurant dining with other people whom I didn't know. It was set in a cathedral but smaller with the place packed with people.

Some silver-haired guy with a voice like Perry Como was the waiter taking orders with ladies doing the same. I ordered soup of some sort and it seemed to take hours for my meal to arrive.

All of a sudden some oriental guy appeared in front of me and taunted me. I didn't like his manner and I attacked him as everyone looked on. I grabbed him and slammed his head against the floor but all he did was smile at me. Somehow a knife appeared in his hand and I grabbed it and stabbed him in the stomach. He grimaced, sat up, pulled it out of his stomach and green fluid seeped out. He pulled it out of his stomach and somehow disappeared. All this time the place was thumping with sound.

The Chinaman reappeared in some school by a sidewalk where the gutter had sludge for water with mud mixed in looking like concrete looks. We had a tussle; I grabbed him by the neck, and put his head in the gutter choking him. He didn't resist with my strength. I put his head in the gutter and splashed the mud into his nostrils and mouth till he stopped breathing. He stopped convulsing. An oriental looking woman drove by, stopped and saw what had just occurred. She told me she didn't want to get involved and wouldn't say anything to the authorities. The man just lied there motionless. Dead.

A crowd gathered and I told them it was self-defense. I asked if anybody had called the police. All of a sudden a doctor of Asian appearance with a stethoscope around his neck said it was a suicide. I knew that forensic science would prove otherwise and I would be found guilty. The doctor had a device he spoke into and it seemed quite funny the way he was talking into it. The crowd just mingled around.

I was back at the restaurant waiting for my food I had ordered. The place was still rocking and the gentleman waiter still taking orders. I had waited about 3 hours it seemed and still no food. I wondered what the hell was the delay? The place then changed into a garden-type of restaurant, like in a winery.

All of a sudden, the waiter appeared in garb similar to a preacher and started preaching and I couldn't hear a thing, but people were responding to his actions and words. Some young boy near me was given some slivers of sharp types of grass with a knife. About 4 of these slivers were placed into his upper arm, sharp enough to cut into his skin. I thought this was a ritual which I didn't want to partake in. The crowd started chanting and laying down on the ground.

I made myself disappear into the toilet where some Polynesian looking men were in there urinating and talking amongst themselves. The language was foreign to me and I didn't understand at first, yet as they talked to me I understood. I said nothing. It was so real.

The urinal was like an open ditch with water in it. The men walked out and I was alone. I went outside and some lady came out with the preacher and walked up to a pulpit, and she had a rope around her neck. I walked out of the toilet as she apparently had done something towards her religion that wasn't acceptable like the Muslim religion. All the time, the crowd chanted and they lay on the grass.

I immediately thought that the Chinaman was an undercover agent and not my enemy.



I tried to leave the place, but the gates into and out were blocked by the Polynesian-like men, about 3 at each gate. Somehow, I escaped and some other fellow and I started to walk, and walk and walk. I don't know who he was, but he was there with me.

*(continued....)*



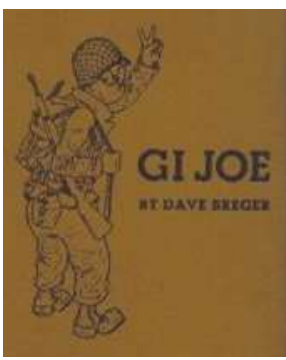
I walked into a Native American Village. There were tee pees all around and the streets were lined with buffalo horns and different colored rocks. I didn't see many people.

We walked until we came upon some Chiefs with buffalo horns on their heads. They spoke, but I didn't understand the language. The Chief motioned for us to sit down. He sat in front of us and had an antler or something in his hand. As we sat crossed legged, he beckoned for us to follow what he was saying. It seemed he wanted us to understand what he was telling us and mentioning things I didn't understand. He motioned with his arms up and down and speaking in his language. I wiggled in my place until I made a small hole with my butt in the ground. His words inspired me, and his words and actions excited me as my body quivered with excitement. I had never before been so inspired or felt this way in my life. I seemed to understand what he was telling me.

He raised his arms up and down and his words sounded so beautiful and authoritative. What he was mentioning seemed like "to be one's self." To not be afraid of my actions. To speak the truth and not have to defend my words. To take risks as warriors often have to in times of danger. As he spoke, it seemed like about 5 minutes, he continued waving his arms around, it was so vivid. His skin was red like the others standing by. He faded with his words and his spirit.

After the ceremony, I had to go to the toilet. I asked one of the men if I could go to the toilet. He asked me if I could wait. I said I couldn't and had to go. He told me I could go in a house. There was a toilet outside this house which had music coming out of it. It was Native American music. It was beautiful music. The toilet was basic and earthy in appearance. There was like a big cavern type hole with clear water in it. There was toilet paper alongside which was wet. There was a tap with a small amount of water dripping out of it which wet my pants. One had to straddle the toilet with foot placements etched into the stone. It was a fall of about 6 feet or so. There were buffalo horns and other regalia all around the toilet.

When I awoke, my mind was fresh with this amazing dream and the feeling it gave me. I lay awake for a while and felt it was fresh enough to remember and put it to paper. I went into my computer room as my grandson slept there. This is what my dream was like on this morning.



G.I. Joe, 2/503d

## ~ REPLY TO G.I. JOE ~

Yeah, I know those kinds of dreams. You wake up and you can recall every detail. And, like you, I'll get up and write them down sometimes. For decades I had a recurring nightmare, you've probably had it too. It's always about being overrun in combat and feeling totally helpless and terrified. I would often wake up screaming and kicking and sometimes hitting my wife in my sleep. I'd occasionally dream of being overrun by the entire Nazi army, and I wasn't even in WWII.

When I finally got treatment for PTSD the psych told me he could help me to stop having that dream, I sarcastically said "sure".

One day he sat me down in front of a small machine comprised of horizontal neon lights with the lights slowly tracking back and forth, left to right, left to right. He had me don headsets then told me to follow the lights with my eyes. As I did that he spoke into the headset recounting the dream I had described to him, the lights increasing in speed as the story became more intense.



At one point I yanked the headsets off -- my heart was racing. I told him I couldn't do it anymore. He said he "couldn't leave me there" and told me to put the headsets back on, which I did. The lights moved slower this time and he put me on a boat in calm waters of some bay, a serene setting, relaxing me.

Get this, Joe. That very night I had the nightmare again, but that was the last time I ever had it....that was about 3 years ago. It's called Rapid Eye treatment or EMDR. It seemed more like voodoo at the time, but damn, it worked bro. If those fucking dreams continue to invade your sleep, ask your doc about the treatment. Another of our buddies is undergoing EMDR and it's working for him too.

Lew "Smitty" Smith  
HHC/2/503d, '65/'66

P.S. Last night my wife told me I was screaming in my sleep again, something I haven't done for quite a while, but she didn't wake me. I don't recall it being the dream I described. Back to EMDR?

(continued....)



# The Eyes Have It: Treatment for the Invisible Wounds of PTSD

By **Scott Fairchild, PsyD**  
LTC (Ret), 82nd Abn. Div.

All too many of you know the symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and you eat them for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can't outrun it. You can't hide from it. It has become a part of who you are. You can't beat it, even if you try, and then after the explosion of emotion, you walk away feeling the wave of guilt.



*The Doc*

You may be out in traffic and someone cuts you off. You feel the tension of the flight or fight response that kicks in immediately. You may sit up straight in the middle of the night and be right back in the jungle or the sandbox, breaking out in a cold sweat with all of your senses dialed up to max. It all takes its toll on your body, shortening your life as well.

Or, you may be like a veteran patient I saw this morning, who was at a get-together where someone was talking trash about the military. He politely asked the man to stop and when the dirt bag continued, the former trooper hit him so hard he broke his hand.

It doesn't have to always have to involve hitting someone. Sometimes the PTSD demon sneaks up on you and you unload verbally on your wife or your kids, those closest to you, or on someone on the other side of the store counter, without even knowing why.

There are so many times you wish there was something you could do to ease the intensity or overcome the power of these symptoms. There is something that can help. It is called **EMDR**.

## What's EMDR?

Eye-Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing or EMDR has been around since 1987, when Francine Shapiro discovered it quite by accident. There are now over 130,000 EMDR therapists in the world and the proof is in the results. Although the process sounds complex, EMDR is a rather simple and very effective tool.

**It is recognized by the American Psychological Association as the most effective tool for the treatment of PTSD and other diagnoses.**

## How does trauma affect the brain?

The brain is involved in all we do. Unless we inherit a brain disorder, we are all born with a relatively intact and healthy brain. Throughout our lives we tend to insult the brain with our life experiences. We insult it with physical trauma, such as falling off a horse, physical fights, playing football and bicycle accidents. We insult the brain with toxic trauma, such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, drugs, paint fumes, inhalants. And throughout our life from childhood on, we insult the brain with psychological trauma, like robbery, rape, assault, hurricane and combat and the loss of a loved one.

When we experience psychological trauma, our brain actually changes chemically. Modern science has allowed us to see those changes in the brain. We refer to those changes as *invisible wounds* -- the wounds you may not see, but the wounds which don't end when the war ends.

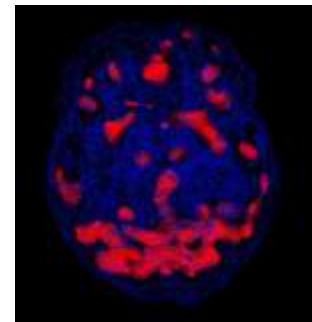
The *Rand Study 2008* predicts that over 300,000 of our Iraq and Afghanistan warriors will experience or are experiencing PTSD.

## **Note a healthy brain compared to a brain with PTSD**

Healthy



PTSD



The image on the right shows the evidence of the depression, the anxiety, and your inability to let go of it. This is the stuff that causes you to be the person you are everyday. This is known as PTSD.

You have carried it for so long. It is time to find a way to let go.

*(continued....)*





In a manner that parallels our natural way of processing negative emotion (dreaming), EMDR allows us to let go of the demons of the past (the negative emotion connected to our bad memories) in short order.

When we normally experience a negative event, say for example when, in our daily routine of events, we witness an intense car accident that results in the loss of life, we normally dream about the event. It is our brain's natural way of seeking healing.

As we dream, we toss and turn, our eyes move from side to side in what is called rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. The emotion is released from the memory and the negative event is "processed". The processed memory of the event is then stored in a different part of the brain, where you can remember it, but doesn't carry with it the disabling emotion.

Unfortunately, when you experience something as life threatening and overwhelming as combat, the memory and the emotion gets stuck and you get to relive that experience in your dreams and in your memories over and over, day after day and night after night. It is as if your projector is stuck in replay and it keeps showing the same damn movie or bizarre movies every night. Your brain is desperately trying to heal itself, but it is literally looping, sometime stuck on fast-forward. As you well know, any little trigger can bring it all back.

If you have been hit by shrapnel, you know how it can continue to work its way out of your skin for years to come. Well, it is similar with your negative emotional experiences. They continue to attempt to work their way out of your mind and EMDR is like a magnet that rapidly frees you of the sharp emotional fragments that plague you.

### **What happens during EMDR?**

During EMDR, the therapist will ask you to focus on a distressing event from the past. As you focus on the event, they will ask you to put a caption on the picture, a one-line summary that incorporates the emotion connected with the event. The therapist will also ask you to identify a caption which would be appropriate for the picture if in some way it were all resolved.

You will also identify the emotion related to the event and where you feel the tension in your body and then follow the therapist's finger or a specially designed light bar. After several sets, the negative emotions are released and the memory is freed. Most participants report remarkable relief.

### **What EMDR is not.**

EMDR is not hypnosis. While participating in EMDR you are in full control. EMDR is like having a focused

discussion. You may leave feeling tired and drained, like having a nightmare in the waking state, but you leave feeling relieved and like something has been lifted -- and it sticks, never to return. In the future, as you think about the event, you remember it, but it is like reading about it in a newspaper or book. It no longer has an emotional charge.

I have been working with EMDR for over 10 years and I was trained by the founder Francine Shapiro in one of the early trainings. I have used EMDR with over 800 clients, to include 9/11 survivors, combat survivors, robbery, rape, assault and multiple trauma victims, and Sky Soldiers and their wives, and I can honestly say that it is an extremely effective tool for relieving PTSD victims of the negative emotion connected to the haunting and interfering events of the past.

An example of using EMDR to free yourself from the demons, you may wish to visit this web site; a great video showing how a combat veteran got relief from his childhood trauma, his combat trauma and his recent trauma. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBtqWrs2-K0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBtqWrs2-K0)

If you as a reader of the *2/503d Vietnam Newsletter* have participated in EMDR, please consider sending in your experience with EMDR to share with your fellow troopers.

Do yourself and those who live within a grenade's throw of you a favor, and seek out some assistance from an EMDR trained therapist.

### **How do I find an EMDR therapist?**

Enter your local data into this link and interview a trained provider from the list. Make sure they have worked with combat trauma. [www.emdr.com/clinic.htm](http://www.emdr.com/clinic.htm)

*Airborne! All the way!*

Doc Scott



**Note: Dr. Scott Fairchild is a licensed psychologist who operates Baytree Behavioral Health in Melbourne, Florida, and was the founder and co-director of the Stress, Trauma and Acute Response (STAR) Team for Kennedy Space Center. Doc Scott conducted much of the early research and work on PTSD for the U.S. Army at Walter Reed Army Hospital. Additionally, he founded Welcome Home Vets, Inc., a not-for-profit organization in Brevard County, FL, which supports returning veterans with their transition and reintegration into the community. The Doc has helped countless Sky Soldiers and other vets from throughout the country with PTSD treatment and evaluations in support of their VA claims. He can be reached at: [BaytreeBehHlth@aol.com](mailto:BaytreeBehHlth@aol.com) Ed**

