

A Moment of Silence to Honor our Heroes Both Dead and Living

Manohar V*

Am. Psychiatric Association, 93 Meeting House Rd, Haddam, CT 06438, USA

*Corresponding author: Velandy Manohar, Distinguished Life Fellow, Am. Psychiatric Association, 93 Meeting House Rd, Haddam, CT 06438, USA, Tel: (860) 347-6971; E-mail: velandy_manohar_md@comcast.net

Rec date: Aug 25, 2015; Acc date: Dec 29, 2015; Pub date: Dec 31, 2015

Copyright: © 2015 Manohar V. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Abstract

Here are nearly 50,000 reasons for me to keep the needs of our service members closest to my heart and on the front burner in my mind as well as front and center in the public square.

One of the heroes who gave his life is Staff SGT James M. Malachowski, USMC. He was 25 when he died in the Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was in 2nd BN, 8th Mar. Regiment, II Marine Div. II Marine Expeditionary force, based in Camp Lejeune, NC.

I picked his name out of the list of heroes because I have two powerful links to the II Marines and Camp Lejeune.

1. I am father of USMC Officer who saw action in the Al Anbar Province when the II Mar Div. took over this totally broken down region. (2006-2007) and

2. The Spearhead Insignia which was a shoulder patch when it was introduced during action in Pacific theater relates very well to the Surname of our family namely Velandy which is a Tamil word meaning bearer of the Spear. The Hindu deity who is referred to as Velandy is revered especially in South India and Sri Lanka. This deity is both a scholar and warrior who like Pericles lead the forces of Good to a great triumph over the forces of evil. I could hardly contain myself and felt extremely gratified when I fully appreciated this link between our Surname Velandy- the Spear bearer and the Spear head Symbol of the II Marine Division. This Division stabilized the once deadly and desperately chaotic region of Iraq- the vast badlands of the Al. Anbar province a couple of years ago and handed over control to the Iraqis.

Introduction

Before I begin to introduce you to this report I wanted to add some urgency to and provide a context for my research, clinical work and commentary that began in 2008 and gathered steam in the past 3 years. This is the most recent of my reports.

At least three Major DOD failures were coming to fruition at about the same time when the horrible impact of the involuntary separation of 23,000 services members under Chapter 5-13 of AR 200- 635 was being reported besides the terrible betrayal of the Tillman family and besmirching of his heroic sacrifice and meritorious service to our Country. His commanding officers comments about Cpl. Pat Tillman's religious practices in connection with the so called friendly fire event and Gen McChrystal's deceptive conduct vis a vis the award of the Silver Star to Cpl. Pat Tillman remain to this day among most reprehensible dishonorable and unworthy acts taken by a superior officer in the US army in past 235 years. His firing by President Obama was only the second example I can think off since the Korean War when President Truman fired McArthur that a Commander of a theater of operations was relieved of his command. There are others who could be considered for separation from their command for dereliction of duty.

These are the three additional areas of ongoing concern besides the Chapter 5-13 Discharges:

Major nidal hasan: "The ticking time bomb"*

*This is how a colleague at WRAMC assessed Nidal Hasan. It is part of the title of the report issued by Sen. J. Lieberman and Sen. S. Collins.

The multiple inexcusable deadly systemic (DOD and FBI) failures in the case of Major Nidal caused even more havoc than the Chapter 5-13 discharges in a short space of time. After the smoke cleared and the shooting ended because of the valor of Sgt. Kimberly Munley and Sgt. Mark Todd who ended the rampage by an American Mujahidin the extent of devastation became clearer. Sgt Kimberly Munley was wounded in the exchange of gun fire.

There were tragically 43 casualties, 12 dead service members including a pregnant service member, 1 dead civilian Physician's assistant and 30 wounded(including the wanna be mujahid Major Nidal Hasan in a matter for a few minutes on 11 05 2009. He was wounded but survived. He expected to die.

It is my hope based on the 02 17 11 posting by Mr. Charles Keyes the CNN Senior National Security Producer that after 15 months Secretary of Defense Mr. Gates will be releasing a report on the dramatic rise of Major Hasan to the title of Major despite indisputable evidence that he had undergone auto-radicalization and that Nidal Hasan was a clear and present danger to the US military effort and to the lives of our unsuspecting service members that will assign responsibility and hold all those who had endangered Force security and forsaken National interest accountable. I believe he had to do

something like this in 2007 when the Washington Post published a series of investigative articles which outlined serious shortcomings in the care and treatment of our warriors at the WRAMC.

Military sexual trauma

The ongoing intractable and demoralizing problems associated with MST has not been addressed effectively and fairly to the detriment to health well-being and morale of our military especially our women warriors. There are several service men who have been victimized as well. The callous and dismissive response to the extremely traumatizing wounds associated with rape and sexual assault inflicted by military colleagues are as much a cause of concern and anger as the sexual assault they suffered. The Class action suit filed by SWAN (Service Women's Action Network) on the matter of Sexual Assault and Rape against Mr. Rumsfeld and Current Secretary of Defense Mr. Gates which is long overdue to force the military to take a really hard objective look at the problems experienced by women in a broad range of inter-phases with men and the command structure can bring to light the systemic problems and identify those who have sought to institutionalize sexual harassment, intimidation, assault and rape. I will attach documents based on my earlier efforts to bring MST to the attention of our leaders.

Battle at the VPB in Wanat, Afghanistan

The Battle of Wanat occurred on July 13, 2008, when about 200 Taliban guerrillas attacked NATO troops near the village of Wanat in the far eastern province of Nuristan. The position was defended primarily by U.S. Army soldiers of the 2nd Platoon, Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team.

The Taliban surrounded the remote base and its observation post and attacked it from the village and the surrounding farmland. They destroyed much of the Americans' heavy munitions, broke through U.S. lines, and entered the main base before being repelled by artillery and aircraft. American casualties included nine killed and 27 wounded, while four Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers were wounded. The U.S. combat deaths represent the most in a single battle since the start of U.S. operations in 2001.

The Battle of Wanat has been the focus of widespread debate, generating "a great deal of interest and scrutiny among military professionals and from outside observers." This is primarily due to the relatively "significant number of coalition casualties". Several investigations were launched into events leading up to the battle. The initial investigation was completed in August 2008. In July 2009, Senator James Webb requested that the U.S. Army formally investigate the battle and previous investigation. Lieutenant General Richard F. Natonski conducted another investigation in late 2009 which led to orders of reprimand for the chain of command. In June 2010, the U.S. Army revoked the reprimands—stating that no negligence was involved and that the actions of the chain of command were reasonable.

The officers of the troops in the Wanat Base could have learned enough from the actions and accomplishments of Col. John Ripley who coordinated efforts with elements of the US Army and the VN Marines who saved the day for Viet Nam on April 2nd 1972 at the Dong ha Bridge and from the studying the outstanding leadership and aggressive as well as adaptive tactics of Lt. Gen Cheatham and Lt. Gen Christmas when they were with the 2/5USMC who were fighting the PAVN (North VN) and the NLF forces (Viet Cong) during the Battle for Hue and trying to reach their ARVN allies and elements of the US Military trapped in Hue to give the troops in their command a fighting chance to withstand the attack and launch a successful series of counterattacks.. The lessons learned from these three leaders would have been invaluable in preparing for the battle that ensued at Wanat which ended in a terrible defeat even though the officers had 10 months to prepare for this battle. Maj. Gen Alles could also teach them important lessons on investigating and developing remedial and disciplinary measures.

This report has outlined several challenges that must be addressed with resolve and a great degree of urgency but the scope of the problems and complexity of the tasks are daunting but we must rise up to challenge and enlist the support of all men and women of good faith and courage to rally around and focus their energies of getting it done. It will not be completed in one feel sweep but one step at a time. This is the process I took to document these challenges to the health and wellbeing, dignity and sacred honor of our service members and point out the urgency of their needs since about 2008. I leaned on the spiritual power that is addressed in Mahatma Gandhiji's favorite hymn. These words of prayer are essential to this kind of effort "Lead Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on. The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead thou me on. Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see the distant scene one step enough for me." Cardinal J. H. Newman.

All the time I have been thinking about and writing up this analysis of catastrophic events during the course of OEF and OIF I was wondering how should this essay be brought to close, on what note should this debilitating read end and after some internal debate I decided to end t with this ballad that is special for me and certainly for a great many people I work with for whom my optimistic outlook about their future suggests all is not lost and their life has a chance to put out more fresh shoots in the days to come.

Conclusion

I had helped to convince him this hearing the second (the first one was in 2007) on the matter of Personality discharges was very important to attempt to correct the errors involved in the application of Chap 5-13 of ARR 635-200 regulations and to restore the Veterans benefits to 23,000 service members who are along with their family members suffering various privations and health concerns.