

**Vietnam vs Iraq: A Comparison of the Soldier's Experience,
Preparation for Each War, the Fighting in Each War, and the Return
Home for the Soldiers of Each War**

**A Comparison of the Emotional and Psychological Adjustment of the
Returning Veterans of Vietnam and Iraq**

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**The papers are based on parts of the upcoming book,
Two Soldiers, Two Wars: Forty Years Apart by Worthington & Heffner**

Introduction

- Two Objectives
 - Total destruction
 - Elimination of the enemy
- How they began
- Similarities
- Differences



How they began

- Vietnam
 - Slow Build up
 - 1950 – Helping the French
 - Advisors to Brigades
 - Prevent communist takeover
- Iraq
 - Quick invasion
 - Regime change/WMD



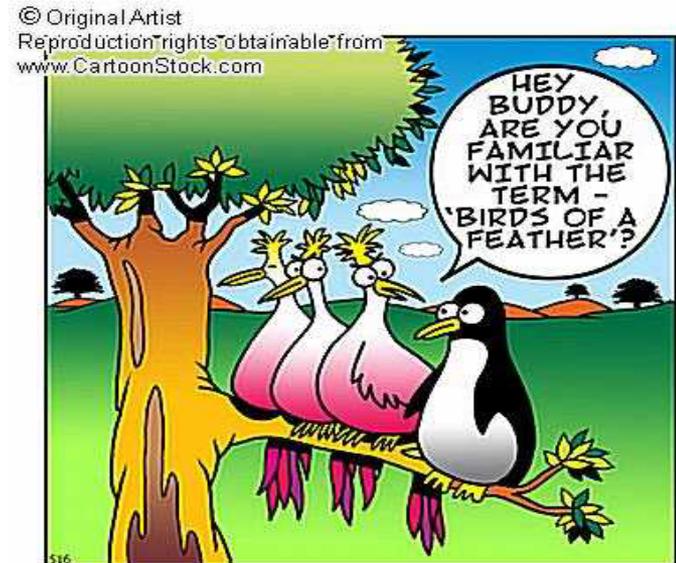
Differences

- Vietnam
 - Began as insurgency
 - Enemy has centralized control
 - Enemy with common objectives
 - External support
 - Unending supply of troops
- Iraq
 - Began as army vs army
 - Enemy with no or little centralized control
 - Enemy with no common objective
 - Little or conflicting external support
 - Unsure of troop supply



Similarities

- Political actions
- Lack of unwavering support from US populace
- Harsh environment
- Difficult to differentiate friend from foe
- Peaceful settlement unlikely
- Counterinsurgency operations



Vietnam

The Soldier's Experience

Emotional and Psychological Adjustment



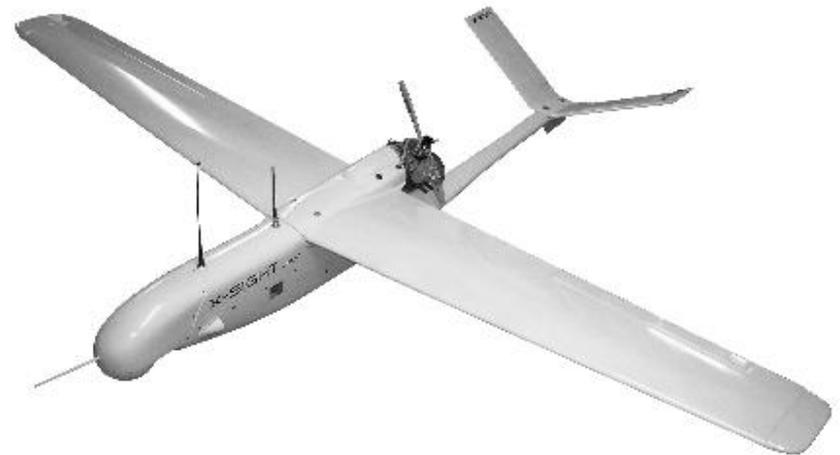
Iraq

- 500,000 troops
 - 233,000 Army
 - 11,000 Army Reserve
 - 9,000 Army National Guard
 - 74,000 USMC
 - 10,000 USMC Reserve
 - 61,000 US Navy
 - 2,000 US Navy Reserve
 - 55,000 US Air Force
 - 2,000 US Air Force Reserve
 - 7,000 US Air National Guard
 - 700 US Coast Guard
 - 43,000 Coalition Nation troops (38 nations)



Iraq

- Planning began day after Operation Desert Storm
- Four Phases
- 150,000 troops – Running Start
- Joint force
- Information-based war
 - Satellite communications
 - UAV



Iraq

- 1 May 2003 – “Major combat operations have ended.”
- 23 May 2003 – Bremer disbands Iraqi Army
- Zarqawi/Al Qaeda Iraq
- Civil war?
- Marines and 101st Airborne remember Vietnam (Combined Action Platoons)
- Ratios
- The Surge
- Statistics



Iraq

- Tour 12 months – now 15
- R&R 15 days – now 18
- Training sessions
- FOBs
- Weather
- IEDs – EFPs – SAF – IDF
- Complex attacks – chemical attacks
- Risk management (IBA, armor, PT belts?)
- Redeployment (weeks to months)
- Reintegration - BATTLEMIND



Iraq

- Prediction: 30 % PTSD
- Is PTSD political?
- 1.5 million troops
- Pre- & Post-Deployment Health Assessment
- Post-Deployment Health Reassessment
- At risk for PTSD
 - Army & Marine
 - Reserve component
 - Multiple deployments
 - Iraq
 - Women



PDHRA Battlemind Training

Continuing the Transition Home

Audience: Service Members and leaders

Training Timeframe: 3-6 months after deployment as part
of the Post Deployment Health Re-Assessment (PDHRA)
(Reconstitution phase of Deployment Cycle Support)

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Combat Skills You All Possess

- Battlemind skills helped you survive in combat...
but may cause problems when you get home...
if you haven't adapted them

Buddies (cohesion) vs. Withdrawal

Accountability vs. Controlling

Targeted Aggression vs. Inappropriate Aggression

Tactical Awareness vs. Hypervigilance

Lethally Armed vs. "Locked and Loaded" at Home

Emotional Control vs. Anger/Detachment

Mission Operational Security (OPSEC) vs. Secretiveness

Individual Responsibility vs. Guilt

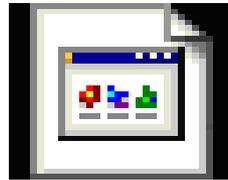
Non-Defensive (combat) Driving vs. Aggressive Driving

Discipline and Ordering vs. Conflict

- **Battlemind Checks** allow Soldiers and their Buddies to identify when help is needed.

Two Buddies

- To play video scenario, click the link to play the video.



buddies_driving.wmv