

Reaction paper

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REACTION PAPER THE WOUNDED PLATOON Kevin Shields, a 24-year old Army Soldier, went out drinking with three Army buddies on November 30, 2007, from Fort Carson, Colorado, a base close to Colorado Springs. A few hours later, he was dead. He was shot twice in the head at close range and left by the side of the road by his army buddies. Shields' violent murder accentuated one of many violent attacks committed by the three Army buddies, who are now serving time in prison for Shield's death and other crimes as well. Since the Iraq war began, a total of 18 soldiers from Fort Carson have been charged with or convicted of murder, manslaughter or attempted murder committed at home in the United States, and 36 Army soldiers have committed suicide. In the movie *The Wounded Platoon*, FRONTLINE investigate a single Fort Carson platoon of infantrymen, the 3rd Platoon, "Charlie Company" 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry, and finds that after a long period time away from home, serving their country, a group of young men changed by the war in Iraq and suffering from a range of psychiatric disorders that many blame for their violent and self-destructive behaviors. Since returning from Iraq, three members of the 3rd Platoon have been convicted on murder or attempted murder charges; one was jailed for drunk driving and another for assaulting his spouse; and the other one has attempted suicide. They could not stop bragging about the amount of innocent people they have murdered and they have gotten away with it. "There's a whole bunch of people in the unit that killed people they weren't supposed to," according to Bruce Bastien, who, along with Louis Bressler and Kenny Eastridge, is now serving time for the murder of Kevin Shields. In a stunning confession recorded by police interviewers and shown for the first

time on television, Mr. Bastien admits to his role in the murder of two U. S. soldiers and the stabbing of a young woman during a robbery in Colorado Springs, thefts and murders are being committed in our own backyard by our own Army soldiers whose work is to protect us and our country. Mr. Bastien also makes claims about more murders committed in Iraq during the surge. "It's easy to get away with that kind of s**t over there. You can just do it and be like, 'Oh, he had a gun,' and nobody really looks into it. 'F*** it, it's just another dead Haji.'" But that excuse did not go too well for them here. While the Army has concluded that there is no evidence to back up Bastien's allegations of soldiers killing innocent Iraqis, PBS, Fontline also speaks with platoon member Jose Barco, who makes a similar claim. "We were pretty trigger-happy," he says of the soldiers' time in Iraq. "We'd open up on anything. We usually rolled three or four trucks, and if one of them got hit and there was any males around, we'd open up, and we'd shoot at them. They even didn't have to be armed." They have extended their behaviors here at home and even turned on their own Army buddies. ScienceDaily (Sept. 15, 2009) The Veterans' Administration should expect a high volume of Iraq veterans seeking treatment of post traumatic stress disorder, with researchers anticipating that the rate among armed forces will be as high as 35%, according to the Management Insights feature in the current issue of Management Science, the flagship journal of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS®). 35% of our soldiers suffer from PTSD. The VA system which is already experiencing significant delays for PTSD treatment provision, urgently needs to vamp up its mental health resource capacity. Our soldiers are becoming mass murderers abroad

and at home. Is it PTSD, boredom or just because they can get away with it? Anything less than mandatory PTSD therapy upon return should be considered less than acceptable to the American public. We ask these personnel to put their ordinary lives on hold, commit unspeakable acts of valor and return to America without support and understanding. We can not begin to imagine the horrors these people have witnessed or experienced. With mandatory treatment by psychotherapists, the stigma would be removed and maybe they would have a regained sense of morality. Being from N. C. and witnessing the struggles of returning military personnel from wartime, we need to do so much more for them. This was an excellent film and is exactly what I expected from Frontline. No opinions or hidden agendas. Just the facts and the room for us to interpret. I think we need to step back and remove the original problem, which is waging illegal wars in other countries. We are sending our people in there to be damaged, then trying to "fix" them, most of the time so they can become functional enough to go back on a deployment and do violence upon others and be re-traumatized. That is insanity. Did you notice how the assistant chief of staff to the army talks about the soldiers as though they are products or commodities to be shipped to the front based on "supply and demand?" That is, indeed, exactly what they are. Just another pair of boots on the ground, just like any iraqi is "just another haji, like cattle or a dog." These soldiers are de-humanized in the same way they have de-humanized the alleged "enemy" and that may be the moral lesson for them all. This should give any person a lot of pause before they voluntarily (and remember everyone, it is voluntary) signs up for this irrational, cowardly work. " This should give any person a lot of pause

before they voluntarily (and remember everyone, it is voluntary) signs up for this irrational, cowardly work." You need to jump back with your bad self, you and like minded others are as much to blame as the incompetent system I've had to deal with because of my own issues, you reek of the snide arrogant sort who spend the day blaming America for every wrong in the world before going home to sleep at night under that blanket of safety provided by better men than you, the same men you call cowards. You're not fit to lick the mud off any of my brother's boots What 'blanket of safety' did the War in Iraq provide for anyone? It was and is a complete disaster that has cost us over 4,000 soldiers lives and \$1 trillion to US taxpayers. It was waged based on lies by 'chicken hawks', men like Dick Cheney who got 5 deferments when it was his turn to fight in Vietnam yet has no problem sending young American men and women to die for 'weapons of mass destruction and liberating the Iraqi people.' What a joke. The 'support the troops' campaign is nothing but a Pentagon marketing strategy to take the onus off of the government's awful policies. If you really want to support the troops, look at the policies themselves and the terrible decision making that went into waging them and make sure it never happens again. We can support the troops by avoiding the needless deaths of 4,000 soldiers and the countless wounded. That's real patriotism, saving American lives from needless death. I'm sure many Americans are scared of the same thing happening to their soldiers coming home in their hometown who are now in Afghanistan. So far our media has not really made any connections between crimes at home and PTSD. It will only be time. I'm also sure that our Military is keeping quiet. Sending our young men into combat results in PTSD, Madness, and violence

backhome. The VA will ne er have enough resources to take care of the broken minds and bodies that wars have created.