

In Memory of Joe Biel



It was November of 2006 when Company A of the 164th Combat Engineering Battalion returned after a one year deployment to Iraq. One of the members of Company A was SSgt. Joe Biel, a native of Peavers, SD. Joe had served with the Army in Operation Desert Storm, and this was his second deployment with the North Dakota National Guard in Iraq. His service to his country was honorable and his unit did their job well, yet on May 1st, 2007, Joe Biel's family buried him in Wilmont, SD after he completed suicide just a few days earlier.

To honor the memory his friend and fellow ND National Guard Veteran, Dan Olson from Fargo will cycle across North Dakota in a **Courage Carries On Courage Ride** to be held from May 23-31st.

Dan and Joe served together on their second deployment to Iraq. Their first deployment was "not all that bad" according to Olson. But on their second deployment they were assigned to route clearance. In layman's terms, it meant they were to clear routes used by U.S. forces in search of roadside bombs (IED's). They located over 470 plus ordnates in their deployment, but found themselves always on the edge, worried about their safety and the safety of others in their unit.



There is help available! If you think you might be suffering from PTSD or are having suicidal thoughts, please have the **COURAGE** to ask for help.

In North Dakota dial 211 or
Nationwide dial 1-800-273-8255

If you still require non-emergent assistance, please call your
North Dakota American Legion Service Officer at

701-451-4646.

North Dakota American Legion Courage Carries On Courage Ride



Bicycling Across ND to Bring Awareness of Veterans' Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Suicide

Receptions and Fundraiser

May 22-31, 2010

Beach, Medora, Dickinson, Hebron,
Bismarck, Steele, Jamestown, Valley City
and Fargo

History of Courage Carries On

Courage Carries On is a project of the North Dakota American Legion to bring awareness to the issue's of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Suicide among our veterans. Courage Carries On began in 2008 to raise awareness in North Dakota about our Veterans who suffer from PTSD, the campaign simultaneously addresses the issue of suicide among veterans. Since its inception, Courage Carries On has produced three short video and radio PSA's, pamphlets and posters. We have distributed them throughout North Dakota in hopes of raising the awareness about these issues and hopefully encouraging our veterans to seek help if they are experiencing symptoms of PTSD or having suicidal thoughts. With this bicycle tour, we sincerely hope to carry our message of courage to any Veteran needing help.

For Dan Olson, the ride is all about honoring his friend Joe Biel. For other returning veterans it may be the encouragement they need to seek help through the Courage Carries On program.

Please mail all contributions to:

The ND American Legion

PO Box 5057

West Fargo, ND 58078

What is Post-traumatic Stress Disorder?

It is classified as an anxiety condition.

It is a natural reaction to experiencing a traumatic or life-threatening event.

It can develop if stress reactions persist or worsen.

It has had many names over the years such as shell shock, battle fatigue, war neurosis and Vietnam syndrome.

It can occur due to any type of traumatic event such as combat, rape and abuse.

Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Recurrent, intrusive and distressing thoughts about the event or trauma

Recurrent dreams, nightmares

Flashbacks

Distress caused by reminders of the events

Alienation, isolation and avoidance of people and places

Emotional numbing

Survivor guilt

Difficulty falling or staying asleep

Anger and rage

Difficulty concentrating or remembering things

Hyper-vigilant, or survivalist behavior

Exaggerated startle response

Suicidal thoughts

Suicide

Unfortunately, many of our active duty personnel and veterans have taken their own lives. Suicide among our veterans isn't limited to those currently or recently serving. In spite of the current efforts to inform and educate our veterans and urge them to seek counseling, too many see no way out of their situation and complete suicide.

Suicide Warning Signs

Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself

Trying to get pills, guns, or other ways to harm oneself

Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide

Hopelessness

Rage, uncontrolled anger, seeking revenge

Acting in a reckless or risky way

Feeling trapped, like there is no way out

Saying or feeling there's no reason for living

**It is never too
late to get help!**