

Who's the Enemy Now?

After being "in-country" (Nam) for a time, it became easy to figure out who the enemy was. Anyone who had a pointed hat, slanted eyes and ate rice was Charlie (Viet Cong). By the time you filled your first body bag with the leftover pieces of your Brothers, or saw the heads of your interpreters stuck on poles for your viewing pleasure, you quickly hardened to the fact that "Everyone is the Enemy." That is, if you wanted to stay "frosty" and make it home yourself.

The Geneva Convention was a joke. It was a set of rules for war that only we had to follow. So when we had to chase the enemy across the border of a neighboring country, we'd send in the Korean Marines (ROK's, Republic of Korea). They did a wonderful job and didn't give a shit about rules. I've never had much use for the United Nations anyway, but it would have been nice to have a few "Blue Hats" around when you needed them. At least the Australians showed up for the party. Never met an Aussie I didn't like.

You can't trust anyone in war, except your fellow warriors. Hell, even our barber was a Viet Cong, and got a personalized lesson in skydiving without a parachute. That was our way of interrogating prisoners. Terrible you say? No, that's just the way war is. There are no rules, and there sure aren't any referees or goody-two-shoes calling "foul" or "unfair."

So what's the point, you ask? Don't worry, I'm gettin to it. Just need a little time to warm up a bit.

By the time you arrive Stateside, you pretty much distrust everyone who looks even close to the enemy you were just fighting, and that's perfectly understandable from a Warrior's point of view. The cute little kids you're sharing your meal with are found laying dead in a night ambush, caught trying to smuggle in explosives to blow the shit out of you and your brother's the next morning. How could anyone expect our Vets to feel any other way but untrusting?

What you don't expect, however, is for the round-eyes at home to turn out to be like the enemy you left in war. Maybe you can see how it wasn't (or isn't) much of a stretch for a Combat Vet to take a rifle up on a building and start killing anyone in range.

In this situation, the Veteran felt like his war hadn't ended, and there were no "friendlies." With the right amount of traumatic stress, the right conditions to prove that, in fact, he had been betrayed, he felt that "suicide by combat" was his chopper out. And if he had to go, he'd take as many of the enemy as he could with him. This did happen.

So here's my point. These were tragic events that we as Americans, do not want to see happen again. And if we're not real careful, it's very likely they will.

To you Warriors from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars that are reading this book, I want you to understand a few things very clearly. There ARE friendlies now. There IS help for you now. Your true support base is your fellow warriors, and the old knuckle dragger like me. I'll be damned if you're gonna' go through what we did, with or without the support of the American public.

And I hope like hell that the American people of this great nation make some amends for their

disgraceful actions to our Veterans from Vietnam, by treating our new young Warriors with the dignity and honor they deserve.

And now to you Warriors, I ask this:

“Who is the Enemy now?”

The answer to this, my Brothers and Sisters, is that if you are now among people that love you, and you’re in a country that honors you, then that only leaves one enemy left. That enemy is you.

This is a tough hill to climb my friends, I’ve been there. And it means that you’ll really need to look deep inside if you’re gonna’ find any answers that fit. No two humans are exactly the same. You will all feel different degrees of pain and have different limits for dealing with it.

There are many common experiences in war, but when it comes to dealing with those experiences, it's up to each of you to choose your own path to your own future.

You can do it! You can make it! And you will have help! You’ll just need to ask for it.

Let's lock-and-load. We’re movin’ out!

From: “*The Warriors Guide to Insanity*” By Sgt. PTSD Brandi, U.S.M.C. Never Retired?
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