

Inception of the AA PTSD Association?

America's involvement in the war in South Vietnam ended in 1975. However, for the thousands of teenagers who did the fighting in that war, the battles live on as vividly today as they were more than three decades ago. Vietnam Veterans were especially vulnerable to this conflict because the average age of these veterans was 19 years old. This meant that many young men were exposed to constant violence and trauma during a critical period in the formation of a developmental period in their adult personalities.

While in Vietnam, military personnel of many ethnicities served with distinction. However, the 1988 National Vietnam Readjustment Study (NVVRS) demonstrated that Black (African American) and Hispanic veterans who served in Vietnam experienced significantly greater readjustment problems and a higher level of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than did European American Veterans.

In 1990 and 1991 many studies were conducted referencing veterans preparing themselves for the challenges ahead through psychological, social, economic and political renewal? It was while conducting these studies and during the 1996 Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Brain trust Symposium, the horrific effects of PTSD on African Americans and other ethnic minority Veterans were first revealed. It was learned that many minority Veterans, as a result of this period of military service, had great difficulty in establishing a coherent positive sense of identity. Even though many Veterans suffered from PTSD in previous wars (World War I, World War II and Korea) it was not suitably understood until these studies of Vietnam Veterans clarified the problem. The study, in its comparisons of military personnel by population indicated the military was composed of 13% African Americans during the Vietnam era. Thirty percent (30%) of that African American military population was assigned to combat units during the Vietnam era. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all casualties of the Vietnam War were African Americans. One in three African Americans who served in the country of Vietnam currently has full or partial PTSD. Minorities, having had a higher level of exposure to war zone stress and other military dangers were placed more at risk for PTSD.

ABOUT US

The African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association (AA PTSD Assn) established in 1996 in part as an outgrowth of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Veterans Brain Trust symposium. The African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association (AA PTSD Assn) is a National Veterans Service Organization (**SERVING ALL VETERANS**) is recognized by Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs. While providing multiple services for veterans and their families is a critical focus, the AA PTSD Assn also provides assistance to the homeless , self-education training programs, claims preparation for individuals with PTSD, TBI and other military related ailments and resources that provide effective health and human services.

AA PTSD Assn's services are dedicated to the discovery and dissemination of knowledge; stimulation of public policies discussed on the implementation; identification and expansion of effective programs; and initiatives that reduce traumatic stressors and immediate and long-term health consequences to individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and their families.

Operating primarily from contributions that are tax-deductible the African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association provide a culturally competent forum for the sharing of research information, clinical strategies, and to enhance the effectiveness of available resources among individuals with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), also called, "acquired brain injury or simply head injury".

AA PTSD Assn has partnered with Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs in the implementation of the States' Incarcerated Veterans Program and the development of their claims

processing program that has resulted in that State becoming number one in veterans claim processing. This of course has resulted in an increase in the amount of revenue generated for both the veteran and the state.

We have also partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services, Howard University, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Brain Trust Organization, the Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Administration, and the Institute of Medicine for the dissemination and stimulation of public policies for discussions on the implementation; identification and expansion of effective programs; and initiatives that reduce traumatic stressors and immediate and long-term health consequences to individuals with PTSD and their families.

Our program is staffed by National Veterans Service Officers that are accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Congress of the United States. AA PTSD Assn currently has offices in the states of Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Texas, and Washington. Within the next year we will have offices in Hawaii, Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Marshall Island, Philippines', American Samoa and twenty-five other states across the Mideast section of the United States and the South.

MISSION

The mission of the African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association is multiple, and includes seeking materials that are dedicated to the discovery of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and their many maladies. These materials are then disseminated, and are used to promote knowledge and stimulation of public policy discussions. This material also encourages the implementation, identification, and expansion of effective programs. It provides initiatives that encourage healthy lifestyles and long-term health consequences, and provides assistance with homelessness, self-education, training programs, and claims preparation for individuals with PTSD, TBI and/or other military service related concerns.

The African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association has provided Veterans, family members of Veterans, homeless Veterans and incarcerated Veterans, direct services (e.g. food, clothing, personal hygiene items, shoes, boots and blankets). AA PTSD Assn. has provided these services with an all-volunteer force that utilizes their own funds and minimal resources through group partnerships within each State they operate to finance and operate this very necessary program.

The African American Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Association was established April 3, 1999, as a derivative of an African American PTSD Therapy Group formed in 1995. The purpose for the creation of this Association was:

- To field many of the questions and complaints lodged by Ethnic Minorities and All Other Veterans.
- To obtain and exchange information, to provide pertinent information to medical personnel and to ensure better health care.
- To assist Ethnic Minorities and All Other Veterans by informing them of illnesses they or their family members may be afflicted with or could suffer as a result of their military service in Vietnam, Korea or the Gulf War.
- To provide informative materials explaining the disorder PTSD and its impingement on their related social, psychological, physical and accompanying economic maladies. Providing materials and information explaining why African Americans and other ethnic minorities are more susceptible to these disorders.
- To provide informative materials explaining the disorder TBI and its impingement on their related social, psychological, physical and accompanying economic maladies.

- To provide assistance and information on what can be done to minimize the effects of these disorders and to offer **HOPE**.