

Every Successful Sniper Round Leads to a Knock on the Door

Posted on Feb 05, Posted by [Buzz Davis, Army Veteran & Activist](#) Category [Wisconsin](#)



One veteran's reaction to the new 'American Sniper' movie.

STOUGHTON - All the senseless deaths, grievous injuries and destruction in war. Maybe we will "never learn." Across the world many are fighting back against these death machines we call governments. This is a fight we can never stop.

American Sniper is just one item in this world that shows how much we have lost our way. The supposed moral leaders of our nation are for the most part silent on America's never ending wars - called the War on Terror.

For each successful sniper shot, somewhere in the world there is a knock on the door - the messenger of death has arrived.

It reminds me of some of the worst days of my life. I was a lieutenant stationed at Fort Bragg, NC. I was informed that I was to serve as a survival assistance officer. I soon found out what that meant.

I had to go tell a family that their young son was missing in action. The soldier killed was a young Black man about 18, drafted, in Vietnam just a week or two.

The Mother and Father were divorced or separated. The Army demanded I go and tell the Father first. I had to go to the Mother's town to ask where the Father was, then go tell him in another town where he was working and then drive back to the Mother's town and tell her. The agony for the Mother and his sisters was probably terrible. When people saw my military car and driver I am sure the phones started ringing and they all dreaded for those we were going to see.

A few days later the Fort received a telegram that the young man had been killed in action in a "firefight."

I told the colonel I should go tell the Mother first and then tell the Father after I found out where he was working that day. But he said you will tell the father.

So I found the Father an older man in a large field near a pile of lumber. By the time I walked across the field to him he was just standing there in the hot sun, shoulders slumped all alone with his hands at his side. I reached him and he says I know what you're going to tell me. And I said yes. He says sit down. So we sit on the pile of lumber and I tell him his son has been killed. We talk a bit and he explains how much he appreciates me coming and telling him. I thank him and we shake hands. As I walk across that field back to my waiting driver I think I tell him his only son is dead and he is very kind to me and thanks me for coming all the way to tell him in person.

An hour or two later I am back at the Mother's home. Of course they all know by now. From the very bright sunlight his sister leads me to her Mom's bedroom. She is in bed in the dark with just small low light lamp at the side of the bed and a chair. She says he's gone isn't he. I say yes and she wants me to sit down. I open the telegram and tell her that her son has been killed in a firefight. Then I hear a gasp in the room and I look up. There are about 5 men and women standing around the bed that I had not seen in the dark...They had all been waiting with her.

The Mother then asked was he in much pain. I said what? With the fire and all. Then I realized she thought I was telling her her son had burned to death. And I thought to myself God we can't even get it straight how to tell loved ones their son is dead.

So I explain that her son was a gun battle which the Army calls a firefight. She felt better that he son had not burned to death.

A week later I went back to escort his body to the funeral home and prepare everything for the funeral. Fortunately a sergeant escorted the man's casket from the East Coast. That sergeant taught me and the detail of soldiers sent to help with the funeral what to do.

The family wanted to have the casket unlocked - my orders were the military said the casket was to be kept locked. I said to the funeral director and the sergeant I think the casket needs to be kept closed. But I knew what they wanted to do. By that time in Vietnam, there were some unusual things going on with bodies and some of course were badly destroyed. So I left to do something else. When I returned the sergeant and funeral director showed me the young man's body and we were all thankful everything was ok.

I will never forget giving his Mother, a very small slender woman, the American flag after we removed it from his casket at the funeral.

The chairs for the family were very close to the grave. At the proper time, I knelt in front of her with the folded flag and said on behalf our nation and the president of the United States of America I present this flag in honor of your son's sacrifice to our nation.

Just as I finished this the rifles went off with a very loud crack a couple feet away from the foot of the grave. People screamed and jumped up. I was so startled I jumped up, the Mother jumped up, I started falling backward into the open grave toward the casket. She reached out and grabbed me. There we were holding on to each other with the flag wedged between us. I then sat her back down, saluted, went to the back and the minister took over to conduct the ceremony.

I have blocked that young soldier's name and that wonderful family's name from my memory. I think my brain just does not want to revisit those times.

So much senseless death going on and on century after century.

Now our government has tricked us again. The all-volunteer military has turned into a mercenary army. Our young men and women are again being brain washed into fighting battles for the 1%ers -- the lying, cheating, conniving men and women with kill lists who would never lower themselves to serve their country in the military. When will we ever learn?

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