

VFW Slams NY Times for Wacko Vet Story

Jan 17, 2008

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The national commander of the nation's largest organization of combat veterans is furious at the *New York Times* for not fact-checking the Jan. 13 article that portrays servicemembers returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as mentally unstable and more likely to commit violent crimes than nonveterans.

"This is irresponsible journalism," said Veterans of Foreign Wars National Commander George Lisicki, a Vietnam veteran from Carteret, N.J., "because it twists facts to perpetuate a myth that combat veterans are crazy and more likely to commit violent crimes. This dishonors the service and integrity of 1.5 million servicemen and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan."

The article, "[Across America, Deadly Echoes of Foreign Battles](#)," cites 121 cases in which veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan either committed or charged with a killing. The cases ranged from vehicular manslaughter to first-degree murder. The reporters then mixed in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, domestic violence, substance abuse, and homelessness and unemployment verbiage "to build an untenable case against today's veterans, and to further strengthen their biased 'wacko vet' premise," said Lisicki.

"America's veterans serve their country and society honorably," said Lisicki. "We're not all perfect, but perpetuating the crazed veteran myth is no better than calling every news media organization irresponsible for the acts of a few reporters. I expect more due diligence from the nation's third largest newspaper. I can only surreptitiously surmise that one of the reasons behind this story was to attack U.S. policy regarding the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and using troops as their pawns."

Note: Here are some recent statistics that [Move America Forward](#) cited in their Jan 14, rebuttal article titled "New York Times 'Killer Vet' Story Exposed as Erroneous by Pro-Troop Group."

*"The Times documentation of 121 potential killings out of more than 1.5 million veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq) and Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), divided by 6 years of conflict results in a murder rate of just **1.34 incidents per***

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100,000 veterans per year. That murder rate is far lower than the murder rate for the general population, demonstrating that the experiences of military service – including having served in Iraq and Afghanistan – actually made it less likely for returning veterans to commit murder once they returned home, than the general population."