

ABBREVIATIONS

ACU

Army combat uniform: The camouflage-printed uniform worn during combat since 2005, when it replaced the battle dress uniform (BDU) and desert combat uniform (DCU) of earlier eras.

BT

Basic training.

C-LEG

A state-of-the-art prosthetic leg with a computerized knee joint made by the Otto Bock Company, whose marketing emphasizes the technophilic details of the device and a sporty, physically active, and normative body and lifestyle for its wearer. At the time of my fieldwork, the C-Leg was considered the cutting edge in prosthetics.

CO

Commanding officer: CO is not a rank but a relation. Though any commissioned officer in charge of a particular unit of any size could be called its commanding officer, *your* CO is usually the officer with whom you have the most direct contact. In practice CO was generally used to refer to the person in a soldier's chain of command who is most likely to be the one to discipline or care if he did something wrong.

DEP

Delayed Entry Program or Delayed Enlistment Program: An army program that allows enlistees to delay the start of their contract for 365 days. Its

main use is to contract people who are seventeen years old and cannot actually begin service until they turn eighteen.

DOD

Department of Defense.

EFP

Explosively formed projectile or explosively formed penetrator: A self-forging shaped charge that, when exploded, propels a superheated piece of metal that forms aerodynamically into a projectile. As they were found in Iraq, EFPs were usually composed of a canister full of explosives with a convex copper disk for a lid, which was formed into a projectile that was dense, hot, and fast and could penetrate the hardened steel of armored vehicles. They were usually considered a subspecies of IED.

EXFIX

External fixator or external fixation device: Sometimes also called a halo, an ExFix is a steel and titanium scaffolding that surrounds and stabilizes a shattered limb and is anchored into the bone with a series of protruding screws.

GI BILL

The original GI Bill was the Servicemen's Readjustment Act passed in 1944 as a way of providing financial support for returning soldiers (or GIs, which stands for "government issue" and is said to be derived from "galvanized iron"), including loans, medical expenses, employment insurance, and tuition funds (its most well-known benefit), to help them establish civilian lives. In 1984 an updated version called the Montgomery GI Bill was passed, and in 2008 a new post-9/11 GI Bill was passed with an even more explicit emphasis on training, education, and benefits for family members.

IED

Improvised explosive device: The particular species of homemade bomb that became characteristic of insurgency warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq they were often hidden on the side of or beneath roads traveled by U.S. military vehicles and were sometimes detonated by pressure switches and sometimes by remote.

IVAW

Iraq Veterans Against the War: Modeled on Vietnam Veterans Against the War, IVAW is an organization of American service members and veterans

who have served since 9/11 and who are organized in opposition to the war in Iraq but who also organize around other issues, like PTSD awareness and sexual violence in the military.

MATC

Military Advanced Training Center: The \$11 million state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility that was opened at Walter Reed in 2007.

MOS

Military occupational specialty: The particular job of an enlisted soldier for which he or she receives training. An MOS could be infantryman, radio operator, paralegal specialist, or plumber.

MP

Military Police.

MRE

Meal ready to eat: The nutritionally engineered, dehydrated, and vacuum-sealed food for soldiers in the field. MREs are the high-tech replacement of the C-Ration of earlier military eras.

NCO

Noncommissioned officer: A service member still in the E (Enlisted) pay grades of rank E4 or corporal or above who is in a supervisory role.

NMA

Nonmedical attendant: The person living with and helping an injured service member while he or she requires treatment at a military medical facility that is at least one hundred miles from the service member's home. NMAs are (usually) entitled to a per diem and travel expenses from and to their own home and are expected to assist the service member with non-medical activities of daily living. At Walter Reed, NMAs were usually wives, girlfriends, or parents, though occasionally brothers and friends would fill the role. They were entitled to a \$60 per diem, for which they had to file paperwork and receive orders (i.e., official authorization).

OEF

Operation Enduring Freedom: The name for the U.S.-led mission in Afghanistan that began on October 7, 2001, as a response to 9/11. It also includes operations in Guantánamo Bay, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Jordan,

Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Yemen. On December 28, 2014, the Obama administration declared an end to the operation.

OIF

Operation Iraqi Freedom: The name for the U.S.-led mission in Iraq that began on March 19, 2003. On February 17, 2010, the Obama administration changed the name to Operation New Dawn (OND) to reflect the changing nature of the U.S. role there.

PICC LINE

Peripherally inserted central catheter line: A tube that runs from the heart to the outside of the body (usually the bicep) through the most direct intravenous route. There is a port on the outside of the body to which intravenous medicine can be attached. At Walter Reed PICC lines are most commonly used for administering aggressive antibiotics.

PT

Physical training or physical therapy: Usually in the military, PT means physical *training* (i.e., exercise). At Walter Reed this meaning slides into physical *therapy* in a subtle way.

PTSD

Posttraumatic stress disorder: The psychiatric diagnosis developed to recognize the particular psychic trauma of U.S. soldiers returning from the Vietnam War. Though the criteria are shifting, generally PTSD can be applied when a person's response to (experiencing or witnessing) a traumatic event includes a specified combination of pathological remembering or forgetting of the event, avoidance of things associated with it, emotional and affective numbing, heightened arousal, sleep disturbances, and other symptoms that begin after the event. The diagnosis was first recognized in the 1980 edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and has undergone significant revision in subsequent editions.

PX

Post Exchange: The PX is a subsidized store on an army base where only people with military ID (including dependents) can shop. They are often huge, sprawling, Walmart-like places selling everything from food to furniture and clothing.

SFAC

Soldier and Family Assistance Center: A central location where soldiers and their family members can access services, get information, or ask for help about everything from child care to leave forms and substance abuse counseling. The SFAC at Walter Reed also featured a huge storage room from which staff could retrieve DVDs, sweatshirts, and other items if soldiers or family members needed or wanted them.

TBI

Traumatic brain injury: A brain injury acquired by sudden impact to the head, including concussive force, physical impact to the head, or penetrating wound to the brain itself. Of the three types of TBI clinically differentiated—mild, moderate, and severe—mild TBI (or mTBI) is the most common in the current U.S. military context and, along with PTSD, is often identified as one of the signature injuries of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TRICARE

A comprehensive suite of managed care health insurance products that is heavily subsidized and available to all members (civilian and military) of the Department of Defense and their dependents.

TSGLI

Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance: An extension of the low-cost SGLI provided to service members by the VA. TSGLI entitles soldiers to \$20,000 to \$100,000 per limb lost. The payments for soldiers I knew were \$50,000 per limb. TSGLI was created in 2005 under Section 1032 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror, and Tsunami Relief.

USO

United Service Organization: A nonprofit, congressionally chartered, private organization founded in 1941 as an umbrella to unite other existing charitable groups wanting to support members of the U.S. military. They are perhaps best known for their tours, during which they bring entertainers (usually comedians and musicians) to perform for service members stationed around the world, especially downrange.

VA

Department of Veterans Affairs (formerly the Veterans Administration): The branch of the U.S. government that oversees veterans' issues, including administering the GI Bill and running a sprawling medical treatment and research network comprising over seven hundred facilities.