### VETERANS AND BAD PAPER: THE FACTS

- **VETERANS WHO RECEIVE A LESS THAN HONORABLE DISCHARGE FROM THE MILITARY ARE COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS VETERANS WITH "BAD PAPER."**
- **WHILE SOME ARE JUSTIFIED, IN TOO MANY INSTANCES THE FAILURE TO PERFORM OR 'BAD' BEHAVIOR IS SYMPTOMATIC OF IN-SERVICE INJURY AND TRAUMA WHICH REQUIRES TREATMENT, NOT DISSMALL WITH BAD PAPER.**

#### WHY BAD PAPER?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MINOR DISCIPLINARY INFRACTIONS</th>
<th>A PATTERN OF MISCONDUCT</th>
<th>COMMISSION OF A SERIOUS OFFENSE</th>
<th>CIVILIAN CONViction</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: For being late to formation a couple times, or having an argument with a superior.</td>
<td>A minimum of two incidents occurring within one enlistment is required. May be minor or more serious. Incidents do not have to be of the same nature.</td>
<td>Typically include willful disobedience of an order. Can be as minor as refusing to report to a barbershop or as serious as refusing to transport ammunition to a combat unit. May also include drug use.</td>
<td>Military code of justice dictates consequences for what we may not see as serious behavior outside of the military.</td>
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### BAD PAPER AND THE MENTAL HEALTH/TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY LINK

1 in 5 Iraq + Afghanistan veterans
(although lifetime prevalence estimated up to 30%)

1 in 10 Gulf War veterans

1 in 3 men and 1 in 4 women Vietnam veterans

PTSD and TBI produce behavioral dysfunction through an exaggerated startle response, inability to control reflexive behavior, irritability, or attraction to high-risk behavior.

INTERFERENCE with social and occupational functioning is a primary measure of the severity of PTSD and TBI.

### SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMORBIDITIES

- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Military sexual trauma
- Depression
- Combat exposure

### SOME MEDICINES used to treat mental health conditions may induce fatigue or lethargy, and also interfere with basic functioning.

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13. See No. 12.
16. "Suicide Rates in VHA Patients through 2011 with Comparisons with Other Americans and other Veterans through 2010", Veteran’s Health Administration, January 2014.
COMBAT AND BAD PAPER

MARINES WITH PTSD IN COMBAT: 11x more likely to receive misconduct discharges than those without PTSD.

8x more likely to have substance abuse discharges. As combat exposure the odds of each most striking for PTSD.

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

1. BEHAVIORAL ISSUES FROM IN-SERVICE TRAUMA may result in infractions of unit discipline.
2. THE SERVICE MEMBER may have early onset symptoms/may not yet be diagnosed.
3. THE MILITARY OFTEN DOES NOT TREAT these disciplinary infractions as symptoms of mental health injuries.
4. COMMAND MAY NOT BELIEVE that the conduct is due to in-service trauma.

EVEN IF THE MILITARY HAS ACKNOWLEDGED A DISABILITY and is processing a medical discharge, the military may suspend the medical separation process and give an immediate misconduct discharge if any misconduct occurs.

BECAUSE THE MILITARY REGARDS DRUG USE as behavior for which the service member is culpable, it generally processes these cases as misconduct discharges. 13

THE FALLOUT OF BAD PAPER

1. Service members with bad paper might be eligible for VA benefits. The VA decides.
2. The veteran has to request that the VA make a decision on this. Until the VA makes its decision, the veteran is ineligible.

BAD PAPER VETERANS ARE OVERREPRESENTED in state and federal prisons.

In 2004, 40% of incarcerated veterans had less than honorable discharges. 14

BAD PAPER AND ACCESS TO VA CARE + BENEFITS:

- VA ACCESS
- Treatment related to MST.
- Treatment for service-connected disabilities (after it is service-connected).
- Counseling at Vet Centers for combat veterans and survivors of MST.
- GPD – Unless dishonorable discharge.
- Must have minimum time in service.
- SSVF – Unless dishonorable discharge.
- No educational assistance unless fully honorable discharge.

INCARCERATION

- Suicide

VETERANS WITH BAD PAPER COMMIT SUICIDE at twice the rate of those with honorable or general discharges. 15

THE RATE OF SUICIDE for veterans outside of VA care is increasing. 16

In 2010, veterans outside of VA care were committing suicide 30% more frequently than those enrolled in VA care. 16