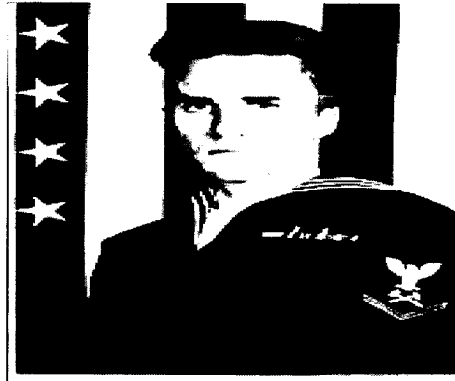


I sent a copy to the president and every governor in the country. And trying to get every news agency to Bite! My name is Richard Lane. I was a firefighter on the Flag LaSalle (AGF-3) from 1999 to 2002. I lost shipmates on 9/11 in the pentagon, ET1 Ronald Hemenway and our old CDR Commander Patrick Dunn. I remember the first time we pulled into Turkey; he said "You better mind your P's and Q's in Turkey boys, because if you've never been to a Turkish prison it will make a whole new man out of you." My mother's Family also lost PFC James Henry Martin Jr., my mother's half-brother in Mogadishu, Somalia when the Black Hawk Helicopter's went down. I proudly served my country and was privileged to travel from N. Africa to Russia doing it. Not a day goes by that I don't miss the beautiful port of Gaeta and the Mediterranean Sea and the warm smile of the Italian People. But it is a small world. While I was in Koper, Slovenia I found out the tour guide the Navy hired to show us around had actually lived for three years in Phoenix, AZ, my hometown, and he had the driver's license to prove it. But the world gets even smaller. My father didn't know he had a son. Although she thought he was a good man, for reasons of her own my mother never told him about me. After my discharge from the Navy I set out to meet him. I felt that even if he didn't want anything to do with me at least I would finally know whose eyes looked back at me from my mirror. In 2005 with the help of a "Base Locator," an angle in disguise, I was able to have a letter forwarded to him explaining who I was and why I was getting in touch with him. When he found out about me he was overjoyed to know that he had a son. He did twenty-two years in the Air Force as a Military Police. Then he worked training Navy Masters at Arms and Air Force Police at a joint school in Texas. When I heard this I remembered one of my shipmates went to that school. I got in touch with my shipmate and told him my dad's name and he exploded over the phone. "Lane," he said, "I remember your dad perfectly! Every day he would say, I don't know what you guys do in the Navy but in the Air Force we used to..... ! Wow Lane, I knew your dad before you did!" I eventually got to go to Texas and meet him and had a great relationship with him and my younger sister before he passed away. Our world is so small. In 2009 I began having Grand Mal Seizures. Not only would I have a Grand Mal seizure, I would have two more while in the hospital receiving IV medications for seizures. Other than pull my blood to look for narcotics or alcohol they did no other test then would discharge me. Just for the record, narcotics were never found in my system. About three months later same thing, different hospital, they just recommended that I don't drink anymore. A couple months later I again woke up in the ER again and was told that I had another Grand Mal seizure. I explained my seizure history to them and told them that I hadn't had a drop of alcohol in months. That day someone finally ran test and they confirmed my left-temporal lobe epilepsy. It was latter that I took the suggestion of a friend who said I should start going to the VA hospital since I am a vet haven't been able to work since the seizures started so I had no health care and no funds to pay for the seizure medications. Now as to the problems with the VA hospital, first off most of the staff on the lower chain of command (other vets) treat you pretty good but it is most of the Dr.'s and RN's that treat you like the fast food of healthcare. Maybe if the folks down there didn't have to use the same pc's I learned to play "Oregon Trail" on to fill up my Mayan calendar of drugs. I wouldn't be on hold for ½ a hour waiting to talk to a human to say "oh no you got to come down here to do that". You know how many other agencies have a call back system in place where if you're on hold too long it says "you can press pound and it reads back your caller number instead of waiting? It will call you back at the head of the line? Then it reads back your number to you and you can hang up. That way you are not burning up your limited cell minuets. Or when the robot calls me to say I have an appointment with no real info?! And when I asked them why they said "it's for my protection in case someone not me answers the phone?!?!?" If so you still let "THEM" whoever "THEY" are know just as much about me as they need to "DO ME IN"? So whether they "STALK" me down at the

VA. Or wait outside my house until I leave. "THEY" still know! MY INFORMATION! So how about either one, you stop having a robot call me. Or two maybe we can come on a way that robot can verify who it's talking to first, like asking for a code number. ONLY I OR MY CARE TAKER KNOW! Then maybe it can tell me a little more than. "you.....tomorrow.....VA" Like What DR? Which clinic? Are they going to do any test? Can I eat that morning? Are they going to draw blood? Should I take my morning meds? All the kind of things us people who been trained by the government to make sure we have all our i's dotted and t's crossed and bases covered before we even LEAVE (! OR PEOPLE DIE!) would like to know! And while I believe that there are some health problems that we can just suck up and wait to resolve, head traumas are not on that list. I am not even a combat vet, I fired not one round but ever since the seizures started loud, quick noises or even my woman coming in the room too fast to say "Dinner is ready" has me ready to smash her face in. I can't imagine what our combat vets are dealing with. In 2012 I got a notice to report for jury duty. At the bottom is a number you call if you have questions. I called that number and when I told them that I have seizures the lady "said get a note from my doctor". I called my doctor at the VA and left a message explaining that I needed a note to present to the court clerk excusing me from jury duty due to my seizures. I was shocked at the doctor's response when she returned my call. I was told that she wasn't going to write the note because, "all her other patients serve jury duty just fine." My response was an enraged rant (with quite the sailor's mouth telling her, "Look lady, I'm not just fine. If I was I could work, drive a car, operate some equipment. I wouldn't be filing for SSD in my thirty's, but most of all I wouldn't be thinking about blowing my head off every day. Now do I sound like I belong on a panel of people making life altering decisions for someone else!?" Her response? "You are entitled to your opinion Mr. Lane." I reported this up the chain of command and requested another doctor and was denied. **Can you imagine the implications of all the inmates who want to know who was forced to serve on their jury?** So a great deal of the problem lies with the total lack of communication within the departments or with us, the vets. It is a sad state of affairs for the hospital as well as us vets for putting up with it. The woman I was with when the seizures started left me within a few months because as she said, #1, you don't remember anything anymore, #2, half the time it's like you're not even on the same planet as me and #3 I'm really getting tired of having to drag you into bed. These are all problems I never had before the seizures. I didn't rush out and try to find a new girl but eventually I reconnected with someone I knew long ago who had previously worked with seizure patients so she had some idea what to expect. But she too has witnessed the ongoing battle with the VA for treatment and my escalating anger and frustration. Now she is hanging on by a thread. She is experiencing the blunt end of my anger and it isn't fair to her or any of the people in my life who have to deal the person I have become. The person I have become? Sometimes I am embarrassed to look at my own mother or any of the women in my family or friends knowing that my seizures have made me violent period. Having a violent nature is one thing anyone who knew me prior to this point in my life would never have accused me of. There is a reason 22 veterans a day are killing themselves and it is unacceptable. My name is Richard Lane but I will be having it changed to my father's last name as soon as possible. Thank You.



Was it all a waste of time
A search in vain at the cost of my mind
Sailed far away, saw lands foreign to me
I never thought I'd see Russia or the Black Sea
Time can slip right by each day
And before you know it years have slipped away
Lived hard and shined then broken like Jade
Loathing the idea of a life of molded clay
A sense of duty and responsibility I felt within my heart
We say sir and maa'm were taught from the start
America will always be home of the brave, land of the free
Shining with opportunities for all our people from sea to sea
The people who stand and say this isn't right
Even if sometimes that stand leads to a fight
Often times I've been asked if I regret my time
For not one second with no doubt in my mind
The only thing that I ask now from the country that I hold so dear
Is to hear us if we cry, for if we cry it must be from fear
My greatest fear now, to die before my new mission is complete
Ensuring none of my veteran brothers and sisters become end up on the street