

Testimony of Scott Emde  
March 30, 2004  
Subcommittee on National Security,  
Emerging Threats and International  
Relations

Good morning Mr chairman and members of the subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations. My name is Scott Emde, and I have been a member of the Virginia National Guard, Reserves, and Active Army since 1980.

On January 10, 2002 I was activated for Operation Enduring freedom and reported to Fort Bragg N.C. to train for a mission overseas. In April that year my shoulder was injured during training. I reported to our company medic and was told it was his opinion the injury wasn't serious and to continue to train. In May, our unit was shipped overseas. Most of the teams were sent to Afghanistan and mine was sent to Qatar. In June, while stationed at Snoopy AFB and training for a mission to Djibouti, my shoulder was injured again and I went to a physician for pain medication so I might sleep at night. At this time I was diagnosed with a torn rotator cuff and was told I would be on a plane to Germany in 72 hours. As fate would have it, I was on a plane in 12. I spent one night in Oman, and the following day arrived in Landstuhl, Germany where I assumed I would receive treatment and return to Qatar. I remained in Germany for two or three weeks and was taken to Walter Reed for further diagnosis.

Once I arrived at Walter Reed I was told I would have to stay in the hotel on base as there were no rooms available for enlisted personnel in the barracks. The rooms were nice, but they were 30 to 35 dollars a night and it was to be three weeks before I had an appointment.. Additionally, I came back from Qatar with four big boxes totaling roughly 1000 pounds. These boxes had to be stored in my hotel room. There was no room to walk, I had to climb over the boxes to get to the bathroom. The three week stay for the doctor's

appointment was a bit unexpected and the hotel bill was a bit of a strain financially. This was of course paid back when I was able to file a travel voucher. Luckily, the equipment was only a minor inconvenience as my wife drove up from the Hampton Roads, Virginia area with a U-haul trailer and the equipment was then stored at my house. After the three weeks were up I saw Dr. Doukas and a surgery date was set for October 30, three months later.

I was sent to Ft. Bragg where I spent the first half of the day at 3<sup>rd</sup> Group Battalion Headquarters briefing the commander about situation reports on Bco, 3rd Group ODAs, Bco 20<sup>th</sup> Group ODAs, in various countries of the world, and kept up with the rest of 20<sup>th</sup> Group as they were getting ready to deploy to Afghanistan. The second half of the day was spent running B company's operations with another enlisted soldier. A great deal of time was spent dealing with pay problems. The rest was spent helping soldier's families with health problems, reassuring families when they heard stories on the news, sending and receiving soldiers overseas, and other logistical issues. Luckily, I did get to drive home to see my family on some of the week-ends.

Shortly after we received all the teams back, I went to Walter Reed for my surgery. Immediately after surgery, my wife drove me three hours home to the Hampton Roads area to recover. Physical therapy started the following week at Fort Eustis for six weeks. Then I had to report to Fort Bragg for four to six weeks for therapy and clear post. Then I was sent to Walter Reed as a Medical Hold and that very afternoon sent home as there was again, no room at the inn. I continued therapy and volunteered in the PT department as I waited for orders. This went on for six weeks. I drove up to Walter Reed for a follow up and visited a neurologist for problems I had in my neck. He wrote orders for an MRI, CAT scan to be done at Langley AFB.

Since they didn't have the equipment at Langley, I was then sent to Portsmouth Naval Hospital who didn't want to accept the doctor's order because there was no reason given on the slip. When I called Walter Reed for a correction, the doctor had left for vacation. I kept calling to arrange for treatment between Portsmouth, and Walter Reed. It was during this time, my orders were set to run out so I filled out the paperwork to extend the orders with the hope of a continuous paycheck. This did not happen in March, and again in June. I have noted 145 phone calls trying to extend my contract in the Army, check on pay issues, and make medical appointments calling everywhere from Walter Reed to the National Guard Bureau in Washington to Fort Bragg, N.C.. This is by no means the total amount made. The last time I went without a paycheck for two months. After my therapy ended in October, I reported to Fort Bragg. They had no knowledge of my existence. I had fallen through the proverbial cracks. With a process that frequently takes three to four days, mine took three to four weeks. Instead of extending my orders to the suggested date, they were extended for a couple of days at the time. The problem with that was it took several days to process the paperwork and the orders were late by the time they were sent to Fort Bragg - and so the process began again. I finally signed out at 14:20 on 07 November 2003.

Even with all the problems I encountered, I must say I was very pleased with my medical experience. Like my wife, I was very skeptical with the idea of a military surgeon working on my shoulder especially when no x-rays or MRI was done for diagnosis and then again when I was told it would be done open and not arthroscopically. As a nurse working in the Same Day Surgery setting for Sentara Hospital, in my opinion the health care I received was as good or better than any I have ever seen. I particularly appreciated the physicians seeing me in a short

time frame on the days I had two appointments four to five hours apart. The physical therapy was an eye opening experience but went smoothly despite being transferred from one installation to another.