

It has been called many things throughout the years and the wars. My grandfather William Howard Michael also wrote an article in Harper's Magazine in 1942 titled Medical Action at Pearl Harbor (Dec. 7th 1941). He had received the Bronze Star for turning the officers club into an aid station during the attack and wrote about the three tangible and immediate cardinal problems that occur in injury trauma (battle wounds). They were pain, hemorrhage, and burns. Each had a tangible answer that would provide the solution to the injury, such as morphine syrettes for pain; blood typing and transfusion for bleeding victims, and plasma use for burn victims. But these three weren't their only problems. He wrote, "As we watched and worked that morning of Dec. 7th, we thought we had seen all the destruction possible by man. But in the days that followed, we discovered that another invisible destruction had been wrought. Here was the coxswain of a motorboat, who had done his duty heroically under fire, rescuing sailors floundering in the water with fuel oil blazing close by. The next day, he was wild-eyed, jumping in reaction to the slightest unusual noise, frankly hysterical at the sound of gunfire, afraid to go below decks. A typical case of what we called shell shock in 1918 was labeled war neurosis; later it evolved to anxiety neurosis. (not until 1990 did it become posttraumatic stress disorder.) Another was an officer who had served the Navy for thirty years. On Dec. 6th he was alert, affable, and energetic. On Dec. 8th, he was depressed, apathetic, morose, tired, and his heart beat with startlingly irregularity without any discoverable physical defect. In two days the man had aged 25 years. The same forces that had destroyed men's bodies had destroyed the equilibrium and buoyancy of many men's minds."