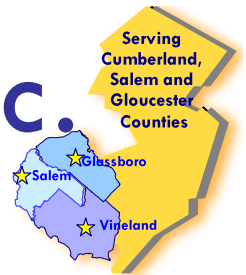


# THE SOUTHWEST COUNCIL, INC.

"Where the Science of Prevention Meets the Needs of the Community"



**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 19, 2009

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## **Agency Holds Conference on The Battle Beneath: the Camouflage Continues – the Plight of Returning Vets**

On Friday, June 5, The Southwest Council, Inc. will present a truly unique symposium on a topic of growing concern not only among the clinical community, but also one that impacts all of us and will do so, most likely, for years to come: *The Battle Beneath: The Camouflage Continues, the Plight of Returning Vets*.

Military veterans run the gamut in age, from the now elderly World War II veterans, to Korean vets and Vietnam veterans, to the veterans of Desert Storm in the early '90's and on to the more recent service of young men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. While returning troops do still suffer from the more obvious and well known scars of war, twenty percent of U.S. troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are affected by traumatic brain injury (TBI) and/or post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Blasts are a leading cause of brain injury for active duty military personnel in war zones, but brain injury can also occur through bullets and fragments, falls, motor vehicle crashes, and assaults. As a result of improvements in battle gear and medicine and the increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), traumatic brain injuries are more prevalent now than in any other war and affect hundreds of thousands of our troops.

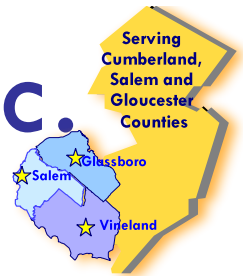
"While these often hidden disabilities have become the signature injuries of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Joseph Williams, executive director of the Southwest Council, "the good news is that help is available from many sources, including mental health professionals in military treatment facilities, counselors at veterans' affairs centers, military chaplains, as well as private, civilian doctors, counselors and other health professionals.

"Families, of course, play an integral part in their recovery and re-entry into their daily civilian lives," Williams said. "However, all members of our communities, including employers, co-workers, educators, friends and neighbors have a stake in our veterans' well-being and social integration."

(more)

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## *Disabled Veterans Conference – cont'd.*

Melissa Arnott, Ed.D LPC NCC CAC, a counselor and educator, who maintains a private counseling practice for individuals, families and groups, is the forum's keynote speaker. Dr. Arnott is a Licensed Professional Counselor in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, a Nationally Certified Counselor (NCC) and a Certified Addictions Counselor Diplomat in PA. As an educator, working as a Director of the Academic Success Center at Rowan University, she has developed a coaching program designed to assist university students in achieving academic success and has been instrumental in starting the second Veteran Student Organization in the country that addresses some of the needs of student veterans.

Dr. Arnott's morning presentation will be followed in the afternoon by a panel of experts, including disabled veterans. Angelo Romeo, who served as a Captain in the U.S. Army in both Germany and Vietnam and is now Director of the Gloucester County Office of Veterans Affairs, will serve as panel moderator.

The conference, being held at the Veterans Memorial Home, 524 North West Boulevard in Vineland, begins at 9:30 am and concludes at 3:30 pm. The conference is free and includes lunch, but *pre-registration is required*. Deadline for registration is Friday, May 29. Continuing education credits will be provided.

For more information or to register, contact *Beth Mayers* at 856-935-0182 x11.

The Southwest Council, Inc., an affiliate of the New Jersey Prevention Network, is an alcohol, tobacco and other drugs prevention and education agency serving Gloucester, Cumberland and Salem counties. For more information about the Southwest Council, visit [www.southwestcouncil.org](http://www.southwestcouncil.org).

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