

Seven Months Without Care After a Heart Attack in Iraq

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My name is Sean McNabb. I served in Iraq with the New Jersey National Guard. On August 16, 2006, I had a heart attack in Iraq. I was shipped to Germany for further care. In Germany they inserted a stent into my heart. I was in intensive care for 2 to 3 days. I really don't know the exact time. I was heavily drugged. I then spent a few days in the ward. On my last day the cardiologist told me that I had heart damage and it would never recover. He told me that when I got to the states I would be put on Community Based Outpatient Care (CBOC) and he wanted me to take 30 to 60 days of convalescent leave, then when that was over to have a cardiologist put me in Cardiac Rehab.

When I arrived at FT Knox I was sent to the care station there. I explained what the cardiologist had wanted and showed the doctor the paperwork I was given. I was told that the convalescent leave was not needed because they would have me home in a matter of a week or two. As I was rushed through the process, I started to wonder what was happening. I was told that I would get the care I needed when I got to my home state. At the end, I realized that I was getting the run around.

I started asking for someone to put it in writing. I told the people in charge that I wasn't leaving until I got assured I was going to get the care I needed. My wife received a call that stated that everything was fine. I was going to be put on CBOC. I was going to be put on 6 months of orders to complete it. This assurance was left on the answering machine.

The Major in charge of the med hold company at Ft Knox called me into the office to ask what the problem was with me. I told him that I was concerned that I would not get the care that was recommended by the Army assigned Cardiologist in Germany. He told me to wait outside. I waited. He called me back in and told me, "You have been medically cleared by our doctor and you will get the HELL of the post ASAP." He also stated it was not his job to make sure what happened to me was "Right". It was his job to get me to the next station.

I was flown to FT McCoy and out processed. The out processing took about 1 day and I was flown home the next day. Since then I have not received the care I was promised. The state of New Jersey has done everything they can to help but, the Army has not budged. I was put in for Military Retention Processing Orders (MRP). The request was denied by the Office of the Surgeon General. An appeal was sent forward with the supporting documentation they asked for and it was again denied. It has been 7 months since I had the heart attack and I still have not received my care.