

G.B. Trudeau
Doonesbury

Feb. 10, 2009

Dear Garry,

I admire your courage and social conscience in taking on veterans' issues in Doonesbury. Your national bully pulpit gives you the opportunity to make a difference. My friends talk about your issues every day, and I rejoice in your leadership.

As an ally in your fight to get veterans the help they need and deserve, I'd like to give you a quiet tip. The Obama administration is very close to endorsing an initiative to adopt what the president has called the "Montana model," which has become a national pilot program to help combat vets with emotional disorders resulting from their military service. He endorsed the concept last August in Billings, and the National Guard Bureau and the active-duty military are now working to implement that model. My friends tell me we could have agreement within a week or two.

My book, *Faces of Combat*, will let you know the reforms that the National Guard in Montana has adopted – and the reasons why.

When the Obama administration endorses this plan of reform, I hope that Doonesbury will support that plan to help our vets. And if you'd like to show B.D. reading my book, I'd happily grant you permission.

The bottom line is that our vets have been damaged by their combat experience. They need and deserve help. Montana has made a good faith effort (albeit only a start) to provide them the help that will prevent some of them from falling through the cracks. And I'd solicit your help in letting our vets, their families and their care providers know about this new promise.

You have the national audience to make a huge difference for millions of vets who need your help. If there's any way that I can help, please let me know.

Cheers,

Eric Newhouse
Author, *Faces of Combat*