

Hi my name is Raelene King.

My husband is Aaron King

He served in East Timor Oct 2000 -May 2001 with 1RAR.

Aaron was on the trial drug Tafenoquine an anti malaria drug whilst deployed overseas.

He was made to sign the form for the trial on the parade ground before deployment. They were told if they didn't sign they would not be deployed.

Aaron was given no information on what he was taking and what side effects it may cause. Aaron was part of the 100 club as they used the term.... the 100 guinea pigs on the parade ground chosen to take part in the Tafenoquine trial.

At the end of his deployment from East Timor things began to unravel. My husband came back a changed man.

He was medically discharged from the army late 2003 with PTSD and a knee injury.

Our life from that moment has been a roller coaster of counselors, psychologist, psychiatric, medication, hospital stays, suicide attempts and many police interventions.

My husband suffered constant paranoid to the point he became housebound, he abused alcohol as too numb his mind. He suffered nightmares daily and could not tolerate crowds more than eight people. Over time Aaron became antisocial, emotionless and withdrawn from everyone around him.

From March 2004 till now Aaron has had at least 20 hospital/psych ward admission to various facilities. Some admission at least three months long.

Throughout the 15 years of a PTSD diagnose Aaron has tried 9 different anti depressants- been on 22 different medications ranging from tablets to treat epilepsy, bipolar, manic depression, anti psychotic, anti convulsion, alcohol inhibitors, sleepers, calmer and nightmares.

These tablets have not only had a small effect or none at all, but they have destroyed the spirit of my husband. He has missed out on a quality of life that we all deserve. As a family unit we have struggled. We have lost many friends as they couldn't cope with the changed man that came home. Aaron has tried to overdose many times, resulting in the hospital monitoring him overnight only to release him the next morning

I will never forget leaving to go to our Daughters grade six graduation with three young kids in tow. Aaron telling me "I'm going to take a heap of Valium....my response was' " if you do call me"..... well half way through the graduation he calls me "I've taken the whole bottle',, with that I called an ambulance and stood shocked trying to watch our daughter graduate.

It may not seem normal....but nothing was ever normal in our life.

Aaron has been alcohol free now for seven years....this saved our family.

PTSD consumed everything in our life but something was always amiss. Aaron never fit the textbook character of someone with PTSD. It was a never ending roller coaster ride with so many lefts turns and bumpy bits sometimes we never knew when it would end

Many doctors queried whether he had Bipolar or Manic Depression.

With our own money we tested Aaron s bloods and discovered that one of the most important enzymes involved in the metabolism of xenobiotics is diminished.

If the Australian Army were aware of this and did this testing before giving our soldiers these trial drugs, they would have known that some soldiers could not metabolize Tafenoquine . When this drug is unable to be broken down it builds up in the system and the high levels make it very toxic, with devastating results.

In the last two years Aaron has done TMS (Trans Magnetic Stimulation), he did 20 sessions with no change. Then four months after tried ECT(ElectroConvulsive Therapy), he did twenty sessions with little result but made his memory worse, which was a side effect. Aaron s cognitive behaviour became worse to the extent where you would think he had been in a car accident with major brain injury.

I am not a doctor and have no experience in the medical field to make any diagnosis.

I am a wife of a husband who I believe has been mistreated and also misdiagnosed.

I have lived with Aaron s condition and see that it has destroyed soul. He has given up on who he was. Too see the person whom I love the most be a crumbling wreck is disheartening

As father he feels like he has failed his children as they are damaged and seek counseling regularly. He feels he has missed so much...the days he was home, he was never there.

He feels like his career could have been so much more, as he loved the Army. He feels used by the Army as we believe ,this trial drug it has taken away most of his quality of life.

Aaron's hygiene has always been a struggle to maintain.... he has black days where he doesn't shower for weeks. He gets depressed and becomes a shadow of himself

He was living zombie whilst on many medication, at one time taking up to 25 tablets a day, a constant revolving door of hospital and psychs, the many questions of " WHAT wrong with you, you look fine".

The embarrassment of not being able to work like other men his age .

The daily grind of waking up to a day he will not remember.

You see Aaron's memory is diminishing at a fast pace. He forgets from one minute to the next. He constantly asks me the same question over and over and never recalls what I say when I have told him stuff.

He gets frustrated at himself as he forgets again and this is a big blow to his self esteem.

At night he faces demons that haunt him in his sleep, he constantly moves and yells and never remembers those night terrors. But we hear them.

Aaron was currently in Heidelberg Repatriation clinic coming off his anti-depressant. As the doctor said "there is no magic bullet" and there really are no more medications for him to take. He has exhausted everyone of them.

He is at home now and currently taking no medication. His hope is fading as he struggles daily again to maintain some form of living.

So tell me..... will my husband become another statistic on the suicide list?

Will he become miraculously better after fifteen years of medication that never worked?

Will the army stand up and be responsible for these actions using my husband as a guinea pig?.

Does my husband have PTSD..... no one can determine that 100%

Did my husband have neurological toxicity from taking Tafenoquine....no one can answer that either.

But there is some substance from taking that anti-malarial tablet, there is no doubt in my mind. The amount of anguish and frustration that no one has an answer is debilitating to a normal person, let alone someone with some form of mental illness.

Come and spend a day in my shoes, come and talk to my four children who are living it.

Was this trial worth it?

Does my husband deserve this?

Does our family deserve this?

No one deserves this

Our Australian soldiers do not deserve this.

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Thank you

Raelene King