



Created in the wake of the scandal in 2007 over serious shortcomings at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Warrior Transition Units were intended to be sheltering way stations where injured soldiers could recuperate and return to duty or gently process out of the Army. There are currently about 7,200 soldiers at 32 transition units across the Army, with about 465 soldiers at Fort Carson's unit.

But interviews with more than a dozen soldiers and health care professionals from Fort Carson's transition unit, along with reports from other posts, suggest that the units are far from being restful sanctuaries.

For many soldiers, they have become warehouses of despair, where damaged men and women are kept out of sight, fed a diet of powerful prescription pills and treated harshly by noncommissioned officers. Because of their wounds, soldiers in Warrior Transition Units are particularly vulnerable to depression and addiction, but many soldiers from Fort Carson's unit say their treatment there has made their suffering worse.

Some soldiers in the unit, and their families, described long hours alone in their rooms, or in homes off the base, aimlessly drinking or playing video games.

"In combat, you rely on people and you come out of it feeling good about everything," said a specialist in the unit. "Here, you're just floating. You're not doing much. You feel worthless."

At Fort Carson, many soldiers complained that doctors prescribed drugs too readily. As a result, some soldiers have become addicted to their medications or have turned to heroin. Medications are so abundant that some soldiers in the unit openly deal, buy or swap prescription pills.

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