

**“USMC combat vet Hank Lee dies suspiciously of an "accidental" overdose while in VA lockdown by a drug not prescribed by the VA.**

*Veterans 360 Inc. & his widow move the case against the Veterans Administration forward.*

**SAN DIEGO, CA – September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017** 6 months to the day after the death of USMC Combat Veteran Hank Lee, his widow, Jamie Lee Hasted and Veterans 360 finalized a retainer agreement with the Rawls Law Group as part of our efforts to hold the VA accountable for the death of her 35 year-old husband Hank Lee USMC.



For 6 months Veterans 360 and Hank Lee’s widow Jamie Lee Hasted has been fighting an impossibly complex and often uncaring bureaucracy to get the benefits that the family of 4 needed to survive. Members of the veteran’s support community stepped up until her request for benefits was approved and the death of her husband confirmed even though he died in a VA facility. Jamie Lee is finally getting the benefits that the family can rightfully expect but not the expected life insurance for disabled veterans because **no one at the VA cared enough to make sure that Hank signed the correct paperwork.** Jamie Lee notes: While we appreciate the benefits, they are 50% less than when Hank was alive and I just don’t know how we are going to survive”.

While our collective goal is to hold the VA accountable for Hank’s death we also want to begin a dialogue as to how the Veterans Administration seems to be incapable of helping today’s combat veterans on how best to cope with post combat stresses. While **90% of society will be impacted by PTS(D) at some time or another in their lives** it seems that the VA’s option of choice for mental health support is mind-numbing levels of prescription drugs.

Rick Collins Founder of Veterans 360 states: “When you tamper down the symptoms associated with PTS(D)/combat stress/mental health, with high doses of prescription drugs you **effectively tamper down the desire for the patients to cope and succeed.**” In Hank’s case, the prescription drugs themselves ended up being the “cause and the effect” that led to despondency, frustration, apathy, addiction and suicidal ideation.” Hank Lee was under VA care for 10+ years and even now no one is taking responsibility for his addiction to prescription drugs. **Hank Lee was not a drug addict when he left the Marine Corps. He was however, a wounded warrior who needed help.**



We understand, as much as most, that the treatment of patients with severe mental illness is difficult. However, Hank’s death from an accidental overdose, while a patient in an in-patient restricted ward compels us to request an explanation. “The hospital – in this case the VA hospital – has an ethical duty to keep its patient’s safe “from harming themselves or others” but **the institution in question appears to have failed to meet this basic requirement.**”  
Brewster Rawls of the Rawls Law Group.

Veterans 360 Inc. is a San Diego based veteran centric 501(C)(3) who has been actively supporting young veterans who struggle with transition and mental health challenges since 2011. To understand this campaign please visit [www.carrythechallenge.org](http://www.carrythechallenge.org)

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