

What's in it for soldiers

?

known. It is one of the family of psychotropic drugs, whose primary effect is to alter mood and behavior by acting on the central nervous system.

The drug is said to act on the central nervous system with lightning speed, causing sensations that can run from delusions of giddy well-being to outright paranoia.

Medically

Briefly on the medical effects - "The main pharmacological action of cocaine is to block the generation and transmission of nerve impulses." While the blocking action is reversible (the neurons return to normal function almost as soon as the drug is absorbed and carried away in the blood system), it poses other medical problems.

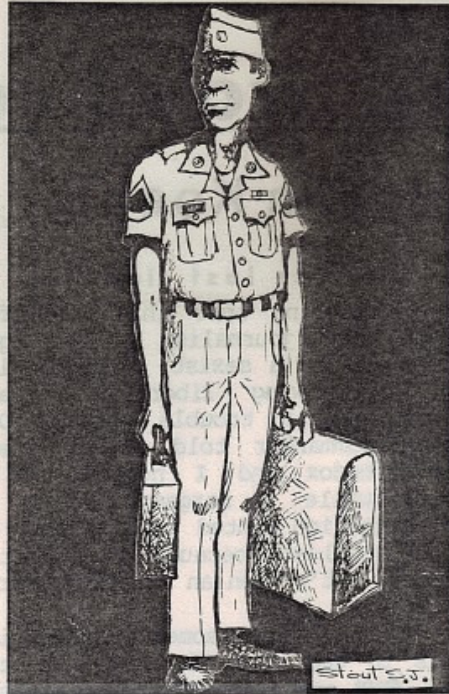
Sniffing the small crystals is abrasive to blood vessels in the lining of the nose. Since this is the more popular way to inject it into the body, it is a concern. Not only can it cause the vessels to become constricted with continued use, cocaine may also perforate or kill the tissues of the nasal wall.

Large doses of the drug which reach the heart may cause immediate death as a result of cocaine's toxic action on the heart muscle. Blood pressure at first rises, then gradually falls as the central stimulation produced by cocaine is followed by depression. This depression continues until, if the dose is high enough, respiratory failure results in death.

Drug and alcohol help - information

McNair.....2315-732

Cambrai-Fritsch....2371-6506



Two Yale University psychiatrists, following a six-year study, claim that the effects of "recreational" cocaine use may be no more harmful than alcohol or tobacco use. Sounds almost too good to be true?

Read the statement's adjunct: The smoking or injection of cocaine can, however, "lead almost to continual consumption and drug-seeking behavior, destructive to personal competence and productivity."

Death

Consequence Number Three: physically and mentally - abnormal body functions and mind alterations (with a possibility of death) are "what's in it for me."

In the process of deciding whether or not to take a calculated risk, a key ingredient is data. And formulating that decision means weighing the benefits against the drawbacks.

Your career

Military careers take at least 20 years to build fully. They can be wiped out in a matter of days, well before their time. The question for the soldier to ask him or herself is this: "Is the cocaine high, worth the price?" (Sp5. Burke is a staff writer for the Patriot at Fort Stewart, GA.)