

SOLDIER'S heart

Soldier's Heart is a veterans' return and healing project addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of veterans, their families and communities. Soldier's Heart promotes and guides community-based efforts to heal the effects of war based on strategies presented in "War and the Soul" by Edward Tick, PhD.

PO Box 8564 Albany, NY 12208
(518)463-0588

April 2007

www.soldiersheart.net
info@mentorthesoul.com

Soldier's Heart Has Gathered a Community!

By Kate Dahlstedt, co-director of Soldier's Heart

Community plays an integral part in healing our veterans. Just as "it takes a village to raise a child," it also takes a village to transform a soldier into a warrior. When a nation is at war ideally the whole community is involved - not just soldiers and their loved ones. Otherwise we risk alienating and isolating the very people who are making the greatest sacrifice.

As Soldier's Heart has unfolded people from all over the country have reached out to ask, "What can I do?" Many of these are helping professionals offering their skills and devotion. Others are concerned and compassionate citizens. The outpouring of gifts, services and monetary support for our Veterans Return Retreat last January exemplified the desire of citizens to give back to military service people.

There are innumerable ways we can contribute to helping veterans reintegrate well on their return from the war zone and support their families while they are gone. These can be as diverse as vendors giving free or discounted goods and services (car repair, child care, gasoline, tutoring, hair cuts, household services, etc.) to military families. People from the community can volunteer to do household chores such as shovel the walks and mow the lawns of military families living in our neighborhoods.

Beyond this kind of giving, church groups and community organizations can offer emotional and spiritual support. This doesn't require professionals or specialists. All of us are able to lend a compassionate ear. A hallmark of the healing arts teaches us that storytelling is essential to healing; storytelling to those who can really listen, feel the truth of what is shared, refrain from judging and agree to help carry the story in their hearts.

Over and over again we hear from veterans that their healing became possible when they could finally let out the truth of their experiences and have it received by the rest of the community with love and respect. Once a community agrees to carry the stories and the emotional burden they evoke veterans can release the shame, guilt and horror of what they have been through. Honored as chief witnesses to the realities of war, our veterans can transform from wounded soldiers to embrace the identity of the True Warrior.

Ed's work in the last year has spread this message to communities throughout the country. These communities have, in turn, begun to address the soul needs of their veterans with a better understanding. As we prepare to celebrate Soldier's Heart's first year anniversary, we feel gratitude for all of the wonderful and inspiring people we have met along the way, people who have led us, one to another, to form a great circle. People from all walks of life are coming together in a united mission to help our veterans return and claim their true identities as warriors.

These newsletter pages are a gathering place. All of you are welcome to submit articles about what you are doing in your own towns and cities. Together, from all over our nation, we support and encourage, challenge and inspire each other. Together we are "the village."

Thank you.

...a quote illustrating the need for community involvement...

“Our Iraqi brothers are building an interesting barrier of defenses with many seeing three tours. Their perspective has changed from the first tour in which many were very committed to value of the conflict. Now they are faced with that ever present "cognitive dissonance" or out-right "this is a dead-end conflict". The latest Department of Defense study is citing figures in the 160,000 range with PTSD. The VA is providing services for 6600. Our challenge is to figure out how to bridge the gap.”

Dr. Tony Luick, psychologist, Vietnam combat veteran

Upcoming Events...

June 13th – 17th 2007

Soldier's Heart Veterans' Return Retreat

Pumpkin Hollow Farm, Craryville, New York

Since the book “**War and the Soul**” hit the shelves in November 2005 author Ed Tick has been touring the country talking about the psycho/spiritual needs of veterans when they return home from war. In response to those who would like an in depth experience Soldier's Heart is offering a Veterans' Return Retreat Wednesday, June 13th through Sunday, June 17th. It will be an experiential, intensive retreat calling on the essential healing elements described in “**War and the Soul**”. Areas to be addressed are: The Old Identity, Being Called, Boot Camp, On the Home Front, War Madness, Homecoming, and Warriorhood. The retreat will be held at Pumpkin Hollow Farm, a peaceful, rustic setting nestled amidst the Berkshire and Taconic Mountains. The Soldier's Heart Veterans Return Retreat is open to *all* veterans and their support network. For more information and tuition costs or to register for the retreat please call (518) 463-0588 or email info@mentorthesoul.com.

September 13–16, 2007

Healing Veterans from PTSD: A Three Day Workshop for

Soldiers, Their Loved Ones, and Helping Professionals

Olcott Campus near Chicago IL

‘Healing Veterans from PTSD’ is an intensive healing and training workshop providing experience in the groundbreaking healing techniques developed by Dr. Ed Tick. The workshop is open to veterans of any war and their families, counselors, therapists, chaplains and clergy.

The workshop is co-sponsored by Quest Books and Soldier's Heart. It will be held September 13th –16th 2007 at the Olcott campus of the Theosophical Society, 1926 North Main St., Wheaton, IL. For details visit <http://www.theosophical.org/events/conferences/soldiersheart.php>. To register, or if you have questions, please call Christine Pomeroy: 800-669-9425, ext. 350, or email cpomeroy@theosmail.net.

November 9-11, 2007

Southeast Regional Conference: Social Action As Spiritual Practice

Atlanta, GA

Presenters (Ed Tick among them) have been invited to share their unique expertise of living in the service of their most heart-felt convictions. For more information contact Diane Eisenberg at 1-800-669-1571 ext 320.

To Contact us at Soldier's Heart:

Kate Dahlstedt, Co-Director
kate@mentorthesoul.com

Maureen Daly, Development Coordinator
maureen@mentorthesoul.com

Paula Griffin, Administrative Assistant
paula@mentorthesoul.com

Field Reports, by Edward Tick, PhD...

Ed has just published an article that explores community healing, shamanic searches for the Missing in Action, and reconciliation rituals between ex-enemy combatants in northern Viet Nam. Please see "Healing Mysteries in a Vietnamese Village," in his FIELD REPORTS column in *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, March, 2007. It begins:

"This past October, 2006, I led my sixth annual journey of healing and reconciliation for American veterans and civilians to Viet Nam....Toward the end of our journey, our group of veterans and healers rolled through thickly populated northern countryside where tiny homes are surrounded by vast stretches of rice paddies glowing an iridescent green.

We arrived in Thon Hoi Quan hamlet, one hour north of Ha Noi.... We were greeted by Mr. Tuy, a village elder.... One man, forehead covered with large tumors of the type caused by Agent Orange exposure, beckoned us to inspect the rice he was drying and bagging.... Scores of children surrounded us, competing with smiles, funny faces and welcome hugs to have their pictures snapped.

We prepared for the honor of entering the village dinh. We were the first westerners to ever visit Thon Hai Quan and thus the first foreigners to enter its sacred social chamber."

www.explorejournal.com

Untrained for Tears

by Chi Kelley, Vietnam Veteran

Parris Island Drill instructors
have no page on tears.
Repetitive drill can harden muscle
and convert a boy to killer.

The inner self is covered
in layers of distorted dogma
and muddied in emotional baggage
to mollify the truth.

The job of combat Marine
is laced with pain, fear and horror,
many tasks just months before
called nothing but murder.

In animal, cold
brutal missions,
life on the edge and
many times in question.

How can I cry now?
My friend is dead.
There's no place for it, but
here behind these soggy sandbags.

Then another time, another place,
on a truck to Con Tien,
on the way to die,
I saw a flag and cried.

I was unseen either time
I guess it didn't happen
a "Leatherneck",
but no leather heart.

Silent dry tears continue to
drip inside my damaged soul
among the unhealed wounds.

The Making and Un-making of a Marine is Here!

The Making and Un-making of a Marine by Vietnam veteran and author Larry Winters is availablePlease visit makingandunmaking.com for more information or to order.

A combat Marine in Vietnam, Larry Winters' journey to heal his war wounds holds invaluable lessons for all of us. In the first half of his new book *The Making and Un-making of a Marine*, Winters traces with searing honesty his path from small town boy to a killing Marine. But that is not the end of the story. The second half of Larry's book reveals his gut wrenching struggle to untie the Gordian knot his father and the Marines tied around his soul. Unlike Alexander the Great who sliced the knot with his sword, Larry untied his knot by asking the enemy for forgiveness.

“The Making and Un-making of a Marine is an American odyssey written with heart and fire, hunger and love. Winters’ story is not just his own, but the journey of many of the Vietnam generation from home to war and back, from brokenness and pain to healing and forgiveness. But more, Winters has the courage, wisdom and determination to make meaning from his time in hell. He discovers a path of service that brings hope and healing to others lost in those fires. Salute Larry Winters and take this compelling journey with him. It will guide, inspire and transform you”.....*Ed Tick, author of War and the Soul*

Vietnam vet and author John Lee says of Winters' book, "A must read for anyone who has been to any war, loved someone who has been to war and even those of us who have never been to war."

Community in Action: The Warrior’s Journey Home

By John Schlupe

Several years ago I listened to a Vietnam veteran describe the isolation and abandonment he felt when he returned home from active military duty as a combat infantryman. His isolation became “ice-o-lation.” He felt judgment in the presence of his faith community and betrayed by the government and nation he had served as a young man conscripted in to military service.

I, too, am a veteran, airborne infantry 1974 – 1978, and my life’s journey has led me to become a pastor of a large congregation in northeast Ohio. A part of my vocational and a-vocational interests lie in the area of tribal religious practices and community. It is important to me that the community welcome home our veterans and warriors. It is in the context of community that veterans not only come back; but come home.

I read Dr. Ed Tick’s book, *War and the Soul*, and felt a spiritual resonance as it helped me formulate a specialized ministry for local faith communities to care for the families, the veterans and the community. **The Warrior’s Journey Home Ministry** was born in October 2006 and, after hatching to a fledgling state, is drying its wings and learning to fly. Our passage of scripture that speaks to us is: *“For I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:11) Our Vision is simple: Embracing the warrior’s journey. Our Mission: To provide the means of spiritual healing for our veterans, their families and the community through education, support, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, reunification and initiation.

Presently we have two support groups meeting bi-monthly and monthly and we are preparing to add two more. The groups are either “open” or “closed” depending on the type of group membership. We have scheduled four retreats annually for veterans and their families and recently held our first service of healing and reconciliation. The form of the service rituals are “borrowed” from a variety of religious and spiritual traditions and utilize all our senses. It has been important for us to communicate that the ministry is non-sectarian and non-political. All beliefs are honored.

An important facet of this ministry has been to educate my local congregation and the wider community of the importance of assimilating our veterans back and home. I communicate the “nuts and bolts” through our newsletter, bulletin board and when addressing various groups within the congregation and community. As a member of the city’s Chamber of Commerce I have access to businesses that employ veterans or those employees serving in the guard and reserves. Also we have established a network with other local agencies and groups offering support of our military families. We are in contact with the Ohio National Guard in support of their family support agencies and operations.

Our leadership cadre is schooled in the philosophy and practices to support and provide an environment for healing and reconciliation. I am pleased to be in partnership with *Soldier’s Heart* and learn from the many people who have joined in the confluence of care for our world.

SOLDIER'S *heart*

Veterans' Return Retreat

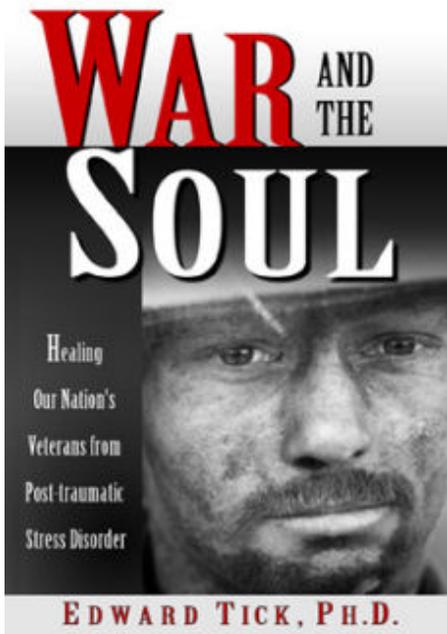
June 13th – 17th 2007

Pumpkin Hollow Farm, Craryville, New York

Since the book “**War and the Soul**” hit the shelves in November 2005 author Ed Tick has been touring the country talking about the psycho/spiritual needs of veterans when they return home from war. In response to those who would like an in depth experience *Soldier's Heart* is offering a **Veterans' Return Retreat** Wednesday, June 13th through Sunday, June 17th. It will be an experiential, intensive retreat calling on the essential healing elements described in “**War and the Soul**”. Areas we will address are: The Old Identity, Being Called, Boot Camp, On the Home Front, War Madness, Homecoming, and Warriorhood. The retreat will be held at Pumpkin Hollow Farm, a peaceful, rustic setting nestled amidst the Berkshire and Taconic Mountains. For more information on Pumpkin Hollow Farm visit www.pumpkinhollow.org.

The retreat is open to all veterans and their support network

For more information and tuition costs or to register for the retreat please call **(518) 463-0588** or email **info@mentorthesoul.com**.



Soldier's Heart is a non-profit 501(C)3 project under the International Humanities Center. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to support our veterans' programs. Checks can be made out to IHCenter/Soldier's Heart and mailed to Soldier's Heart, PO Box 8564, Albany, NY 12208. For more information or to donate securely online please visit our website at **www.soldiersheart.net**.

Thank you for supporting our veterans!

****Scholarships for veterans available****

OUR MISSION: Soldier's Heart is a veterans' return and healing project addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of veterans, their families and communities. Soldier's Heart promotes and guides community-based efforts to heal the effects of war based on strategies presented in "War and the Soul" by Edward Tick, PhD.

Please see final newsletter page for retreat topics

SOLDIER'S heart

Soldier's Heart is a veterans' return and healing project addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of veterans, their families and communities. Soldier's Heart promotes and guides community-based efforts to heal the effects of war based on strategies presented in "War and the Soul" by Edward Tick, PhD.

June 13-17, 2007 Soldier's Heart Veterans Return Retreat Registration

Your name:

Address:

City, State:

Phone:

Email Address:

Why are you attending the Veterans Return Retreat?

Are you a veteran?

If so, combat or non combat?

When and where?

Are you family of a veteran?

Do you need any accommodations for disabilities?

Do you have any dietary restrictions?

Will you be applying for a veterans and families scholarship?

(For more information email maureen@mentorthesoul.com or call (518)463-0588.)

A \$200 nonrefundable deposit is required to hold your place. Total tuition, room and board is \$755. Make your check out to Soldier's Heart/IHC for and mail to:

Soldier's Heart
PO Box 8564
Albany, NY 12208

Email completed form to maureen@mentorthesoul.com or mail printed copy to PO Box.

Thank you!

TWELVE STAGE WARRIOR'S PATH HOME

1. **Creating a Sacred Container:** Explaining group rules, safety rituals
2. **Teach What Must Happen:** Discussion of the return of the warrior in other cultures throughout history
3. **Being Called to the Warrior Vision:** Your decision to join the military
4. **Meet the Old Self:** Who were you before you went into the military?
5. **Leave Taking:** How old were you? How did you say goodbye? What did you feel?
6. **Boot Camp and Other Life Changes:** Where did you go? What was your indoctrination like? What did you learn? What didn't you learn that you would like to have?
7. **Wartime Storytelling:** Where did you go? When? What were your responsibilities? What were the conditions? Who was with you? What were your commanding officers like? What did you do?
8. **War Madness:** Facing the inner beast - dancing the War Dance
9. **Coming Home Stories:** The trip home. Who was there when you arrived? What did you do? New behaviors, PTSD symptoms, coping.
10. **Grief, Loss and Guilt:** Memories, loss of loved ones, loss of innocence
11. **Forgiveness and Grace:** Rituals, letting it go, acceptance
12. **Restoration of Order to the Community:** The warrior returns - moving forward and making meaning. Becoming a warrior of truth. Taking your place.

An excerpt from "Angels in Vietnam"

by John Fisher, Vietnam veteran

"He held his breath as his board screamed down the mass of water to the bottom of the breaker. Then, shifting his weight onto his left foot, he leaned into a turn that brought him into position facing the wave. Up ahead a monstrous, roaring wall more than twice his height, bore down on him. As it moved in toward the beach, it began to break behind him. He manipulated his surfboard, using short, sharp turns on the face of the wave to increase his speed and to keep him out ahead of the breaking section. He shivered with exhilaration. With a deliberate turn, he cut his board back towards the crashing white water. Just before he hit the turbulence, he spun his board around, to avoid disaster. He leaned back on his right leg to stall his forward progression. If he could slow down enough, he'd get inside of the breaking wave. The water curled over him creating a tunnel of pure speed. His mind raced, zigzagging back and forth from the sheer exhilaration of his accomplishment to the anxiety of possibly being over powered. Three seconds in the tube seemed like minutes, but he kept his head up and drove his stick towards the illuminated opening at the end. He felt different—euphoric—was he even alive?"