

# The Frontline

Observations, strategies, experiences, and activities from those on the frontline of Christian healing.

## The Welcome Home Initiative<sup>©</sup>

### Healing the Haunting Memories of Post Combat Trauma

By The Rev. Nigel W.D. Mumford

In 2007, I was having lunch with the Rt. Rev. Dan Hertzog and The Rt. Rev. David Bena (Col. USAF and US Marine, retired) and discussed ways we could bring the healing ministry into our community. Our discussions centered on returning veterans and the challenges they face after serving in combat – specifically Post Traumatic Stress (PTS, formerly known as PTSD) which drastically impairs how returning veteran's cope with their daily lives.

I can connect to this on a personal level, as I was a drill instructor in Her Majesties Royal Marine Commandos in the 1970's. I spent a year of my life deployed in a combat zone where I had been shot at three times, blown up five times and also hit in the head. I was told the horrible news that four of my recruits had been killed. My life

would never be the same and I was diagnosed with "Shell Shock" – as it was called then.

My personal description of this type of trauma is:

- The mind is witness to a catastrophic event.
- The intellect cannot cope with what it has seen.
- The body reacts physically under duress.
- The heart receives emotional scar tissue.
- The Soul weeps.
- This mental trauma is a total body reaction to horror.

#### If we could save one life

The Welcome Home Initiative<sup>©</sup> (WHI<sup>©</sup>) was born out of this conversation. Lt. Col. Noel Dawes (British Army, retired) and Sandra Lester were recruited immediately and we got to work designing a healing retreat for combat veterans of all wars.

The result was an intensely focused, three-day retreat open to combat veterans of all wars, spouses of veterans and allies of the USA. These

#### Did you know...

★As of June 2010, the Department of Veterans Affairs said there were 171,423 deployed Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans diagnosed with PTSD.

★Studies estimate that 1 in every 5 military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan has PTSD

★A major VA study found that about 31 percent of men and 27 percent of women had suffered PTSD at some point after their return from Vietnam.

★According to CBS News, the suicide rate among veterans is double of that of the general population.

★In 2009 and 2010, more American Soldiers committed suicide that were killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Source: Creatorarts. The Welcome Home Initiative. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l30blHeZve0>



retreats are totally Christ-centered and are based on the following bible verse, "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Cor.10:5)

The retreat is designed to bring about awareness of the hidden impact



of combat service upon veterans; assuring them of a welcoming and safe place to accomplish essential spiritual and emotional healing. The program is geared to help every participant know and experience that they are "welcomed home" in every sense. These service men and women are in deep pain.

The volunteer team is dedicated to making those attending to feel thanked, loved and nurtured through His presence and to experience His grace. The connections and friendships that are formed during these retreats are deep and lasting, regardless of rank or branch of service.

We provide resources for coping and recovery and keep a line of communication open long after the retreat ends. We have been told that there are numerous programs geared toward PTS, but the missing component is Christ, which is the key that sets them free. "So if the Son sets you free,



you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

During the weekend, there are a series of talks, small group discussions and prayer. We deal with the root of the veteran's problem and then fill that space with the healing spirit of Christ. The retreat becomes a safe place to tell their stories. We bring Christ into those wounds, healing those who have been held captive, some for 40 years! The testimonies from the men and woman who have attended are awe inspiring as we know that the Lord wants these captives set free!

Meals are taken together to build camaraderie and friendships. "Walls which once seemed too high to scale, crumble in the face of a common shared experience". It is truly amazing watching God setting captives free.

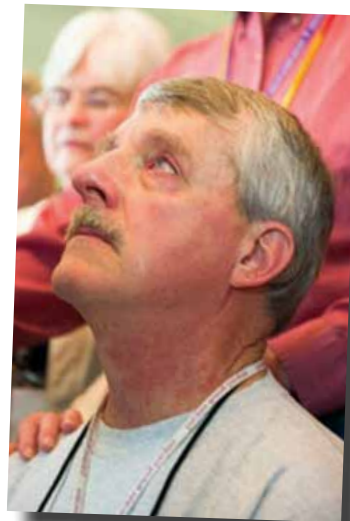
Veterans often arrive with furrowed brows leaving with a smile on their face. What a privilege it is to watch God at work.

Toward the end of the retreat, we have a healing service. Trigger fingers are anointed, confessions are heard and "we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ". (2 Cor 10:5).

Due to the generosity of individuals and churches we offer retreats to veterans free of charge. The accommodations and meals are designed to pamper, restore and renew weary vets and spouses.

### A Brilliant Future Ahead!

The future of the Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup> is exciting! They say imitation is the highest form of flattery and several people have already copied our program in England, Australia



and the US.

The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) did an excellent news segment on the 700 club on the WHI<sup>®</sup> entitled, "One man's mission to help veterans heal from their past starts with one prayer at a time". If you'd like to see this news segment, you can find a link on our ministry's website at [www.ByHisWoundsMinistry.org](http://www.ByHisWoundsMinistry.org).

I have also had the privilege to present the WHI<sup>®</sup> program at the pentagon at the invitation of a two star general and no less than twenty-one Lt. Colonels and above! God is Brilliant!

### Holding a Retreat in Your Community

People have been asking us how to hold a retreat in their community. To help them, we've created a teaching and training DVD program (with a workbook). Several OSL Chapters have already used our DVD program and are helping veterans and their families in cities across the US and Canada.

Most retreats are a mix of male and female participants. We have also offered specialized groups for female-only veterans and "Black Ops" veterans.

The WHI<sup>®</sup> is also being used to train first responders, police, firefighters, ambulance workers, and therapists. One such retreat was held in Newtown, CT after the shooting of twenty children and six adults (the toughest retreat I have ever led!).

For those silently suffering from PTS, making programs like the Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup> available is vital. If you or someone you know is dealing with PTS, please contact us. We are here to help. If we can save one life or hundreds of lives through this ministry—then we will have victory!



If you would like to learn more about the Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup> program or to financially help support a veteran to attend a WHI<sup>®</sup> retreat, visit our website at [www.ByHisWoundsMinistry.org](http://www.ByHisWoundsMinistry.org) or call Sandra at (561) 877-0944.

The Rev. Nigel Mumford, is a former OSL NA Board member, International Speaker, Author, & Founder of By His Wounds, Inc. a non-profit charity, focusing on Christian Healing. He has been involved in the Healing Ministry for over 24 years. Nigel is also Priest Associate at Galilee Church in Virginia Beach, VA. He was born and educated in England. He also served in Her Majesty's Royal Marine Commandos. His last two years as a Marine were spent as a drill instructor at the Commando Training School (CTCRM). Nigel's experience with Post Trauma Stress Disorder has led to the creation of "The Welcome Home Initiative"(WHI) – a program of healing for veterans, dealing with PTS and moral injury. He is a published author and all of his books, CDs and DVDs are available on his website: [www.byhiswoundsministry.org](http://www.byhiswoundsministry.org) Nigel and his wife Lynn, reside in Virginia Beach, VA.



# By His Wounds

Christian Ministry

## Hold A Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup> retreat!



OSL Chapters and Members can learn how to help combat veterans be filled by the healing Spirit of Christ and learn how to hold a Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup> retreat in your area. Order the complete WHI<sup>®</sup> program on this 3-disc, DVD set.

\$100 DVD set

\$20 Manual

NOT AVAILABLE IN THE OSL STORE  
ORDER DIRECT FROM BY HIS WOUNDS MINISTRY  
[www.ByHisWoundsMinistry.org](http://www.ByHisWoundsMinistry.org)

### 2015 Retreat Schedule Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup>

**July 16-18**  
Holy Trinity Church,  
West Palm Beach, FL

**November 12-14**  
Galilee Church,  
Virginia Beach, VA

**REGISTER NOW!**  
email: [welcomhomeinitiative@gmail.com](mailto:welcomhomeinitiative@gmail.com)  
(561) 877-0944 or (757) 496-0001

[ByHisWoundsMinistry.org](http://ByHisWoundsMinistry.org)

## A REFLECTION OF POST COMBAT TRAUMA

Welcome Home Initiative<sup>®</sup> Retreat #18

By Rev. Nigel Mumford

*Contentment...  
Today, this moment, I feel content,  
The battle won for now.  
The call to help others heal  
Of the wounds of war.*

*What a privilege to hear the stories  
And then invite the Christ  
Into the emotional gaping wounds  
Of mans inhumanity to man.*

*Press on dear men,  
Press on dear women,  
Who have served and seen  
Hell on earth,*

*leave your battle scarred  
Memories at the foot of the Cross,  
At the feet of Christ  
Let them go, let them go,  
Over and over and over again.*

*See the healing hands of the Lord  
On the Soul wound of your life,  
Come alive again dear soul,  
Resuscitated, revived, renewed,  
Brought back,  
To life again...  
Leave the battle at the foot of the Cross.  
Come home, come home,  
Leave the battle ground behind*

*Welcome Home dear soul to live  
again.  
Peace on earth  
Good will to mankind  
As we try to let go  
Of man.....unkind.*

*Allow the Lord to fill your heart  
With peace and an abundant joy  
Seek the Lords presence  
And learn how.....to be content.*

*Welcome home my friend  
Welcome home dear soul...  
Thank you, thank you, thank you.*