

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".

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A recent healing journey with Ed Tick...

Dear Friends,

I recently returned from a "saturation journey" to Milwaukee and Racine, Wisconsin where we created as many veteran-related events in the community as possible. Our goal is to find that "hundredth monkey" - to so saturate a community with new awareness regarding the wounds of war that the community is changed and takes up new war-healing initiatives based upon its particular needs and resources.

During this trip I lectured at both the University of Wisconsin at Parkside and Marquette University. We conducted a seminar for clergy on veterans' ministry attended by ministers of eight different churches and denominations. At Lake House, a healing center in Racine, we held a community pot luck discussion group, then a two-day healing retreat. We held a veterans' mentoring council and a sweat lodge was lead by David Eight Eagles. Connie Ligman researched and interviewed for her documentary in progress on soldiers returning from war.

These events brought in over 300 people – old and new veterans, their families, therapists, clergy, active duty service people, professors, doctors, concerned citizens and activists. It was moving and gratifying to share our concerns for veteran healing and recovery with so many! I am most grateful to Anne Huber of Sheepish, a Racine health store, Karen Carnabucci, director of Lake House, Mark Marlaire of the University of Wisconsin, and Michael Duffy and Steven Merrill of Marquette, for organizing, publicizing and hosting these events. This visit, like other events held in Seattle, Kalamazoo, the Colorado River valley, and New York's Capital District, demonstrates the power and necessity of community in bringing healing to our courageous service people.

Together we achieved much healing. One church, using "War and the Soul" as a guide, had already instituted a Veterans Day service, and several more churches pledged to follow suit on both Veterans and Memorial Days. Many vets spoke openly and movingly about their war and peace experiences. Some veterans and family members shared their war wounds for the very first time. Many therapists, clergy and activists pledged to bring more war-healing work to their communities. But it was what occurred for two of our veterans that made this visit most memorable.

One veteran, back only two months from Iraq, sat morose and withdrawn at the beginning of the weekend, suffering from depression, alcoholism, and suicidal inclinations. By the time our weekend was over, hope had returned - he had told parts of his story for the first time and his numbed heart had begun to open. As he began to feel and express his grief, he committed to continuing the long healing journey home.

Another vet had a different kind of story. He had been on isolated night missions in Eastern Europe and was an artillery officer in Desert Storm. He had been severely wounded and carried constant, terrible pain in body and soul. He spoke out with great courage and spirit in this, his first public talk. A devout Christian, he connected veterans' suffering to the spiritual anguish of true believers persecuted for their devotion. Enveloped in the community's true concern, hope has reawakened in his heart.

We all left our time together feeling determined and hopeful that we can, indeed, create a homecoming for our veterans that is restorative, welcoming, and full of love, spirit and wisdom.

May we carry on this work together!

Ed Tick

A letter from Plum Village...

...requesting the names of those who died during and after the war in Vietnam as Thay Thich Nhat Hanh and the community prepare for the Chanting Ceremonies to be held in Vietnam. Please send anyone's name you know to www.plumvillage-vn.org and pass the information to others who might benefit from this great healing opportunity.

Dear friends,

In this year's Vietnam Trip of Thay Thich Nhat Hanh and the Plum Village Sangha, Three Great Chanting Ceremonies for the Deceased during and after the Vietnam War are being held in Ho Chi Minh City (March 16, 17, and 18), Hue City (April 2, 3, and 4) and Ha Noi (April 20, 21, and 22). This is a very old Vietnamese tradition, to offer the collective chanting of many monastics to liberate the deceased (and, therefore, their descendants) from their suffering. During the ceremonies, Thay will give Dharma talks and Buddhist Monks and Nuns, from Plum Village and from the Vietnamese Buddhist Church, will perform prayers to help liberate the deceased as well those alive, who are still suffering from the Vietnam War.

I've created a database so that people can register the names of the deceased. These names will be placed on the altar and also read during the ceremonies. The ceremonies are the final steps to resolve the lingering pains and suffering of the war. We would like to make these ceremonies an international effort to liberate all victims of the war: the US Vietnam Veterans, the boat people who died on the sea because of pirates and angry waves, the prisoners who died in the re-education camps, victims of Agent Orange.

Please help make known the efforts being made to heal the last wounds of the war. People can register names of the deceased on line at www.plumvillage-vn.org.

Breathe and smile,

Br. Phap Kham

My Medals

This is the first poem written by David Koch, Navy Reserve Sea Bee, after serving a year in Iraq.

This is what I got for going to war
A hand full of medals nothing more
I can't talk to my medals they don't talk back
I can't hug my medals they won't hug back
Can't sleep with my medals their not cozy and warm
Can't love my medals the'll never love me
So what do my medals say when their in my draw
Don't blame us for your problems you walked out that door

The Communicator Awards Honors Bioneers Radio Show "War, Earth and the Soul: The Warrior's Path of Redemption" with Ed Tick

The Communicator Awards is an international awards program founded by communications professionals to recognize excellence in the communications field "for projects that exceed industry standards in quality and excellence." *Bioneers: Revolution from the Heart of Nature* is an inspiring radio series with an avid following. Bioneers radio show "War, Earth, and the Soul: The Warrior's Path of Redemption with Dr. Edward Tick, author of the groundbreaking book "War and the Soul", won an Award of Distinction for 2006. In the show Tick looks at whether high-tech war that can annihilate human civilization and nature on a global scale is really a viable response to conflict in the 21st century. Tick demonstrates that the traumatic wounding of war is so deep that it calls for more than antidepressants or stress management. Tick's work illustrates that transforming the demons of war can lead to a redemptive path of healing and reverence for life.

On The Edge: A Series on Veterans and Healing

For this month's newsletter, supplements are not on the menu. We move directly to the topic of Zen. Just like that, we are in the arena of Zen. Many believe that the concept of Zen is mystical or esoteric. My own belief is that it is more akin to a direct experience. Combat veterans have experienced a moment of Zen. Some call it a moment of truth. The moment of truth or a direct experience can happen to anyone of us at any time. In the Japanese based Zen traditions, this moment of truth is often called "Satori". I mention all of this to share a Zen experience that occurred for me while driving a car and listening to a song. As a human being, I often find myself not being fully engaged, on every level, in every moment of my life. This is part of the human condition. Now, you ask me, how did I experience Zen? It was surprisingly simple. I was driving my girlfriend's car to school and as I drove I turned on the CD player. The music playing was by a young musician named John Mayer and the CD is called "Continuum". The song I heard for the first time is called "Belief". I had never heard this song before and as time slowed down I heard every single word and the music turned into my own emotions. Mayer

sang "Belief is a beautiful armor, But makes for the heaviest sword, Like punching underwater, You never can hit who you're trying for..." I started to cry and slowed the car down. The song continued, "We're never gonna win the world, We're never gonna stop the war, We're never gonna beat this if belief is what we're fighting for. What puts a hundred thousand children in the sand? Belief can. Belief can. What puts the folded flag inside his mother's hand? Belief can. Belief can." I directly experienced everything outside me and simultaneously, everything inside me as my emotions poured out in the form of tears. This is Zen. Simple, yes. Direct, yes. No thinking involved. Everything, including me, became one for just a few moments during a song I had never heard as I drove to college one morning this past week. The Satori state can occur for any one of us at any moment in time as we live our lives. Dan Millman wrote a book about this called "No Ordinary Moments". It happened to me and all I was doing was going to school for a day of English and math. Zen knew otherwise.

On the Edge,
M. Shawn Nelson

More comments about the January'07 Soldier's Heart Veterans' Return Retreat...

"...Still trying to process the experience of the retreat and not sure in what direction it will lead - but looking forward to the journey, and going through it with each and every one of you. I have not had exposure to such an open group of people before (that being a good thing!) and it has certainly changed the way I view others. You each have a special place in our hearts."...Trish, wife of Desert Storm/Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran

"Thank you for all the work you have done for the cause...In the end run, it will save many young men and women from a great deal of pain and agony...Like Orestes manages to do in the Greek play, Agamemnon, it's time for the curse to come to an end... (Soldier's Heart) has gotten the ball rolling, and with any luck, we who have learned from the three of you, will continue the effort...semper fi".... Tom, Vietnam veteran

Soldier's Heart Now Has a National Yahoo! Group!

Now anyone connected to Soldier's Heart can network across the country! Here are the details on Soldiers_Heart:

Group home page: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Soldiers_Heart

Group email address: Soldiers_Heart@yahoogroups.com

SOLDIER'S *heart*

Veterans' Return Retreat

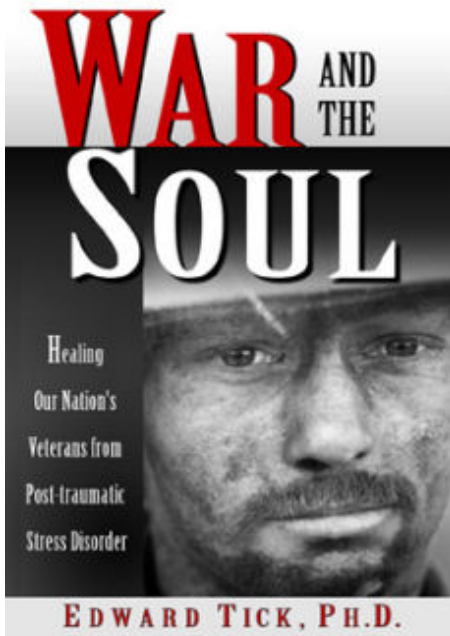
June 13th – 17th 2007

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.

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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)

Make your check out to Soldier's Heart/IHC for \$755 to cover tuition, room and board 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!