



New Year's Letter from Ed Tick

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Dear Friends,

Many of you have probably heard of the famous Christmas Truce of World War I. In December, 1914, British and German troops put down their weapons and met in the no-man's land between their gore-soaked trenches. They played soccer, exchanged gifts and stories, and helped each other recover their dead. They sang carols of joy, love and peace to the very men whom only hours before they had tried to kill. When the holy day passed, the troops did not want to return to their trenches or pick up their weapons again. Their officers had to beat them back into the horror.

This is the time of year that we rest from conflict and stress and review the work we have done and the road traveled. It is a time to evaluate self and service, restore energy and hope, and rededicate ourselves to the tasks before us. We have the luxury of this pause. Our loved ones in harm's way, the millions in daily danger around the world, do not. Nor do those whose bodies may be safely home from the wars but whose minds, hearts and spirits are still torn apart inside from their time in the hell. We serve them. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all who are endangered and suffering.

While I, Ed, have been working with veterans for 28 years and Kate for a long time as well, Soldier's Heart has completed its first calendar year of service. Ed, Kate, Paula, and Maureen while she worked with us, a hive of devoted volunteers, veterans, family members, active duty service people, healers, clergy, professionals, activists from all over the country have joined forces in mutual devotion and concern to help support, guide and heal our active duty service people, our veterans and their families from the devastating aftereffects of war. Simultaneously, we have worked together to help restore truth-telling to the war experience.

Here is a brief summary of our Soldier's Heart programs, some of what we accomplished in the year past, and what we hope to accomplish as we enter a new year together.

Counseling and Psychotherapy: Ed, Kate and Soldier's Heart workers provide a unique, holistic and psycho-spiritual model for the treatment of PTSD based upon models and research in

worldwide warrior traditions and cultures. For many years now much of this treatment has been provided to veterans from a dozen different large and small American conflicts for free or for reduced fees. In 2008 Soldier's Heart intends to expand its clinical treatment services, train additional healers and counselors, and provide counseling to veterans and families in need at little or no cost. In addition to ongoing counseling and support for veterans, we intend special efforts on behalf of female vets and veterans' spouses and children.

Veteran Retreats: The SH model for the holistic, community-based, experiential treatment of PTSD is taught and practiced at SH retreats for veterans, their family members, and community based service providers, especially counselors and clergy. At SH retreats, we take participants through the entire transformational process of civilian into soldiers, identify where the process broke down and became wounded or damaged, and guide the survivor in healing his or her wounds and completing the initiatory process into a mature identity as a returned warrior of honor. SH retreats are intensive 3 – 5 day residential programs. We have worked closely with the Theosophical Society in America to co-sponsor some of these retreats. In 2008 and continuing this partnership, we intend to conduct 6 – 8 retreats all over the country to reach veterans in need, train counselors, and develop community based affiliate programs. We already have retreats scheduled for Seattle (early Feb.), New England (late Feb.), Texas (late April), and the Hudson Valley region in New York State (Mid June), Please visit our web site for exact dates and details. And please join us!

Soldier's Heart Affiliations: SH is helping foster a national network of community-based veterans' safe return programming. SH Affiliates are dedicated to providing such care in their local communities. In 2008 we intend to continue to develop the existing affiliates in Seattle, Wisconsin, Illinois. We are developing affiliates in Texas, New England, New Jersey, California, Arizona, Atlanta, Florida, Europe and Viet Nam.

Community-based Outreach: Communities need extensive professional and volunteer referral networks and training and development of such services in order to meet the health and healing needs of veterans. SH provides community outreach, extensive public education efforts through the media, lectures, workshops, networking, advising, meeting with clergy, community leaders, veteran advocates. We help communities locate and create referral sources in their region. We help them reach out to veteran and military organizations to locate vets in need of services.

We are dedicated to creating a model community locally in our home community of Troy, NY area. Our goals for 2008 include community education through churches and veteran advocacy groups, out reach to and ongoing referrals from local veteran's organizations, the V.A. clinic, homeless shelters, churches and the county veterans' affairs office. We are pleased to announce our new internship program with occupational therapy and psychology student interns from Russell Sage College. We express our gratitude to Profs. Barbara Thompson and Cheryl MacNeil for their devoted collaboration in training students. We also thank Rev. Beth Illingworth and Margaret Leatham for Sage collaborations that include Reading of the Names of the War Dead and community and student education efforts regarding war and vets on the Sage campus.

Workshops: We presently have workshops planned for 2008 at the Department of Peace Conference in Rhode Island in March, State University of NY New Paltz in April and Ft. Hood,

Texas in September.

Train the Trainer: Our Veteran Return Retreats have served as training venues for those interested in veteran psychology and how to work with veterans. Our goal for 2008 is to institute an advanced training program for professionals looking to learn more. This would combine attendance at workshops and retreats, group conference calls, individual supervision, reading assignments and written work, and internships at retreats, workshops and overseas journeys. We intend to train people to be able to train others after completion of our program.

Benefits Advisement: We are proud of our alliance with Rensselaer Co. Veterans' Affairs director Bob Reiter. Bob will expand his consultation with Soldier's Heart in 2008 to provide veterans' benefit information and serve as veteran's benefit counselor and advocate to vets seeking their deserved disability evaluation, rating and payments.

Philanthropic Healing: Soldier's heart directs our Sanctuary International Friendship Fund, a philanthropic endeavor that funds overseas projects in countries ravaged by war. This Fund makes it possible for veterans to contribute to restoring areas in Viet Nam where they once participated in destruction. Veterans and others who travel to Viet Nam with us on our healing journeys have the opportunity to meet the people who benefit from their donations.

Since we began this program in 2000, we have funded the building of a kindergarten in the Mekong Delta, the repair of an elementary school in Da Nang, improvements to an Agent Orange Rehabilitation Center east of Ha Noi, the building of six Compassion Houses for destitute families, donations of livestock, sampans, children's school tuition, computers, etc. During our 2007 trip, we re-supplied the Delta school, donated water buffalos to two impoverished farming families, donated financial aid to a disabled North Vietnamese army veteran, built another Compassion House, visited two we previously built and provided their families with clothing and school supplies, and contributed to the Da Nang Street Children's Program. We intend to continue and expand these efforts in the future.

PTSD Research: Dr. Tick has used the intensive case study model of evaluation and research for his entire career. His books and articles have numerous presentations of illustrative cases of veterans' treatment and healing. SH staff will continue with intensive case study research.

We are looking at other research models appropriate to our work. This year we utilized pre-journey questionnaires for the veterans who went on our 2007 trip to Vietnam and will follow up with post journey questionnaires to track long-term transformation and healing. We have are grateful to Dr. Tony Luick, psychologist and Viet Nam veteran, who is helping design and conduct our empirical studies, and to the Kalliopeia Foundation for a grant that enabled us to bring two veterans and one spouse to Viet Nam and to fund this research. We will also work with Professors MacNeil and Thompson to train students to design and implement research.

Publications: Important tools for our training will be Ed's writing and development of a companion guidebook to WAR AND THE SOUL, which Quest Books is committed to publishing in early 2009 along with a DVD to showcase and illustrate our veteran return retreats. In addition, Ed, Kate and others will continue to write articles for interested journals and other

periodicals.

Newsletter: Our monthly on-line newsletter features upcoming events as well as articles and contributions by our readers devoted to increase education, understanding, and community action on behalf of our veterans. Our newsletter has a monthly circulation of over 600 readers from all over the country and world. In 2008 we will continue to publish the newsletter. It is our goal to raise funds to cover the costs of its production.

Web Based Outreach: SH maintains an active web presence through distance writing, teaching, networking, referral and outreach. We will continue and increase such web-based efforts in 2008. We are grateful to Andy Himes and his organization VOICES IN WARTIME for their generosity and guidance in creating our new interactive web site that will encourage the growth of community through web based ongoing involvement in education, writing, creative expression, discussion groups.

We have achieved much in our short time together, but it is only a proverbial drop in the bucket in comparison to the great needs and suffering across our country and around the world from the scourge of war. We are grateful for your help and alliance and humbled before the vision of all that needs to be done. We ask your ongoing support and help in volunteering, writing, networking, and making much-needed financial contributions and thank you in advance for anything you can do. You can contribute to our efforts by sending a tax-deductible contribution to our mailbox or making a secure on-line donation through **International Humanities Center** at <http://www.ihcenter.org>.

The Christmas Truce of WWI teaches us that at any time it is possible to lay down the guns, come out of hiding, transform feared enemies into beloved friends, and work together to grieve, heal, support and come home. With all your help, we can add our loving contributions such that some day no one will be ordered back into the trenches.

May you have a blessed holiday season and New Year!

Ed

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