



www.soldiersheart.net

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".

Soldier's heart is a non- profit project of the International Humanities Center.

Winter Newsletter 2010

Kate Dahlstedt, Editor

EDITORS NOTE: As I gathered pieces for this **newsletter** our Haitian brothers and sisters were hit by an unimaginably horrific catastrophe. Mother Earth has shown her power. As we extend our hearts to these vulnerable human beings, let us also lend our hands. Please consider donating to a disaster relief organization as a memorial or gift to a veteran in your life.

Let us also remember the hundreds of thousands who have been killed and injured in our current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the destruction of towns, cities and hamlets that happen in war to people just like those in Haiti, like those in our own hometowns. Thank you.

A NOTE FROM ED TICK

Dear Friends,

Greetings for the New Year.

2010 promises to be an auspicious year for our work at Soldier's Heart. As in the past, we will continue to conduct healing and training retreats and activities all over the country, and continue our advocacy and development of our model of "spirituality in community" for supporting and healing our troops, vets and their families. We already have a full year of activities scheduled and hope to see you at some of them.

In addition, we have some extraordinary special events planned that will continue our work of expanding healing and educational efforts to our entire nation and world. We know the wounds of war are so pervasive that they infect entire nations. We know that our nation and others have isolated those wounds in our veterans and that making veterans carry the wounds alone significantly increases the incidence and severity of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. We are increasingly concerned about creating effective means for addressing these broader cultural influences that contribute to the ongoing suffering caused by war.

We will lead our 10th annual healing journey to Viet Nam in October. In addition to our regular work of guiding our veterans, their families or survivors back to the areas of service and practicing healing and cultural immersion, we will attend the 1,000th anniversary celebration of the founding of Ha Noi, bringing a gift from America to Viet Nam honoring their history and celebrating their renaissance and our reconciliation.

For a decade now, Soldier's Heart has been working with Vietnamese and American institutions to foster joint healing and reconciliation projects. We are pleased to announce that next September **we will bring an original art exhibit, "Vietnamese Children's Art on War and Peace," to the United States.** The exhibit has been a decade-long project of the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. It will premier in the U.S. at **Kent State University** in Ohio in September as part of their program marking the 40th anniversary of the 1970 student shootings. It will then travel **to Case Western Reserve University** in Cleveland for October, where it will be part of the program for **an International Summit on War and Peace** where I will offer one of the keynote addresses. This summit will bring veterans, survivors, scholars, policy-makers, and educators from all over the world together to address our major international issues around the costs and consequences of war. After these two events, we hope to create a national tour for the exhibit. And Soldier's Heart, along with these two universities, will create and publish a catalogue including the art, essays by American and Vietnamese authors, and poetry by Vietnamese and American children and veterans about war and peace. This catalogue will be the gift we give to Ha Noi in October. **We are currently looking for submissions of poetry based on this art.** You will receive a mailing with images of the children's art and a call for submissions by the end of May.

Some of the children's drawings and paintings are now available on the [Wick Poetry Center website](#), where they can be easily accessed, shared, and even projected on a classroom screen.

Along with this exhibit, Soldier's Heart has been working in collaboration with the Wick Poetry Center and its director David Hassler at Kent State. Together **we are working to pair Vietnamese and American schools as well as veterans from both countries as pen pals, exchanging poetry and letters and modeling international reconciliation between former foes.** We hope to create a significant Internet presence for this work and extend it to other countries that are former foes. We intend to spread the vision of the humanities serving as significant tools for healing individuals and nations from the wounds of war.

We hope many of you will attend these events. **We are seeking additional venues for the art exhibit and additional individuals and schools at every level interested in entering pen pal relationships with Vietnamese counterparts.** If you are interested in any of these projects, please contact us. We always welcome volunteers to help in your home communities or with any of our national projects. And we welcome and are in need of donations of any amount to any of our efforts.

These represent only a few of the many initiatives that we at Soldier's Heart are guiding. Over thirty years ago, when I began working with veterans, I realized that the exploration of war and its wounding was necessary not only to help our vets but because it is also a doorway into the deepest recesses of our collective and cultural psyches that create war in the first place. Such exploration and tending of the wounds we all carry is more necessary now than ever before as violence travels around the planet and makes us all unsafe. Please join and support our efforts to dig deeply into the wounds of war and seek community and psycho-spiritual principles and practices that respond with hope and healing to these deepest of human dilemmas.

May 2010 bring you all hope, healing and peace.

Ed Tick, Director

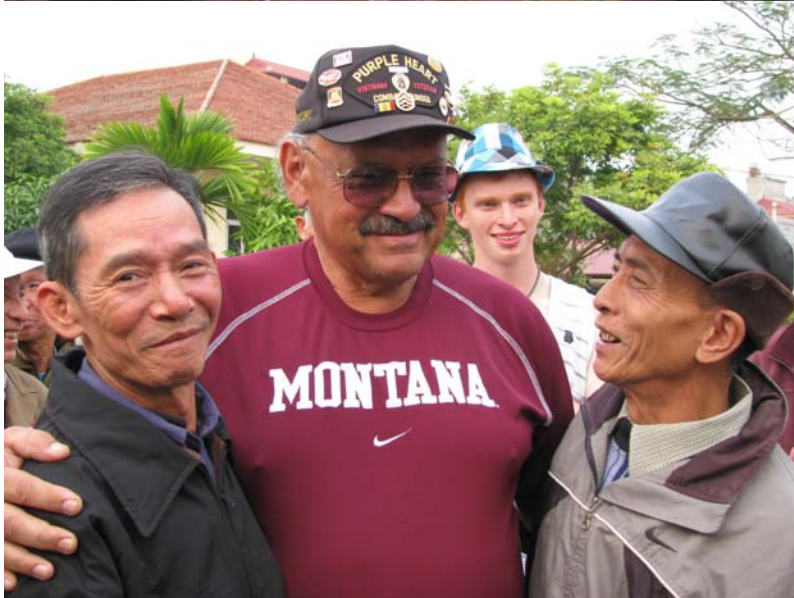
REPORT FROM VIET NAM:

By Kate Dahlstedt

Ed Tick and Kate Dahlstedt led another of their annual journeys to Viet Nam in November. With 18 pilgrims they traveled for 16 days beginning in Ho Chi Minh City in the south to Hanoi in the north, with many stops along the way. Much healing took place as they visited battle sites and told stories, met with former enemies and exchanged handshakes and hugs, drove through the lush countryside and experienced Buddhist ceremonies.

There were plenty of tears and lots of laughter as the group formed a temporary supportive "family." As in other years, we participated in philanthropic activities, donating an infirmary to an orphanage, a compassion house to a destitute family, money, clothing and school supplies to communities hit hardest by the recent typhoons.





Here is what some travelers had to say:

"The journey back to Viet Nam was a powerful experience for me in many ways. I felt as though the circle that began when I was eighteen and a soldier in the 101st/159th aviation battalion near the city of Hue in South Viet Nam was finally complete. All the suffering and confusion that has been a part of my life since 1971 finally had some meaning. I felt whole for the first time in forty years." *Steve Anastasoff*

"This is how I feel about my recent trip to Viet Nam with Soldier's Heart, like a witness to history. Good history. It was an honor and privilege to witness and be a part of healing and reconciliation between the Vietnamese and our veterans. I am in awe of the open-hearted and welcoming Vietnamese, after all they've been through. I'm also in awe of our veterans for their incredible courage in undertaking what had to be initially a daunting,

even frightening pilgrimage back to the land of their former nightmares. It was powerful and transformative for everyone. For me it was an exhilarating affirmation of what is possible. I plan to do it again. *Susan Raby-Dunne*

"Our journey through Viet Nam deepened and affirmed my faith in our ability to love and heal. Despite great atrocity, despite deep suffering and despair, we can choose to accept, forgive, and love even in the face of war. The kind Viet people and our courageous veterans taught me that we have the power to find freedom in our hearts and minds." -*Rachel Beals*

One of the travelers, Michael Phillips (Magoo) gave an interview for his local paper which can be seen [here](#)

And another expressed it in a poem:

It Looks Like

By Vicki Vanderhorst

It looks like a tour bus

It is really a pilgrimage

It looks like a bunch of people dancing

It is really long lost joy recaptured

It looks like people stretching their legs

It is really walking the land with new eyes

It looks like crying and rage

It is really healing at depth

It looks like broken hearts

It is really us witnessing the light shining through the cracks

Our next Journey to Vietnam will be Oct. 1-18. Please contact us soon if you are interested in going. It is almost full!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Feb. 25-28 - Soldier's Heart Healing Retreat - Atlanta Georgia

April 6-20 - Soldier's Heart Journey to Greece

May 1 - 5 - Kent Ohio, numerous events commemorating the May 4th killings at the Kent State University

June - 10-13 - Soldier's Heart Healing Retreat. Pumpkin Hollow Farm, Craryville, NY

July 5-9 - Northeast Educational Institute training - Cape Cod, MA

Aug. - 25-29 - Soldier's Heart Healing Retreat - Colorado

POETRY CORNER

Your Enemy

By Jeremy Berggren

Your enemy was my hero
A hill number was your home
Your enemy was my hero
A hill number you call home
Called you gook
Called you Charlie
Called you evil, incarnate, enemy
But your enemy was my hero
After the war was done
From their words, their art, their touch
After the war was done
Called themselves evil, incarnate, enemy
But your enemy was my hero
After the war was done
Called themselves GI
Called themselves killer
Long after the war was done
Your enemy was my hero
Into your hills they return each night
Your enemy was my hero
You shared war, death, and the night
You see **you** are my hero
And when I say this even children understand
It's the ones that promote the wars who don't
They value money, power, and land
You see you are my hero
Warriors of distant lands

My heroes shared your dreams
To come home
In one piece
A man
But monsters do not die
When heroes lie awake at night
Your enemy was my hero
And **I** think of you each night
You are not my enemy
If anything we are brothers
But before I had these heroes, your enemy, he was me
We shared war
We shared death, and the night
So today, I call you brother!
Call you love
Call you peace
Call you light

ROGER SHOURDS HONORED

On behalf of Commandant Ron Smith and members of The Hellroaring Detachment we would like to announce that Marine Roger Lee Shourds was presented the honor of being the Marine Corps League Hellroaring Detachment 1041 of Lake County Montana, 2009 Marine of the Year. This honor was announced and usually presented at the annual Marine Corps Birthday in November. Marine Shourds was on a Vietnam Healing Journey in November with Dr. Edward Tick author of the book "War and the Soul" and his wife Kate Dahlstedt who are co-founders of Soldier's Heart. Marine Shourds was presented the award on January 13 2009 at the Detachment's monthly meeting. Marine Shourds served in the Marine Corps 1965 -1972 and in Vietnam 1966 -1968. He received a medical discharge at the rank of Staff Sergeant for injuries from Vietnam.

Marine Shourds was awarded this Honor for all the personal time and work he has done for the Veterans of Lake County and of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Marine Shourds organized a PTSD/Suicide Talking Circle and is a co-facilitator of the Talking Circle. Learning to deal with his ghosts and taking the time to get the training to assist others with their ghosts and other problems with dealing with society today.

Marine Shourds shows what it means when we say "WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN" He has accepted the Office of Sgt at Arms for the Hellroaring Detachment.

The members and the Detachment's Marine of the Year Society would like to Congratulate Marine Shourds for all he does to help Veterans of Lake County, Flathead Indian Reservation and the surrounding areas of Western Montana.

Respectfully Submitted Semper Fi

John Miller-Past Detachment Commandant

Detachment Adjutant

LIVES TO REMEMBER

by Ed Tick

As we enter a new year and seek hope our collective future, we commonly look back to honor those who have left us and make meaning from their examples.

We invite you to pause for a few minutes and reflect on two lives that have just ended. These two people witnessed and survived some of the worst horrors of the 20th century. They lived long lives and always remembered the lessons of war and tried to pass those lessons on to all of us.

On Jan. 7 **Tsutomu Yamaguchi** died in Nagasaki, Japan. According to the NY Times, Mr. Yamaguchi was "the only official survivor of both atomic blasts to hit Japan in World War II." Though he lived a long life, Mr. Yamaguchi's family members - parents, siblings, children - all had severe health consequences from the "black rain and poison" of the fallout. In his later years, Mr. Yamaguchi spoke out against nuclear weapons and called for their worldwide abolition. He embraced some of life's most difficult lessons from his experiences. "I could have died on either of those days," he said. "Everything that follows is a bonus."

On Jan. 12, **Miep Gies** died in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Mrs. Gies was 100 years old, the last surviving member of the group who hid Anne Frank and her family during the Nazi holocaust. Mrs. Gies and her family risked their lives to protect Jews and others being hunted for extermination. About her actions, she said, "I am not a hero." She also said that though those "dark and terrible times" were years ago, "it is always like yesterday in the heart of those of us who bear witness." Mrs. Gies is responsible for rescuing, hiding, preserving and finally returning Anne's diary pages to Anne's father, Otto, the only family member to survive the concentration camps. To the end of her life she said, "Not a day goes by that I do not grieve for them."

These witnesses remind us of lessons we learn from our veterans and others survivors - life is fragile and a great gift; it is easily snuffed out; we can survive and recover but we will always remember and grieve; witnessing is a sacred act and gives meaning to our losses; we are responsible for each other and our shared world.

Let us remember these honorable survivors and witnesses and carry their lessons into our new millennium.