



LMVFM



LUTHERAN MILITARY VETERANS AND FAMILIES MINISTRIES
"SERVING WITH CHRIST'S LOVE THOSE WHO SERVE"

Winter 2010

Official Military and Veterans Care Programs Continue to Fail our Service Members and Their Families

Leslie Haines

Executive Director

The annual report card for 2010, for official military and veterans care programs for troops and their families should be published during the first quarter of 2011. However, having followed the figures for the first ten months of 2010, we already have an accurate foretaste of what's to come.



Having met or surpassed the figures from 2009, figures that measure how well our troops and their families are doing, we can report that for the most part official military and veterans care programs have once again failed our service members and their families.

Of particular note: suicide rates for 2010 exceeded the already historic highs set over the last five years. Suicide rates in the Army have more than doubled since 2001 and exceed the national average. In addition, 2010 marks the first time that suicides among our Guard and Reserve forces have surpassed the already historic highs set by our active forces.

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LMVFM's Newly Launched Programs Target the Critical Needs of Veterans and Their Families

Staff Report

This year the LMVFM has taken a hard look at the reports that reflect how well past and present service members, and their families are doing. The reports have given us a better understanding of what needs to be done on behalf of our service members and their families.

Through your support, our efforts to move forward with new programs in response to the needs we have been seeing have been successful. Beginning in July we kicked off the first of our new educational programs. "Basic Training I", the first of our three part Basic Training series seminars was conducted for area clergy and counselors. Our Basic Training seminars are designed for civilian care givers i.e., Counselors, Clergy, Stephens Ministers, and others who can expect to work with our veterans and their family members. The series covers the unique challenges and issues that our veterans and their family members face each day, and provides those who are in caregiving roles with valuable insights and tools to assist them as they work with our veterans and their family members. Over the past few months we have conducted two of our new three part focus area seminars (basic Training I, and Basic training II).

This January, we will conduct the third in the Basic Training series. Basic Training III focuses on combat stress related injuries, traumatic brain injuries, and military sexual trauma. The seminars have been well attended, and feedback has been outstanding. In each of our seminars we provide one scholarship seat, for any student going into a care giving profession or vocation. As such, during our first Basic Training Seminar, we provided a Vicar from the Fort Wayne Seminary a scholarship seat, as well as a university student. During Basic Training II, we also trained four Deaconess students from the seminary.

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Your Tax Dollars at Work...

Last year the Army launched a \$50 million suicide study. In October 2010, Army Col. Carl Castro, Director of the Military Operational Medicine Research Program at Fort Detrick, Maryland, announced the award of \$17 million for a three year suicide prevention study.

Castro explained "We know we're not going to solve the suicide problem in the military with this research consortium," "But what we hope to do at the end of this three years is to lay a very solid foundation on which other research can be built." Castro added that the current suicide prevention programs are based on "good ideas" "but we do not have any evidence that [suicide] training actually in fact prevents suicide."

While the now \$67 million price tag targets suicides, in reality this research is more about solving the riddle of how and why warriors respond so differently to war and their responses can be controlled.

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results."

However, a comparison of the research which has mushroomed since 9/11, to the volumes of existing research that spans centuries of war, reveals that not much has changed regarding the impact of war on those who fight them. What's worse is that we have continued to ignore the lessons we have learned from past wars, which is a price that service members and their families continue to pay.

Wisdom to Know When it's Time to Reinvent the Wheel

In many cases, the "Don't reinvent the wheel" rule is good advice. However, it falls short when despite your best efforts, the wheel simply won't work. It's at that



point when you need to abandon this advice and get on with the task of inventing a wheel that meets your needs-unless you enjoy failure. The willingness to let go of a wheel which isn't meeting the needs it was designed for isn't that easy for many of us. Letting go means having to admit that what we were doing wasn't working-or that we were wrong, and then begin the work to invent or reinvent a wheel we can use. The longer we hold on to a wheel we know needs reinventing, the harder it becomes to let it go.

The "wheel" I am referring to are the various military programs created by the services used to respond to the

wellness issues of our military members and their families. The continued use of programs that have failed to stem years of increased suicides, substance abuse, domestic abuse, divorce, mental health disorders, high risk behavior, and a long list of other negative areas seen among our troops and their family members challenges the logic and rational behind the military's decision to continue using these programs on their personnel. More challenging is trying to figure out why some individual caregivers and ministries outside of the governance of the military will parrot the line "let's not reinvent the wheel" in an attempt to justify taking the same failed military programs, repackaging and reissuing them for those who come to them for care. Albert Einstein defined this practice very eloquently when he wrote: "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results."

It's Time to Connect the Dots

The answers to the escalation of problems seen among our troops and their families are already known. While we may not like the answer, it is and always has been that until we stop sending men and women off to war, we will continue to see them return home affected by wars grim realities.

1. War is destructive. No one who has been, or had a loved one go to war escapes the changes that will come.
2. The primary mission of military medical and religious personnel is to preserve the fighting force, i.e., patching up the wounded in order to get them back into the fight.
3. Deployments strain relationships with loved ones, and failed relationships are the leading cause of suicides.
4. Multiple deployments, are directly related to the marked increase in spiritual, emotional, mental, distress among warriors and their families.

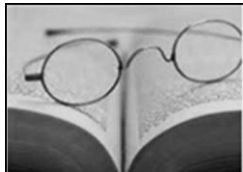
Don't Blame the Military

While the military must be concerned with the health of its warriors, it's responsibility extends only as far as it relates to its mission. Our military, and its members are first and foremost the armed agents of our nation, and sworn to protect and defend our country, it is not a social service agency, and cannot carry the responsibility for the long term spiritual, emotional, and mental well-being of its warriors or their families.

The real responsibility to provide for the spiritual, emotional, and mental needs of warriors and their families is given to the church, its ministries and to those who provide mental/emotional health care on the home front.

Whose responsibility is it? It is ours. †

JUST THE FACTS



Suicide report:

Jan-Oct 2010 (10 Months)

172 Active Duty, and 116 Guard/ Reserve reported suicides versus

Jan-Dec 2009 (12 Months)

162 Active Duty, and 78 Guard/Reserve suicides.

- Every day, five U.S. soldiers attempt suicide, a 500 percent increase since 2001.
- Every day 18 U.S. veterans attempt suicide, more than four times the national average.
- Of the 30,000 suicides each year in the U.S., 20 percent are committed by veterans, though veterans make up only 7.6 percent of the population.
- Female veteran suicide is rising at a rate higher than male veteran suicides.

Divorce Rates:

Since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom, the divorce rate of active duty members, has increased from 2.6 percent in 2001 and is presently holding at 3.6 percent in 2010.

However, there have been small increases within certain subgroups. Increases are being seen among male Marines and Airmen while remaining constant for Sailors and Soldiers. Divorce rates for enlisted females increased in every service except the Navy where they remained unchanged at 7.8 percent (which is still more than double that of their male counterparts). Army female enlisted divorce rates are three times that of enlisted males.

*In 2009, the divorce rate among US citizens was 3.4 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

More than 50 percent...

In 2010 more than 270,000 active duty Army and Marine Corps personnel had been deployed more than once. More than 110,000 active duty Army and Marine Corps troops have served three or four tours, more than a fifth of the total deployed. According to the U.S. Defense Manpower Data Center, That is more than 50 percent of the total deployed for both services.

Roughly a third of National Guard and Reservist troops in both services had served more than one tour. †

RETREATS continued from page 1

I am pleased to announce officially that the first of our wellness retreats for family members will be conducted on the 8th of January. This has been a project in the making for about 2.5yrs, and as we partner with the Victory Noll Retreat Center, and the Huntington County VA service office, we are finally moving forward. Our target is to get appx. 25 family members signed up for this all day retreat. In keeping with our policy of not charging our veterans or their family members for any services we provide them, we are seeking out sponsorships to cover the \$50 fee.

Workers in the Field

This fall we accepted our first field worker from the Fort Wayne seminary. As a ministry, we welcome and appreciate the opportunity to provide valuable training to our future caregivers.

One of the greatest blessings we have received this year are our volunteers. We have had, and have not only one full time volunteer, but many part time volunteers that are truly the backbone of our ministry. As a small ministry, words cannot begin to express just how much we depend on our volunteers, and what their gifts do for our ministry.

Sharing Resources

In November, we expanded our ability to provide additional and specialized counseling for veterans who otherwise would not have had access to this care. We are providing space in our facility for this care, as well as space for group therapy. The therapist providing this care will also assist us on our basic training team.

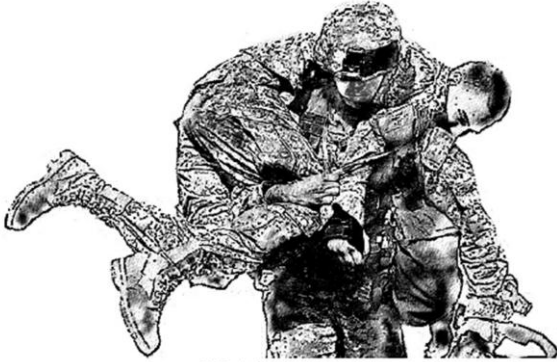
Giving Thanks

As a ministry, and as His servants we continue to be thankful for the many ways that God has provided for the needs of our veterans through our mission to "Serve with Christ's Love, those who serve."

On behalf of the LMVFM I want to thank our ministry partners who have supported us in prayers and financial support. As a growing ministry, we too struggle to survive during these difficult financial times, Without the support of our partners, the LMVFM would not be able to continue its ministry to our veterans and their families. We are so very thankful for the continued support of our ministry partners which continues to allows us to provide care in His name to our military members and their families who are in need...†

WE NEED YOUR HELP:

Would you leave an American Soldier behind
on the battlefield?



Neither would we,
even when their battlefield is back home.

*During this season as we give thanks for all that
we have received I would like to encourage you to
remember that our ministry depends on your
support. Your tax deductible gift allows us to
continue helping our veterans and their families
come all the way home!*

Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries
is a Tax Exempt 501(c)(3)

Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries
1615 Vance Ave. Ste., 3
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

RETREAT FOR VETERANS FAMILY MEMBERS

PLACE: VICTORY NOLL RETREAT CENTER, HUNTINGTON, IN

DATE: 8 JAN 2011, TIME: 0830-3PM

This daylong retreat focuses on assisting military family members with finding positive and creative, stress management skills. The Retreat center is ideally suited for retreats, and provides each participant, with an environment well suited for those who are seeking peace.

For more information, please call: Sue Wilhelm at:
260. 356-0628, ext. 128

BASIC TRAINING III

PLACE: LMVFM, 1615 VANCE AVE., FORT WAYNE, IN

DATE: 21 JAN 2011, TIME: 08:30-4P

About: BASIC TRAINING III is the third seminar in the **BASIC TRAINING** Seminar series. Topics covered in **BASIC TRAINING III** include: Combat Stress Related injuries i.e., PTSD, traumatic Brain injuries, and Military Sexual Trauma.

Who Should Attend: BASIC TRAINING III is designed for Therapists/Counselors; Clergy/Stephens Ministers and community care providers who work with, or can expect to work with veterans and their family members.

Cost: \$49.95, Members \$39.95, *Students \$ 25
Snacks and Lunch provided.
Seating is limited. To register call: 260.755.2239

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