



# In FOCUS

## Newsletter

Issue 5  
May, 2014



**FMF Chairman  
Walt Suhre**

Hello, Marines –

Change is inevitable. It's that time of year in the Midwest when winter has faded and Spring is here in all her glory. Changes continue at FMF and in the FOCUS Course as well - changes to make us better able to accomplish our mission and changes in the FOCUS course to make it more meaningful and effective.

Our March course was attended by our largest class ever – 33 heroes struggling to return to meaningful civilian lives. As we approach our class capacity of 36, we are ever mindful of the necessity to remain intimate. Growth must not compromise our proven effectiveness. Our teams are sacred in size, optimizing camaraderie within and allowing our Team Leaders to maximize their effectiveness. Foul weather on the Sunday of our March course drove us inside, but presented us with opportunities to kick-off the course even more efficiently and to move it along more quickly than in the past.

Following the end of each FOCUS Course, the content and presentation of each element of the program is critically evaluated for possible improvement – deleting aspects less effective in favor of changes for the better. Most of those changes occur as results of the critical evaluations by participants of each component of the program. We value greatly your opinions.



### FOCUS March 2014

Yet again, March 2014 FOCUS can be summarized in one word...  
**COLD!**

This round, we even got to add in some ice. Not too much fun for those who pretty-much skated into town. Thankfully, everyone arrived safely. Our abilities to improvise, adapt, and overcome have become fine-tuned with the last few courses.

Due to the weather, Sunday's activities required quite a bit of improvising. It's amazing how circumstances beyond our control have been leading to improvements in the overall FOCUS program. We added in a new relaxation exercise that received overwhelmingly positive reviews from all who participated. The feedback we receive from our participants and Team Leaders is vital to the evolution and growth of the course.

We were again fortunate to have Gunny Pop come out to the farm and inspire us all with his story. Even those of us who have heard him speak on countless occasions manage to claim a seat in the Lodge to listen in.

We now have 33 new members in the FOCUS family. They know the support they've found is unwavering and far reaching. Lessons learned, from the Marine in Your Pocket to the 3 R's, will serve them as they take the next steps in their lives.

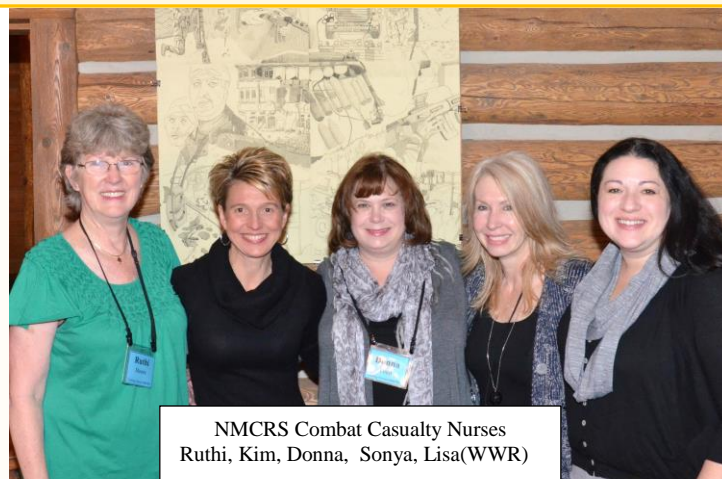
## Walt's Welcome (cont.)

On the organizational side, FMF continues to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. Hard to believe that the physical facility can be improved upon, but John Brauer continues to find ways to do so, enhancing acoustics and lighting, and adding additional sleeping facilities for Team Leaders. Ted Kretschmar and his Development Committee are increasingly successful in obtaining funds through outright contributions and grants. I am particularly pleased to inform you that our dedicated, hard-working Board of Directors has expanded to 16 members with the election of Sheri Oberhelman. Sheri, the daughter of one career Marine and the niece of another, is as dedicated to FMF as any Leatherneck in our organization. We feel that a member of the fairer sex among our directors will bring perspective and sensitivities not heretofore present.

Undoubtedly, changes occur in your lives also. Whoever said that life was a bowl of cherries either had no pulse or lived on a planet different from the one we inhabit. Life is not fair, is not consistent and is seldom predictable. Nonetheless it sure is challenging and is definitely rewarding to those who give it their all. Never, never forget – **FALL DOWN 7; GET UP 8.**

Count your blessings and conquer your challenges. You can, and you will. You are the best. **You are Marines!!**

Semper Fi,  
Walt



NMCRS Combat Casualty Nurses  
Ruthi, Kim, Donna, Sonya, Lisa(WWR)

## **“Moral Injury”**

By

**Ruthi Moore**

**NMCRS Director of Visiting Nurses**

Very few children grow to adulthood without having feelings of shame or guilt over something they did, or something they didn't do in their life (shoplift a toy, tell a lie, cheat on a test, not stop a bully from hurting someone, not stand up for a friend, etc.). Whatever causes a feeling of guilt or shame is an example of a “moral injury.” I think of it as the things I would be ashamed to tell my Mother.

Once we become adults, we still have to deal with the moral injuries we acquire in life. Some are self-inflicted (not reporting someone who has stolen something, knowing we cheated on our taxes, damaging someone's property and not telling them) and some are a result of situations such as war, where we have a job to do (follow orders, protect our buddies, kill or be killed). The problem with a moral injury is that we must live with the consequences, and those feelings of guilt and shame are often more damaging than any amputation, burn, traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Moral injuries require forgiveness - forgiveness of ourselves and each other. Forgiveness for the anger and rage that may have led to acts of violence against others; forgiveness for the temporary pleasure that may have been felt when taking revenge for the friends who died; forgiveness for stepping away rather than engaging in a battle; forgiveness for being afraid - forgiveness for the best you could in a horrible situation not being good enough. The biggest challenge of a moral injury is believing and accepting that you deserve forgiveness. There is often no one you can go to who can say “It's OK, man. I forgive you.”

Cont. Pg. 3 “Nurses Corner”



## "Nurses Corner"

(Cont. from Page 2)

If you know or believe people died because of your actions, you may see them every time you close your eyes. As veterans begin to talk more, they often acknowledge that their sleep problems are because of who they see in their nightmares as much as what they see. I can't imagine anything worse in life than feeling like my actions – or lack of actions – caused the death of a friend. It's bad enough in a war to know you caused the death of an enemy, but to believe that a friend died because of you would cause intolerable pain. If that is what you are remembering, I would ask that you think about what happened for a few minutes. Was it intentional? If not, think about that friend and imagine what he/she would say to you, if possible. Think what you would say to him/her if you could. And then think about what you would say to a fellow vet who told you a similar story. I assure you, you are not the only one dealing with these feelings. Nothing will change what has happened. But destroying your life is probably not what that friend would want. You did the best you could. That is all anyone can ask of any of us.

One of the disadvantages of war today is that the return home takes so little time. During past wars, people were on troop transports and would have more time than they might have wanted to relive the horrors and memories of combat. But they relived those horrors with others who had been there. Talking with fellow vets about the moral injuries of war is a valuable method for dealing with what you saw, did, thought, and felt during and after combat.

The beginning of healing a moral injury will start when you realize that there is non-judgmental support for you. You can say whatever you need to, tell whatever horror stories you see in your nightmares, and know that the person you are talking to will not blame you for your thoughts, feelings or actions. You can talk to another vet you know, someone at the local vet center, someone from FOCUS, or a

NMCRS Visiting Nurse. While not many of us have been in combat, many of us have been in the military ourselves and remember what it is to take orders that had "unintended consequences." We have heard more than you can imagine and while we will feel sad for what you are dealing with, we will not judge you. You matter, regardless of what you did, saw, thought, or felt – then or now. Talking about it will not change what happened, but realizing you can say the words out loud and not be considered the monster you think you are may help you start to accept that you did the best you could at the moment.

Everyone in life has regrets. If we let them cripple us, we are doing a disservice to ourselves, our loved ones, and those we believe we failed along the way. You don't have to suffer alone or in silence. Being human means making mistakes; learning from those mistakes – real or perceived – allows others to accept that they, too, can move forward. Hating yourself will not help anyone, especially not the memory of those you believe you failed. If they were someone you thought highly of, perhaps they can become a "moral compass" in your head – "what would Joe or Tom do in this situation?"

Moral injuries don't go away, but they can help us recognize the kind of person we want to be, and help us move forward towards that goal. Blame and shame will not help. You are more important than you realize to those who know you. You deserve to believe in yourself again, in spite of or maybe because of all you have gone through. I truly believe that, and more importantly, I believe that is what your fellow vets would want for you and themselves. By acknowledging and talking about your moral injuries, you may unknowingly help someone else with theirs. Someone recently mentioned to me that no one goes into a fire fight alone. You don't have to deal with the consequences alone, either.



NAVY-MARINE CORPS  
RELIEF SOCIETY

## FOCUS Lessons Learned

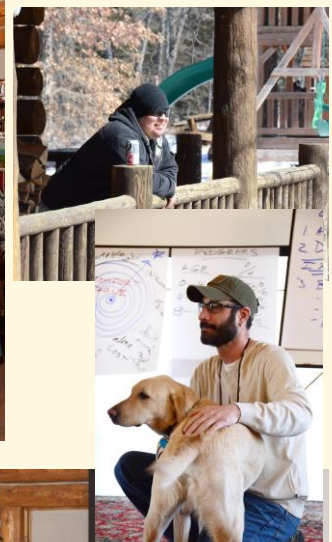
### “Goals”

At FOCUS we spend a considerable amount of time talking about goals. On the very first day, the very first topic is “Blue Star” goals and how they relate to one’s comfort zone. This is immediately followed by the discussion on SMART goals and how these relate to your Blue Star goals. Then on the last day of FOCUS we reinforce the SMART goal lesson with a dedicated segment to develop three SMART plans before leaving FOCUS. Therefore, the first lesson of FOCUS is about setting personal goals, and one of the last lessons at FOCUS is about setting personal goals.

Obviously we feel that this is one of the most important lessons to be learned at our FOCUS sessions. Without setting goals, an individual regresses into their personal ‘comfort zone’ and they become a shell of who they could be. Setting goals is how we as humans grow. Without goals – if we mark time – we decay.

The most basic element of goal setting is the SMART plan. The SMART plan is short term – 30 to 90 days – and many times multiple SMART plans reflect stepping stones to achieving a Blue Star goal. SMART plans are not limited - you just don’t complete three SMART plans and you’re done for life. SMART plans are life’s stepping stones. If you are achieving goals, regardless of how small they may be, you are growing and completing the mission of life.

If you are a FOCUS Marine, review your SMART plans. Where are you in the process? Don’t stop with just three. You should have a file folder with many different plans that reflect your growth and success. We suggest that you go back to your FOCUS workbook and review sections 4 and 5 on goal setting. Setting goals is preparing for life. There is a reason the message “Failing to Prepare is Preparing to Fail” is front-and-center on the book cover.





## FOCUS Support

No FOCUS session would be possible without the overwhelming support of our local community. At any given session we have more than 120 people from various organizations supporting our FOCUS participants. Below are highlights of just one of these organizations.



### **Gateway Warrior Foundation** **St. Louis, Missouri**

The Gateway Warrior Foundation was established by a group of St. Louis executives in September, 2013. A non-profit organization, its sole purpose is to help men and women who have paid a tremendous price for defending the United States in the War on Terror.

The Gateway Warrior Foundation mission is to raise funds to support organizations providing support services for wounded men and women who live in Missouri. Focus Marines Foundation is fortunate to be one of the organizations supported by GWF.

The major fund-raising event for the Gateway Warrior Foundation is their annual Golf Benefit held this year in October at the Country Club of St. Albans. This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Golf Benefit conducted to support our veterans. This year's event will feature a golf tournament and auction to raise funds for selected veteran support groups. In 2014 the proceeds of their fund-raising activities will go to the St. Louis Fisher House, Honor Flight chapter in St. Louis, and of course Focus Marines.

In addition to golf, the event will also feature veterans from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, and Iraq. An all Military Honor Guard will post the colors, and a bugler will play "Taps" prior to the golf tournament to honor the military men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedom.

The next issue of InFOCUS will provide details of the Golf Benefit, and information on how to get tickets.



### **Summer Kickoff Party at the "Q"**

Dave Baker and Brian Scheidegger have hosted a party each of the last four years to benefit local law enforcement and veteran organizations including Focus Marines. Last year's party was a smash hit. FMF Board Members, Team Leaders, and guests who attended the event enjoyed meeting and getting to know Dave and Brian's guests. FMF received approximately \$10,000 from the event.

A big hit was the presence of The Budweiser Girls. These beautiful young ladies made sure that no one was without a drink in hand at any time. They also put a big smile on the face of our FMF Board Chairman, Walt Suhre.



The 2014 event will again be held at the Q Restaurant, 149 N. Main St., in St. Charles, MO on May 22, 6 to 10 PM. And "Yes" Walt, the Bud Girls will be there! For tickets or sponsor information, contact Dave Baker at...

[dbaker@woilco.com](mailto:dbaker@woilco.com).

## Speaker Profiles



**Dan Dorr**  
**International Speaker**  
**Corporate Facilitator**  
**Coach**

The FOCUS program is indeed fortunate to have Dan Dorr as the primary facilitator of our sessions. Dan has worked with our organization in developing the course strategy since our first FOCUS session in March, 2011.

After our inaugural program in 2010 (then called "Compass"), it was apparent that our strategy to accomplish our mission to serve the wounded warriors needed a major overhaul. The next twelve months was spent revamping our approach, our content, our message, our lessons, and even our program name.

In March of 2011 the Focus Marines Foundation launched its first "FOCUS" program with Dan Dorr signed on as the primary speaker during the first three days of the session. It might be said that Dan was, and still is, the heart and soul of each FOCUS session.

Dan is proud to have participated in the development of the curriculum for the FOCUS training program. His FOCUS message is consistent with his corporate and public workshop seminars. The program, delivered through FMF in association with the United States Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment, and the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, serves our returning Marine, Navy Corpsmen, and other veterans from the war on terror. With Dan's leadership and other resources from Dan Dorr and Associates, our FOCUS program powerfully supports our veterans as they make the often challenging transition back into civilian life.

Dan combines an engaging presentation style with a deep understanding of what motivates people to action. The key to his effectiveness as a facilitator is the interactive nature of his customized presentations.

He creates enduring leadership results, challenging people to see themselves, their business, and most importantly, life itself in new ways.

Dan Dorr is a gifted speaker and workshop leader. His experience spans multiple levels of training delivery. He was contracted to deliver leadership and team development seminars for Klemmer & Associates Leadership Seminars, and PSI World Seminars in public and private venues for tens of thousands of participants. Since 1974, he has facilitated well over 70,000 people in ten countries. As an outside contractor, he managed Klemmer & Associates Personal Mastery Seminar Department, led their Corporate Leadership Program, and was responsible for program delivery and trainer development. In addition to being certified at a Basic and Advanced levels of Leadership course delivery for both Klemmer & Associates and PSI World Seminars, Dan is a certified course leader in George Leonard's Samurai Game and Harvard's Robert Kegan's Immunity To Change course.

For details on the programs provided by Dan Dorr & Associates visit the website at...

[www.dandorr.com](http://www.dandorr.com)







## FOCUS Marine Challenges the “Mighty Mississippi”

'Paddle Off The War' is an epic adventure which will see FOCUS Marine Joshua Ploetz come face to face with the Great Mississippi River over a 64 day, single man canoe journey down the 2,350 miles of North America's mightiest river.

Josh is a FOCUS Marine alumni from our March 2012 session who hails from Winona, Minnesota. He is a veteran of the War on Terror, having served two tours in Afghanistan. Like so many of our young warriors, he suffers the effects of the invisible wounds of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and fights the every-day battle to return to a life of normalcy in our society. Josh is committed to conquer this hidden personal war which rages within him, and many of our veterans returning from conflicts around the world.

This colossus challenge will not only test his courage and his warrior spirit to conquer the extreme conditions of the largest river in North America, but will also examine his sheer determination and strength as a warrior.

Joshua's primary objective is to promote PTSD awareness and the mission of the Baton which is a symbol of national conscience, crafted with care and respect from the handle of a stretcher – symbolizing pride, hope, courage and suffering. He will carry the Baton in his canoe from Lake Itasca to Venice, LA. In addition, he will be raising money to help support those who have lost a veteran due to PTSD and Combat Stress.

Focus Marines Foundation will greet Josh at the St. Louis riverfront on July 4th, 2014. We invite our local supporters to come down to encourage and support Josh with us. All funds raised will go to support fellow U.S. wounded warriors who suffer the invisible wounds of PTSD.



For more information on Joshua's journey, the planned route with updated itinerary, and information on how to support Joshua's cause, please visit the following site ....

[www.affwashingtondc.com/events/PaddleoffTheWar/](http://www.affwashingtondc.com/events/PaddleoffTheWar/)

### Focus Marines Foundation Upcoming Events

May 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	Spirit of St. Louis Airshow	Spirit of St. Louis Airport
May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fundraiser	Summer Kickoff Party	The Q Restaurant, St. Charles, MO
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	Eureka Red, White, & Blue 5K Run	Eureka, MO
May 24 <sup>th</sup> /25 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	Sailing for Veterans	Lake Carlyle, Illinois
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	Memorial Day 5K/10K Run	Chandler Hill Winery
		And Memorial Service (3 PM)	Defiance, MO
June 7 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FOCUS</b>	Summer FOCUS Support Session	Augusta, MO
June 14 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	MCL 184 Shooter Challenge	OnTarget, Valley Park, MO
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Support	Joshua Ploetz, “Paddle Off the War”	St. Louis Riverfront at the Arch
Sep 6 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FOCUS</b>	Fall FOCUS Support Session	Augusta, MO
Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	Gateway Warrior Golf Benefit	The Country Club of St. Albans, MO
Dec 6 <sup>th</sup> -13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FOCUS</b>	Winter FOCUS Support Session	Augusta, MO
Dec 13 <sup>th</sup>	Fundraiser	Army/Navy Game Event	Rookies Bar & Grill, St Charles, MO

For detailed information on any of the FMF upcoming events, please contact our FMF VP of Development, Ted Kretschmar, at... [help@mmffocus.org](mailto:help@mmffocus.org).



FOCUS Marines Foundation  
 1880 Schlusersburg Road  
 Augusta, Missouri 63332  
 Email: [help@mmffocus.org](mailto:help@mmffocus.org)  
 Phone: 888-553-0078

