



In FOCUS

Newsletter

Issue 7
November, 2014



**FMF Chairman
Walt Suhre**

Greetings Marines,

September brought us our 14th FOCUS course! Thirty-four Marines and Navy Corpsmen attended, our largest class so far. We look forward to December and our last class of 2014. Hopefully, we will max out our capacity with 36 attendees. For those of you, like me, interested in demographics, participants in September came from 14 states, coast-to-coast. Of those attending, 35% were married; 24% single. Lastly, 41% were employed while 26% were attending school.

In the last InFOCUS issue, I commented upon the necessity to set SMART goals and to diligently work toward satisfying them. At FOCUS you were challenged to set three SMART goals; one, to positively affect a relationship; two, to set a goal for self-improvement and three, to strive to do something for others in need. I elaborated somewhat in the last issue on relationships, the inevitability of them in life and the critical importance of developing good ones and nurturing them.

Allow me to comment on the second goal – self-improvement.
(Cont. Page 2, “Walt’s Welcome”)



FOCUS September 2014

September 2014 brought us our largest class ever! Thirty-four Marines, Corpsmen, Soldiers, and Sailors came to St. Louis from across the country to participate in the course.

Yet again, FOCUS Week proved what a small world it truly is. From Boot Camp to Combat, participants found unbelievable ties to each other. We can't get through a week without realizing that there are some things that go beyond coincidence. And, more importantly, we've learned that not everything needs an explanation.

By Friday, participants realized that they now have an incredible support network. They've discovered life-long friendships with fellow warriors who truly understand their struggles and see the significance of their accomplishments.

When asked about the most challenging part of FOCUS, many participants will tell you it's making themselves get on that airplane to St. Louis. They have no idea what to expect and are putting their confidence in complete strangers. Fortunately, graduates of previous classes have stepped up and volunteered to contact the incoming class. They answer questions and encourage the new group to push through their anxiety. We've learned that these Graduate volunteers are invaluable in creating feelings of hope and determination in participants even before they get to FOCUS.

September 2014 Grads – we can't wait to see you accomplish your goals! We have every confidence in you. And, in turn, you can have every confidence in us. Welcome to the FOCUS Family.

Walt's Welcome (cont.)

Those of us of the Christian faith believe that there has only been one perfect person in all of history. That leaves a whole lot of folks with room for improvement. Last season's clothes fitting tighter than comfortably? Time to shed a few pounds. Not communicating as effectively as you would like? Time to step back and brush up those communication skills. (For starters, refer to your FOCUS notebook and your notes under Dan Dorr's "Listening" presentation.) Grouchy, irritable and up tight? Time to decide what's important and what is not, and to prioritize the things that are important. You get the idea. We all have facets of our lives that require attention and fine tuning.

Please remember when you begin to address a goal of self-improvement, approach it SMART(ly). **Specific – Measurable – Attainable – Risk – Time Frame.** And don't be discouraged if your goals become more difficult, take more time, etc. Reset SMART, and go forward. You've got the rest of your lives to get better. It's a continuing process, and you'll do it. Good luck!!

Happy 239th Birthday!! What a legacy!! We're the best!!! Never forget it.

Semper Fi,
Walt



NMCRS Combat Casualty Nurses
Bobbi, Renice, Kim, Tricia

"Triggers"

Veterans respond to traumatic events in a number of ways. They may feel concern, anger, fear, or helplessness. These are all typical responses to traumatic events associated with war and combat. Veterans who have been through combat trauma and hardship in the past may be even more likely than others to be affected by new, potentially traumatic events. Even something as mundane as dates on a calendar – anniversary dates - act as "triggers" that relives the trauma of past events on the respective date. Triggers can cause a range of reactions. These reactions may include:

- General distress - an increase in PTS symptoms
- Quickness to anger
- Sleeping disorders, nightmares
- Uncontrollable substance abuse – alcohol or narcotics
- Avoidance of any reminders via media about similar incidents
- Isolation and social avoidance

Recent traumatic events may also trigger old memories among veterans. When facing a new traumatic event, for example, the serious illness of a family member, some veterans expect and/or prepare for the worst based on their past experiences. They will:

- Become overly protective, vigilant, and guarded
- Become preoccupied by danger
- Become augmentative and irrational
- Feel a need to avoid being shocked by, or unprepared for, what may happen in the future

Cont. Pg. 3 "Nurses Corner"

"Nurses Corner"

(Cont. from Page 2)

On the anniversary of traumatic events, many people find that they experience an increase in distressing memories of the event. These memories may be triggered by reminders, but memories may also seem to come from out of the blue while at work, home, or doing recreational activities. An increase in distress around the anniversary of a traumatic event is commonly known as an "anniversary reaction" and can range from feeling mildly upset for a day or two to a more extreme reaction in which an individual experiences significant psychiatric or medical symptoms.

Other types of anniversary reactions may involve anxiety symptoms such as panic, specific fears, or worry. Individuals may have panic attacks, be afraid to go certain places, or find that they worry about their safety and the safety of their loved ones. Others may experience physical (or medical) symptoms such as fatigue and pain or general health complaints such as headaches and stomachaches.

Most people will feel better within a week or two after the anniversary. Over time, the stress symptoms will decrease in both frequency and severity. Providers can suggest strategies to help survivors through the anniversary period. For example, survivors may find it helpful to make specific plans for the anniversary day so that they have other things to occupy their time besides memories of the event. Some may choose to participate in a commemorative ceremony such as visiting a grave, making a charitable donation, giving blood, helping others, or dedicating the day to spending time with family.

In the next column is a list of proven tips to help manage triggers for veterans with or without PTSD. Regardless of the source of the triggers – events, anniversary dates, certain holidays, etc. – these tips help mitigate the severity of the episodes and shorten the longevity.

- Know your anniversary dates and prepare for them. Talk to your support team and give them a heads-up on the upcoming event.
- Consider limiting your exposure to news on television. While media coverage may draw you in, increased viewing can raise stress levels.
- Watch yourself for signs of anger, rage, depression, worry, or other negative feelings. Take a time out from the news to let yourself recover from these feelings.
- Keep up with daily schedules and routines. Try to include more pleasant activities in your day, even for brief periods of time.
- Keep up with your body's needs for exercise, food, and sleep.
- Feel what you feel. It is normal to feel a range of emotions. Having these feelings is to be expected.
- Slow down. Give yourself time and space to deal with what has happened. Remember that people have their own pace for dealing with trauma.
- Count on feeling angry, but balance your actions with wisdom. Try to stay calm. Avoid reacting with sudden anger toward any group or person.
- Talk with someone close to you who might understand what you are going through. Use your **FOCUS** fire team!
- If you do not feel like talking, writing in a journal may be helpful for dealing with intense feelings.
- Do not avoid other veterans even if they remind you of your military past. Seeking support along with other veterans can be very helpful when stress is high.

If these tips do not work, or if you are abusing alcohol or drugs, or you are having any symptoms that are causing high levels of distress, problems in relationships, or problems at work, get help from your doctor or a mental health provider who is skilled in working with PTSD and recognizes the effect of "triggers".



NAVY-MARINE CORPS
RELIEF SOCIETY

FOCUS Lessons Learned “Victim or Victor”

Whether the discussion is “Victim/Victor” by John O’Leary, or “Victim/Responsible” by Dan Dorr, the message is a critical part of our FOCUS sessions to encourage our participants to move on with their lives regardless of events.

Being the victim of circumstances creates Resentment, Resistance, and Revenge (the 3R’s) which leads one into a vicious cycle of anger and looking for ways to get even for circumstances from bad events. Perpetuating the cycle of victim, resentment, resistance, and revenge, creates a vicious downward spiral that will make one feel angry, worthless, confused, defeated, alone, shameful, weak, etc. If you cannot find methods to get past the victimization, it will eventually define who you are and take control of your life. Perpetual victimization will cost you friends, family, relationships, and may even affect your career path.

Bad things beyond our control happen to us all. But how do you put the victimization aside and take responsibility for your choices. Here are some steps to consider....

- Drop blame, shame, and guilt – just state the facts. How you talk about your story to yourself as well as others will determine your mindset.
- Don’t embellish - drop the drama. We all naturally use drama to win people over to our respective points of view.
- Start earlier in the story. Consider what choices were made that created the circumstances that resulted in the bad events? Review these choices to determine what may have been done differently that may have avoided the event.

To achieve happiness and contentment, one must drop the victimization for the bad things that happen. One of our FOCUS Marines summed it up perfectly, “...*the dog that wins the fight is the one that you feed the most*” – if that “dog” is victimization, you’ll be an angry victim for life.



Service Dogs

“Man’s best friend.” These words ring truer than ever when describing the relationship between a veteran and their service dog. The right service dog, one custom-selected and trained for each individual’s needs, can give our veterans, specifically those living with Post-Traumatic Stress, a chance to truly come home. Everyday things most people take for granted, such as going shopping, to a ballgame, to class, to dinner with family, or getting on a plane, are things they often cannot do. Just the simple act of driving can trigger flashbacks. Fortunately, this can be changed.

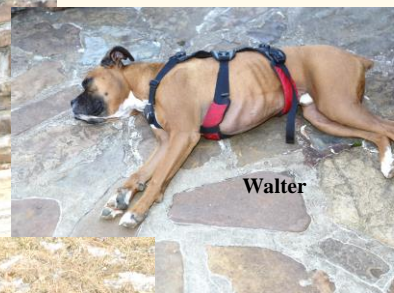
Experimental programs are beginning nationwide to pair veterans afflicted by PTS with dogs. Researchers are finding that the animals draw out even the most isolated personality, and having to praise the animals helps traumatized veterans overcome emotional numbness. Teaching the dogs service commands develops a patient’s ability to communicate, to be assertive but not aggressive, a distinction some struggle with. The dogs can also assuage the hyper-vigilance common in vets with PTS. Some participants report they finally got some sleep knowing that a naturally alert soul was standing watch.

Six certified service dogs attended the September 2014 FOCUS class. These canines support their humans by providing emotional support, protection, and even physical assistance. The consensus from the humans is that these dogs have changed, and in some cases, saved their lives.

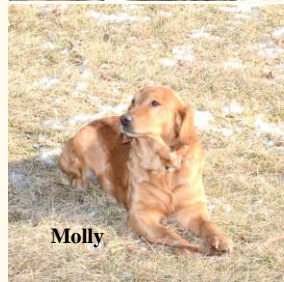
If you are a veteran interested in acquiring a service dog, there are many organizations throughout the U.S. that provide certified service dogs at little or no cost. For more information on these groups, contact your DISC or NMCRS visiting nurse.



Moses



Walter



Molly



Bravo



Joey



Cooper



Grits



Colt



Bolt



FOCUS Group Sept 2014

Happy Birthday Leathernecks!

On November 10th, 1775 in an obscure watering hole in Philadelphia called Tun Tavern, the legacy of the U.S. Marine Corps was born. At that time Captain Samuel Nicholas was recruiting sea-going soldiers for General George Washington's revolutionary forces. These sea-going soldiers were assumed to be temporary Continental Marines. However in 1898 congress passed the legislation making the U.S. Marine Corps a permanent part of the new United States of America's military forces.

Marines near and far, young and old, have celebrated the birth of our Corps for hundreds of years. What does the celebration mean to Marines across the globe? To Gen. John A. Lejeune it meant a great deal. On Nov. 1, 1921, he issued Marine Corps Order No. 47, which provided a summary of the history, mission and traditions of the Corps. The illustrious Lejeune directed that the order be read to every command each subsequent year on November 10th in honor of the founding of the Marine Corps.

Either way it was formalized in 1952, by Commandant Gen. Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr., who directed the celebration of the Marine Corps Birthday be formal-

ized throughout the Corps. The details were included in the Marine Corps Drill Manual approved in 1956 and helped bring together the inclusion of a cake ceremony and other traditions still held every year at the Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

One key piece is the passing of the first piece of cake from senior to junior Marines; it is a symbolic gesture of the passing of experience and knowledge. That tradition begins in recruit training and at Officer Candidates School, where knowing where one comes from, knowing our past, and living up to that example set, is emblazoned in the minds of those in training.

Our traditions surrounding November 10th are many. Even long after active duty you'll find many of us celebrating our origin on this date. We remember our legacy. We revere our Marine legends. All other branches of the military have their own song that identifies who they are. The U.S. Marine Corps is the only branch of U.S. military that has a **hymn** that honors and reveres our legacy. Being a Marine is spiritual – not religious - because we all do our duty for God, country, and family.



FOCUS Profile Enoch Pashby Cpl, USMC

FMF is privileged to have as an integral part of our FOCUS sessions graduates of the program who have attained levels of success in their lives worthy of recognition. Many of these Marines return to the course a week at a time to mentor first time participants to optimize their opportunities for success at FOCUS. These Mentors have proven to be invaluable and are hugely appreciated. To our readers outside of the FOCUS family, we would like to introduce you to another FOCUS Marine Mentor.

Enoch Pashby is from Rapid City S.D. He first attended FOCUS in December 2012. Enoch sought help to control his intense anger and anxiety. He faced huge challenges in familial relationships and knew changes had to be made. Enoch was stuck in the self-destructive downward spiraling cycle of Resentment, Resistance, Revenge, and Victimization. In the sharing portion of the course, Enoch unloaded his overstuffed pack and let it all out. In so doing, he earned the admiration and support of everyone in attendance. When he returned home, he applied the tools he acquired at FOCUS and made gigantic strides in his life.

Enoch returned to FOCUS as a Mentor in March, 2013. He has attended every session of FOCUS

since. Notably, Enoch organizes and conducts a Bible study group three evenings during each FOCUS session. Attendance is voluntary, and extremely well attended.

Enoch's life reached a new threshold in September 2014 when he remarried and acquired two young sons to complement his four year old daughter. Demands on his time increased significantly, but he still makes time to support his fellow Marines at each FOCUS session.



Enoch originally came to FOCUS in December, 2012 as a Victim but left as the Victor when he applied the "FOCUS Lessons Learned" to his newly acquired life perspective. We look forward to Enoch's continuing attendance at FOCUS for as long as his private life allows.

Focus Marines Foundation Upcoming Events

Dec 6 th -13 th	FOCUS	Winter FOCUS Session	Augusta, MO
Dec 13 th	Fundraiser	Army/Navy Game Event	Rookies Bar & Grill, St Charles, MO
Jan 31 st	Fundraiser	St. Charles Paramedics Poker Night	Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, MO
Mar 7 th -14 th	FOCUS	Spring FOCUS Session	Augusta, MO
May 16 th	Fundraiser	Sailing for Vets	Carlyle Lake
May 25 th	Fundraiser	Chandler Hill 5K/10K Run	Defiance, MO
May 30 th -Jun 6 th	FOCUS	Summer FOCUS Session	Augusta, MO
Jun 29 th	Fundraiser	FMF Golf Tournament	Old Hickory Golf Club

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

FOCUS Support

No FOCUS session would be possible without the support of our local community. At any given session we have more than 120 people from various organizations supporting our FOCUS participants. Over the course of a calendar year our community support resources are an indication of the overwhelming love and respect that we all have for this generation of our veterans who have sacrificed so much for our security and freedom. Below are the names of volunteers that we have on record for this calendar year alone.

There are many others who have helped in some capacity in anonymity, and we apologize to those support volunteers for not capturing their information in our records. However, the FOCUS Marines Foundation and all of our 350+ FOCUS participants truly appreciate your services. FOCUS would not be possible without your help!

Don Aird, John Allquist, Stephanie Ashford, David Baker, Tiffany Barr, Larry Becker, Wendy Becker, Bill Bedo, Lt. Don Belew, Kiley Bergbower, Eugene Bestgen, Dennis Bible, Gail Bickerton, Jack Bickerton, Michael Birdsong, Dick Birkner, Noel Blythe, Ted Boerding, Amy Boggs, Dan Bradley, Aron Branscum, Jason Brauer, John Brauer, Chief Greg Brown, Roy Burke, Dawn Cahill, Brian Callahan, Chris Cannon, Bob Cassidy, Merlin Clayton, Chris Collins, Lt. Wm. Collins, Paul Conley, Lt. Col. Justin Constantine, Charles Coulon, Tyler Counts, Bill Craft, Cody Crane, Rob Crowley, Jerry Crump, Ron Curry, Dan Day, Armando de la Garza, Mary Diller, Charles Disbrow, Gary Dollahon, Lt. Col. Doug Downey, Mickey Drake, Bill Elmore, Pat Fader, Bill Fallert, Donovan Feder, Dick Felter, Marilynn Felter, Richard Feltz, Robert Ferguson, Pamela Fernandes, Tom Fischer, Lori Flett, Ron Fogarty, Sgt Major Brian Fogarty, Major Jason Frei, Yasmin Garay, Tiffany Garcia, Josh Garvey, Matthew Garvey, Rick Garvey, Vickie Garvey, Scott Gaterman, Laurie Gaterman, John Gillis, Bud Getz, Mike Gollon, Betty Gonzales, Phil Goode, Ed Greiwe, Sheila Grgurich, Nate Hall, Ken Hare, James Hargate, Diane Harlan, Norm Harriman, Nathan Harms, Harry Hegger, Jackie Heggeman, Annie Heinly, Dave Henke, Mark Hill, Tom Hill, George Hinkfus, Marry Hinton, Terrie Hobson, Capt. Hollenburg, Ron Holtman, Marissa Houghton, Jim Hubbard, Sandy Huebner, James Huffman, Jen Martin Huighe, Bob Hutchcraft, Tom Ilges, John Iman, Jean Jaeger, Dave Jefferies, Mike Jefferies, Steve Jefferies, Bryan Jefferson, Aaron Junk, Cpt. Dave Kaiser, Brian Kaveney, Debbi Keyes, Jerry Keyes, Nick Keyes, Scott Keyes, Jerry Kirk, Jeff Knelange, Mark Korte, Wm. Korte and Staff, Ted Kretschmar, Robin Kraujalis, Matt Kuhn, Austin Lafeber, Andrew Law, Gary Leibach, Mike Leblanc, Jerry Lewien, Luke Lucas, Greg Maddox, Tim Maher, Kari Martin, Mick McDonough, Terry McGinnis, Reed McEwing, Mike McGuire, Kathy Meadows, Nicki Mergenthal, Shawn Merry, John Meyer, Rick Meyer, Ruben Micich, Chris Miller, Mark Morrison, Greg Muffler, Kay Nanny, Lonnie Nasalrod, Lisa Neislein, Dave Nichols, Ashley Nickolaison, Drake Nickolaison, Grayson Nickolaison, Marnie Nickolaison, Nick Nickolaison, Eric Nielsen, Chris Niebruegge, Sheri Oberhelman, Kathy O'Connor, Greg Omer, Karen O'Neal, Cliff Otts, Rich Palarito, Brandon Pallarito, Enoch Pashby, Angela Peacock, Trish Perkins, Spencer Pike, Ron Purcell, Jack Quinn, John Rains, Sarah Rakers, Nile D. Ramsbottom, Laura Reed, Lynn Reeves, Frank Reis, Gary Remensnyder, Richard Reyna, Barb Rhyne, Kelly Reilly, Nick Rohe, Carey Rolofson, Jeremy Romo, Mary Rumy, Theresa Ryan, Jaime Salvatore, Brian Scheidegger, Kristi Scheidegger, Mark Schmiedkamp, Gary Schneider, Jim Schneider, Wade Schott, Ann Schroeder, Larry Schwartz, Charlie Scott, Hudson Shade, Linda Shade, Gary Shatro, Dave Shimamoto, Stan Shaun, Mike Shuster, Tim Sims, Dennis Simpson, Smitty Smith, Mike Stambaugh, Mike Stocker, Wayne Stokes, Ken Streett, Michael Street, Walt Suhre, Tom Sumner, Mary Szpatoski, Conrad Targonski, Ed Tasch, Col. Shane Tomko, Cheryl Turano, Jessica Turner, Steve Tuttle, Kyle Umgelder, Michael Van Deren, Julie Vinnedge, Jay Vermillion, Julie Walton, Mike Walton, Wendell Webb, Harry Weber, Jack White, Melanie Williams, Chris Winkelmann, Lou Wright Sr.