



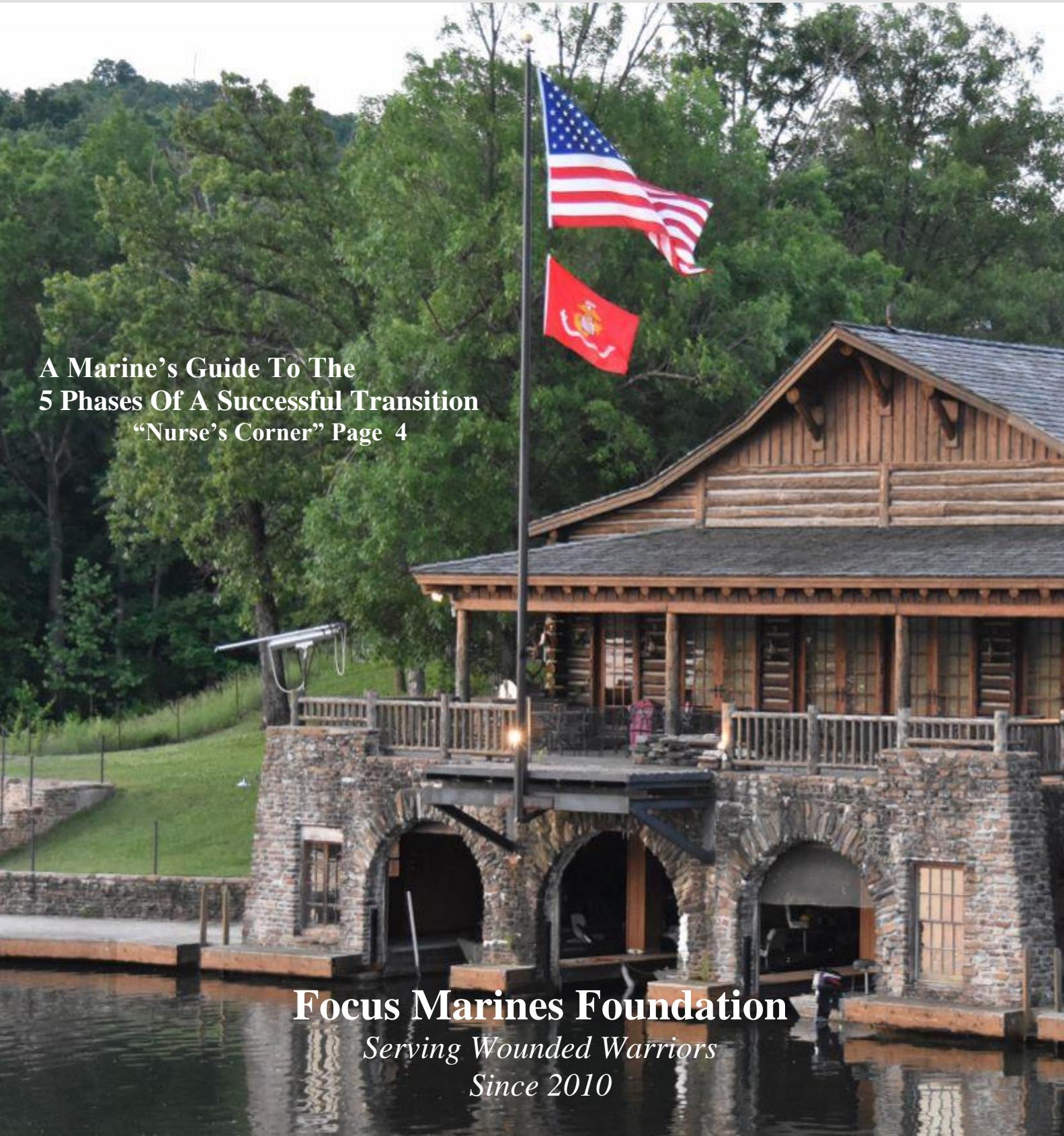
In FOCUS Newsletter

Issue 11
May 2016

A Marine's Guide To The

5 Phases Of A Successful Transition

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Focus Marines Foundation
Serving Wounded Warriors
Since 2010

In FOCUS



**FMF Chairman
Walt Suhre**

Greetings, Marines –

We in Eastern Missouri are enjoying a gorgeous spring. Everything in bloom and the world looks just a bit brighter. Hope the same exists wherever you are. We had a great week in April with 31 participants from 17 states coast to coast. We enjoyed having our first Air Force vet along with two sailors and two soldiers. Both sailors were greenside corpsmen/corpswomen, so their affiliation with the Navy was technical only. They were definitely Marines, and by the end of the week the airman and soldiers became honorary Marines, forgiven for having wandered into the wrong recruiting offices. Our April grads brought our total grads since inception to 573. Distinct honors for our Team Leaders and for all of us at FOCUS Marines Foundation to serve you who served us so valiantly.

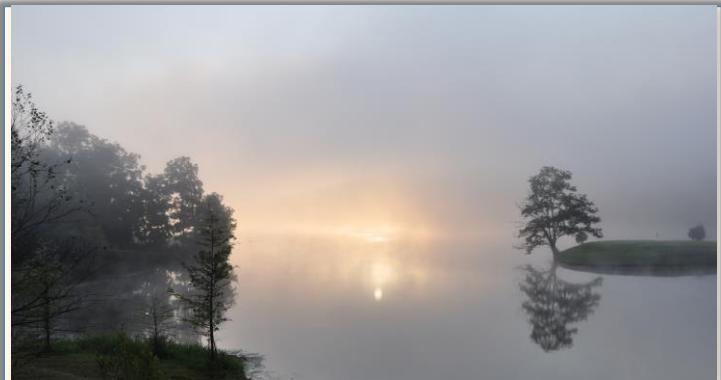
I want to talk to you briefly about status quo. Most, if not all of you receive financial aid from the government for injuries you received serving bravely our Corps and our country. You bet you deserve every penny – probably much more. We at FOCUS have learned something else, however; something that too frequently has serious negative effects on recipients. That effect is disincentive --- a willingness to accept a lifestyle at a level at which the monthly disability benefits accommodates one's total living expenses. And the incentive to move forward and improve one's life goes away. No job, no education, no career.

From my perspective, there are two things very wrong with that scenario: First, I refuse to believe that any of you is going to be satisfied with that situation for the long run. You have already demonstrated the opposite in coming to FOCUS. You were not satisfied with the state in which you existed and wanted more in life. You put in a long, hard week at FOCUS and left in a much better state of mind than you had when you arrived. Of course it has not been easy since you returned home. Face it; that's life!! We each only get one shot at this experience --- this is not a dress rehearsal. It's the only chance we're going to have. And we owe it to ourselves and to everyone who we care about and who cares about us, to give our best. You joined the Corps to be the best fighter in the world. And you succeeded. Why accept anything less now?

Secondly, we know that very little in life is certain – it is said that death and taxes are the only two. Your disability benefits are not guaranteed; they can be modified or eliminated entirely at any time. Hopefully, neither ever will occur. But, just in case

So, Marines, we challenge you to rekindle inside you that fire which led you to be a U.S. Marine, to be the best that you can be. Whatever you do, never, never, never quit. We believe in each and every one of you --- and we will never quit.

*Semper Fi,
Walt*



“22”

Any of our veterans today know the significance of “22”. However, many outside of our veterans community may not.

“22” is a very sad and heart rendering statistic. It represents the number of combat veterans each and every day that fail to cope with the invisible wounds of war and succumb by taking their own lives.

The FOCUS program in conjunction with our strategic partners – Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society, and USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment – work diligently to be aware of situations where one of our FOCUS graduates may be in danger of becoming a statistic. We provide coping skills and a deep support infrastructure to help these young men and women cope with the emotional wounds of war and get the support they need when they need it the most.

Cont. Pg. 5 “22”

In FOCUS



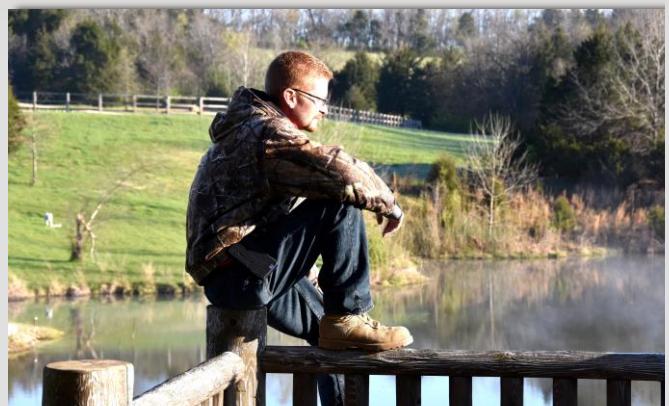
FOCUS April 2016

The April 2016 Course featured many FOCUS “firsts”. The class of 31 veterans included two Soldiers, 2 Corpsmen, and our first Airman. Marines, as always, made everyone feel welcome and part of the brotherhood, and proved to our soldier and airman participants, that “Once a Marine, Always a Marine”.

Our Sunday rotations included a new presentation on Service Dogs. Participants asked countless questions and learned about training/certification requirements. The course was also highlighted by three incredible speakers. John O’Leary, Justin Constantine, and Nick Popaditch each inspired our participants, and anyone else in the room, to make the most of their lives and show the world what they have to offer.

The amount of talent and potential that comes in with each class is tremendous. To build on that, we’ve added a segment on vocational rehabilitation and the GI Bill to get everyone off and running.

All of the week’s programs, classes, and instruction were captured by our new photographer, David Gill (FOCUS Graduate – September 2015). Graduate involvement has quickly become a key factor in the evolution and growth of the FOCUS Program, both during the FOCUS courses and in finding others who would benefit from attending. Almost one third of the April class came to us through our Graduates and we only expect these numbers to rise. So Graduates, you know what you need to do!





NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY

A Marine's Guide To The 5 Phases Of A Successful Transition

By Dave Smith, USMC

The following are excerpts from an article written by a combat Marine, Dave Smith. Dave reflects upon his struggles with transition from military to civilian life and how he developed a phased approach to overcome his challenges. The full text of the article can be found on the FMF website at the link on the bottom of this page.

The transition out of the military seems to come in a few important stages. Getting started and being willing to truly do what it takes to begin a recovery is probably the most difficult. After that, taking responsibility, building healthy relationships, finding a supportive community, and staying active are all important self-choices. In the next stage, getting involved and giving back are essential to setting goals and providing a sense of purpose. Finally, seeking professional development, employment, and education will improve confidence and set a stage for continued growth.

Based on my own experience, here are the five stages of transition for those veterans who may struggle to acclimate to the civilian world right away.

Stage 1: Climbing Out Of The Hole

This is where you realize something is wrong, but you haven't begun yet to take steps to fix it. If you are not willing to take personal ownership for your life, then it's very difficult to get out of this stage.

Stage 2: The Pain Stage

I refer to this as the "pain stage" because in some ways it hurts to start facing all of your problems and seeking help. This is where you make a committed decision to change your life. Much like quitting smoking, it doesn't work if you don't really want it to. You must take steps toward your personal improvement and stick with them. The pain comes because as you open yourself back up to feeling again, there is an emotional dump truck full of hurt that is trying to get out of you.



Stage 3: Finding Your Passion

Get involved with things that are important to you. Whether it's painting, hiking, snow sports, running, fitness, volunteering, or something else, immerse yourself in something that makes you want to be a better person and something that gives you goals to strive for. A large part of regaining self-confidence and improving your view of yourself comes from striving to be better. If you know that you are working to become better daily, then it's hard to have a poor outlook on life.

Stage 4: Professional Development

Whether it is using the G.I. Bill, applying for jobs, taking new courses, learning a trade, writing personal blogs, or sharing your experiences with others during speaking engagements, this is the next main stage to help you make a successful transition from military to civilian. When I left the Marines, I thought I was nothing but a doorkicker and I would never be above an average student in college. I was scared of college. But, the discipline and motivation I gained in the military put me on track to be an excellent student. All I had to do was apply myself.

Cont. Pg. 5 "Nurse's Corner"

"Nurse's Corner"

(Cont. from Page 4)

Stage 5: Pay It Forward

Everyday, service members are transitioning from the military into the civilian world. Much like you, they know little or nothing about properly using their G.I. Bill, finding good veteran service organizations, writing a resume, and finding employment. Moreover, many of them have a mindset that to admit there is a problem is "weakness."

Just because you've made it out of your downward spiral doesn't mean it's all over. Life is hard and always changing. One moment you're offering a helping hand, the next moment you may need one, so don't be afraid to accept a helping hand again. Remember the importance of confidence, personal relationship building, helpful community, exercise, holding yourself accountable, and good resources.



"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything. This was a major life-altering experience."

Jared R. - Illinois
FOCUS April 2016

"This experience has been an eye opener in helping me identify a sense of purpose, direction, and connection with brothers in arms. I am anxious but equipped with tools to carry on the fight."

Jared M. - California
FOCUS November 2015

"22"

(Cont. from Page 2)

In the upcoming months we will continue developing procedures to further enhance our support. But what can you do to help eliminate this statistic? Here are some suggestions...

- FOCUS graduates – check in with your ‘fire team’ at least once a month – the 22nd of each month would be a good day to shout out to your buddies – call, don’t just text or email. People can seldom hide their true feelings when they are being addressed personally. Also, if you haven’t already joined the private “FOCUS Graduate” Facebook group, sign up for it now. FMF will be checking with all members of this group on the 22nd of each month. Send an email to sheri@focusmarines.org to join.
- If you know a veteran or see one in public, thank them for their service, and always ask “How are you doing?” You will see the true answer in their eyes. If it’s apparent that they are struggling get pertinent contact information and run it up to FOCUS at our help@focusmarines.org email.
- Check in with people you may know on social media to see how they’re getting by. Watch for signs on social media of anger, anxiety, futility, major life upheavals (breakups and divorces). These are always indicators of hopelessness which may lead to a life-threatening event.
- If you know of anyone personally that is in crisis, and needs immediate help, go to the FMF Crisis webpage at <https://focusmarines.org/help-now/> where we have listed contact information for a series of crisis intervention services.

Working together, we all can have a major impact on “22”.



In FOCUS



"FOCUS has motivated me to live! I feel purpose and a true sense of friendship with my fellow warriors. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to be among the best men and women of our corps, past and present."

*Jacob F. - South Carolina
FOCUS March 2015*

Networking in the Classroom

Many FOCUS Graduates are choosing to further their education. This has prompted us to add an Education/Vocational Rehabilitation piece to the schedule. Actual schoolwork aside, there are many unknowns veterans face when beginning or returning to school.

In a recent publication, entitled Military Education Benefits for College: A Comprehensive Guide for Military Members, Veterans, and Their Dependents, David Renza and Edmund Lizotte (Lt.Col.,Ret.) walk through the steps in determining a degree program, choosing a school, covering the costs and navigating the classroom. Consistent with a theme at FOCUS, they explain why a classroom can provide beneficial networking opportunities. To make the most of this process, they suggest the following:

Introduce yourself. Give more than just your name! Be sure to give enough information to interest people who may want to engage in further conversation. If it's not obvious, tell them you're in (or were in) the military.

Reciprocate. Be equally receptive to people who approach you, and show interest in their background. Answer their questions: civilians will have a natural curiosity in what you do. Ask questions about them to show interest in their lives as well. Networking isn't a one-way street. You may even help someone who is interested in joining the military themselves.



Maintain Relationships. Once class is over, if you have a classmate or classmates you conversed with or worked with throughout and you feel so inclined, by all means, keep in touch.

Keep in touch with your professor (if class went well). Remember, your professor comes not only with the guidance to help you succeed in the course, but he or she also comes with a background that is reflective of [their] knowledge and experience.



FMF Fundraising Activities

Calendar year 2016 has started with a bang! So far there have been four fundraising events to benefit Focus Marines. All of these events have been sponsored by different organizations.

In late January, Travel Benefits by Design sponsored a Marine Corps formal dinner (Mess Night) in Kansas City. The Guest of Honor and key note speaker was Commander Richard Marcinko, founder of Seal Team Six. When asked a question by the Mess President, a wrong answer resulted in a shot of mess “grog”. It’s safe to say that by the end of the evening it got very “groggy” out. However, a good time was had by all in attendance, and several thousand dollars was raised to benefit FMF.

In early February, the St. Charles County Ambulance District sponsored a Texas Hold-em Poker Tournament and Casino games for the benefit of Focus Marines. The St Charles Foundry was packed with more than 300 players. Besides enjoying ourselves at the tables, all eyes were on Bonnie Ilges, wife of FMF Board Member Tom Ilges. She mowed down all but three other poker players to finish fourth in the tournament. Way to go Bonnie!



In mid-March, Meet Me St Louis sponsored a book review of renowned author Martin Fletcher - a first for FMF fundraising. Mr. Fletcher, known for his television news reports of wars and conflicts worldwide, talked about his new book, *“The War Reporter”*. Following Martin’s presentation, there was a panel discussion which included Mr. Fletcher, FMF VP Harry Hegger, and NMCRS Visiting Nurse Kim Bradley.

In early April the Augusta Chamber of Commerce sponsored a chili cook-off and home-made beer contest at the Augusta Brewery. Thirteen contestants entered their special home-made chili recipes and there were twelve different home-made brews to sample. A beautiful day and a large crowd of guests made it a fun and successful day. It is rumored there was a fix in with the chili contest as our FMF Team Leader, Chris Winklemann, was one of the judges.

FMF sincerely appreciates the sponsors of these events as well as the volunteers who helped with the activities. Your efforts and support to help us raise funds continues to enable us to offer our FOCUS program to the many wounded and disabled servicemen and women.

There are many more FMF upcoming events in 2016. To see a complete calendar and full description of events, go to our website and peruse the Events Calendar on most any page. Check it often since it changes frequently.

We hope to see you at future events like the Sailing for Vets regatta on Memorial weekend, or one of the scheduled golf tournaments. Your participation helps raise revenue for FMF and you can rest assured that 86 cents of every dollar goes directly to supporting our veterans. To help support our mission you can donate online at the link below.

Focus Marines Foundation operates exclusively by private donations and fund-raising events from local community organizations dedicated to supporting our brave men and women fighting for our freedom and security.

In FOCUS



**Sgt Charlie Stockhausen
USMC 1943-1952**



From the black sands of Iwo Jima to the frozen shores of the Chosin reservoir, Sgt. Charley Stockhausen represents the legacy that IS the United States Marine Corps. Our FOCUS participants are indeed honored to have Sgt Stockhausen briefly speak at each of our FOCUS sessions.

Not only are the words of wisdom from this Marine of the “greatest generation” inspiring, his anecdotal stories of Marine Corps life – even in a time of great conflict – are humorous and entertaining. His anecdotes prove to our current generation of combat warriors, “... that the more things change, the more they stay the same”.

As you can see from the photos, our FOCUS participants are mesmerized by his first-hand accounts of the battle of Iwo Jima and the Chosin reservoir. After his short talk of life in the Marine Corps in the 40’s and 50’s, our participants gather around him like flies to hear more first-hand accounts of his experiences.

InFOCUS cannot do justice to the full account of Sgt. Stockhausen’s personal story in this limited space. Therefore, his personal memories are posted on our FMF website at the live link below. SemperFi Sgt. Stockhausen!

