

# What goes on between WHI Retreats?

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“It is finished” were the last words of Jesus on the Cross according to John (John 19:30). It was the end of one phase and the beginning of a new one for those remaining on earth.

And so it is at the end of each Welcome Home Initiative retreat (WHI). The combat Veterans, having had an emotional and exhausting three days of listening, praying, worshipping, laughing, crying, fellowshiping and much more, are sent home. The equipping and empowering final service leaves them with an inspiring, hope-bringing message which, we pray, encourages them to stay close to Christ even if they have not professed any Christian faith. Healing is the aim of the retreat and we hope our Alumni will use the tools we have equipped them with. We have modelled for them how to give their traumatic burdens to Jesus, asking Him to take them as stripes on His back and give His Soul-Rest and peace in return (Is 53:4-5 and Matt 11:28-30).

Some of the Veterans who came before may come to a future retreat. To enable this, our team has been busily at work preparing the many details for the next retreat scheduled this year. Details can be found by following this link <[http://www.ckcenter.org/page/veterans\\_ministry](http://www.ckcenter.org/page/veterans_ministry)> or visiting the [Christ the King \(CtK\) website](#).

Our ministry team is concerned that those people they have quickly become so emotionally connected to do not hit mountain bottom after they get home. So within a few days of the retreat



ending almost every team member makes phone, email or sometimes face-to-face contact with as many Veterans as we can. Often these new relationships continue, introducing Veterans to others. Team members also commit to pray regularly for Veterans and encourage them to pray for each other. In this way networks of prayer and other forms of contact begin and grow. They are ad hoc and they bless those Veterans who take part in them.

One female ministry team member has been meeting a lady who lost her husband and her son in operations of war. Many challenges remain in her life but she has remained stable and more able to live normally. Our team member helps to keep her focused and going forward.

Another woman in our team has mentored a former USAF air woman whose soul and life were shattered by the Oklahoma City bomb in 1995. She would probably have died a tragic death but for this mentoring, her attendance at several WHIs, and some good help from the VA.

These two members plus a male Veteran team member have been visiting a local home of refuge where many women combat Veterans come to live for varying lengths of time. We are trying to build links of trust and acceptance with the managers at the home which we pray will lead to some of these Veterans coming to a future retreat.

A male team member has been keeping in contact with a vet who has changed for the better beyond recognition, after coming to two retreats in three years. He is reaching out to many PTS and suicidal combat Veterans through Facebook and phone. But he has his own share of ongoing addiction and trials of life. Hopefully the regular contact between him and our team member helps him to be resilient, bouncing back and bouncing back higher, above the challenges of his daily life. We are glad he has become a new member of the WHI team.

Similar stories could be told of encouragement being given; prayers being prayed, silently and out loud; and encouragement given to Veterans to "keep on keeping on" by our team. Most of the team themselves have military connections and often the nature of their relationships with those who have attended WHI is mutually beneficial. Being bridges of healing and resilience to each other is of inestimable value, for which we thank and praise God! God, through us, Veterans, and team, is bringing healing and multiplying healing, reminiscent of the Diocesan motto to be disciples, making disciples.

Not every Retreat produces total success. At a recent retreat, not at CtK, although with three of our team as team members, a Vietnam Veteran seemed to have received good healing - for that was his testimony. What happened in the days following we will never know. Most grievously, about 3 weeks later, he shot and killed himself. Each of our 3 CtK team members had substantial interaction with this Veteran during the retreat and, thankfully, one has been able to gently follow up with his widow since his untimely death. The Lord is still at work and we anticipate His grace and mercy being clearly seen in the days to come.

And thank you Lord Jesus for what you have done and are still doing in the lives of so many who have unreservedly served us and the nation. And thank you for the Welcome Home Initiative, its team members and those who support them through prayer, finance and in many other unseen ways.

***If you know of any combat veterans who would benefit from this ministry, please put them in [touch](#). And, please join us in prayer for those individuals God is calling to come to the November 2017 WHI retreat.***

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