**Module 1: Introductory Journey**

**Veterans Standing in Faith to Support Each**

**Other for Inner Peace**

**Welcome everyone. This is our weekly meeting of Veterans Patrol.**

The Patrol is dedicated to supporting veterans to find and maintain peace in their lives. Supporting those who are troubled, alone, feeling disconnected or suffering from trauma to know that there is someone who cares. Veterans supporting Veterans is the means by which many have found satiability and peace from the lies, onslaughts and attacks hurled at them by the enemy of their souls. We strive to provide a safe environment to open our hearts, reveal our suffering and confess our short comings without ridicule, political posturing or condemnation.

 Veteran’s Patrol is a place to learn about the one who truly knows, loves and cares about us; the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether a believer or non-believer all Veterans are welcome here. If you have been questioning about faith issues or you have been walking in faith for many years, we hope you will explore the Good News with us. In this journey we take together we hope you will open yourself to new understandings about the Creator of your soul and the love He has for you.

All of us come from different backgrounds and abilities. Each of us have different perspectives on faith and God. In this intro session we each share our story. We share our military experiences and about our lives in and out of the service.

Some individuals have seen combat and faced the dragon in the teeth. Others have served without putting boots on the ground in a combat zone. Still we all share the same experience of being shaped and molded by the military machine. We came to understand the dependence we have on the service person next to us and importance of being a team.

For some the transition from serviceman to civilian seems easy but to others there is a profound disconnect that leaves them stunned and floundering. PTSD is rampant amongst veterans and still others suffer with marital issues, loss of jobs and income, mental health issues, substance abuse and dependency, physical illnesses and disabilities.

All these issues stem from the same source; a broken connection with our Creator and the abusive attacks from the one who seeks to kill and destroy; Satan. With a suicide rate of approximately 26 Veterans a day there needs to be support that restores hope into these broken lives. The Veteran’s Patrol is a support element to the King of Kings that can be His heart, hands, feet and voice to help restore peace into Veterans lives.

Veterans Patrol started is a calling of Brother Jim Lanning a Viet Nam veteran. The following is a letter he wrote 1 July 2019 explaining his background and his mission to found Veterans Patrol.

*Dear Fellow Veteran,*

*I am a Christian and a veteran---both are deeply woven into my journey. In 2018 at a gathering of my old infantry outfit, I was overwhelmed by both the joy and pain experienced from over 50 years ago in Viet Nam; but many had no peace. Ecclesiastes 4:10 (NIV) says “Pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up”---*

*Veterans serving in other times are just as likely to bring home challenges that family and friends can’t understand. Veterans share a camaraderie and feel the warmth of brotherhood when they meet. I always say, ‘I know your heart’; due to our unique military experiences.*

*An outreach movement outside of the traditional church has resulted in ‘a breath of fresh air’ with ministries created for specific focus groups.*

*For example, there are cowboy churches, biker churches, country churches for fishermen, hunters’, skeet enthusiasts, as well as long-time established ‘chapels for truckers’ at truck stops. Question: Why not have a focus group for veterans? There are over 20 million veterans in the United States; top is California with two million followed by Texas and Florida with 1.6 million each.*

*In San Marcos, Texas, at a Noonday Lions Club meeting, Gene Hooper, local representative for the Military Veterans Peer Network, was the speaker. His presentation was about “challenges for veterans’. Gene and I visited and the need for a “Veterans Church” emerged. Then God gave me a two-year stay in upstate New York that provided time and a crucible to formulate and test a pilot ministry called the* ​***Veterans Patrol.*** ​*My desire was to eliminate the traditional barriers the hinder veterans from finding peace and faith.*

*In 2018, with the blessing of the local Veterans Service Officers, I targeted students at State University of New York (SUNY) New Paltz and (SUNY) Ulster County, who were recently discharged veterans. To my disappointment, no meaningful traction resulted. I did not feel led to stop; like in the scripture of John 21, I started to ‘fish on the opposite side of the boat!’ with men in my Bible study group.*

*I sought guidance at Goodwill Church. The counsel was that I enroll in the Stephens Ministry’s fifty-hour certification training; which I did. I met another enrolled member, Kimberly Cardona-Smith, who had recently retired from the Air Force, and who agreed that there was a need for this kind of group. I felt a confirmation to continue.*

*God called Kimberly into a position of leadership at Goodwill Church, but before she took that position, she was part of the core group meeting at my home that included Jason Stevens, Greyson Thomas and myself to focus on starting a Veterans Patrol in New Paltz. Our first meeting was on 19 March 2019; and we followed the Holy Spirit and found confirmation.*

*Finding nothing in the literature that met our vision, we acted like a ‘recon patrol’ to find our and at every weekly meeting God showed us another directive. Adding to the concepts of ‘service to the nation’; camaraderie, and the ‘I’ve got your back story’ God led us to a model that was flexible and inclusive; with the directive to ‘bring peace’. We distilled a mission statement:* ​***VETERANS STANDING TOGETHER IN FAITH TO SUPPORT EACH FOR INNER PEACE.***

*We all have the same journey: birth, school, marriage, vocation, children, death; but we travel different paths. The core group recognized the need for creative ideas in the design of a curriculum that would accomplish the mission of how-to bring peace to other vets. Three core values were the prism used to develop six objectives and 52 application modules.*

***The 3 core values are:***

1. ***Diversity and Inclusion.***
2. ***Veterans dealing with the past are looking for peace.***
3. ***Assurance and Respect for each other.***

***The 5 Objectives for supporting the mission.***

**Objective I: Introduction and Background – General Statements to provide an examination of military culture, commitment to diversity, and inclusion practices**

 **Objective II: What does it mean to “Serve’ based on Old**

**Testament and New Testament Biblical Examples**

**Objective III: To provide an Examination of Biblical References to Soldering and Military Quotations**

**Objective IV: Provide knowledge of practical helps to find peace in our daily lives.**

**Objective V. To create and maintain an inclusive environment where the value of diverse knowledge, experiences and backgrounds enhances peace in the Veteran’s life**

Brother Jim Lanning revised August 26, 2019 **Tonight we will go around the room and share our story.**