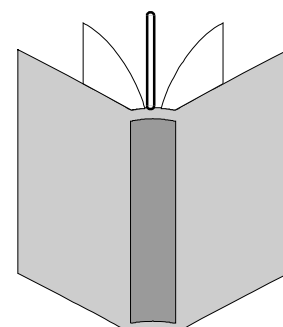




Editorial / Opinion



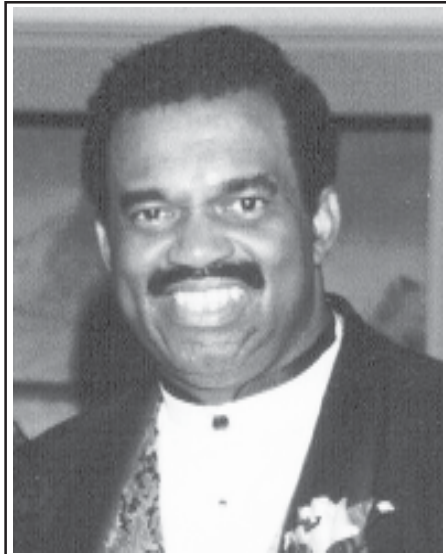
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RESET: ROAD TO RECOVERY

Fayetteville, North Carolina is the home of the finest military in the world, Fort Bragg and Pope AFB. The personnel who serve are part of an elite group of well groomed, disciplined and highly educated individuals who represent many sectors of the United States and its surrounding territories. Needless to say, there are the families of the soldiers who bravely serve in the fields of their home maintaining a family structure in the absence of their beloved father or mother who has been deployed. The stress associated with this type of lifestyle is virtually unnoticed due to the disciplines required from both ends, yet it is there. Somewhere lurking beneath the surface of their lives, and hidden deep within the area of their emotional well being waiting to surface at any given moment. At times it is called the "Unheard Cry", or the "Silent Killer".

The military produces highly trained men and women. These individuals have **HUGE** responsibilities while deployed and return to no jobs or relatively trivial responsibilities in comparison. Service members are our family members, neighbors, friends, co-workers, patients. Thousands upon thousands have served in the military. All who have served come home changed. You do not receive the same person back. For few a few individuals these changes can be debilitating and life-altering. The wearing of the uniform is a costly price to be paid, and many are paying it above and beyond the call of duty. I served in Vietnam from 1969-1970 as an 11B (Infantry), and at first I did not want to admit that I had changed. I wanted family and friends, particularly Church family to view me as the same person I was when I left, but I wasn't. Something happened to me in the jungles, rubber plantations and Cambodia. I can say without a shadow of doubt or hesitation that CHRIST was the significant one who sustained me and kept me balanced throughout the process. Returning home is disorienting and can represent a significant change of and perhaps an absence of social community, structure, order, mission, purpose and predictability for the returning service member.

The enormity of the war experience can shatter the individual's basic sense of safety and basic understanding of the meaning of life as they knew it. In addition, the returning soldier's family are not the same as they were before the deployment to war. Readjustment and "re-setting" after the crisis of trauma can be complicated and difficult. Upon returning from war, individuals must "reset" themselves for civilian life. Everyone who is associated with him or her become vital support mechanisms



by **Dr. Lonnie Sessoms, Jr.**
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in their overall recovery, particularly, their immediate family. Resetting included; (1) Grief and transition processing; (2) Unlearning (or re-learning) basic skills such as defensive driving rather than offensive driving; and (3) Redeveloping community support systems. Whether you want to admit it or not, you've been traumatized, emotionally, physically or both. There has been an exposure to an experience that was emotionally painful, distressful or shocking and which probably resulted in lasting mental and physical effects. Psychiatric trauma is essentially a normal response to an extreme event. Trauma reactions upon returning from war are **NORMAL** reactions to the abnormal circumstances of war.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to one or more terrifying events that threatened or caused grave physical harm (to self or others). This is a specific psychiatric disorder in which a cluster of symptoms occurs beyond one month after someone experiences a traumatic event. Non-mental health care providers (especially pastors) should never assume this medical diagnosis or proffer it to inappropriate over-identification can occur. There are many Physical, Cog-

nitive, Emotional, Behavioral and Spiritual Reactions to trauma that occurs. Confusion about God, an altered sense of meaning in/of life, or guilty feeling are some of the spiritual reactions to trauma. Rebuilding (or Resetting) an individuals Spiritual life, for example, can result in the person receiving meaning and purpose. It can be found in relationships with self, others, ideas, nature and even God. Many veterans feel more comfortable approaching their pastor than they do a mental health professional. Research shows that 4 of 10 individuals with mental health challenges seek counseling from clergy. Individuals seek council from ministers more than all other mental health providers combined. Often seeing a member of the clergy or their pastor is less threatening and has less stigma attached. It is viewed as engaging a know community resource.

There are many avenues of resources available to help **RE-SET** the lives of those who have been traumatized by war, and especially those who have engaged in multiple deployments. As a retired disabled veteran of the Vietnam war one sure cure with lasting effects is Christ. The principles of the Christian life, as well as the foundation and balance of the Word of God are critical elements to recovery to the Christian who has served in war. Whether it be 41 years or 40 days God is able to keep you and your mind stayed on Him. **Welcome Home and Thank You.**

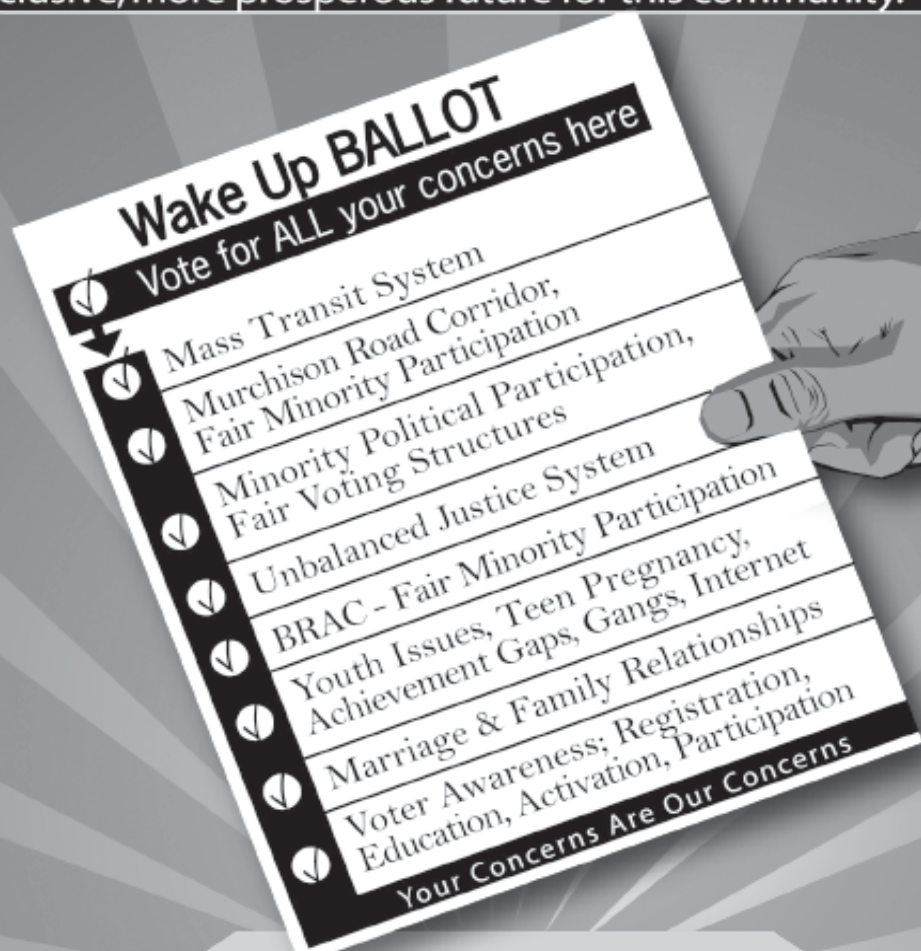
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For us, it began in 1939 when we became the first bank in the United States to open an office on a military post – right here at Fort Bragg. Today, over 70 years later, this tradition continues with our ongoing dedication to the men, women and families of Fort Bragg, Pope Air Force Base and the surrounding communities.

To learn more about what we can do for you, visit one of our 14 convenient Fayetteville area offices – on post and off.



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