

Chaplaincy Opportunity and Issues

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This presentation seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) **What is a chaplain?**
- 2) **What arenas besides the military utilize chaplains?**
- 3) **What is their historic role?**
- 4) **What are current challenges and problems?**
- 5) **What is the future of the chaplaincy?**
- 6) **How can local churches be involved with the military?**
- 7) **How should we help those who get out and deal with issues related to PTSD or injuries?**

1) **What is a chaplain?**

- a) **Definition of a Chaplain:** A chaplain is a credentialed minister recognized by a faith-based organization to render spiritual care to assigned recipients in a non-religious institution, like the Army. Chaplains serve in hundreds of capacities from the military, to hospitals, prison, sports, businesses, educational institutions, police and fire departments. He/she can be Protestant, Catholic, or even Jewish, Buddhist or Imam. The chaplain is a non-combatant, i.e. he does not carry a weapon.
- b) **Definition of a Chaplain Assistant:** A chaplain assistant is a soldier required to assist the chaplain in the function of his ministry. He sets up the worship service accoutrements (accessories) for the specific worship service. Once he has set up the environment, he may participate in Scripture reading while in garrison, but while in a combat environment, he pulls guard duty to protect the worshippers. He must be able to stand in the place of the chaplain as the commander's spiritual advisor and brief the staff in the absence of the chaplain. He carries a weapon and rides shotgun, while the chaplain drives, to provide protection while in transit.
- c) **Derivation:**
 - i) The origin of the term "chaplain" was established in the time of St. Martin of Tours of the fourth century, who encountered a beggar. Martin tore off his cloak or capella, cutting it in two and giving half to the beggar. That night he saw a vision of Jesus wearing half the cloak. He allegedly became a Christian and was baptized. He left the army and devoted his life to the church. The French named him a patron saint in the Middle Ages and the "capella" symbol was carried into battle by kings as a banner signifying the "presence of God." A priest was appointed to go with the banner as the custodian and representative of God. He was called the "cappellanus" and rendered religious care for the king. The place where the capella was kept was in the "chapel," or place of worship and the priestly office was called the "chaplain."
 - ii) Chaplains originally and currently serve in combat taking soldiers to God and God to soldiers, which continues to be a creed of Army chaplains today. They connect heaven to the soldier or recipient of ministry, regardless of faith group

- d) **Duty:** Chaplains today provide military service members (or the recipient in the related assignment) with spiritual guidance and pastoral support. Military chaplains take the same oath of office as all officers. He vows to support and defend the constitution of the United States and protect a soldier's right to the free exercise of religion. Chaplains are advisors to the commander and staff on spiritual, ethical and moral issues. They must be able to defend and provide the opportunity of worship for all soldiers of all faiths in order to practice their own faith. They must be willing to work with spiritual leaders of all faiths in order to meet the spiritual needs of every individual in their unit, hospital, prison or institution. They are free to proclaim their faith in any and all services they conduct, whether in a chapel, ship, or combat environment. However, the military does not allow open proselytizing.
- e) **Differences:** Chaplains have standard requirements.
- i) **Requirements** for serving on active military service: He/she must be:
- (1) A member of the clergy in one of 200 denominations recognized by the Armed Forces Chaplain Board.
 - (2) Qualified spiritually, emotionally, intellectually and morally to serve in the Armed Forces.
 - (3) Sensitive to the religious pluralism of every service member.
 - (4) Possess a bachelors degree of 120 hours and theological degree of at least 72 hours.
 - (5) U.S. citizen.
 - (6) Favorable clearance from the National Agency Security Clearance.
 - (7) Pass a physical examination and fitness test for the branch assigned.
 - (8) Normally two years experience in the pastorate.
 - (9) At least 21, but not more than 42 with several exceptions for reserve officers.
- ii) **Religious** faith:
- (1) Each chaplain must be able to provide for, but not to the individual to practice his desired religious convictions. A protestant chaplain does not perform last rights, but can pray for a dying soldier. A rabbi chaplain does not need to lead a mass, but provide transportation to a Catholic gathering or secure a priest chaplain to minister in his location.
 - (2) Chaplains are not allowed to proselytize, but if the soldier asks about the chaplain's faith, then the chaplain is free to share and discuss his views. The chaplain needs to be wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove.
 - (3) There is camaraderie among chaplains across faith lines. Chaplains must agree prior to being commissioned to function in a pluralistic environment. Should chaplains ignore that principle once serving as a chaplain, he/she will be counseled and eventually put out.
- iii) **Reasoning** to serve:
- (1) I chose to serve in the military and provide opportunities for Catholic, Jewish, and Muslim soldiers because it gave me a chance to build a bridge to all soldiers. As I established credibility, it gave me an opportunity to share my faith in many cross-faith situations.
 - (2) I had **two emblems** on my collar. I had a **cross** which designated me as a spiritual leader in the protestant faith and I was able to share the gospel on many occasions by asking five simple questions:
 - (a) Do you ever talk about spiritual things?

- (b) In your opinion, who is Jesus Christ?
 - (c) Do you believe in a heaven and a hell?
 - (d) If something tragic were to happen, do you know where you would go? (the corollary was, “If God were to ask you, “Why should I let you into heaven, what would you say?”)
 - (e) If what you believed were not true, would you want to know the truth? The answer to the first four questions merely tells me where the person is spiritually. If a non-free grace theological answer is given regarding salvation, then I ask them the fifth question. IF they say yes to the fifth question, then it is not proselytizing. I am merely answering their question. I had freedom to hold Bible studies and discuss truth. I was paid by the government to lead soldiers in their faith and share my faith.
- (3) I also had a **rank** on my collar. I looked at the rank having two purposes:
- (a) First, it told me I needed to do what I could to get that soldier ready to serve on the front lines and die for his country.
 - (b) Secondly, it gave me an opportunity to use my position to influence people. The higher the rank, the higher I could influence for the good of the organization and provide spiritual and biblical support. It also meant I could assist a greater number of soldiers and chaplain ministry teams called Unit Ministry Teams (UMT).
- f) **Distinction of Religious versus Military assemblies:**
- i) **There are two types of assemblies:**
 - (1) **Memorial ceremonies** are command functions, which mean the commander has established the assembly as a requirement for all soldiers. All soldiers are required to attend and the soldier has no choice. The chaplain is requested to respect the faith views of all the soldiers. It’s more than a secular gathering, but it is not an opportunity to shove your faith on soldiers who have no choice in the assembly. The chaplain respects the soldier so that when the soldier is ready, the chaplain can share the truth as the chaplain understands it. The truth is always received better by an open heart than a resistive one.
 - (2) **Memorial Services** are faith-based services according to the wishes of the soldier or his family as communicated to the chaplain. If the memorial is identified as a Memorial Service, then soldiers will have a choice about their attendance. The chaplain can be free to conduct the service wisely using the opportunity to communicate truth.
 - ii) **Recognizing prayer in the two assemblies:**
 - (1) **Prayers** – Chaplains are not restricted on how they are to pray. However, they can lose opportunity to pray if they disrespect the soldier. If a chaplain uses his platform to shove Jesus at people, soldiers will often resist. That chaplain will often lose future opportunities. They will be classified as a non-team player on evaluation forms.
 - (a) When I was in a command function (soldiers required to attend) I often prayed to “The Battle Captain of History” and everyone knew I was talking about Jesus Christ. I often prayed in “Thy holy name,” or words to that affect. Some people liked it when I gave a two sentence Scriptural example prior to the prayer to stir up their faith, some commanders were wimps and only wanted the prayer.
 - (b) When the assembly is considered a Service, the chaplain has total freedom.
 - (2) You do not have to pray a certain way. In wisdom, it’s not an issue.

2) What arenas, besides the military, utilize chaplains?

- a) Chaplains are utilized in a **multitude of fields**. In addition to the military, chaplains are involved in hospitals, prisons, sports teams, businesses, educational institutions, police and fire departments. Each has slightly different requirements. Sports teams likely have the least requirements, but the personal connection must be much stronger.
- b) **Hospital Chaplains**
 - i) Hospital Chaplains serve a variety of patients and the purpose of the chaplain is to help in the healing process according to the designated faith of the patient. The chaplain must gain an understanding of hospital and medical procedures to provide counsel regarding surgery, powers of attorney, Living Wills, etc. The chaplain is also a key spiritual support to staff members and care providers. They must be able to work well in a team environment and follow professional rules of ethical behavior and confidentiality, especially related to HIPAA rules.
 - ii) Hospital Chaplains are required to have a theological degree. Which degree depends on the size of the hospital; credentials from a recognized denomination; and a certain number of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) units. Most hospitals require four hours to be accepted as an active chaplain; normally 2-5 years pastoral experience; human relations skills and computer skills for generating reports.
- c) Similar requirements exist for other types of institutions.

3) What is their historic role?

- a) The origin of the “chaplain” term is explained above.
- b) Army Chaplaincy began under the care and desire of George Washington who wanted God’s providence on the colonial side. On July 29, 1775, Congress approved the positions and pay for 15 chaplains to oversee the care of 23 regiments. Washington wanted the chaplains to lead services, to visit the wounded, to honor the dead, to write letters for soldiers who couldn’t write and to provide patriotic encouragement to soldiers, lest they desert. There were 25 chaplain deaths of the 218 chaplains who served in the Revolutionary War. During the Civil War, General Grant asked his chaplain regarding a flogging sentence of 50 lashes. The chaplain at first did not want to comment, but Grant informed the chaplain it was his responsibility to advise the commander on requested issues. The chaplain said it was excessive and Grant restricted the number to 25.
- c) The first Senate agreed on April 25, 1789 to elect Chaplain Samuel Provost to serve the senators, their families and staff with spiritual support and council. The Chaplain opens the Senate sessions in prayer and today conducts a weekly prayer breakfast.

4) What are current challenges and problems?

- a) **Current data:** There are about 6000 chaplains and chaplain assistants in all branches of the military. The Army has over half of them.
 - i) The National Guard has 723 chaplains assigned and is at 90% fill. There are 800 chaplain assistants at over 100% fill. There are 34 Catholic Priests, 3 Rabbi's, 29 female chaplains and 24 female chaplain candidates
 - ii) Chaplain Candidates. These are 2LTs (or they can be prior-service officers who branch transferred to the Chaplaincy and carry their previous rank) who are enrolled in a theological education program. They are currently serving one weekend a month and have summer training time to acquire their basic training. The candidate can assist in a service, but is not to serve alone or provide counseling alone. Once he completes his education, he completes the process to become a chaplain. Currently, there are so many chaplain candidates, the system is restricting the number, so that upon their graduation, they will have a place to serve. They also are non-combatants and are non-deployable.

- b) **Recruiting**
 - i) It is not a problem on Active Duty or the Reserves and National Guard as a whole. However, in the Northeast and Pacific Northwest, there are shortages. There are also shortages in the low-density faith groups (low number of soldiers in a faith-group compared to the number of overall soldiers), females and diversity of representation of all faith groups. That means, for example, there are greater numbers of some faith groups than others. The military has had greater problems recruiting chaplains to represent certain faith groups. The quota system had been done away a couple decades ago, but diversity has become a significant talking point.
 - ii) Army National Guard has removed full-time recruiters for chaplain specific requirements. That means the recruiting function falls back to the senior chaplain, or State Chaplain. Fortunately, vacancies are low for now. The State Chaplain has many functions to juggle and may cause future shortages, depending on the job market.

- c) **Budget**
 - i) All chaplain conferences have been cancelled this year. There will be no senior level training conferences or regional conferences attended by all ranks of chaplains and chaplain assistants. They are trying to do more VTC hook ups and training. Big Army is looking to save 6 Billion in each of the three remaining quarters of the fiscal year and 18 billion by the end of the fiscal year.
 - ii) Big Army may take back some of the missions that the Reserves and National Guard have been doing for the past decade. Big Army has already retrieved the Balkan mission with a maneuver Task Force.
 - iii) In the past, the Army has allowed the Reserves/Guard to be over-strength, depending on the state and unit. Some states allowed 125% fill and a few even allowed 200% in low density specialties like chaplains. That all reverted to 100% because of budget.

- d) **Don't ask don't tell (DADT)** – has been a non-issue for most chaplains. There was early anxiety, but it allegedly becomes less a factor for ministry each year. Other outside religious organizations have made it an issue, probably for funding and emotional awareness. However, chaplains are saying it hasn't affected their ability to minister to this point. I don't necessarily agree with them in the sense that the loss of morality has a

subtle affect on all ministry. Also, it could present challenges for chaplains to provide counseling for same-sex couples. I have no reports of problems in that area.

e) **Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA)**

- i) All expect an overturn of the Defense of Marriage Act by Supreme Court action not later than June, 2013. Department of Defense (DOD) is in the process of implications and effects. Secretary Panetta recently signed the provision that homosexual partners would have equal access to Arlington National Cemetery with the same provisions as previous marital spousal rights. This new policy has huge implications for chaplains, because of a question regarding freedom of speech and actions, particularly in Strong Bonds seminars, marriage ceremonies, chapel use, preaching and teaching.
- ii) Chaplains are affirmed that their ministry will not be adversely affected.
- iii) Strong Bonds are the marriage seminars for deploying and redeploying couples. Will Strong Bonds be taken from the Office of the Chief of Chaplains (OCCH)? In other words, if, because, when the chaplains have to make decisions of whether to give the seminars with same-sex couples in attendance, how will they have to rephrase and address issues? The question exists, "Can Strong Bonds survive without the efforts of the chaplains to build and maintain the program?"

f) **Realignments** of reserve and National Guard units with different Combatant Commands is an on-going challenge leaving old units and forming bonds to new units, often in other states.

g) **Church employment** - Churches are regularly less inclined to keep or hire pastors who also serve as chaplains in the Reserves and National Guard. The number in Illinois is 55% and 10% in Alaska, who serve in a church. Indiana has 32% of the chaplains serving in a church. The rest of the Indiana chaplains are serving in a prison chaplain role, National Guard full-time role, overseas role or a few who have non-pastoral roles. In Kentucky only 25% of their chaplains are local clergy. New chaplains in Kentucky have left the state in search of church employment elsewhere.

h) **Chaplain experience** - Chaplains who obtained their training from brick and mortar schools are often broader in their thinking and versatility in ministry, because of interaction with other students and professors. This is in contrast to "on-line" chaplains. The "on-line" education has been great to help many obtain their degrees, but because they get to do things their own way rather than adjust to the seminary structure, they are sometimes less inclined to be open to ministry with a broad section of people, especially those who are not of their faith group. Obviously, they need to continue to grow. However, young chaplains have been called on to deploy early in their career and the mobilized environment is a tough place to learn how to function cross-culturally. It just means more mentoring is required from senior chaplains.

i) **Contradictory legal policy between Federal and State guidelines** related to National Guard chaplains. The Federal policy is that the chaplain is exempt from providing any chaplain/client counseling information to authorities. The State policy varies from state to state for reporting purposes. This sets up a tension and each chaplain must choose.

5) What is the future of the chaplaincy?

- a) **Chaplains who serve in churches have many positive opportunities:**
- i) The opportunity to serve their country while fulfilling a call God has placed on his/her life, i.e. patriotism.
 - ii) The opportunity to minister in venues, from which the average pastor is restricted. Chaplains have access to a segment of people no other gospel pastor can reach.
 - iii) Professional Military Education (PME) enhances pastoral skills. The leadership, self-discipline, administration, relational skills, and counseling opportunities are all enhanced through PME. Management of a unit ministry provides extra insight into how to manage a church. There are additional courses like Emergency Medical Ministry, or Clinical Pastoral Education which can often be obtained at no cost to the church. It's a win/win situation if the church would open its eyes to the opportunities.
 - iv) The educational financial support for furthering civilian education is unmatched. The chaplaincy requires chaplains to progress through training. It is part of life-long learning. The country pays the chaplain for this. Churches should rejoice the chaplain gets an extra incentive for their increased training and preparation of serving those who provide freedom to worship.
 - v) The Tri-Care Reserve Select insurance makes it less expensive for churches when wanting to hire a pastor. This can make the Chaplain more employable when using this benefit. This can save a church budget thousands of dollars.
 - vi) Physical fitness is required of chaplains. This enhances medical fitness and provides for fewer illnesses.
 - vii) Supplemental incomes to a pastor's civilian salary include military salary for two days a month, 15 days a year with potential bonuses, student loan repayment and more workdays. These are tremendous opportunities for both the chaplain and the church. Unfortunately, some church members become resentful or jealous over the peanuts that a chaplain makes. Church possessiveness is a shame.
 - viii) Situational awareness of other cultures. In many seminaries, the student is exposed to his own culture or limited exposure to other cultures. In the military, he is exposed to a multitude of faith groups and cultures. To be an effective chaplain, he must have a basic understanding of other practices. Some chaplains in particular denominations have been opposed to learning about other faith groups, but they've lost the missionary zeal if they ever had it.
 - ix) Serving a diverse group of people can be refreshing and satisfying. It makes the chaplain refine and polish his position.
- b) **Fewer chaplains in the National Guard are serving in churches.** The percentage was about 50% several years ago. Consequently, chaplains have less pastoral experience. Some chaplains are prison chaplains and some are State Highway Patrollers. Many of the chaplain candidates have non-church related jobs. They do not see the value of serving in a church while going through seminary. The problem is there are too few paying jobs at church to help a chaplain candidate while he is in school. They will need real ministry experience, but many do not see the need for that until just before they become a chaplain. Too many chaplains are acquiring their degree from an on-line seminary and have little face to face interaction. Problems in the individual do not surface because of this. The Active Duty may require that chaplains who are pursuing "on-line" training have to do some training "in residence," often two years.

c) Church/Chaplain tension.

- i)** Chaplains use agreements with their church to ensure continued employment as military duty occurs. However, churches often do not hold a position for more than six months. Churches are reticent to ‘call’ a pastor who is in the Guard or Reserve. Churches do not want to face the loss of their pastor during deployment. LCMS has a program called “Operation Barnabas” that works with Districts and congregations on finding a ‘fill in’ clergy and helping them understand how they can better reach out to the veterans in their communities.
- ii)** Citizen-Soldier pastors do not fall within the guidelines of Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). They are not guaranteed a job when they return from deployment. The Law does not cover chaplains, so chaplains are often required to look for a new church after deployment. Most active duty leadership just shrug their shoulders and express little concern.
- iii)** Chaplains, who are also Citizen-Soldier pastors, find it difficult to spend time on military education in addition to drill. Although all Soldiers face the same dilemma, pastors do not fall under USERRA. Some churches do not see military education as beneficial to their church, when in fact it is very helpful.
- iv)** Some clergy at about the 10 year mark have been told by their congregations: "Choose between us or the military." On occasion a General Officer Chaplain has interceded, but chaplains don’t lobby for themselves.

d) Suicides among the ranks. This is an increasing chaplain difficulty and opportunity. Soldiers, because of multiple deployments and lack of spiritual orientation, develop a lack of hope. Problems often fester because of the “Hooah” attitude and soldiers don’t address the real problems. Chaplains are too often without a good answer and fail to use the opportunities to provide spiritual solutions. Too many commanders expect chaplains to develop secular answers to spiritual problems.

e) Downsizing will go on, but there is no guidance at this point. Thus far, the decisions are to cancel conferences and to keep ships in harbor... do VTC conferences, etc.

f) Ministering to the next generation of soldiers. Traditional approaches do not seem to reach the younger generations. Chaplains are very traditional in reaching out, which does not seem to reach the younger generation of soldiers.

g) Job opportunities. There has not been a lack of applicants for active duty and Reserve/Guard slots. The lack of regular church opportunities seems to cause chaplains to look to the military chaplaincy as potential ministry.

6) How can local churches be involved with the military?

- a) **Relationship with State Chaplain** - find out who the State Chaplain is and develop a relationship of trust. Do not presume on him, because he's part time and has a hundred military issues he's dealing with along with his church responsibilities. Understand what you as a church could provide and make that available to him. Do not presume your help will immediately help, because you become another coordination effort.
- b) **The military is protective of servicemen and their families.** The military must protect the privacy and safety of members. There are many predators who want to take advantage of a spouse while the soldier is on deployment. Anonymous gifts and merchandise can be given to any soldier. However, particular names will not be given out, unless a relationship is formed between the church or agency and the military through proper channels. That will be different according to each state. Sometimes connection can be made through the State Chaplain's involvement with Partners in Care (see below). Sometimes it can be through the Family Readiness organization within the Joint Force Headquarters. You can also contact the personnel department for information. Contact the switchboard and begin asking questions, but at least give the chaplains an opportunity.
- c) **Partners in Care (PIC)** – This is a ministry that several States Guard have initiated. It began with the State Chaplain in Maryland and has spread to several other states, like Ohio, Illinois and Oregon, which have similar programs. PIC is a Guard program whereby congregations or agencies extend free of charge support to all referred soldiers and their families from programs they offer without regard to the recipient's religious affiliation. Basically the state chaplain or a representative makes contact with at least one faith-based organization in each county. There are a whole series of agreements between the faith-based organization and the military to protect the privacy and situation of the military member.

7) How should we help those who get out and deal with issues related to PTSD or injuries?

- a) **What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?**
 - i) PTSD can result from any event that is traumatic to the individual, including combat or dealing with combat death or injury, but it also includes natural disasters as well as rape, murder, and even giving birth.
 - ii) The trauma results from the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness in the horror of an event.
 - iii) It can result from an attack on your person or even the threat of an attack.
 - iv) The results can be dreams, flashbacks, or a turmoil of feelings that are triggered from a memory, smell, sound, or jolt.
 - v) The person often responds as if the traumatic event is happening again and may include hallucinations or flashbacks. They feel like they are right back in the traumatic event, even though they may not remember all of the event.
 - vi) The person often avoids situations that remind him of a traumatic experience.

b) Medical aspects of PTSD

- i) There is no certainty to a medical cause. There are no tests, scans are analyses that can identify a medical source. Difficulty in understanding PTSD is compounded with Traumatic Brain injuries (TBI).
- ii) Almost all medical drug tests have been made with differing results, but nothing definitive. There is no set medical cure that can be made, only tried. Most medical professionals would recommend avoiding isolation, returning to work and avoiding experimenting with drugs and alcohol.

c) PTSD is described in various ways

- i) Many soldiers will describe feelings or desires for isolation, loss of purpose and sense of brokenness.
- ii) They describe flashbacks, dreams, and sleep disturbances. Additionally they describe hyper-vigilance, hyper-reactivity and startle response during a flashback or trigger. On the other hand, many describe shame, guilt, anger, fear and depression that they cannot connect to an event, but describe as their feelings.
- iii) Civilians have similar challenges. Civilians describe fear, worry, depression, anger, loss of purpose and victimology, that is feeling like a “victim.” They describe struggles with relationships, marital problems and sexual dysfunction. Furthermore, eating disorders, substance abuse, shame and guilt are prevalent.
- iv) Unfortunately, too many counselors and caregivers do not help build their faith or disciple individuals with biblical solutions, while recovering from episodes.

d) How do you deal with it biblically? This is a very cursory explanation.

- i) Consider Joseph in Genesis 37-50. He did nothing to cause his problems of being sold into slavery by his brothers or thrown into jail by Potiphar after his wife lied. He was forgotten by the cupbearer. For at least 13 years, he entrusted himself to God’s purposes (Gen. 50:20). He understood God’s providence (Gen. 50:20; cf. Rom. 8:28). Joseph may have struggled greatly in the first few years, but we know by Genesis 50:20, he overcame.
- ii) Consider God’s overall plan and sovereign work in John 11. Jesus knew exactly the situation with Lazarus and he depended on God’s work for His glory.
 - (1) All actions should be done for God’s glory 1 Cor. 10:31
 - (2) We can trust God through every circumstance with God’s Word Roman 8
 - (3) We need to learn principles of moving on and pursuing God’s ground Phil. 3:1-14
 - (4) Trusting God brings His peace that surpasses all comprehension Phil. 4:1-10
 - (5) I can grow in my relationships with others John 13
 - (6) I can deal with fear through God’s love 1 John 4:9-19
 - (7) I will get my opportunity to experience the sovereignty of God and His sustainment, even as Job did. Help them take their circumstances before the Lord and help them learn about God’s sovereignty. Job 1-42. Help them by believing them and standing with them during their crises.

e) Use the following two sheets for practical discipleship/counsel:

Tools for PTSD¹

(Use this only with God's Word)

- 1) Learn about PTSD symptoms
 - a) Re-experiencing symptoms: the situation seems very real.
 - i) Frequently having upsetting thoughts, memories or dreams about a traumatic event.
 - ii) Acting or feeling as though the traumatic event were happening again, sometimes called a “flashback.”
 - iii) Having strong feelings of distress when reminded of the traumatic event.
 - iv) Being physically responsive, such as experiencing a surge in your heart rate or sweating, to reminders of the traumatic event.
 - b) Avoidance symptoms
 - i) Making an effort to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations about the traumatic event
 - ii) Making an effort to avoid places or people that remind you of the traumatic event
 - iii) Having a difficult time remembering important parts of the traumatic event.
 - iv) A loss of interest in important, once positive, activities.
 - v) Feeling distant from others or feeling as though your life may be cut short.
 - vi) Experiencing difficulties of having positive feelings, such as happiness or love.
 - c) Hyperarousal symptoms
 - i) Having a difficult time falling or staying asleep.
 - ii) Feeling more irritable or having outbursts of anger.
 - iii) Having difficulty concentrating or being jumpy or easily startled.
 - iv) Feeling constantly “on guard” or like danger is lurking around every corner.
- 2) Manage flashbacks to control your thoughts and emotions
 - a) Know what causes you to “remember” or become aware of them. Accept how the body reacts.
 - b) Identify early warning signs for flashbacks.
 - c) Journal your emotions when you remember situations to understand trends, events, so you can reread what you have gone through, are going through and can be prepared for what could happen in the future. Just start writing and don't be concerned about where you start, but write down anything that comes to mind. Once finished, reread and reflect on it for personal understanding.
 - d) Consider the five senses to regain focus on reality; the event is in the past.
 - e) Enlist the support of others to help through challenging moments Pro 24:6
 - f) Identify the thoughts that bring things back to the control of Jesus 2 Cor. 10:4-5 Accept the thoughts are part of the past and press to the future.
 - g) Help your mind by proactively accepting the reality of the past Phil. 3:1-13
- 3) Address guilt that you survived and your friend did not
 - a) You did survive. Everything comes under the sovereignty of God.
 - b) Meditate on truth and consider what the guilt is coming from and what the 2nd and 3rd order effects are. Allow yourself to mourn and accept what your feelings might be. They may be different than anyone else Ecc. 3:4
 - c) Accept what cannot be changed Matt 5:4
- 4) Build resiliency
 - a) Develop problem solving skills – do the previous so that you can calm approach future events.
 - b) Trust that you can change and learn to control the emotions by 2 Cor. 10:4-5
 - c) Seek help from the Lord in wise friends Matt. 6:33; Jer. 17:5;
 - d) Be connected with friends and family Pro 18:24
 - e) Disclose to friends and family what you can share. Be a survivor rather than a victim.
- 5) Stop avoiding the problem - it leaves the problem hidden and prowling to engulf
 - a) Face the reality of the past and share with trusted friends as necessary Pro. 18:24; cf. Jam 5:16
 - b) Think on what is true and honorable Phil. 4:8

Practical Suggestions

- 1) Renew Relationships
 - a) Spend time with family and friends who are supportive
 - b) Increase your contact with other veterans who can guide you to God's Word.
 - c) Join a home group from church

- 2) Become more active
 - a) Overcome the feeling of apathy and laziness
 - b) Engage in a variety of activities – work, hobby, house, family outings.
 - c) Set goals of what makes sense, but stretches you from where you are.
 - d) Track your progress. Keep your goals reasonable.

- 3) Acceptance
 - a) Account for past experiences
 - b) Accept that they happened and the events that cannot change.
 - c) End the war with the past events.
 - d) Commit yourself to future progress.

- 4) Develop a daily activity plan
 - a) Build a calendar for good stewardship of time Eph. 5:15-17
 - b) Develop goals for the calendar

- 5) See things for how they really are
 - a) Discuss with another your thoughts and let them give you feedback for objectivity
 - b) Make a page for situation/thoughts/put off/ put on/ new plan

- 6) Train yourself to relax
 - a) Learn to relax from hyperactivity (workouts, movies, etc.)
 - b) Get a comfortable chair and think through muscles relaxing
 - c) Release the tension

- 7) Prepare to sleep better
 - a) Do workouts early in the day
 - b) Eat big meals at least four hours before rest.
 - c) Stick to a regular sleep schedule
 - d) Avoid naps after 2pm
 - e) Lower lighting and noise an hour before sleeping.

- 8) Take a break from anger
 - a) Read booklets on dealing with anger.
 - b) Take a break to gain calm.
 - c) Restore relationships that have been injured from personal actions.
 - d) Find enjoyable activities like reading, movies, challenging games.
 - e) Exercise
 - f) Prayer

¹*Adapted from The Veteran's Toolkit for PTSD by Chaplain Ramsey Coutta*