

*Serving With Christ's Love,  
Those Who Serve*

June 2009

## In His Service

### “Applying Lessons Learned”

It's now June 2009 and for me a time to reflect on my last twelve months as a Deaconess intern. Today, having just graduated from four years of seminary, I am serving my first call as the Co-Director of the LMVFM. In many ways the last twelve Months have been a blur of growth and activity. I must confess that God's plans for this ministry have proven to be far greater in scope than anything I could have imagined. When I look at the initial project proposal that I wrote as a seminary project, which became the model for this ministry, I am deeply humbled. Despite my human frailties and short sightedness, God has seen fit to nurture, cultivate and grow this ministry. He continues to protect the ministry from the evil foe, providing us the means to expand our outreach as He leads us forward in His service.

As I take stock of where the ministry was twelve short months ago and look at where it is today I find myself full of awe and wonder. Over these months, by God's grace and by the support and efforts of the Board of Directors, volunteers, staff and generous supporters of this ministry, the LMVFM opened up its first office suites. The ministry received both it's official IRS 501(c)(3) "Non-Profit" status, and gained RSO "Recognized Service Organization" status with the LC-MS. The LMVFM has been blessed by the continued support of individuals, congregations, and has received its first grant. This generous support has provided us with the ability to continue providing fee-free programs and services for our veterans and their family members. It has also allowed us to develop and conduct training which is modeled on the example set by Christ, for congregations and organizations that work with veterans and their families.

God has grown this ministry by leaps and bounds, and has never failed to provide us with the means for us to continue to minister and grow . Today the requests we are receiving for care and services, the need to create new programs, as well as develop the necessary funding to support the ministry, is beyond the capabilities of one person. I am thankful that God has led the Board of Directors of our ministry to call the Rev. Dr. James R. Cotter, who is retiring as an Army Chaplain,(COL), after 36 years of service as our full time Executive Director. His gifts, talents and experiences in military ministry, church planting and development are exactly the qualities our ministry needs to continue the positive growth and forward momentum that we have seen since it was planted. I look forward to serving with Dr. Cotter as Co-Director as we continue, and expand the LMVFM's ministry outreach to our military veterans, their families, and the church.

“Serving Him with you”



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## Because you asked...

### Q. How many of our Active, Guard and Reserve troops have gone off to war since 9/11?

As of Oct, 2008, 1,321,019 troops have been deployed to Afghanistan and or Iraq, at least once.

\*60% (796,483) had deployed once.

\*36% (469,095) had deployed 2-3 times.

\* 4% (55,441) had deployed 4-6 times.

### Q. How are multiple deployments affecting our military members?

Multiple deployments have been consistently linked to the alarming rise in serious mental health cases, alcohol/drug abuse, violence, suicides, and homelessness we are seeing in service members who have been deployed two or more times.

### Q. How are these deployments affecting military marriages?

More than half of our service members are married. Divorce rates for soldiers have been increasing since 2003. In 2008, both the Army and Marine Corps had their highest divorce rates since 1992, the year when statistical data began being kept.

### Q. How are deployments affecting the children of military members?

There are more than 1.85 million children with one or both of their parents serving in the military. Studies have shown that over time, deployments have contributed to an increase in long term psychological and behavioral issues among many of these children. The best predictor of how well a child will cope psychologically and socially when a parent is deployed is seen in how well the remaining parent copes with their own stress.



### What can we do to ease the burdens of our military veterans and their families?

There are many ways that individuals and churches/groups can help. Please contact us and allow us to help you, help them.

## LaQuita's Heart v. Man's Soul

LaQuita was born in a little factory just outside of Wolfsburg Germany in 1959. Powder blue, with wide white walled shoes her cruising speed was a cool 60mph, though with a little coaxing she could fly into the 70's. Shortly after being born, LaQuita made her journey to the US where a young navy officer purchased her for \$1569. Three years later, the officer and LaQuita arrived at "GTMO" (Guantanamo Bay Cuba). Later when the officer was reassigned he sold LaQuita to another sailor at GTMO. Since then LaQuita has changed owners many times over as troops rotated in and out of GTMO, and in 2002 when I deployed to GTMO I became LaQuita's next owner. We were both 43 years old, both graying, and the thin coat of primer gray that covered her outer body only a hinted of her original powder blue color. The heart of LaQuita was her 1500cc engine. Her top speed of 35mph (with a tail wind) reflected the various mechanical skills and replacement parts that had kept her going through the years. None of that mattered to me. On a "car-poor" naval base, with a base wide a speed limit of 25mph, LaQuita's lack of speed wasn't an issue. The bottom line was that I could I depend on her to give me the freedom to get around GTMO when ever I wanted to and I was happy to pay the \$1500 asking price. The goal of every owner was to keep LaQuita running, by whatever means possible. With the tattered old manual that had come with her, I kept LaQuita going the best way that I could. Everything on her had been repaired, or rigged umpteen times so that the new repair parts I ordered had to be modified in order to work. With the exception of a three days, LaQuita faithfully performed her mission of transporting around GTMO without fail. I thought about taking her to the states with me at the end of my deployment, but was told that she'd need about \$7000 of work to meet the volumes of US car regulations. The reality was that while LaQuita was perfect for the challenges of GTMO, the years of constant wear and tear, combined with years of "band-aid" quick-fix repairs had made it impossible for her to function back home. At the end of my tour, we parted ways. I came home, but La Quita didn't.

While attending a two week course on PTSD this year, I met a soldier at Walter Reed Army Hospital. Had he not been wearing shorts, I probably wouldn't have known that he was supported by two below the knee prosthetic legs. He revealed that he actual had several sets of prosthetic legs each designed to allow him to perform different missions. The amazing technological feat I witnessed gave this young man his ease of movement and to some extent made up for what he had lost. I asked him what his career plans were, and he stated clearly his intention to return to Iraq to finish his mission. For the first time in our nation's history, at least 22 of the more than 900+ military amputees have been returned to combat. Like LaQuita, many of our physically wounded warriors have been treated by highly skilled medical personnel, and had their missing limbs replaced by cutting edge new replacement parts, allowing many of them to return to war to fulfill their mission.

The words I used to describe LaQuita gave her life, and made her appear to have human qualities. In reality, LaQuita, who is still running around GTMO, is nothing more than a car, a machine. Her "heart" is the 1500cc iron cast engine and its parts that make it go. LaQuita, either runs or she doesn't. She doesn't feel the need to return to duty, when she's in the shop, or mourn the loss of her body parts. She doesn't agonize over the rusted wrecks in the junk yard and she doesn't plead with God to take her when she's had all she can take. Though we can replace LaQuita's run down parts, and keep her on the go, like all machines, LaQuita is without a soul.

Wars leave both visible and invisible (emotional, spiritual) wounds on warriors that follow them home. The quick-fixes and band-aids that kept troops in battle won't sustain them at home. While we can often give our wounded new parts to replace those taken by war, and physically get them on the go, his soul is irreplaceable and can only be healed by God. The challenges of caring for our veterans emotional and spiritual wounds are knocking on the doors of the church, and those in mental health fields. The LMVFM actively committed to assisting these caregivers, by equipping them with the tools and resources they need to meet the unique challenges of ministering and caring for all of our military veterans, and their family members.

The LMVFM serves veterans, their families and the church by offering educational resources, training and assistance through the following programs:

**TRAINING PROGRAMS**



**TRAINING**

† Training and Workshops for churches and groups designed to educate caregivers in the unique aspects of providing care and outreach to veterans and their families.

**RETREATS**

- † Small group veterans reintegration retreats
- † Marriage Retreats
- † Caregiver Retreats
  - \* Military Caregivers
  - \* Church Workers

**The Mission of the LMVFM**

1. Provide short-term pastoral counseling and needs evaluations for veterans and their families.
2. Provide training and educational resources for church ministries and other outside organizations concerned with the needs of military veterans and their families.
3. Assist veterans and family members in identifying available local community resources to provide for their long-term care needs which include: VA services, counseling, social service organizations, church resources, etc...
4. Serve as a congregational resource by equipping them in their ministry of outreach to veterans and their families in the church and local community.
5. Provide encouragement, and support for military families when their loved one is deployed.

**INDIVIDUAL**

† Individual assistance to veterans by providing them with short-term pastoral counseling and resource referrals.



† Assistance to family members of veterans by providing them with short-term pastoral counseling and educational materials.

**COUPLES**

**Ministry Highlights**

- † "Common Threads," a 6 week small group for veteran's family members begins 30 June 2009 at 6:15pm. Please contact us at 260-409-8043 if you are interested in joining.
- † The LMVFM Board of Directors extended a call to Rev. Dr. James Cotter for the position of Executive Director which he has accepted.
- † The LMVFM Board of Directors extended a call to Dcs. Leslie Haines for the position of Co-Director which she has accepted.
- † Please check-out our new website at [LMVFM.org](http://LMVFM.org)

## **Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.**

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*Serving With Christ's Love,  
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Find us on the Web:  
[www.lmvfm.org](http://www.lmvfm.org)

The LMVFM is a non-profit  
ministry, 501(c)(3) and is  
a recognized service  
organization of the  
Lutheran Church Missouri  
Synod

## Additional Resources

### Helping Children Cope During Deployment

<http://www.usuhs.mil/psy/CTChildrenCopeDuringDeployment.pdf>

### National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

(800) 793-0324 x341

<http://www.naccrra.org/MilitaryPrograms>

### Veterans and Families

Information and resources to help homecoming Veterans and their families in  
their transition from military to civilian life.

[www.veteransandfamilies.org](http://www.veteransandfamilies.org)



**Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries  
is a Christian non-profit faith based ministry.**



**We are dedicated to serving and assisting all  
military veterans and their families who need  
service-related care and assistance,  
regardless of their faith or religious affiliation.**

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