

“ Go... in peace...Hold fast to that which is Good... “ A Peaceful Warrior Ethos

Every ANZAC and Remembrance Day service we attend, concludes with this timeless Blessing taken from the words of St Paul in the 1st century to the missionaries he was sending out to bring Good News to a troubled world. The full text follows later in this article, but it is just as relevant to us today as we try to negotiate a troubled world where violence, conflict and adversarial anger and frustration keeps people in a state of distress, anger and frustration. Even within our veteran community , many social media posts are polarised, aggressive and spiteful. Some veterans are perplexed as to what was right or wrong about actions of some on overseas operations.

In my previous article I reflected upon the moral courage, the moral injury and the moral healing of Major John White DSC, whose traumatic experiences and betrayal in Vietnam in 1968 were to negatively impact him and his family for the majority of his life. Only recently, he gained insight into moral injury and its healing, and was able to restore a positive and life giving perspective through integrity in restorative action, forgiveness, letting go ,and helping others from a heart of “**Goodness**”.

It was fascinating that in his final days he was still able to encourage other veterans with simple but powerful words of advice: ***to have the courage to change; to practice kindness and gratitude; to be kind ; to forgive yourself , to forgive others and to offer forgiveness, and leave a legacy of goodwill in the world.***

I learned many things in 48 years in uniform, but one thing the military didn't teach us was how to care for ourselves, how to live holistically healthily, and how to manage our anxieties, disappointments, shame and guilt. There was plenty of warrior ethos promoted , but less emphasis on “Goodness”. For the last 11 years, a team of veterans explored how we could prevent veteran suicide and restore a thriving life. We called ourselves Veterans Care,Association (VCA) and have been sharing those things on 39 “Awakening” residential programs, we have conducted on the Gold Coast and in Timor.

Participants on these programs rejoice that they have discovered they can find peace and renewed identity and purpose. They can move into Post Traumatic “Growth “, and move from isolation to be embraced in a tribe of caring people with a vision and purpose to be life givers to those in need. They can laugh and cry and have fun with people who understand them. They can embrace the goodness in themselves and become “Peaceful Warriors”.



In our most recent June program ,several former special forces soldiers and others with extensive operational service shared how they had now been able to rise up and find new insights into what is RIGHT, and life giving ,and wholesome. They spoke of resetting their “moral compass”, embracing a new identity, and forgiveness of themselves and others. They committed to moving from years of darkness into the light, and keen to help others do the same.

Most clinical interventions require us to dig up and share again, all the negativity and trauma of our past . VCA don't do any of that. We start with gratitude for the present moment, and work towards a day by day plan to restore love and joy and hope into our lives and the lives of others today

and have fun doing so. We explore what values we consider vital to healthy living. It's a positive psychology model and the 1200 participants we've had will tell you it works ! We “rewire” our brains through neuroplasticity - and let go of past hurts and focussing on what is “Good “ and wholesome for us.

We all can choose each day to be focussed on a world in chaos, unjust treatment by our government, and conflict and adversarial behaviour in our veteran communities, OR to refocus on the positives we have, intentionally embrace holistic healthy living , and equip ourselves to be carers and mentors for those struggling in darkness.

As John White DSC reminded us we need the courage to change , and move forward with Goodness in our hearts .

So , may you now embrace this Blessing and :

Go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage.

Hold fast that which is good. Render to no one evil for evil,

But Overcome evil with Good. Strengthen the fainthearted.

Support the weak. Help the afflicted.

Show love to everyone. Love and serve all in need,

and may the blessing of almighty God, be among you,

and remain with you always. Amen.

1 Thessalonians 5

May God bless you , your Padre , Gary Stone OAM

July 2026

