



Heroes Outreach Program

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The story on the reverse of this page is titled, **“A Not So Unique Story.”** While every person's story is unique to themselves, the incidence of suicide among military combat veterans and First Responders is far too frequent. Veterans are 1.5 times more likely to die by suicide than Americans who never served in the military. For female veterans, the risk factor is 2.2 times more likely. For decades, the VA, DOD and other agencies have been working diligently to reduce or eliminate these incidents. No one has come up with a significant solution.

My name is John Morlock. I am the founder and president of the Heroes Outreach Program. The story on the other side of this page is mine. While in the Army, I was fond of telling my younger soldiers that “I've been where you're trying to get.” This was a clever way of saying that I have had the experience that you lack and I can help you get where you're trying to get. Unfortunately, when it comes to suicide among veterans, what it means is, I have been there. I have done that. I have survived and I can help you survive as well. People often say, “I don't have to be hit in the head with a 2x4 to know that it hurts.” While that is true, even so, you will never truly understand the pain of it, or the psychological impact of it, or even the cause of it, unless you actually have it done to you. In the case of suicide, I can honestly say, I have been there. I have done that. I know the pain, desperation, despondency that brought you to that cliff.

I am reaching out to all of you now and saying, I understand and I am here to help. On that day in November of 1998, I DID commit suicide. I died three times that day, twice in the ambulance and once on the operating table. God chose to save me and to bring me back so I could continue my work as a medic and to save my fellow veteran's lives. Believe me, I do not share my story to garner sympathy. Sympathy and \$10 buys you a coffee at Starbucks. No, I share my story to let you know that I am not some highly educated clinical researcher who spouts statistics to make a point or to come up with a 'cure.' I share my story with you to let you know that I HAVE been to the edge myself and that I speak from experience. I know what brought me to that edge, what pushed me over, and what it would have taken to keep me from getting there.

I now spend my life working to keep my fellow veterans from ever feeling that suicide is a viable solution to their issues in life. I founded the Heroes Outreach Program to pull my fellow veterans and first responders back into the fold and to give them the hope for a better future than they have seen since leaving the service. We all lived by the creed of “Leave no man/woman behind.” As our oath that we took when we enlisted hasn't expired, this creed has not expired either. I refuse to leave anyone behind and I ask you to please stand with me and let's bring them all back. We are all Brothers and Sisters in Arms. I promise not to leave any of you behind.

Sincerely,

John L. Morlock

John L. Morlock

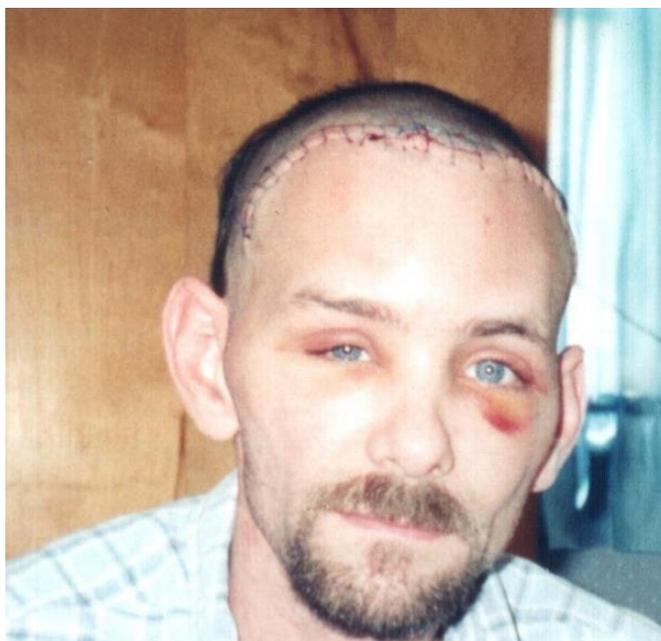


A Not So Unique Story...

A young man of 34 leaves the Army. While in, he served in no less than 3 separate major combat zones. When that man first joined the Army, he was more interested in saving his fellow soldiers rather than killing any enemy, so he became a medic. While serving in those combat zones, this young man saw, and did, some horrific acts that left an indelible impression on his psyche. When he finally left the military, he tried to put all that behind him. He finally realized a dream he had had since he was a boy, he purchased a house. He had a great job and was living a very happy life with his wife and three sons.

What this young man soon learned however, was that he was never able to leave the terror and horror of his combat experiences behind. He had nightmares nearly every night. His wife continually told him that he would 'beat her up' in his sleep. His sons knew not to wake Dad up unless they were across the room from him. He had never heard of PTSD and just assumed these were the costs of defending his country and that every combat soldier went through the same thing. One day, his wife of 18 years finally walks out and leaves him and his sons. This young man loved his wife with all his heart. She was his one true love. The prospect of waking up screaming from the nightmares, and realizing he was truly alone for the rest of his life was something he was just not strong enough to do. Rather than face this life alone, the young man loaded a 357 magnum handgun, placed it under his chin and pulled the trigger.

These photos were taken of this young man, seven months after that near-fatal day in November 1998. Of course, that young man was me, John Morlock.



See other side for the rest of the story...