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Soldiers with PTSD may benefit from meditation technique

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Captain Jerry Yellin, retired P-51 WWII Fighter Pilot, along with Vets from Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan are coming to Minnesota the week of Sept. 11 to launch Operation Warrior Wellness in Minnesota.

This is a new initiative for Vets, soldiers, and family members impacted by post-traumatic stress disorder or high stress levels. It addresses these conditions at a deeper level than other treatments, through the Transcendental Meditation program for PTSD.

Jerry himself suffered with debilitating PTSD for decades after Iwo Jima. He said, “The sights-remnants of 21,000 Japanese and 7,000 American Marines who were killed on that eight-square-mile island-the sounds, and the smells were fresh in my mind when I was discharged in December 1945, and they did not leave for thirty years. I could not get what I saw and did out of my mind. I was truly a lost soul with no help, no guidance, no diagnosis and no one to turn to.”

Then in 1975 when he learned the Transcendental Meditation program he says, “It changed my life. I found a way to connect with myself-and to begin thinking and acting in a manner that made me aware of my place in society and helped me lead a normal life.”

Captain Yellin was not only instrumental in starting OWW, he also has helped introduce OWW into the resiliency programs at some of the top-rated military academies and military bases on both coasts and the south.

“We have thousands of young veterans coming back from war today who are suffering from what I suffered from after WWII — now known as posttraumatic stress disorder,” he said. “It is important to me that they do not wander lost to themselves for a good portion of their lives, as I did. We are making the Transcendental Meditation technique available to all veterans and their families through Operation Warrior Wellness, a division of the David Lynch Foundation, a nonprofit organization. I urge all who read this to understand the gravity of the PTSD and help us help our returning warriors.”

There will be a free, public meeting to learn more about Operation Warrior Wellness at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 16 at the VFW Post 305 building at 1300 Starr Ave., Eau Claire. Veterans, active duty soldiers and their families, VA personnel as well as anyone else involved with people with PTSD are especially encouraged to attend.

Director of the TM program, Dr. Billie Jean Billman, explains, “The Transcendental Meditation technique is a simple, natural mental technique practiced twice daily, quietly, by one self. It brings a state of very deep rest and peace, along with inner wakefulness for the whole mind and body. This unique state of restful alertness that is the antidote for deeply rooted stress. After meditating we feel clearer, more ready to focus, calmer, happier, more balanced and alive.”

Special grants and funding assistance to learn the TM® Program are currently available through OWW. This assistance is available on a first-come-first-serve basis for Vets, active duty military and their families impacted by high stress or PTSD and living in Minnesota or Western WI. Anyone interested in finding out more about OWW should attend one of these meetings. OWW can be reached by calling (651) 714-0254 or emailing bjbillman@tm.org. The OWW website is www.operationwarriorwellness.org.