

## Programs available to Soldiers

www.WarriorTraining.us

Due to post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and suicide or attempted suicide in our returning veteran population, we have developed specialized warrior mind training classes for combat-related decompression.

The program is offered at the Warrior Transition Battalion at Womack Army Medical Center and is part of Marine Corps Base and Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune's "Back on Track" program.

There are several classes and training offered to returning and deploying Soldiers through the Warrior Mind Training program. Each designed to meet the Soldier's needs:

### ■ Before and during a deployment

Training in immunization techniques are offered. This technique can be used as mental hygiene tools designed to produce ongoing protection by increasing focus, clarity and mental resilience, especially during long deployments.

### ■ Returning from a deployment

The program will offer decompression or warrior mind technique training, designed by veterans for veterans, to help Soldiers enable an effective reintegration into family and civilian life upon returning by combining ancient mind focusing techniques with the healing properties of music to allow Soldiers to strengthen and reforge their minds.

### ■ Strengthening the warrior mind

Through Warrior Mind Training techniques, elite warriors will learn how to strengthen and forge their minds into the ultimate fighting weapon. The program is useful in preparing for battle-proofing Soldiers or preparing them for the upcoming rigors of Special Forces Qualification Course.

These are only a few classes being offered through the Warrior Mind Training program.

The classes are free and offered every second and fourth Thursday of the month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Warrior Transition Battalion in Moon Hall.

For more information on the classes, visit Web site [www.warriortraining.us](http://www.warriortraining.us) or e-mail [info@warriortraining.us](mailto:info@warriortraining.us).

*(Editor's note: Information on courses and descriptions came from the [www.warrior-training.us](http://www.warrior-training.us) Web site.)*

## Warrior Mind Training

# Learning to calm the inner turmoil

by  
**Lucille Anne Newman**  
 Paraglide

"Our motto is: 'Take the war to the enemy, but leave the battle on the battlefield,'" said Sarah Ernst, instructor, Warrior Mind Training program. "The Warrior Mind Training program is designed to teach mental focus and mind training to the men and women of the United States military. We aim to provide these valuable mental hygiene tools to our troops before deployment in order to immunize them against the effects of combat stress and post-traumatic stress disorder and to assist them in decompression upon returning home from the frontlines."

Decompression Sgt. Wilfredo Raguro, a combat medic, Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 4th Air Missile Defense, said he needed following his previous deployments and uses during his current deployment to control any anxiety he may experience.

"After coming back from Iraq, I had a lot of rumination from the previous deployment. I worked in the Balad Air Force Combat Support Hospital and I had a share of mishaps while being deployed," Raguro said. He added that prior to the training, memories of the traumatic incidents would prevent him from sleeping or focusing on anything clearly.

"I was constantly thinking about it ... so

*"Many men feel that they should act according to the time or the moment they are facing, and thus are in confusion when something goes beyond this and some difficulty arises. The man whose profession is arms should calm his mind and look into the depths of others. Doing so is likely the best of the martial arts."*

— **Shiba Yoshimasa** (1350-1410 AD)  
 Warrior leader during the Namboku and Muromachi period in Japan

when I returned home, I started looking for a cure," he said and added he even tried distracting his mind by running in marathons, spending more time with his family and even traveling. But none of it seemed to work.

"I was willing to try something new because I wanted personal growth and improvement for myself. So, when I saw the flyer (for Warrior Mind Training) I had to check it out ... I had to try it at least once," he explained.

Raguro said he found the training to be more involved in meditation and added that for him it was hard at first.

"It was like doing mental weight lifting," he said. "I think (the program's) introduction to meditation has helped me."

The program involves concentrating your mind on certain notes of music, practicing your breathing techniques and clearing your mind of thoughts.

Raguro added that since taking the first class he has

become more intuitive, focused and refreshed every time he does his daily meditation.

"It brings me happiness and the feeling of being content. Since then I have been doing meditation as part of my day-to-day routine, even here in Iraq," he said.

Irene Kennedy, a licensed clinical social worker with a private practice in Raleigh, said the program offered her a new alternative to helping her patients, both military and civilian, who are trying to deal with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorders. She said it has also helped her patients with attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to focus more by using yoga and meditation techniques.

"(Prior to attending the program) I'd heard about Soldiers who came back with problems," Kennedy said. "With PTSD, it's not the fact that your life was in danger so much as it frightens people ... it's what (the Soldiers have seen) and can't get out of their mind. An experience that

affects everything they do emotionally,

cognitively and their visceral or sensory motor."

Kennedy refers to people experiencing this type of stress as "being stuck."

"In my practice I've noticed that this method has helped (my patients) with trauma get 'unstuck' so to speak," she said and added that the program could have prevented a lot of the heartache she experienced as a child following her father's return from the Vietnam War.

"(The Vietnam War) had a huge impact on our family," she explained. "When our Soldiers came back from war our families didn't understand why the Soldiers were acting the way they did." She said it created a problem for her family because at the time there were no programs to help them back then.

"Since I left Fort Bragg those many years ago, this program has actually helped me return to Bragg," she said. Kennedy explained that for a long time memories of her bad experiences in dealing with her father's return from war kept her away from the installation.

"(Now) my heart is in Fort Bragg," she said. "It's where my father retired and though he is now living in a (Veteran Affairs) nursing home in Salisbury, I have a special (place in my heart) for military families and their Soldiers. It's important to me to be able to give back to them, to find some way to help the military. We have a responsibility."

