



FLORIDA CHAPTER

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Subject: Troop Support, Peace Chapel - Otany Military Retreat

I am an officer in the 173d Airborne Brigade Association. In this capacity, I hold many duties. All duties center around support of our membership and the troops downrange. I have been busy with several other programs from Operation Christmas Stocking to Operation Showtime to Operation Transition Home through our local chapter of the Association here in Florida. We shipped more than 3,000 pounds down range on the last deployment. But recently while researching an article for our national magazine (Sky Soldier) I met Chaplain Major John Porter and his family. They are on a quest to also support the troops coming back from this war and other vets needing help to defuse, decompress, learn and come to peace during these stressful times.

As a combat veteran myself (Vietnam) and a health clinician with the Veterans Health Administration, I whole heartedly offered them my support. You see, I also have a son and daughter who served in the current War on Terror. I know the hardships, fears and worry of families separated, especially when I received the call my son had been wounded in Afghanistan. Enough about me... Let me introduce you to one of the most exciting projects that has come to my attention.

Chaplin Porter and his men of the 173d Airborne Brigade constructed a chapel at their base in Bien Hoa, Vietnam during the early days of the Vietnam War. It was funded by the men and built in the middle of combat to stand as a symbol for hope and peace. Today many service members of our military force are coming back from war with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and other health problems. As a VA primary care provider, I see this regularly. Our service members and veterans deserve the best care that can be provided. The Porters plan to reconstruct Peace Chapel on their current property as a memorial for the brave soldiers who fought and died in that conflict and those still fighting for our freedom alongside, The Otany Military Retreat. It is to be located on 22 acres with hot mineral springs near Palm Springs California in a quiet area away from everything and surrounded with a beautiful mountain view. It will be perfect for the relaxing therapy needed to recuperate from the stress of the war. Upon visiting a similar program at Ft. Bliss Texas for PTSD, the Army Chief Of Staff, General George Casey said, "the Army needs to replicate this program". Otany should be even more effective because it will actually be an off-base resort with horseback riding, biking, hiking, healthy food, a green environment and away from everything stressful.

I appreciate you taking the time to read the following proposal that will explain in detail the plan for the Peace Chapel and the Otany Military Retreat surrounding it. Please continue reading below, for a short introduction by Trish Porter, and Sheree Porter-Thomas, wife and daughter of Chaplain Major John B. Porter, founder of Peace Chapel, and author of the book, "If I Make my Bed in Hell", a story of his experience as a combat Chaplain during the Vietnam War.

**James R. Bradley, CW3, USA (Ret)
President, 173d Airborne Bde Assn, Florida Chapter
See: www.173dPeaceChapel.com**



PEACE CHAPEL

We are excited to share with you our plans for the Peace Chapel-Otany project!

We are rebuilding Peace Chapel and surrounding it with a retreat for our military that are coming home from their service. As Jim Bradley stated above, one in 5 of our soldiers returning from active duty is suffering from PTSD. Less than half of these soldiers with problems actually seek help. This is mostly out of the fear of being stigmatized or hurting their careers. The most important thing for service members who have been in combat, is that the earlier they get help when they need it, the better off they'll be. This is coming directly from an Army study in the mental health of troops who fought in Iraq. Traumatic Brain injury (TBI) aka. "blast trauma" is the signature wound for this war. This leads to many other problems, all needing decompression and time. So much is still not understood about the long term affects of TBI. Also new problems like "Burn Pits" and exposure to inhaled toxins and musculoskeletal problems in troops due to repetitive heavy load bearing. These are some of the health concerns facing our injured service members which we will focus on dealing with at Otany-Peace Chapel.

Otany will be built as a horse guest ranch. It will offer a feeling of a holiday rather than a medical facility. Because of this, our goal is that our service members will want to come and be a part of the Peace Chapel-Otany program. Most importantly it will offer the help, programs, and treatments that our military so urgently needs. They will have the opportunity for Otany's all encompassing choice of programs which aren't just designed for PTSD and TBI but also for health, detoxification, physical therapy, nutrition, counseling, health and fitness.

We have included some descriptions in the enclosed attachments of our project and a copy of the article, Peace Chapel Reborn, which appeared in the Sky Soldier military magazine.

**For more information on the Peace Chapel - Otany Military Retreat:
Don't miss our video on You Tube!**

We appreciate you taking time to review our information, we look forward to hearing from you.

**Thank you!
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