

## PTSD Resource Books



Some of these books address PTSD directly, and some provide the wider background material for the spiritual side of PTSD. Some of the reviews were written by Ret. Colonel Erik Opsahl, a veteran of the Vietnam War.

If you are not sure of which book best meets your needs, you are invited to contact Chaplain Ziemer at [military@wels.net](mailto:military@wels.net) or (239) 218-8494 for his suggestions.

Adsit, Rev. Chris. **The Combat Trauma Healing Manual**. 2007. Military Ministry Press, Newport News, VA. ISBN: 978-1-4196-7820-2

REVIEW: The subtitle, *Christ-centered Solutions for Combat Trauma* summaries the material quite well. The book can serve as a basis for group discussions.

Adsit, Chris; Adsit, Rahnella; and Waddell, Marshale Carter. **When War Comes Home – Christ-centered Healing for Wives of Combat Veterans**. 2008. Military Ministry Press, Newport News, VA. ISBN: 978-1-4392-0890-8

REVIEW: As the title indicates, this is addressed to the wives of those who have seen combat, and are looking to God for help and guidance.

Artwohl, Alexis & Christensen, Loren. **Deadly Force Encounters**. 1997. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO. ISBN: 0-87364-935-4

Review: This work is primarily directed at those in law enforcement, where stress is commonplace. It covers psychological injuries and surviving the aftermath of a traumatic event.

Backus, William. **The Hidden Rift with God**. 1990. Bethany House Publishers, Minneapolis, MN. ISBN: 1-55661-097-1

REVIEW: The PTSD victim can often feel that God has abandoned him, or is punishing him. His mental disorder can threaten his relationship with the Creator and Redeemer.

Clark, Allen. **Wounded Soldier, Healing Warrior: A Personal Story of a Vietnam Veteran Who Lost His Legs but Found His Soul**. 2007. Zenith Press, St. Paul, MN. ISBN: 978-0-7603-3113-2

REVIEW: The strength of this work is the insight it gives into how traumatic events can have severe spiritual implications.

Finley, Erin P. **Fields of Combat—Understanding PTSD Among Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan**. 2011. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. eISBN 978-0-8014-6118-7.

REVIEW: The author draws upon twenty months of fieldwork with recent veterans of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Gulf War. Using the stories of the veterans, she tries to show how the American culture influences how PTSD emerges in our troops and how Americans respond to the disorder. She submits that PTSD is not a clear-cut, static condition, but is often fluid and subject to interpretation.

Gerhard, Johann, translated by Carl L. Beckwith. **Handbook of Consolations: for the Fears and Trials That Oppress Us in the Struggle with Death**. 2009. Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR. ISBN: 13: 978-1-60608-664-3

REVIEW: Written by a Lutheran theologian who died in the early 1600s, it probes the richness of the Bible to demonstrate the comfort that God offers for his struggling and grieving people.

Gilmartin, Kevin. **Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement**. 2002. E-S Press.  
ISBN-13: 978-0971725409

REVIEW: A guidebook for people who face stress, sometimes traumatic stress, on a regular basis.

Gire, Ken. **The North Face of God: hope for times when God seems indifferent**. 2005. Alive Communications, Inc., Colorado Springs, CO. ISBN-13: 978-0-8423-7103

REVIEW: While not specifically addressing PTSD, this is an excellent work that addresses the confusion, alienation, and anger that victims of PTSD often feel towards God.

Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave. **On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace**. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. 2012. Human Factor Research Group, Inc.  
ISBN-13:978-0-9649-2056-9

REVIEW: This is a definitive work on how the warrior is affected by combat. PTSD receives ample attention.

Grossman, Lt. Col. Dave. **On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society**. 1995. Back Bay Books / Little, Brown and Company, New York, NY.  
ISBN: 978-0-316-33011-4; 0-7814-4288-5

REVIEW: This is a classic, and required reading for many leaders in both the military and law enforcement. It provides a background understanding to what the protectors of society (“sheepdogs”) endure. PTSD is addressed in the context of the wider experience.

Hillenbrand, Laura. **Unbroken: A World War II story of survival, resilience, and redemption**. 2010. Penguin Random House, New York, NY. ISBN: 978-0-679-60375-7

REVIEW: A movie has now been made of this book, but the main benefit comes from learning how the traumatic events impacted his life when he returned to safety.

Hoge, Charles W. **Once a Warrior Always a Warrior—Navigating the Transition from Combat to Home Including Combat Stress, PTSD and mTBI**. 2010. Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, CT.  
E-ISBN 978-0-7627-6209-5

REVIEW: A guidebook to help the combat veteran adjust to the normal world even if he carries home emotional baggage from combat.

Hughes, Brian and Handzo, George. **Spiritual Care Handbook on PTSD/TBI**.

Provided by U.S. Department of the Navy. [PDF version available from Chaplain Ziemer](#).

REVIEW: One of the few works on PTSD with a government connection that clearly recognizes the spiritual factors that are often part of PTSD.

Kyle, Chris. **American Sniper**. 2011. HarperCollins e-books. ISBN:9780062190963

REVIEW: The experiences of this now well-known warrior have also been made into a movie. But the book gives the inside look at how stress impacted what otherwise would have been called an heroic life.

Lewis, C.S. **A Grief Observed**. 1961. (eBook Edition 2009). HarperCollins e-books.  
ISBN: 978-0-06-194928-9

REVIEW: In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, the author does an excellent job of addressing the pain experienced by a Christian. This book was written after his wife died, and the inner pain he feels is unexpected and torturous.

Lewis, C.C. **The Problem of Pain**. 1940 (eBook Edition 2009). HarperCollins ebooks. ISBN: 9780061947643

REVIEW: The famous author takes up a common question of the victim of PTSD: *Why does God let me suffer?* It is not light reading, but it is worth the time and effort.

Lyon, H. Curtis. **Counseling at the Cross**. 1991. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. ISBN: 978-0-8100-0353-8

REVIEW: Written by a WELS pastor with special training and experience in counseling, it provides a rich storehouse of insight into helping the distressed person receive help from God.

Mason, Patience H.C. **Recovering from The War: A Guide for all Veterans, Family Members, Friends and Therapists**. 1998. Patience Press, High Springs, FL. ISBN: 978-1-892220-07-3

REVIEW: The book was originally written for veterans of the Vietnam War. But after her son was deployed two times to Iraq the author expanded the work to compare the two combat experiences. She addresses the differences in the experiences of troops in forward positions and those who are in support positions.

Morrison, Marjorie. **The Inside Battle: Our Military Mental Health Crisis**. 2012. Military Psychology Press, Mustang, OK. ISBN 978-1-62024-982-6

REVIEW: Written by someone who has counseled many Marines, the book reports on actual situations. This quote captures the spirit of the book: *"I learned life's most valuable lessons: when the going gets rough, you don't quit, you are just getting started."*

Seahorn, Janet and Seahorn, E. Anthony. **Tears of a Warrior—A Family's Story of Combat and Living with PTSD**. 2014. Team Pursuits, Ft. Collins, CO. ISBN: 978-0-615-21317-0

[This book is being offered free to veterans, their families, and service providers.](#)

REVIEW: Personal accounts from the warrior who talks about his experiences in Vietnam and his life back in the States, allows veterans and families to gain a clearer picture of how PTSD affects people.

Sprague, Debbie. **A Stranger in my Bed: 8 Steps to taking your life back from the contagious effects of your Veteran's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**. 2013. Morgan James Publishing, New York, NY. ISBN: 978-1-61448-57-9

REVIEW: The author, who is a member of WELS, allows the reader to enter into her life as the PTSD inside of her husband unfolds. It is very personal.

Schiraldi, Glenn R. **The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Sourcebook. A Guide to Healing, Recovery, and Growth. Second Edition**. 2009. New York et al: McGraw Hill.

REVIEW: Informative; realistic; useful appendices; good, additional references.

Self, Nate. **Two Wars: One Hero's Fight on Two Fronts—Abroad and Within**. 2008. Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, IL. ISBN: 978-1-4143-2296

REVIEW: A report of a warrior battling with PTSD that compares his fight in the war zone to the fight within his own self.

Shay, Jonathan. **Achilles in Vietnam. Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character**. 1994. New York et al: Simon and Schuster (Touchstone).

REVIEW: Sometimes too close to home; sometimes off base a little; question addressed: is return to "normal" possible? Almost answered.

Sites, Kevin. *The Things They Cannot Say—Stories Soldiers Won't Tell You About What They've Seen, Done, or Failed to Do in War*. 2013. HarperCollins, Epub Edition.

ISBN 97800062273185

REVIEW: It often frustrates loved ones when people who have experienced traumatic events refuse to even acknowledge they took place, much less be willing to talk about them. This book gives insight into why that happens.

Stanton, Doug. *In Harm's Way: The Story of the USS Indianapolis and the Extraordinary Story of the Survivors*. 2012. (eBook). Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York, NY.

E-ISBN: 9781477818781

REVIEW: After delivering atomic bomb to Tinian Island, the USS Indianapolis was sunk by the Japanese, and the crew that survived would drift for dreadful days until rescued. Some felt the traumatic event was God's way of punishing them for helping to deliver the bomb.

Stevens, Dennis, J. *Police Officer Stress: Sources and Solutions*. 2007.

ISBN-13:978-0131178816.

REVIEW: It is sometimes forgotten that, while the warrior may spend months under stress, those in law enforcement spend years on the job. The stress may not be on the same level as those in a hot combat zone face, but it is frequent, and it is long-term.

Thiede, Eloise I. *"What do I Know" Questions and Answers*. 2015. Xulon Press.

REVIEW: The book of hundreds of questions and answers on the Old and New Testaments gives Bible passages to support responses; intended to times when we are "weak and going through trials and tribulation."

Timberg, Robert. *The Nightingale's Song*. 1995. New York: Touchstone (Simon and Schuster).

REVIEW: The book weaves a story of the Vietnam war and subsequent U.S. military history through examination of the lives of John McCain, Robert McFarlane, James Webb, Oliver North, and John Poindexter.

van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps Score—Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. 2011. Penguin Books, New York, NY. ISBN 978-1-101-60830-2

REVIEW: The author goes into depth to show how the human body is impacted by trauma, and how it responds to the attack.