



INSTITUTE OF HEARTMATH®

Empowering Heart-Based Living

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Institute of HeartMath®’s Military Service Appreciation Fund Gives Soldiers Peace of Mind

BOULDER CREEK, CA. – May 19, 2010 – While U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan fight with the best weapons and training available, they are ill-equipped for combating the serious and deadly effects of daily stress and psychological trauma. The Department of Defense has made some headway to help soldiers before they deploy and when they return home, and various civilian organizations are providing assistance. The Institute of HeartMath® (IHM) is among them. For nearly 20 years, the nonprofit research and education organization has been recognized worldwide for its research on stress, emotions, optimal performance and resilience. IHM has developed programs and technologies that incorporate this research to improve people’s lives. Over the last three years IHM has maintained the [Military Service Appreciation Fund](#), which offers support to military personnel by providing scholarships for HeartMath training programs and its emWave® technology.

One of the great tragedies of warfare is the mental and emotional toll that continues far beyond the battlefield. IHM’s unique approach includes teaching soldiers self-regulation techniques and providing them with HeartMath’s emWave® heart-rhythm coherence feedback technology, which helps them sustain these self-regulation skills.

Nearly one in five troops are returning from Afghanistan and Iraq with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to the National Institute of Mental Health.

“Most military personnel return without serious psychological injury,” IHM Director of Research Dr. Rollin McCraty noted. “However, nearly all of them are challenged with reintegration issues. This often manifests as insomnia or other sleep disorders. They may be over reactive, and many lack the ability to relate to family members and friends about issues that can seem trivial to them, but are important to others. Whether the soldiers have been through extreme levels of psychological stress or struggle with the reintegration process, it ultimately impinges on the quality of life for them and their families.”

HeartMath officials say it can be especially challenging for National Guard members who return to their home communities to pick up their lives where they left off before deployment. In contrast, members of the Army and other branches of the service return to military bases, where they receive support and are among soldiers who had similar experiences.

IHM is working hard to assist military personnel with practical, easy-to-use tools that can help shorten the reintegration process. This benefits not only service members, but their families as well, and it means they can transition back into their local communities and society with greater success – and often more quickly. HeartMath programs and services are being applied in a variety of contexts, including for PTSD and pain management, family communication and other challenges they face during reintegration.

“The need is great,” McCraty added. “It is rewarding to know that IHM’s scholarship program is providing soldiers who need, but cannot afford these interventions.”

McCraty emphasized that IHM’s mission is about serving humanity by providing practical and scientifically based tools and interventions proven to prevent and reverse the negative effects of stress, regardless whether it is a soldier, at-risk student or police officer who has a need.

“The HeartMath System is designed to help preserve and increase the quality of life for all individuals,” he said.

The techniques and technologies IHM has developed over nearly two decades provide service members with science-based methods for reducing stress and building resilience. One example is IHM's emWave heart-rhythm coherence feedback technology, which uses visual and audio feedback of the user's heart rhythms. For military personnel, these techniques and technologies can be applied to achieve balance and calm.

HeartMath's researchers discovered that monitoring heart-rhythm patterns and practicing easy-to-learn self-regulation tools such as its Quick Coherence® Technique are highly beneficial, especially for reducing stress, fatigue and sleeplessness, increasing cognitive function and building resilience.

Coherence is an important physiological state, HeartMath researchers explain, that is achieved when the heart, brain and nervous system come into alignment and work together efficiently and harmoniously. Studies show that when your heart beats in a coherent pattern, your emotional and mental state is balanced, and your body, including the immune and hormonal systems, are positively influenced.

Jolene, the wife of Daniel, a Marine serving in Afghanistan – their last names are withheld because of privacy concerns – told IHM that her husband began using the hand-held emWave® Personal Stress Reliever and learned HeartMath techniques to help him manage stress before deployment. She said her husband now carries the emWave with him in the field.

"I told him, 'I don't care if you have to hide that,' she said. "You take that with you.' Because of how much it worked for him. I felt like it was just as important as having his gun."

Members of the Armed Forces routinely are deployed without the psychological preparation and tools that Daniel was fortunate enough to receive through the Military Service Appreciation Fund, which offers grants for the emWave technology to returning active-duty troops and their families. Statistics show a high percentage of these troops will struggle mentally and emotionally as they try to resume normal lives back home.

In a study to be published in a scientific journal this summer, Dorn VA Medical Center in South Carolina recorded marked improvements in the attention and memory of soldiers with PTSD who practiced HeartMath techniques. A number of independent studies utilizing HeartMath techniques and the emWave technology have been done or are ongoing.

IHM officials say HeartMath resilience training can be tailored to suit tactical training windows and includes programs for military leaders and Special Forces and the reintegration of service members returning home.

The troop reintegration and transition program is designed to speed readjustment, strengthen resiliency, reduce stress symptoms, help manage PTSD and depression and address redeployment readiness.

IHM's Military Service Appreciation Fund is maintained through contributions from the institute's members and supporters. For more information, visit the [Military Service Appreciation Fund](https://www.heartmath.org/military) and the institute's Web site, www.heartmath.org/military, or call (800) 711-6221.

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About the Institute of HeartMath:

The Institute of HeartMath, www.heartmath.org, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization dedicated to teaching the principles of heart-based living around the world and promoting personal and global coherence. IHM, founded in 1991 by Doc Childre, is a world leader in stress reduction, resilience building, and optimal performance research. Through its research and education divisions, the institute has developed practical tools, educational programs and services – collectively known as the HeartMath System – for the mental, emotional and physical benefit of children through seniors without regard to their social, economic or cultural status. IHM research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals such as American Journal of Cardiology, Stress Medicine, Preventive Cardiology, Journal of the American College of Cardiology, Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science and Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine.