

Helping Soldiers Find Solace

On 300 acres of Colorado national forest, against the backdrop of the Sangre de Cristo (Blood of Christ) Mountains, sits a \$4.5 million lodge where Spirit-filled Vietnam veteran Dave Roever helps “wounded warriors” find solace from the trauma of war.

Every month about 30 soldiers—many of whom have lost limbs, eyes and other body parts—converge at Eagles Summit Ranch (ESR) in Westcliffe, Colo., to spend a week getting a respite from the wounds of war. Roever, whose face was disfigured in combat during the Vietnam War when a grenade exploded in his hand, says the main objective of the week is to teach service men and women how to cope with physical, mental and emotional challenges by publicly sharing their stories. At the end of each week, cadets stand before the Westcliffe community and other soldiers and discuss their war experiences.

Roever says the first phase of the program is “nonreligious,” and troops are taught basic public-speaking skills while working through their personal war experiences. In the second phase, troops can find more than emotional healing—some find spiritual healing as well.

“We teach them prayer; we teach them how to turn these things over to Christ and say, ‘God I can’t do this without your help,’” says Roever, president of ESR. “When you see a warrior lying on the floor just broken before God, tears soaking the carpet, you join them down there. It’s so beautiful to see their heart turned over to Christ.”

Roever says his obvious war wounds—including the burns on his face, and his missing fingers and ear—usually open doors for him to share the gospel with the veterans.

“I tell them my story,” he says. “They hear all about the power of Christ that has delivered me. That gives them an

introduction to the No. 1 greatest reason for my success: my faith in Christ.”

ESR facilities include numerous amenities such as hiking, horseback riding, fishing and an on-site rifle range. Soldiers also are provided gourmet meals and resortlike room accommodations. And though there is no charge, Roever admits the financial costs to keep the program running are steep.

“It’s very, very expensive,” he told *Charisma*. “It costs an arm and a leg.”