

**Please send this letter to your Senator and/or Representative.  
Thank you.**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

*“We ask them to do the unspeakable and then  
when they return home we don’t speak about it.”*

On Memorial Day, May 29, 2006, former Marine Ronald Zaleski began an unusual five-and-a-half-month odyssey -- walking the 2,174 mile Appalachian Train barefoot -- as a tribute to his buddies who died in Vietnam and *to call attention to the need for mandatory counseling programs for returning veterans.*

An extremely limited counseling program is available for vets returning home now, but it is not mandatory and often carries a stigma. A mandatory counseling program with extensive workshops would insure that all troops would have an opportunity to heal. Many keep their experience to themselves and suffer silently.

“A report published in March in The Journal of the American Medical Association found that more than a third of the troops who served in Iraq sought help for mental health problems within a year of returning home. The high percentage is deceptive however. The report said it is likely that “there are still considerable barriers to care.” It referred to a prior study that showed that more than 60 percent of the Iraq veterans who screen positively for generalized anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder have not sought treatment.” (Excerpt from “When Warriors Come Home” by Bob Herbert, The New York Times, May 4, 2006)

Please do all you can to help the military begin mandatory counseling programs immediately for all returning veterans.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip

For more information, please go to [www.thelongwalkhome.org](http://www.thelongwalkhome.org).