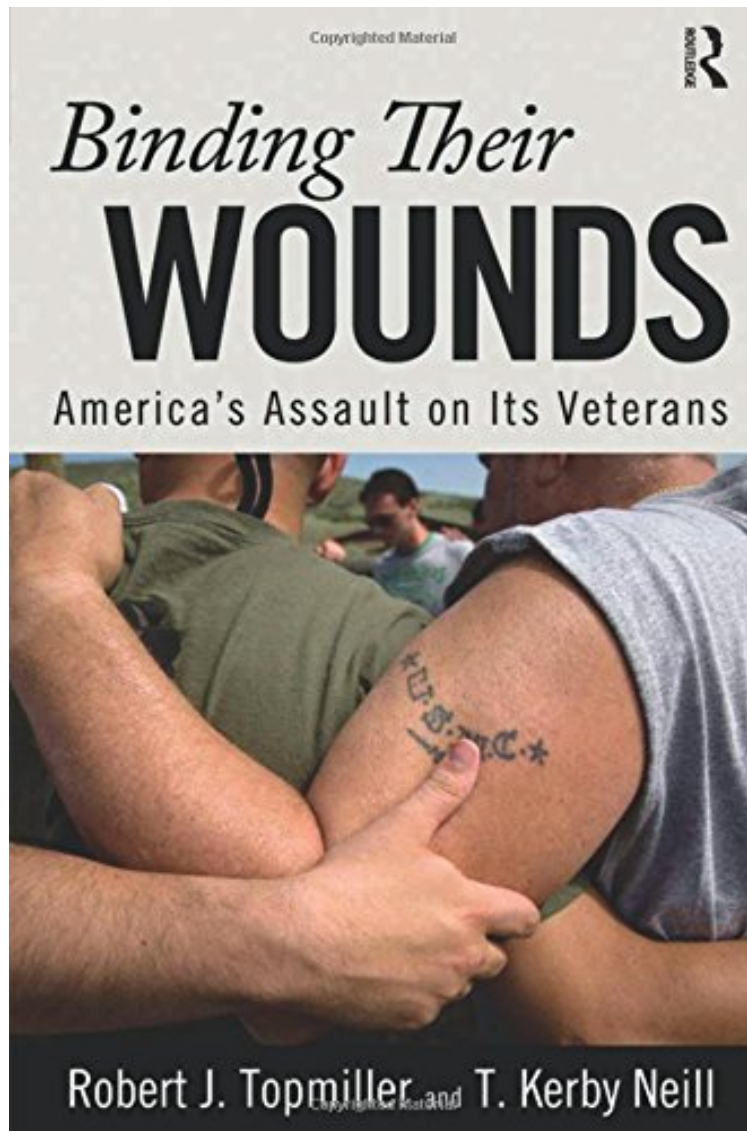


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## Binding Their Wounds: America's Assault on Its Veterans

*Robert J. Topmiller, T. Kirby Neill*

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**Robert J. Topmiller, T. Kirby Neill : Binding Their Wounds: America's Assault on Its Veterans** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Binding Their Wounds: America's Assault on Its Veterans:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good book. Hard to read for PTSD military person. By Bridget E. Smith I've not yet finished the book, but I keep trying. Every time I read passages of it I find myself "triggered" by the sadness it imparts. I am convinced that all people in the mental health profession, especially those who work with military veterans, should read this book. It covers many aspects of what it is like to be in the military, especially

describing those who have been traumatized by their service, either by war or by sensitivities to others' tragedies. My story is yet untold. It is similar to many other women who served, but it is as yet the least talked about, perhaps least known about. This book concentrates on the men's story, as it should be as they are the ones who have throughout centuries born the brunt of war. They, too, are the ones who decide to go to war, so it is not without fault that men die fighting for a country's flag. It's that feeling of wanting to share that burden, and that duty to country, which made me want to join my brothers in arms. It helped that they promised me equal pay for equal work, something I hadn't found on the civilian side of life. They also offered me a college education after discharge, something that would be impossible for me as I wasn't born into a world of wealth. The authors saw first hand the problems facing veterans. Robert J. Topmiller was himself a veteran and was terribly troubled by what he'd experienced and saw. He was author of two other books on Vietnam written from the perspective of a veteran and history professor. *The Lotus Unleashed: The Buddhist Peace Movement in South Vietnam, 1964-1966* and *Red Clay on My Boots: Encounters with Khe Sanh, 1968 to 2005*. He did not live to see the book published. He was writing about his own feelings in *Binding Their Wounds: America's Assault on Its Veterans* and much of his experience as a medic comes through in some of the descriptions. His co-author, T. Kerby Neill, contacted me and my spouse prior to the publication regarding use of material they had found on the Atomic Veterans History Project and the use of the material for their chapter on Atomic Veterans. T. Kerby Neill worked at the VA for a while and so understands its workings from this time spent inside. The book primarily covers the history of the VA and what has been done to help the returning soldiers and sailors from the wars of the 20th Century. It concentrates on the "done me wrong" song that is so familiar to us veterans who've had to fight for the justice due them because of mistreatment at the hands of the military machine. Collateral damage, cannon fodder, friendly fire, all these things come to mind when thinking of who the military machine chews up. It's always the best and brightest who are offered up as sacrifice on the alter of freedom. Truth be known, it is the politicians who offer us up on this alter and use us as the innocents that most of us were when raising our hands to swear honor and allegiance to our Constitution. The sad state of veterans' suicides is explained in several ways in this book. I recommend this book for all veterans who want to understand those who have come before them and those who are still fighting the battles at home. I recommend this book to all family members who want to better understand their veteran family members. I recommend this book to all Congress people who'd like to understand the veterans that need help once they return to being citizens. I recommend this book to any one who wants to start the healing and who wants to work toward stopping war now and in the future. I have purchased several as gifts to other veterans, especially our atomic veteran friends, and mental health professionals. I'm not sure how many copies I've purchased now but knows. I will say I am keeping the copy that T. Kerby Neill signed and sent to me. I have one extra copy right now I'm trying to decide who gets it. I will be reading on it again soon, as I am determined to finish it this coming year of 2013.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Excellent Historical Perspective and a Touching BioBy Apuleius In a way, this was actually two books in one. First, the story of Robert "Doc" Topmiller, from his service in Viet Nam as a Navy Corpsman, and then a history of the struggle for veterans' respect and benefits. Without the backdrop of Doc's service and later suffering and suicide, the broader scope of the book might have lacked the depth of human experience. It is one thing to think of veterans in general, but quite another to understand the anguish of individual veterans, be they those who fought in the American Revolutionary War or now in Iraq and Afghanistan. Between "Doc" and co-author T. Kerby Neill, they gave a persuasive description of how politicians, civilians and even veterans themselves have sometimes complicated the fairness issue that covers the full range of battles, budgets and benefits. Just to mention a few gems I found in this book whose lives and works will be the subject of my future reading: "War is a Racket" by the Marine General Smedley Butler, "Troubled Hero" about Kenneth Kays (conscientious objector/Naval corpsman who won the Medal of Honor) and "Fortunate Son" by Lewis B. Puller Jr (yes, the son of Chesty Puller). The ultimate test of this book is what will I do to help our veterans. But of course that is beyond the scope of this review.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Doc Jim ThomasBy JimI also was a Navy Corpsman at Khe Sanh during the siege. I read for about 30 minutes and had to put the book down. I did not sleep last night, too many memories. Up on hill 861 we received 1/2 canteen of water and one meal per day. There was no way to wash the blood off your hands, or clothes, so by the time we left, we were pretty ripe! It's been some 43 yrs for me now and I still have my bad dreams, and times of anger. From experience, I can tell you that "we Corpsmen" have a tremendous love for the United States Marines!!semper fiDoc Jim Thomas

The victims of US military campaigns are usually nameless civilians in far away places, but there are also victims closer to home - the soldiers so often used and then discarded by the establishment. *Binding Their Wounds* is a book about US veterans written by a US veteran - Bob 'Doc' Topmiller. Topmiller fought in Vietnam, founded a school for orphans there, and become a professor of history before he tragically committed suicide. Close friend and scholar Kerby Neill stepped in to complete the book. The result is a history of US veterans and their treatment by the US establishment from the early republic to the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Binding Their Wounds* offers policy recommendations to improve post-conflict treatment and care for veterans which are long overdue.

ldquo;A harrowing reminder that wars do not end when the fighting stops, *Binding Their Wounds* is also an impassioned plea for America to do better by those who bear the scars of war.rdquo; Andrew J. Bacevich, author of *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* ldquo;This is a book filled with love and anger and patriotism, but patriotism as Mark Twain defined it: 'supporting your country all the time, and your government when it deserves it.' It asks us all, as individuals and as citizens, to consider mistakes that have been made, to listen with open hearts to those who have suffered, and to accept responsibility for being agents of change. Would that 'Doc' Topmiller had finally been able to bind his own wounds, but, as his death underscores the urgency of the problem, so this book, and the community it brought together to honor his intent, suggest solutions.rdquo; Penny Coleman, author of *Flashback: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Suicide, and the Lessons of War* ldquo;Bob Topmiller was my hero. How could he not have been? In the short time I had to know him again, he restored within me a belief in the nobility of human character. His extraordinary intellectual gifts and his confidence in the empirical process were always tempered by a calm spirituality that caused even a cynical, old pagan like myself to recognize there might be a place in this universe for both. I am eternally grateful for that, for the honor of his friendship, and for the simple pleasure of his company. This book gives us a little more time with Bob.rdquo; Michael Archer, author of *A Patch of Ground: Khe Sanh Remembered* ldquo;This important book is a vital resource, not only for veterans, but for everyone who wants to understand the cost of war and way to peace.rdquo; Paul K. Chappell, author of *Will War Ever End? and The End of War* ldquo;Two military veterans look at how the US has treated its veterans from the time of the Revolutionary War to the present day, arguing that the needs of veterans have often been given short shrift. Using veterans' personal accounts (including that of the author Topmiller), the book details the government's failures to help veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam and to radiation in military experiments, and pays special attention to the problems of trauma and suicide in veterans. This passionate account with especially interest veterans and anyone involved in an organization that serves veterans.rdquo; --Eithne Orsquo;Leyne, June 2011 Reference and Research Book News ldquo;*Binding Their Wounds* is a tribute to Bob Topmiller's service to his country, his pioneering academic work and his dedication to America's veterans and to working for peace in this country and in Vietnamrdquo; --Vietnam magazine, August 2011 ldquo;[Robert Topmiller's] words pierce my heart and cut to the core for all war veterans who truly are left with the human costs of warhellip;Read this book.rdquo; ndash;Veterans for Peace "This well-documented work deserves a wide audience; it could be used as source material for a range of disciplines, including psychology, counseling, history, sociology, and peace studies...Highly recommended." -CHOICE, April 2012 About the AuthorRobert J. Topmiller joined the Navy at seventeen and served as a hospitalman with the Marines at Khe Sanh, Vietnam. Later a businessman and professor of history at Eastern Kentucky University, ldquo;Docrdquo; Topmiller wrote two books on Vietnam: *The Lotus Unleashed: The Buddhist Peace Movement in South Vietnam 1964ndash;1966* (2002) and *Red Clay on My Boots: Encounters with Khe Sanh 1968 to 2005* (2007). He was working on *Binding Their Wounds* when he died. He left a wife, three children, and three grandchildren.T. Kerby Neill is a Navy veteran and clinical psychologist. Dr. Neill worked in the VA and later spent most of his career as a child psychologist. He is the author of *Helping Others Help Children: Clinical Supervision of Child Psychotherapy* (2006). Retired from psychology in 2004, he devotes much of his time to peace education. He is married, a father, and grandfather.