

## Worried for her husband's life, Shannon spoke up

**Shannon:** I'm Shannon, married to Scott, and he was in the US Army. We got together just after he got out of basic training. His mother and my mom came in and they were both crying, and immediately my mom said "He's okay, but—" and they had told us that there was a blast that knocked out communication, we won't know anything, but that they do know that he's okay. He called and they got me on the phone with him, and he was like "I'm okay." Later we found out that he had actually broke his spine, but we didn't know at that time and it didn't appear to be a serious injury.

It was March when the injury happened and he came home from mid-tour I think in November. He would have a lot of nightmares, a lot of restless sleep where he just would sleep for a few minutes and be fine for the next day, or he would stay up until 4 o'clock in the morning watching the news slightly paranoid. The drastic changes were very noticeable. He couldn't remember where he was when he went to get a cup of coffee in the morning or if he was going down to the store he would call me halfway there and say "Baby, what was I going there for?" He has very, very short patience, very, very short fuse. Where usually he would be a happy-go-lucky guy that didn't really say too much, now he can get very angry at things that you would never think a person would be mad about.

He was passing out, he would have lapses where he would just fall asleep in the chair and I can't wake him up, so there was probably four times that he had this seizure and whatever happened it knocked him out to the point where they could barely find a pulse. They hospitalized him immediately after it happened. I think the third time they kept him for a two-week thing where they started running tests and determined that he had, like, hearing loss, he's got traumatic brain injury, there's been over nine concussions. At first he was reluctant to go because he was afraid that the chain of command would come down on him for going and getting help or that people would look at him bad in general.

Scott was having a very, very bad meltdown of severe depression. We had just gone through the loss of two of his grandmothers back to back and then my stepfather as well, and between that and the stress of having children that you feel like you can't take care of and can't afford, one night he looked at me and very seriously looked up from his video game and said "You know, you guys would be better off if I just died." And I said "No, we wouldn't. There's not an amount of money that you could put on your life that would make it a value equal to anything that people could give us." I immediately began to cry. I was panicking to say the least. I asked my mom, I was like "What do I do?" And she said, "Go online and look," and I started looking, so when I called the VA's hotline the man stayed on the phone with me the whole time, he got on the phone with Scott.

They sent police out and one of the officers happened to be a soldier, or a former soldier, and he walked in and started talking to Scott and the first thing he said was "I feel the same way, man, let's go a talk about it," and he reached out his hand, and when he reached out his hand Scott put down the remote to his game and he walked out the door with him, went and got in the ambulance on his own, went to the VA hospital and, I mean, it was absolutely that simple, just asking for help and saying "Please, please help us."

Most of the help that they have done is really let him know that he's not worthless. He's injured, in fact he should be proud and thankful that he's still alive to say that he got hurt,



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE  
CONNECTION**

and the VA has restored his confidence in himself by telling him and showing him what he can and cannot do, and knowing what you can't do makes what you can do that much easier as well. I would say the worst thing you can do is to be silent. Silent problems are always the worst because they're not out in the open, they're not spoke about, they're not educated on, they're not fixed. I would say call your VA and talk to the counselors. That's what they're there for. Find out how quickly you can get an appointment because they're there to help and they want to help and they do help.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**MAKE THE**  
**CONNECTION**