

Positive support for your Veteran

Marie: My name is Marie. My husband was a Veteran in World War II in Germany and captured, prisoner of war for eleven months. I met him on a blind date and he had just come home from the war in 1945 and he thought he was pretty hot stuff. And a friend of ours knew that I spoke German because my mother was born in Germany and he had just been released from a German prison camp.

He had a wonderful sense of humor and I was amazed that he could have that after seeing what he had been through, or hearing what he had been through, so one thing led to another and two years later we were married. He didn't like to talk about his experiences, because some of them were rather graphic, and we tried to keep it light. It was after we were married that some of these issues came forth. I had noticed several times, that he was rather nervous and fidgety. At night, he would have nightmares, but I could tell at that time he was facing some enemy or having some flashbacks.

He didn't talk to me too much about it, but other fellow Veterans he did and we have always been connected to some kind of military. Right now we're in a breakfast club. They have different topics that they speak about, and sometimes they flash these pictures of when they were young on the screen and then they tell different stories and I think it does them all good. And the spouses get to hear things, that they have never heard before. So it's good for everybody.

I would say that it eases their minds, that they know other people are going through stress and had the same experiences. And sometimes they meet somebody that was another paratrooper, he was a paratrooper, or other prisoners, ex-prisoners. He also belongs to the VA up in Pittsburgh and they've treated him very well. He has his own doctor, prisoner of war doctor. He's had some psychology too, and that has helped. He's talked with doctors about going through the bombing of Dresden and he actually had to bury civilians that were in the war after the bombing.

As a spouse of a 63 year marriage, I would say have lots of patience and try to keep a sense of humor and let them speak what's on their mind. Ask them if they'd like to talk to you about it. Sometimes they say no, and sometimes they say yes. But I think patience helps, and it isn't always easy. I think the more organizations they're with, and the more counseling they can get, the better off they are. It's just a relief to talk about it and they don't always do it with the wife or with the children.

I do think everything helps if you participate a little bit, try it anyway.



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