

After legal issues, Eddie reached out for support

Eddie: My name is Eddie. I served in the United States Air Force from 1981 to 2003, 22 years active duty. I lived in Japan, Germany, Spain, Italy and I was at the first Persian Gulf war and many places here on state side as well. I was disciplined; I had control over my life; my destiny, actually, because I was able to choose the jobs I wanted to go into. And it was a great opportunity because I got to see the world, work on my degree. I got my master's degree when I finished and you know had two beautiful children. My wife was with me the whole time so we actually had a great time and travelled a lot.

When I got out, I had lived in Sacramento and it was decided that we were going to move back home. And I really didn't want to come back home because I know the temptations of home. We came back and I took two years off just to kind of demilitarize and not do much of anything and that was a mistake. I had a hard time trying to find work; I couldn't find a job. I wasn't really looking, you know, my days were going to the local bar.

After 22 years doing something and then leaving that and coming home to where that comradery is not there anymore; you know those friends couldn't relate. One thing just led to another and you know I was locked up twice for domestic violence. I went to court and I could've had a felony but it was downgraded to a misdemeanor but I had to go through the steps. I mean, I didn't wait for the judge to say, "Hey, you need to do this." I said to myself, "I'm going to do this." And I searched out the VA and got involved with the substance and drug and alcohol program there but I also had to do 52 weeks of domestic violence training and counselling.

Counselling, I mean, you're there talking about your issues with other Veterans. I mean, I could recall one time where we had a veteran that was really, really upset at me because I tried to communicate with the guy and he really was really pissed off. And the other Veteran in the room, you know, at the end they said I handled it very well because I could've gone off on this guy but I kind of calmed myself down.

I've learned that I need my Veterans. I need that comradery. I'm still with my wife; we're working through a lot of the issues. I'm not you know involved with the substance abuse anymore. Now, because of what I did and the errors that I came across you know I took a step back and you know I think I found myself now because now I'm just involved so much with Veterans and you know I feel that comradery back and I gained it again. I got it back.

Reach out to your brothers and sisters. Reach out to the service organizations that are out there. There are many great, great service organizations that have a lot of knowledge that can help you. It's not your dad's VA anymore. I mean, it's our VA and we should take advantage of it.



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