What is a Veteran?
A “Veteran – whether active duty, discharged, retired or reserve – is someone who, at one point in his/her life, wrote a blank check Made payable to “The United States of America,” for an amount of “up to , and including his/her life.”
OBJECTIVE:

• WHAT MAKES A VETERAN

• WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW US

• WHAT ARE THE BEST KEPT SECRETS OF VETERANS!!
Military Veterans have served in the:

- Army
- Air Force
- Navy
- Marines
- Coast Guard

What is one word to describe them all?

WARRIORS
WHAT MAKES A WARRIOR?

VALUES
- **STRENGTH**
  
  I am a WARRIOR. I am disciplined physically and mentally tough.

- **DUTY**
  
  I am an expert and a professional. I will always place the mission first.

- **HONOR**
  
  I will never leave a fallen comrade.

- **INTEGRITY**
  
  I am a guardian of freedom.

- **SELFLESS SERVICE**
  
  I stand by ready to deploy, engage and destroy the enemies of the United States of America.

- **PERSONNEL COURAGE**
  
  I will never quit. I will never accept defeat.
What happens when you're no longer able to be a **WARRIOR** anymore?

- Confused?
- Belittled?
- Feeling broken?
- Don’t know where you fit in anymore?
Two types of Veterans

• **Non-combat Veteran** – served their country with honorably without serving in a combat area

• **Combat Veteran** - served in a combat area of operation or police action
WHAT CHALLENGES DO VETERANS FACE WHEN RETIRED/RELEASED

• The Non-Combat Veteran
  • Have a structured life
  • Have not had the same worries as civilian life
    • Job security
    • Mortgage
  • food
  • medical insurance
  • What to wear for work
• The Non-Combat Veteran cont….

  • Have lived by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ)
  • May view some things in the civilian world as lazy, disarray, unjust
  • Can usually re-integrate into civilian life rather easily
• The Combat Veteran

• Have all the same challenges except re-integration into civilian life plus

• must learn how to live with injuries
  • minor injuries
  • life long injuries
  • mental injuries

• Must learn how to re-integrate into their family after being in a combat area for a long period of time

• Must learn how to live after being on heightened state of alertness for a long period of time
• The Combat Veteran cont…

• Must find their place in society (most difficult)
  • Purpose
  • the feeling of being needed
UNDERSTANDING THE DISABLED COMBAT VETERAN

• PHYSICAL INJURIES
  • Frustrated at loss of ability
  • Stubborn - Will find a way to do things one way or another
  • Injuries can be life long
  • Can leave visible scars
  • May have to have medical treatment their entire life
• MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

• Depression Withdrawn
  • Decreased energy
  • Insomnia or excessive sleep
  • Overeating or appetite loss
  • Sad or “empty” feeling
  • Loss of interest in activities or hobbies

• Anxiety

• Military sexual trauma (MST)
  • Sexual assault
  • Threatening sexual harassment (both men and women)
  • Can occur in peace time, training, and war
• MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES cont….

• PTSD
  • Can occur months after coming home
  • Must be treated
  • Learning how to control and cope
  • Triggers can be everywhere and anything

• Survivors guilt

• Substance Abuse
  • Alcohol
  • Prescription drugs
  • Illegal drugs
What makes or breaks a Combat Veteran

• Support

  • Combat veterans seem to associate more with other combat veterans, we do not shun our other bothers and sisters, we just relate more to other combat veterans, even if it’s through a non-verbal communication.

  • Some organizations are only for combat veterans, example – VFW

• Hurdle’s

  • Statistics – jobless, homeless, suicide
• Communication

• We will do anything we can to avoid talking about our feelings or thoughts if we do not want to bring up the feelings associated with an event or if we feel we might seem weak.

• We may:
  • Change the subject
    ▪ Silence
    ▪ Verbally stating we will not answer
    ▪ Most commonly is to change the subject
      ▪ (we are very good at turning the tables)
Secrets

• Non combat veterans trying to explain how we feel and what we want are not viewed highly by combat veterans

• We are the best actors and actresses in the world.

• None of us want to tell our feelings or what is going on in our minds

• Fear what others may think

• We have all thought of suicide, even if just for a second

• We will almost always minimize any subject about us. (i.e. injuries, awards, pain, feelings, etc.)

• Exhibits of appreciation, gratitude, and recognition are not expected and can be very humbling.

• Most of us do not want to talk about “what happened over there”
HOW DISABLED VETERANS SEE THEMSELVES, COPE, AND FEEL ABOUT THEIR INJURIES

- Weak
- Others will or have lost confidence in them
- Denial
- Angry or feeling of unfairness
- Feeling sorry for themselves (whow-is-me syndrom)
- Hopeless
- Refuse help from others
- Avoid people, hobbies and interests
- Blame game
- Feeling others can see scars and injuries not in plain sight
- Quickly adapt
GENDER SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND FEELING

• Men
  • traditionally the head of the house
  • the provider, strongest, fixer
• Women
  • traditionally the homemaker
  • the supporter
  • the “glue” that holds the family together
• NOT THE ONE ON THE FRONT LINE
• forgotten warriors
HOW VETERANS WANT TO BE TREATED
and WHAT NOT TO DO

➢ Treat us like people not projects (i.e lab rat)
➢ Have expectations and make them clear
➢ Push us, we can take it
➢ Ask us how we feel, what we feel physically
➢ Don’t use us for monetary gain
➢ Don’t put on display as if in a zoo, the military has already
➢ DON’T BE AFRAID TO ASK anything
“Those that are to be admired are the one’s who give the gift of freedom to those who do not yet know the feeling of being free.

For when you are given the gift of freedom, it can never be taken away.”
A rarely seen picture of the inside of an actual Can-o-Wohoopass
THANK YOU