

Know your Veteran / Serviceperson

By David W. Powell

[The following article is adapted from David's address to the Tucson Area Marine Moms. This article and accompanying worksheet are designed to be helpful to parents with an adult child in the military. It might also be helpful for a military spouse or ex-spouse who is not involved in the details of the mission. Feel free to reproduce this article and worksheet as needed.]

Basic Training

Become informed about the mission of your service person's organization, what role he or she plays in this scheme, and what the expected outcomes are. For instance, is the organization responsible for the security of a village, town, city, or geographic region? How are they supposed to fulfill their mission?

Write to your service person often, preferably daily. Encourage others to do the same with their veteran.

Create the History

Save all letters you receive, whether they say something significant or not. When you receive letters, make sure they have a date on each page: If they don't, put a date on them.

Should you get, or place, a telephone call, record it and/or make notes to yourself that will help you remember the conversation.

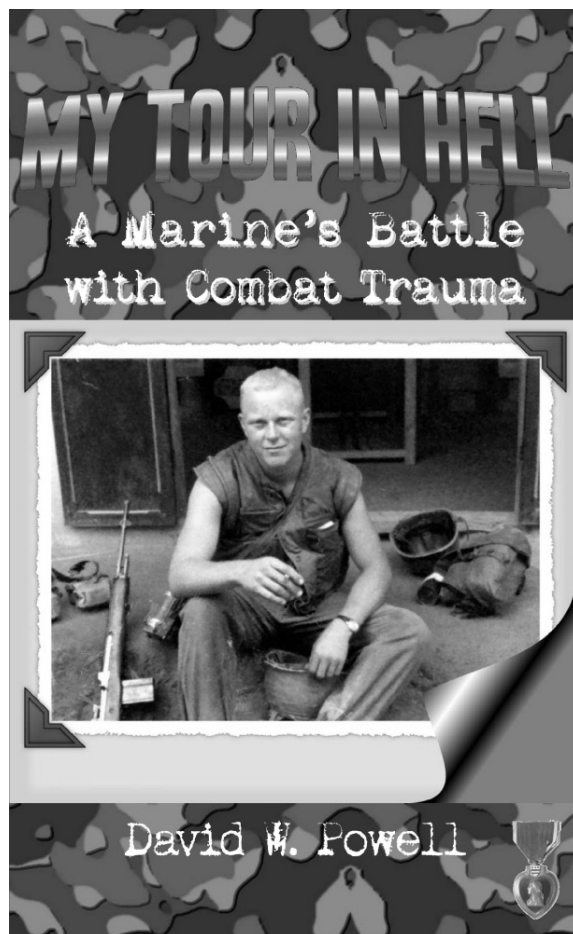
Be optimistic

Plan a homecoming and have it be a celebration.

Get the immediate family involved. When letters arrive, make an evening "date" with the family and read the letter aloud. Discuss the information. Share what each of you has learned with each other.

Locate another parent of a veteran or service person and make it a habit to talk at least weekly with that connection, and vice-versa. Share both the good news and the worrisome news with each other. Use the help your fellow parents of service men and women can give you, and give your help to them too!

Informational Worksheet: turn to next page



Veteran / Serviceperson Informational Worksheet

Get to know as much as you can about your veteran/active duty serviceperson and what he/she “does for a living”. Think about your service person’s job just as if they were working in a civilian capacity.

1. What are his/her identification “tags”?

Rank:

Service Number:

ASK: What is your Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)?

2. What are the responsibilities associated with that “title”?

ASK: What are the duties associated with your MOS.

3. Is he/she the “supervisor” of other people?

ASK: How many people report to him/her.

ASK: To whom do you directly report?

Name:

Rank:

4. What is the name of the business he/she “works for”?

ASK: What is the Unit Name you belong to?

5. Who is the “top dog” in the business?

ASK: What is the Commanding Officer’s?

Name:

Rank:

6. What is the location of the business?

ASK: Where is the Unit located (grid coordinates on a map)?

7. Does he/she have the “work” supplies they need to “work” effectively?

Examples: Writing supplies, shaving and hygienic items, garments, equipment and tools, food, candy, “wish list” items, books, magazines, etc.

ASK: What materials and/or personal items do you need?

8. What does he/she do during a typical day at “work”? Go through his/her duties from when they first start work and continue to the end of the day. Do the same thing for a typical week.

ASK: What constitutes a typical day and a typical week for you?

Is he/she closer to some people at “work” than others?

ASK: Who are your best buddies?

Name:

Name:

Rank:

Rank:

Rank:

Rank:

9. Does he/she have a Personnel File?

Request an “Un-redacted” copy of their Personnel File from the military, not from your veteran / service member.

- Review the Combat History; Note any Operations, etc.
- Review the Awards/Medals; Note any Citations, etc.
- Review the Discipline/Punishment; Note any infractions, etc.
- Review the Medical; Note any illnesses, wounds, etc.