

## Wife of a much loved Combat Recon Marine

For 23 years i have had the blessing of being married to a Vietnam Veteran. It has not been easy. This is hard to write because i doubt and question everything i do. I have watched as a loving caring honest hardworking man has withdrawn more and more until he now only goes to the VA for his appointments (only one of few places he feels "safe") it is so hard. I have been so frustrated by the lack of support. I have tried counseling at the VA on several different occasions and have wanted to have the support of other wives who might have better insight and suggestions to help me be the friend and wife my husband needs and have been told by the counselors that i cannot be "in group" unless my husband is receiving counseling too. Yes i would love to see him have someone to talk with but he trusts next to no one. What i do is just about all that needs doing. or did. i have collapsed, exhausted mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. There is little left. i'm on auto-pilot, numb and ready to fall over. We both are. This isn't living. This is barely existing. We have no solid support system. Friends are kept at arms length, because it's 'too much for them to handle'.

i saw a young man at our local grocery store 2 days ago or rather sensed someone 'familiar' behind me. i say familiar because of the tenseness and emotions from him. He darted around me as we left the store and went to his truck (covered with bumperstickers) he is servicemember who was in Iraq. MY HEART BROKE. With tears streaming down my face, i watched him drive out of the parking lot and down the road, he was driving over the center line, trying to run from the fear and pain and confusion. i could feel the hell in his mind. and all i could think of was -this- ..all over again. the wife, the children, the parents, the next generation hurting and scared. My heart went out to that young man and his family, him, hurting for a lifetime. i pleaded with God, Your Kingdom Come! because that is the only way this madness is going to stop. and be healed. To have support would be wonderful, to know how i can help my husband instead of contribute to his distress, to encourage him instead of discourage, to help him be able, instead of enabling. i almost feel past the point of no return. not totally without hope, just in this life. i will continue doing what i can for as long as i can. Please stop sending children to war, stop teaching children war, i beg you. Confusion, fear and pain and suffering is nothing to be -proud- of. Encourage your children (and friends and family and neighbors) and LOVE them, give them wings to soar.

wife of a much loved Combat Recon Marine who served in Vietnam (and is trying to come home.)