

Iraq War Veteran Finds Passion in Helping Veterans

VFW Service Officer relates to veterans

Dec 05, 2013

VFW Service Officer Vera Moore saw a veteran begging for money on the street by her parents' house.

"He asked for money to help with his medicine. Then he told me about the terrible nightmares he's been having since the war," said Moore. "I offered to help him submit a claim for PTSD, but he wanted no part of it. I almost had to drag him into the office, but he made the claim."

Moore is all too aware that many veterans are just too proud to ask for help, but she's determined to help them anyway.

"It's unfortunate, but there's this stigma ... especially around PTSD," said Moore. "I think a lot of older vets see it as a weakness, and that's just not the case."

Moore can speak from experience. Before becoming a service officer, she spent four years in the Marine Corps, serving in Iraq. When her son was born, she decided not to reenlist so she could stay home and raise him.

"I was working on my Bachelors of Psychology and heard about an opportunity to help veterans while I was in school," said Moore. "So I became a VFW Service Officer. I thought it would be temporary, but I've been doing this for four years now. I just really love what I do."

Moore's favorite part of the job is simply listening to veterans.

"I'm proud to be someone these veterans can talk to," said Moore. "We build a bond, and I can relate to a lot of their experiences in the military."

Perhaps Moore's ability to relate to veterans also makes it difficult for her to keep her feelings at bay—one of her biggest challenges is censoring her reactions.

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“I’m a very emotional person, so I had to learn to put up a wall and not get emotional in front of my veterans. Sometimes they say things that hit really close to home, and I have to hold back tears,” said Moore. “And if they cry, it really tears me apart.”

So what ever happened to the man she saw on the street' He's in limbo, still waiting on a decision, like so many others.

This is especially concerning to Moore, who believes the stress of waiting can have a very negative effect on people already suffering from mental health issues.

“One veteran who worked in law enforcement waited a long time for his claim,” said Moore. “He ended up committing suicide, and that was very painful to know. I can’t say that it was the wait or his disability, or a combination of the two, but it was heartbreaking.”

Moore is hopeful that the VA backlog will shrink over time. In the meantime, she won’t let it discourage her.

“I will do whatever it takes to get these veterans what is rightfully theirs.”