



— FROM THE CHAPLAIN —

Rich "Doc" Strait



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POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

"I returned home from war. It was rough. I was responsible for keeping my friends alive yet many still died despite my best efforts. Some died in my arms. I relive those battles and see their faces nightly in my nightmares. My marriage ended in divorce and I turned to self-medication."

"I returned home from Vietnam and had no problems except anger until I retired from work. Now I am having nightmares, flashbacks, and mood swings. The VA diagnosed me with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder." Which is often referred to as PTSD.

King David exhibited the signs and symptoms of PTSD. In Psalm 6:1-10 King David asked for forgiveness and grace from God. He asked God to deliver him from the intense emotional, spiritual, and physical suffering. Could this be King David suffering and talking about PTSD symptoms? A troubled soul which is having no moral/spiritual conviction while being overwhelmed with guilt and depression. Groaning all day and night just like today's vets. We

talk to ourselves about what happened; trying to justify what we did or simply to make sense of it all. King David made his bed swim meaning that he had such vivid and awful nightmares that he sweated profusely during those nightmares. Drenching his couch with tears and weeping. Any of this sound familiar? Vets with PTSD still do that as they continue to weep for their lost brothers and sisters in arms as they isolate and blame themselves for what happened.

King David wrote over seventy-five psalms filled with despair, hopelessness, anguish and torment due to his PTSD and what he was going through. Yet, he never lost hope. In these passages, King David was praying to God and not running from God. King David knew that he needed God to begin spiritual healing and to deal with the moral injury. Today's combat veterans with PTSD must do the same.

In Ecclesiastes 3 we read that there is a time for everything. Now is the time for our combat vets and their

families to heal. I know this all because I am a combat veteran with PTSD. I served many years with the U.S. Marines as a Fleet Marine Force Hospital Corpsman. A career cut short due to war injuries and PTSD. Finally, after prayer and turning back to God instead of running from Him and blaming Him, I made progress. I eventually was even able to go back to college and become a chaplain. This is not bragging but letting you know that I have been there and am there. Many other veterans have done this too.

If you or someone you know is struggling with PTSD, please get help. Call the Veterans Crisis line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1. You can also text that number. Call or visit your unit chaplain, church pastor, or someone you trust.

Faith in Christ,
Rev. Richard Strait, USN Retired
National Chaplain – Second Marine
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MILITARY EXCHANGES ONLINE SHOPPING PRIVILEGES TO OPEN TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED US VETERANS

By Kristine M. Sturkie, Navy Exchange Service Command Public Affairs

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (NNS) -- Beginning Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, military exchange online shopping privileges will be extended to all honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. military.

The Department of Defense announced this policy change as a way to recognize the contributions of service members who served in the military and to thank them for that service.

"We are proud to support this policy and extend the online shopping benefit to the nearly 15 million honorably discharged U.S. veterans," said retired Rear Adm. Robert J. Bianchi, Navy Exchange

Service Command (NEXCOM) CEO. "It is one small way to honor those who have served. This policy change is great for our veterans, and is a win for our current customers. By having a larger customer base shopping our online store, we expect to be able to expand our merchandise assortment; and by purchasing more from our vendors, strengthen our value to our customers even more. We also expect to see an increase in contributions given to Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) for quality-of-life programs, as well."

Prior to Nov. 11, honorably dis-

charged veterans may go to <http://www.myNavyExchange.com/veterans> or the Navy Exchange Facebook page to check for information and announcements. The Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) will be the sole source for verification data of authorized exchange shoppers.

For more information, visit <http://www.navy.mil>, <http://www.facebook.com/usnavy>, or <http://www.twitter.com/usnavy>.

For more news from Navy Exchange Service Command, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/nexcom/>.