

12-9-2016

Air Force Veterans Discuss PTSD In The Vietnam, Post 9-11 Era

David L. Morse

Wright State University - Main Campus

Will Davis

Wright State University - Main Campus, william.davis@wright.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/wyso_veterans_voices



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Radio Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Morse , D. L., & Davis , W. (2016). *Air Force Veterans Discuss PTSD In The Vietnam, Post 9-11 Era*. .

This Multimedia is brought to you for free and open access by the Local and Regional Organizations at CORE Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Veterans' Voices on WYSO by an authorized administrator of CORE Scholar. For more information, please contact corescholar@www.libraries.wright.edu.

Air Force Veterans Discuss PTSD In The Vietnam, Post 9-11 Era

By: David Morse

Photo 1 Caption: David Morse and Greg Meriwether

Photo 1 Credit: Will Davis/WYSO

Photo 2 Caption: Greg Meriwether during his service in the Air Force

Photo 2 Credit: courtesy of Greg Meriwether

Today our Veterans' Voices series continues with a cross-generational conversation between a post-9/11 veteran and a Vietnam veteran. Wright State student and Air Force veteran David Morse of Riverside is studying social work, and he talked to his mentor, Air Force veteran and social worker Greg Meriwether about counseling Vietnam veterans, and how post-traumatic stress disorder has changed since then.

Transcript:

Greg Meriwether (GM): Vietnam vets did not trust the government at all, and they were not going to the VA for any kind of services. And if they weren't coming in for services, there's no VA. So what they wanted us to do is get these veterans in, and so that's what we tried to do. At the same time, we just felt like they don't know what you're doing, they don't have any idea. There was no such thing as PTSD at the time. The DSM, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, did not say anything about PTSD. It wasn't even a diagnosable problem. We called it Post-Vietnam Syndrome.

David Morse (DM): Did you see any conflicts while you were in the military?

GM: I didn't. You know, I always thought I wanted to, but once I started working with veterans, I was glad I didn't.

DM: Right.

GM: I would have been a messed-up dude. I would have been.

DM: While I was in the military, we had an exercise going on at that time. During the exercise, they're setting off mock bombs and whatever so that people understand that this is kind of what it's like if you're deployed. A unit came back from deployment, and some commander decided that he was going to pull these guys back and they were going to participate in the exercise. Yeah. As soon as they hear the sound of a mortar, these guys hit the deck. And they know they're in an exercise, they know where they're at, they're at Hill Air Force Base in Utah. Instinctively though, they hit the deck. I just watched in horror as these guys covered for their

lives. And at that point, I don't think I knew what PTSD was, but I knew there was something wrong with that reaction, if your reality isn't at the physical place of where you're at.

GM: Can I ask you a question?

DM: Yeah, go ahead.

GM: What did you think about the folks who put that exercise on? I mean, why would anybody do that, is my question. You telling me this right now is like, wow, you got to be kidding me. That didn't happen because we already talked about this. We've already done this. But the fact is that there are so many people coming in now that don't understand how trauma works. They don't understand what war does to folks. I mean this is it like a never-ending thing because trauma impacts people for long periods of time. I do think things are getting better because, first of all, we know what PTSD is, we know what trauma is, now. So now we're doing not only post-deployment briefings, but we're doing pre- deployment briefings. This is what might happen, this is what you might experience, these are some of things you might see. So now we really understand that we need to educate people before they go, and when they come back, and in between.

Veterans Voices is supported in part by a grant from the Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee.