Syracuse Veterans’ Writing Group
Writing Prompts, February 2013 meeting

Loss and Gain

As we witnessed with Jim Johnson's reading and book, the power of reunions and shared storytelling among comrades can lead to remarkable, moving writing and analysis of military experiences. At the same time, it's the case that when you are wounded, transferred, or discharged, that it is possible to easily lose touch with those who most understood what you experienced in the military, those that you trusted with your life on a daily basis.

Write about losing touch or staying in touch with those you served with (or are serving with). Or, to turn this in a different direction, write about what kind of connections and friendships were lost (or gained) when you were transferred, wounded, or discharged?

What are you missing?

Andrew shared a piece on our facebook page called “I Miss Iraq, I Miss my Gun, I Miss My War” by Brian Mockenhaupt. Ralph also emailed me about it. Here are a couple of key paragraphs from the piece:

*Our culture craves experience, and that is war's strong suit. War peels back the skin, and you live with a layer of nerves exposed, overdosing on your surroundings, when everything seems all wrong and just right, in a way that makes perfect sense. And then you almost die but don't, and are born again, stoned on life and mocking death. The explosions and gunfire fry your nerves, but you want to hear them all the same. Something's going down.*

*For those who know, this is the open secret: War is exciting. Sometimes I was in awe of this, and sometimes I felt low and mean for loving it, but I loved it still. Even in its quiet moments, war is brighter, louder, brasher, more fun, more tragic, more wasteful. More. More of everything. And even then I knew I would someday miss it, this life so strange. Today the war has distilled to moments and feelings, and somewhere in these memories is the reason for the wistfulness.*

Write a piece that begins with “I miss….” Or “I don’t miss….”

Read more: I Miss Iraq. I Miss My Gun. I Miss My War. - Esquire
http://www.esquire.com/features/essay/ESQ0307ESSAY#ixzz2LejWtnTX