Military Work

Write about your job in the military. If you had more than one, pick one to write about. What did you do? How specialized was it? What was most challenging or complex about your job? What can you recall about your training? Did you work alone or with a team? If with a team, who were the people you worked with and what kinds of rhythms or interactions did you develop with them? What were you like at your best? Try to remember a mission you’d consider successful, or a particular situation in which you feel you performed well in your job. Describe how it went and what you did/accomplished? Remember to set the scene and embellish your descriptions of place and character.

(If you are a family member or a supporter of a veteran, try writing about your family member's job in the military. How much do you know about what he or she does or did? What stories did he or she tell you? How private or open was he or she about it? Did his or her military training ever translate into the home space in any way? If so, how?)

What Does a Veteran Look Like?

Diane posted the following article to our writing group’s facebook page. In a nutshell, the article tells the story of a woman veteran who parked in a reserved veteran parking spot and was reprimanded via a note by another veteran who assumed that she shouldn’t park there because she wasn’t a veteran (see below).

Write a letter to Mary Claire Caine or to the “Wounded Vet” responding to the note or write about a time where you have witnessed a similar incident—where you have seen the “image in someone's head of a veteran” not match their image of an actual veteran who is right in front of them.

Female veteran shamed for parking in veterans-only spot

Posted: Jan 19, 2015 3:42 PM ESTUpdated: Jan 19, 2015 6:33 PM EST by WNCN Staff

An Air Force veteran who served in Kuwait found a note on her car Friday criticizing her for parking in a veterans-only parking spot in Wilmington.

Mary Claire Caine told WECT-TV that she returned to her car from shopping at Harris Teeter to find a note plastered to her front window from a person identifying themselves as a "Wounded Vet."

It read, "Maybe [you] can't read the sign you parked in front of ... This space is reserved for those who fought for America ... not you. Thanks, Wounded Vet."

Caine, who served in Kuwait and on the flight line of the F-117 Nighthawk, said her heart sank.

"The first thing I felt was confusion that there was a mistake, and that I had to talk to this person and ask them why they were so quick to assume I wasn't a veteran and that I was taking privileges that didn't belong to me," Caine said.

Caine said she got angry at herself when the note left her wondering, "Am I a worthy enough veteran to park in this spot?" So she waited by her car in hopes the "Wounded Vet" would return and she could ask why they felt the need to leave the note.

She said no one returned.

"I think they took one look at me when I got out of my car and saw that I was a woman and assumed I wasn't a veteran and assumed I hadn't served my country," Caine told WECT. "They have this image of what today's American veteran is and honestly if you've served in the United States military, you know that veterans come in all shapes and sizes."

Caine said she doubts she'll ever find the author of the note, but hopes the person realizes their error.

"I want them to know they owe me and every other female service member who's fighting now and who's fought in the past, an apology for jumping to conclusions," Caine said.

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