

Iraq as Experienced by a Woman Soldier, Wife, and New Mother

Joy Schlotterbeck
Army Reserves
Specialist E4

American Public Health Association Session: Improving Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services To Returning Veterans from Iraq & Afghanistan and Their Families. November 6, 2007

I am

A Mother



- As a parent you are horrified that you can completely forget your child
 - Traffic Example
- When I found out that I was pregnant I had many thoughts going through my mind
 - Am I healthy – was I exposed to anything
 - Is my husband healthy
 - » Plastic bottles?

I am

A Wife



Copyright 2007, Joy Schlotterbeck, JSchlotterbeck@myactv.net

- Of a military man
 - There is always the fear that he will have to go
 - Fear of what will happen when he goes
 - As a veteran myself the knowledge that I have of what it is like over there is a double edged sword
- Of a veteran
 - There is a fear that he has issues that have not been resolved

I was

A Soldier

- Female soldiers are often judged by males soldiers
 - often by physical looks and attitudes – not necessarily by accomplishment
- “If you disrespect yourself, others will disrespect you.”
- I was treated well because I was myself and tried to be the best soldier I could be
 - I didn't try to be one of the guys yet wasn't too female either

I was

An Army Reservist

- Being a Reservist isn't good for receiving treatment
 - Told to let someone know that you need help before release from active duty
 - Why when that could mean that you stay on active duty for months or years after you have returned to the US
 - Would you want to watch your friends and fellow soldiers go home to their families while you sit possibly hundreds of miles from your family
 - given massive amounts of information of where to go and who to talk to in short amount of time