

By transforming them with
the HOPE & HELP that
HEALS the traumas of war,
deployment, and its'
aftermath!



***"I submit that we as Catholics,
have a duty to make our
contributions to the
psychological and spiritual
[healing] of our brave young
men and women who have
sacrificed so much for
their country."***

Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio
Archbishop of the Military, USA

What's next

These programs and materials available July 1st:

Military Marriages...a Matter of the Heart — Two-day Retreat bringing Hope, Help and Healing to rebuild trust, reclaim intimacy, create mutual support, and renew love.

Military Marriages MadeEasy — Individual topics and materials for small gatherings to foster on-going growth and peer support. Topics include "There's a Stranger in the House," "Calming the war within," "That Hurts!" and "TRUST, and more TRUST."

Military Marriages...a Matter of the Heart! NOVENA — The first of two, this 9-day format uses various "*Matters of the Heart*" to consider, think about and bring to prayer in the privacy of ones home. One will focus specifically on "Coming home."

Military "Marriage Angels!" — A dynamic, innovative and effective way to create on-going relational and spiritual care as trained advocates will "watch over" a military marriage as it mends.

Who we are

Don & Lorrie Gramer, married 43 years, have 7 adult children and 17 grandchildren. We have worked over 35 years as Catholic Marriage & Family Life Directors and marriage educators. We both have Master's in Family Ministry. Don is an Army Veteran.

Join us in this effort

We are seeking your help for the many Military Marriages from Viet Nam through today's Gulf Wars, and their families. Please visit our website and make a tax deductible donation. No gift is too small. We are looking for Volunteers to be a part of the TEAM, contact us. No experience is too limiting. AND, if you are a Military Marriage in need of support, please email us now.

Contact Us

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Visit us on the web:
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MarriageBuilding USA
Don & Lorrie Gramer, M.A.
Founders & Directors
www.militarymarriagesmatter.org

Don's story

I joined the Army at 19, entered flight school, received the rank of Chief Warrant Officer and flew helicopters in Viet Nam. What young man wouldn't think this to be cool. But "cool" isn't what happened. I faced daily the devastations of war. I, like so many others, carried the realities of life and death on my shoulders. Who really is prepared for this?

Sure, I survived the trauma of war and my military service. But I know now, this wasn't true. I survived the combat, but not the trauma. Soldiers are taught how to kill, but who helps us deal with the killing? I was no different. It's just that the battleground was no longer some field, or air space, far, far away. Now it was within. And, I found that scarier than anything I faced in Viet Nam. I became detached, and found it difficult to really love any one., at least, not very well.

Why Military Marriages Matter!

War, and its' aftermath, is psychological, emotional, relational and spiritual. Being married to a military spouse is no different. It affects your head, your heart, and your soul. Anger and confusion creates doubts. Trust all but disappears. You need a clear "rudder" to guide you, but can't be alone with yourself, or each other, long enough to find one. And the combat zone moves. Now it's in your marriage., and the most important support system we have, is now the focus of our rage. All too often this leads to inappropriate or misunderstood behaviors that are harmful to the marriage and to our life in general. We know we need to do something before there's another failed marriage, before another suicide (and it's now 22 a day among veterans), before anyone else loses hope and feels abandoned and isolated. Each family member is in need of our care, our help and our support to reclaim their marriages and families as a place of safety and support.

In too many instances today, the traumas of war, especially the aftermath of military deployment, combat, and coming home are destroying the greatest support systems our servicemen have, their

"In the face of separations and the pain of post-traumatic stress disorder, it is challenging to live the life and love intended and blessed by Almighty God."

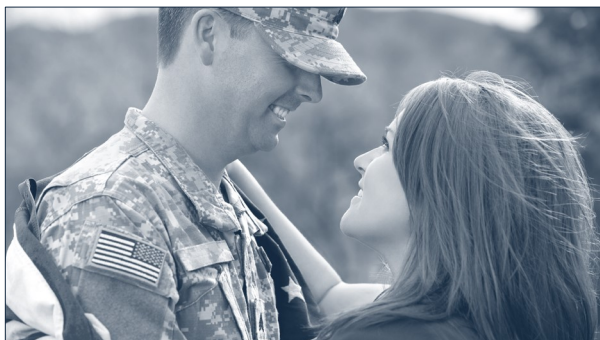
Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, *"Married Couples and the Challenge of Extended Tours, Financial Pressures and Reentry into the Family after Military Service."*, September 25, 2010, USCCB, Washington, D.C.

marriages. Military Marriages Matter seeks to reclaim the sacred space that is Christian Marriage, where "mattering" can become the safest place and the best kind of support in the healing and recovery process.

Military Marriages Matter! because Marriages Matter!

More about our story

Forty years ago I was diagnosed with PTSD. I need to correct this one now. My entire family had PTSD. Especially our marriage, as the trauma was now being played out in our home. As I acted out the training that is designed to send any young soldier to war, and the experiences of deployment and the war itself, I almost destroyed our marriage. I closed myself off from the very person who loved me more than any other. I needed her, but I continually pushed her away with my words and my actions.



Military Marriages do Matter!

Our spouses, our children, are the unsung heroes, the survivors and at times, the casualties of our military experiences. They send their loved ones away only to have them return changed, and in many instances, quite dramatically. And it changes spouses, too.

When given support themselves, and the tools for healing and recovery, spouses can become the best support system our active-duty and veterans can have to deal with the aftermath of war. Lorrie has listened, and listened even more. She has become my strongest advocate and best friend. And, like me, maybe, just maybe, other soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines can find within themselves and within their marriages, the peace of mind and strength of character to love and be loved once again. And, then, we'll learn to return the favor.

Military Marriages Matter! wants to offer...

- HOPE to not only let military marriages survive, but thrive;
- HELP to overcome the stressors, identify the problems, and learn skills for talking, listening, empathizing and problem-solving;
- HEALING from a loving God, and a loving spouse, making marriages stronger, more supportive and with renewed TRUST; and, the
- SUPPORT of "*Marriage Angels*" as we train other military couples to "watch-over" and guide each couple.

Our Success Stories

HOPE, HELP, and HEALING are all "inside" jobs. It's all a matter of the heart. When we can change the thinking, we change the outcomes. This kind of change isn't demanded or forced, though, it's given and it's learned.

Military Marriages Matter! is our story, and the stories of many other couples who journey through the rigors of military life, and do thrive, do grow, and do heal because of our marriages.