

Veteran to Veteran

When a Veteran leaves the 'job' and retires to a better life, many are jealous, some are pleased, and others, who may have already retired, wonder if he knows what he is leaving behind, because we already know.

1. We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times.

2. We know in the Military life there is a fellowship which lasts long after the uniforms are hung up in the back of the closet.

3. We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is.

These are the burdens of the job. You will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see or choose to ignore and always will look at the rest of the Military world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing.

Never think for one moment you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping the 'job' and merely being allowed to leave 'active' duty.

So what I wish for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you never forget for one moment that you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

NOW... Civilian Friends vs. Veteran Friends Comparisons:

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Get upset if you're too busy to talk to them for a week.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Are glad to see you after years, and will happily carry on the same conversation you were having the last time you met.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Have never seen you cry.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Have cried with you.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Keep your stuff so long they forget it's yours.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Borrow your stuff for a few days then give it back.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Know a few things about you.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Could write a book with direct quotes from you.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will leave you behind if that's what the crowd is doing.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Will stand by you no matter what the crowd does.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Are for a while.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Are for life.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Have shared a few experiences....

VETERAN FRIENDS: Have shared a lifetime of experiences no citizen could ever dream of...

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will take your drink away when they think you've had enough.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Will look at you stumbling all over the place and say, 'You better drink the rest of that before you spill it!' Then carry you home safely and put you to bed...

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will ignore this.

VETERAN FRIENDS: Will forward this.

A veteran - whether active duty, retired, served one hitch, or reserve is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to 'The Government of the United States of America' for an amount of 'up to and including my life'.

From one Veteran to another, it's an honor to be in your company. Thank you for your service to our country and defending the freedoms we enjoy.