



Sex in the Military

“

Things the military could do to help sex be better?
Make the damn uniforms easier to get out of!”

female, age 19

It's not like soldiers leave their sex drives in their home towns. But providing helpful information about sexuality for new recruits is not always a priority of the military. Since the military does not publish reports on the sexual practices of its members, we have put this information together based on clandestine reports from the field. Hopefully, this chapter's intelligence is better than that of some governmental agencies.

The Uniform Code of Military Justice prohibits displays of physical affection while you are in uniform. The defense that you were naked and not in uniform while having sex is probably not going to wash. The UCMJ prohibits sex in barracks and sex between people of different ranks. It also prohibits sodomy, which is defined to include oral sex. If that isn't a recipe for "boring," it's hard to know what is. It also could be a bit delusional on the part of the UCMJ.

While there are some fascinating aspects to sex in the military, it is really just a cross-section of sex any place where Americans are gathered. So if you are looking for a bizarre expose, you're in for disappointment. But there are some interesting dimensions to sex in the military, especially if you are a female G.I. who likes her men well armed and ready to engage.

The “Guide To Getting It On” Recruiting for the Military?

Before we get started on the cultural and sociological aspects of sexuality in the Armed Forces, consider the following observations from two khaki-wearing philosophers:

From the Guide To Getting It On

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“Believe me, it’s the women in the military that are sex mad, but nobody complains or calls them sluts, because we would all do the same in their situation.” *male age 25*

“I mean it’s usually five females living in a building with 100 horny males. The girls pretty much pick who they want to sleep with that night.” *male age 23*

If you are a woman who really likes sex and you decide to go to college, there will be around 60 women for every 40 males, some of whom are in good physical shape. For women in the military, there are 85 males for every 15 women. Plus, if you want to have sex with Uncle Sam’s finest, you don’t have to worry about getting a reputation as long as you make efforts to be discrete about it. It’s not like it’s going to follow you 200 soldiers later when you settle down in civilian life and marry the minister from the First Church of Christ. What happens in the military usually stays in the military.

Before the women in the military who are monogamous launch a strike on the offices of Goofy Foot Press, everyone knows that at least half of the women in the military are true-blue and not interested in sleeping around—which ups the odds for the rest of you to 7.5 women for every 100 men. Consider the following words of advice from a reader who knows:

“For new females—have fun! I was so eager to be the good airman, obey all the rules, etc., that for my first few years I didn’t have a lot of fun with the unique situations we can get into. Most of the people you will know will be young men in good physical shape. Take advantage!!!”
female age 25

As for a man’s chances of having sex in the military, these sentiments from two experienced soldiers echo what we heard time and again:

“I thought being in the military would be like taking a vow of celibacy. However, it turned out there were good opportunities.” *male 25*

“Coming from a smaller town in Iowa I was a little shocked how others showed no concern that someone was married.” *male age 37*

Some of the opportunities include civilian women who find the words “base adjacent” and “available men” to be music to their ears. There is seldom a scarcity of available civilian women near military bases. Opportunities also abound in ports of call in Europe and Asia, although in Muslim countries the sex is mostly on base between members of the military, with some prostitution being available if you look hard enough.

As for the willingness of military wives to offer comfort to needy soldiers while their husbands are deployed, some do and some don't. For some military wives, it's not unusual to share tender moments with each other rather than with other men while their husbands are away. However, the wives of officers may be held to a different standard than the wives of enlisted men.

The Culture

Sex in the military is a mirror of sex any place else where Americans live and work. However, there are a few complexities that help define sex in the military as different.

There is the never knowing when you will be put in harm's way—but always expecting it and always training for it. This can contribute to a sense of fatalism or cynicism within the culture of the military, or a *devil may care* attitude when it comes to what you do in your free time.

There's also the emphasis on the body and its abilities, the impact of group living, and constantly being moved from one base to another. This can make for a climate where the sex is catch as catch can. And soldiers are frequently immersed in cultures where sex is perceived differently than it is here. In foreign lands, sexual economies often thrive around military bases. Even here in the states, different bases have different sexual cultures.

These are just some of the factors that help give sex in the military its very own and sometimes unique perspective.

Short Tour vs. Long Tour

“My sister, who is also in the service is married to a serviceman. She recently returned from a TDY (temporary duty) assignment, and while there, engaged in an extramarital affair with another married serviceman. These things happen a lot.” *female age 25*

Deployments in the military are often categorized as “short tour” or “long tour.” If you are married and you are on a long tour, they will often move your family with you. If it's a short tour (under a year), your family usually stays behind. There are plenty of exceptions, especially if you are going into combat.

The Impact of Your Status

“The base where I received the bulk of my training after basic, Sheppard, is where most of the people are young, first time away from home, and

have just undergone an enormous life-changing experience. There's a sudden freedom after basic training. Everyone's hormones are raging. One piece of common wisdom is, 'Don't get married at tech school!' I guess that's because lots of people jump the gun. There are lots of random hookups, some racy stuff going on at the dance clubs, and lots of alcohol. Another base I spent some time at recently, in Florida, has a greater population of 'adult' service members, so there's less of a panicky, gotta-have-it-now attitude." *female age 25*

Members of the armed forces usually fall into two groups: first termers, and lifers:

First termers are often younger and unmarried. They usually have high sex drives and they are eager to be accepted into the military's macho culture.

Lifers are a different story. They have made the military a career and they have often sampled many different customs and cultures. Lifers tend to be married and have families, but it is also not unusual for them to spend a good deal of time away from home.

Social & Economic Class Distinctions—The Dangers of Sex between Ranks

Since there is currently no draft, there is little equity in the military. Enlisted people are almost all from the middle class and below, while commissioned officers tend to be from the middle class and above.

In addition to the political and economic divisions within the armed forces, there are strictly-enforced prohibitions regarding fraternization among the ranks. People in the military who marry other military people are expected to be in the same or a similar rank. It is a violation of the *Uniform Code of Military Justice* to even socialize with someone not in or close to your own rank. Good luck trying to explain away that little affair between a lieutenant and a private, or a colonel and junior commissioned officer.

No matter how hot that first-class private is, a commissioned officer can get him- or herself into big trouble for fraternizing when their uniforms are on the floor.

Women in the Military

"A female private and myself were going through an abandoned building and on the middle floor she just went crazy and started sucking me off like there was no tomorrow. She even answered her radio in the middle of it then carried on." *male age 26*



Catching some rays at the FOB—and on patrol the next day.

“With my coworkers, sex is not an issue—I’m a woman working a job which is, even now, pretty much a ‘man’s job.’ I have a very non-sexual relationship with the boys in my shop. I think it surprises them when I wear civilian clothes and they remember that I’m a real girl. However, I do feel like the females are a bit of a commodity. I know several women who take advantage of the situation and live it up with all the partners they want, and others who are from conservative families/areas who wouldn’t dream of it.” *female age 25*

Like working women in the civilian world, women in the military often change personas between home and when on duty. Some have said that their military persona is more masculine and aggressive, while their civilian persona can be more relaxed or feminine.

In the past, sexual harassment has been prominent. It still is. But it was even worse before because a woman who wanted to report someone had to report to the officer in charge. She couldn’t report to an independent person. The officer would seldom want to lose a good man, and would often ignore the charges.

In the last couple of years, reporting is through separate channels, and women's complaints are being taken more seriously. As for the reality of reporting harassment, one female soldier says it will no longer get you demoted, but forget being promoted and forget being treated decently ever again. A female Marine in the Middle East who is quoted in Newsmax.com says, "You have two choices. You can keep your pants on and be miserable and be harassed, or you can take your pants off and you'll still get harassed, but you'll be a little less miserable."

The military has recently begun to require special training regarding sexual harassment and coercion. There is no shortage of accounts that are SHARPLY critical of this program. They claim it is ineffective. They say its purpose is to placate senators and congresswomen, as opposed to genuinely trying to prevent the sexual coercion of female soldiers.

Quid Pro Quo — Where Sexual Coercion Thrives in the Military

Perhaps the biggest area of sexual coercion of women and some men in the military is referred to as *Quid Pro Quo*. *Quid Pro Quo* invites sexual assault and coercion because a soldier who does not obey the wishes of a soldier in command or of higher rank will not be able to advance in the military. As for the fate of women in the military who report commanding officers for *Quid Pro Quo*-related sexual coercion? We'll get back to you on that one.

Male Soldiers As Victims of Rape

"Nobody wants to admit this, but the problem affects everyone, members of both genders, of all ranks."

Few people realize that the majority of service members who are sexually assaulted each year are men, and that the physical and emotional consequences can be every bit as great for men as women. Male-on-male sexual assault is a substantial problem in the military, which is only just beginning to admit the problems it has with its women members being sexually coerced and raped.

The likelihood of male rape victims in the military reporting the crime is even less than the likelihood of a woman reporting that she's been raped. For starters, it is difficult for people in a hyper-masculine environment like the military to believe that a man can be raped by another man, and that the physical injuries suffered by men who are raped are often worse than those suffered by women who are victims of rape. So any man who says he has

been sexually abused faces a tremendous uphill struggle to be believed. And the likelihood that the military will punish the perpetrator or group of perpetrators as opposed to inferring the victim is mentally unstable is often slim. So men who use sex to degrade or violently rape other men in the military often have *carte blanche* to do it again and again.

As one writer stated, if ISIS were capturing and raping male members of military, the country would be in arms. But when members of our own military are doing this on a daily basis, we often turn a blind eye.

Sex in Different Bases & Ports of Call

“Seemed to be a lot of screwing around going on overseas. Hell, when you are out to sea for 65+ days and come into port and see women offering sex for next to nothing, its hard not to. The Philippines was approximately \$5 bar fine for a gal all night. Treat her with respect and she’s yours the whole time you’re there. Singapore was easy to get laid. Any cab driver knew were the brothels were located. Be careful of street walkers as many of them were benny boys (transvestites). Hong Kong—ask cabbies. Perth, Australia. OHhhhh YES! Blonde hair blue eyed beauties whose parents encouraged the relationships (short or long term).” *male age 44*

“In Greenland it was an isolated base with only a hundred or so military people and some civilians. There was probably a higher amount of cheating there than most places because it was so remote. Not much to do but drink and screw.” *male age 48*

“For nearly a year in Iraq, I was under constant threat of death with my work, and I was rarely alone. I didn’t have sex at all when I was there.” *male age 37*

“In Washington, sex seemed more about starting a family, although I did more easily find sexually-deprived women there willing to forgo a relationship.” *male age 24*

“In ports of call, the official ‘off limits’ list was usually a liberty battle plan because the bars had the best booze and the whore houses had the best broads. Drinking on liberty was expected, getting drunk was a badge of honor, getting wasted to the point that you can’t remember where you were, what you did, who you did it to, nor how much it cost. There was honor in being a drunken whore monger.” *male 58*

Saigon Vs. Baghdad—Your Granddad’s War vs. the Middle East

While members of the military did have sex in Iraq and Afghanistan, it was often between male and female soldiers or interpreters, and not in the best of circumstances. This was different from Vietnam, where sex was often available in bars, hotels, and at “skivvy huts” which were often close to bases. “Skivvy huts” might have three or four beds next to each other in a 12-by-12 room. Local women would be having sex with soldiers who had their pants pulled down around their ankles. There was not much privacy.

Cultures: There was more neon in Saigon than Baghdad and Kabul, and opportunities for sex were everywhere. In the Middle East, sex outside of marriage is strictly forbidden for women and for a woman to sell herself for sex is unthinkable. It’s unusual when a soldier would see the hair of a local woman let alone make serious eye contact, and maybe only while on a “knock and talk” and if none of the men were home.

The Military: During the war in Viet Nam, there was a draft. So the average soldier was single and somewhere between 18- and 22-years of age. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the make up of the troops was very different. Many had wives and children stateside. Many of the troops were National Guard or Reserves who tended to be older and married when compared to active duty Army or Marine Corps. Plus, today’s military has a much higher percentage of females than was the case in Vietnam. There is more room for intra-armed forces fooling around.

Considering the age of the troops and the Muslim culture’s attitude toward sex versus that of the Vietnamese, the respective conflicts were in different centuries in more ways than just figuratively.

Korea vs. Europe — The Moose Culture

There is a large military presence in Korea. Soldiers in Korea have traditionally moved off base and set up housekeeping in a one room “hooch” with a “Moose.” A Moose is a Korean woman who cooks, cleans and provides companionship, including sex. They are quite good at keeping their soldier smiling. It was not unusual for a soldier to marry his moose and bring her home to the US as his wife. Most bases in the Pacific and Asia have their own form of a “moose culture.” There might be some bases where the men in a military dorm pool their money and hire a group of mooses to take care of the men’s needs, including their sexual needs.

In Europe, prostitutes are plentiful and legal. Contacts can be made through night clubs, bars and online.

Sex in Home Bases with Spouses of Soldiers Who Are Deployed

“Couples were fooling around a lot on both ends. There were places you could go if you wanted to pick up someone’s wife.” *male age 24*

“There is one extreme or the other in the military. You either have sex on the casual or you really fall in love with them. Those I knew that wanted to stay together were completely faithful to each other and some even left the military together.” *male age 25*

“I had a lady friend during a remote assignment who was married to another AF member stationed elsewhere, and they seemed to have an understanding that going without sex for a long time apart wasn’t a reasonable expectation. Although she and I were never intimate, she made it plain that she was willing if I was. My only sexual encounters while apart from my wife were casual, with no expectations of a lasting relationship.” *male age 54*

“Most couples that I know usually ended in divorce or breaking up. I’m not sure that it was because of infidelity or not. But a lot of the women I slept with were married.” *male age 23*

While plenty of military people who answered the survey for this chapter say they remained true blue to their spouse or lover, there are plenty who didn’t. It’s not unheard of for married couples to have understandings that all is fair in love and war, or when deployed or on tour. Whether these understandings are spoken or merely understood varies with the people involved.

Masturbation

“Most guys after a while would pretty much talk about it openly. From what I gathered everyone was doing it in their bed (rack). It’s enclosed on all sides and pretty much offers the most privacy. The only other place I would masturbate is in the shower. Some masturbated in the places they worked at day to day (shops). Although it is tempting because of the access to a computer, I only did this once. A few people I’ve know over the years were really open about it. So open as to not stop if accidentally walked in on them. They would simply ask you to come back later.” *male age 24*

“I would masturbate late at night when the rest of the hooch was asleep, or in the showers. I don’t recall being aware of anyone else doing it, but the general attitude was everybody did it sometime.”

male age 44

“My roommates and myself were usually pretty good friends and we knew each other rather well. If one of us had to beat off we would usually just ask the other person to leave for awhile or to take their time at the store or wherever they were at the time. Or you just take a walk to the bathroom and stroke it in the stall.” *male age 23*

“I did it very quietly. We had curtains on our bunks but you could usually tell when someone was solo pleasuring. You didn’t say anything as everyone did it and you wouldn’t like it if things were said about you.” *male age 44*

E.M.H.O.s or Early Morning Hard Ons

“I don’t recall any incidents where a morning erection became an issue. We joked about it a lot when coming to the end of midnight shifts. Morning erections aren’t just for people waking up, there’s something about dawn that seems to bring them on!” *male age 54*

Not a single man in our surveys said that early morning erections were a concern. Some said everyone had them, it was a normal part of being a guy, and no big deal. Another said he suspected the military was putting something in the food to decrease early morning erections during basic training, because he doesn’t remember getting one after the first week. He does remember getting many of them after basic training. Who knows the impact of exhaustion and fear on the spontaneous erection?

Swingers & Nudists in the Military

Swinging and nudism is a fairly prominent activity in the military. This is especially true in bases in Europe or parts of Asia where the social prohibitions against swinging and nudism are not as great as they are in the US.

“Where to find sex?”

“You really don’t have to go anywhere. It usually finds you.” *male age 29*

“Local clubs known to be meat markets.” *male age 37*

“Probably the bars on post. They are usually full of married women looking for someone to play with while their husbands are away.”

male age 23

Unlike males, women in the military have seldom needed any help in finding partners. For men, the Internet is now being used for finding sex. This echoes its use in civilian life. Where soldiers go online depends on what kind of sex they are looking for. There appear to be legitimate online dating services for members of the military who want to date other members of the military. They also hook up soldiers with civilians who live in the surrounding communities. Match.com is said to have more military singles than all of the military dating sites combined. Just beware of the many scams aimed at military singles. Do a browser search to learn what they are so you can try to avoid them.

Gay and Bisexual

“There were very few homos onboard ship. It was never a concern.”

male age 43

“While on ship, I had sex with as many guys as I wanted and as often as I wanted it. I had sex with men and women—in deep corners and heck, even in the barbershop once!” *male age 31*

“It’s somewhat expected that everyone will date; if you don’t date, coworkers will assume you’re a homosexual. While this is very seldom true, it is a stigma.” *male age 47*

“A lot of military in Washington use Craigslist. You would see men on the site advertise for women at first and then as the day went on you would see the same men advertising for any sex. Some of them wanting their first homosexual experience. These were guys in their early 20s, in their sexual prime.”

male age 24

Contrary to what you might hear about the military, not a single one of our survey takers said he or she felt gays and lesbians were a concern for them. None reported feeling stared at while in the showers, and none listed homosexuality in others as a problem.

How you define “homosexual” in the military is interesting. There is the navy term, “It ain’t queer unless it’s tied to the pier,” which implies a different standard for what happens on land where women are plentiful and what happens on board ship. In years past, there was also a military joke that defined a “buddy” as a guy who would go off base while you are restricted to base, get himself two blow jobs, and come back and give you one.

There appears to be a well established if not well hidden gay and bisexual culture in the military. The men and women who are part of this culture take extreme measures to keep it hidden. It’s nothing for them to drive hours from a base to a private gay venue where there is little likelihood they will be found out.

Also, it can be problematic for a man or woman in the military to not date a member of the other sex, as they risk being perceived as gay. Gay officers have to be particularly careful, as other officers’ wives are constantly trying to set them up. A “stunt babe” is a woman who poses as a gay soldier’s girlfriend at military events and whose picture he keeps on his desk. She is the military equivalent of a “beard.”

Gay Females in the Military

Contrary to what you might think, lesbians can have a rough time in the military, especially those who are tomboyish as opposed to fem-looking. Everyone is expecting women in the military to be gay. Straight women in uniform can be especially sensitive to this. They consider their gay sisters as a bad mark on the family name, and often display a lack of tolerance. Lesbians in the military quickly learn this. The constant scrutiny can become nightmarish. While straight girls in the military can have a sexual heyday, lesbians in the military say they won’t even risk kissing another woman in “the privacy” of a base apartment, let alone muff-diving when on government-owned real estate.

In her piece *No Ass, No Tail*, Myriam Gurba says that real military dykes aren’t getting laid. She quotes one lesbian who said she believed herself to be the only dyke among 60 girls in her basic training outfit. Given the rampant homophobia, she said, “I think living in close quarters with 60 women was actually one of the most dreadful experiences I’ve had to endure.”

While there can be opportunities for homosexual exploration, it would seem to be among women who no one suspects as being gay. Otherwise, they are too well watched for it to be comfortable.

A Talk with an Active Duty Solider

The author of *The Guide* recently had an unexpected talk about sex in the military with a young soldier who was on leave from Afghanistan. This soldier had already served two tours in Iraq. The following is a partial reconstruction of the conversation from notes scrawled on the back of an envelope.

Some soldiers say they are too exhausted or traumatized to want very much sex when they're in combat. What's it been like for you?

I enjoy sex and have it whenever I can. I have a much higher sex drive now than when I was in high school. My body is on hyper alert when I'm out on patrol and I can't shut it off just because I'm back at base. After what I see and do out there, the sex helps me reconnect with a sense of humanity.

Where do you find sex in Afghanistan?

There's a lot of sex on base!!!

What about prostitution?

I've been with prostitutes in Iraq and in Afghanistan. They're not out in the open, but you can find them if you ask around. Some that I've been with speak English. I've spent entire nights just talking with them. The women are exotic, and I find that very appealing. It's different than being with a woman here at home. The sex is incredible, but so is being with a woman from such a different culture. I know a lot of the guys just want to have sex and get off, but I want to talk for hours first.

What about the female soldiers on base? Are they up for sex?

This isn't going to sound so good, but there's a lot of people having a lot of sex on base and I don't see relationships back home being a detriment.

If you work hard to please a woman on base sexually and you do a good job, the women will talk about you to other women. Word gets around if you're good and who you are, so it's not at all unusual for a woman to come around in the afternoon or night and ask if you're available to have sex. It's real straightforward, nobody gets embarrassed, none of the games like when you're back home. If you're available and she's someone you'd like to have sex with, then you say yes. Or maybe you'll say "I'm really sorry, but there's already someone I'll be with tonight."

And yes, the women have sex with each other. Most of the women aren't gay, it just happens. And maybe it's nice having sex with other women when you're surrounded by so many guys.

Is there much relationship drama on base?

Good God yes. Guys aren't used to women being trained soldiers, and some of these women won't hesitate to hurt you physically, and I mean hit you, pull a knife on you, and even shoot you. Everything is turned up on a base in a war zone, including the drama.

How are women treated on the bases?

Terribly. A woman who is in the military needs to have seriously thick skin. Guys are going to be talking trash to her from morning to night, "Bend over and let's see what you've got..." kind of stuff. A woman needs to be tough and able to ignore it. Guys will behave when a commanding officer is around, but the minute he or she is gone...

If the women have sex with the women, do male soldiers have sex with other male soldiers?

Before I went on leave, a friend who I've been in combat with was beating himself up because he'd had sex with another male soldier. But I don't think it's that uncommon. You suit up every morning expecting to get shot at and to lay down your life for the guy next to you. And you expect him to do the same for you. You share emotions together that a lot of husbands and wives don't share. You're in a foreign and hostile environment, and there are five or ten men to every woman.

And people are surprised that male soldiers have sex with male soldiers? They should get over it. No one has problems if two female soldiers get it on. Keep it to yourself, and that's that. What you do with your body when the enemy isn't trying to vaporize it is up to you.

What about threesomes?

I'd say there's a lot of that. Two guys and a girl. And there are times the guys will be getting each other off in addition to her. But with so many men, any woman who wants two guys at once gets two guys at once.

Sex after Combat

Thanks to better armor and more immediate medical attention, fewer soldiers are being killed in battle, but more are returning home with injuries. Some of the most common problems include traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat related sleep disorders, burns,



Some soldiers who return from combat appear to be totally normal, but they aren't able to feel close to loved ones and friends. It can be a real struggle to jump back into the relationship and the family life they had before.

amputations and trauma to different parts of the body including the crotch. Many of these injuries are caused by blasts from IEDs.

Unfortunately, the VA does not want to hear about combat-related sex and relationship problems, especially those that can't be treated with pills like Viagra or Prozac.

More than 10% of combat vets are returning with PTSD, which tends to keep the body in a hyper state of alertness. This can seriously disrupt your sex life, given how the adrenaline that's surging through your system can make it difficult to kick back and feel like getting it on. Your body is in a permanent "fight or flight" mode, with sex taking a back seat to worries that bad things

might happen. Just letting your guard down enough to talk about your feelings can be frightening. Plus, the sounds and sensations that happen during sex can become flashback triggers. Even the way we describe what sex feels like often includes combat imagery, “I started coming so hard it felt like an explosion...” or “There was this blast of light and energy...” Also, the sounds people make at the height of sexual passion often sound like cries of pain.

Fortunately, there are cutting-edge treatments for PTSD. Hopefully you will seek them out.

If You Have Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Just under 20% of returning combat vets are showing signs of traumatic brain injury. TBI can impact your ability to connect the dots in every-day life. Things you used to take for granted can become head-scratchers, especially relationships. While it's highly unlikely that a TBI is making you more horny, it could be making it difficult to know the appropriate time and place to masturbate, or who to have sex with and when or where.

Even though you seem perfectly normal on the outside, a brain injury could be impacting your judgement. It might be causing you to have problems expressing emotions and processing feelings.

TBI can be confusing for everyone, especially the people around you who expect you to be the person you were before combat concussed your cabeza. Like any of us, you might be trying to fake it or cover things up. You probably wouldn't know how to put what's going on into words anyway.

When possible, it's important to sort out traumatic brain injury from PTSD, as TBI symptoms can often look like those of PTSD. A great resource for learning more about TBI is a book written by Bob and Lee Woodruff: *In an Instant: A Family's Journey of Love and Healing*. Mr. Woodruff is a journalist who suffered an extensive TBI as a result of a war-related explosion.

As for burns and other tissue trauma, these can result in skin that is numb or painfully sensitive. Combat-related amputations are common and require huge adjustments to life in general, not to mention problems with keeping your balance during intercourse and having difficulty with thrusting. It's not like *Good Morning America* is going to have on the author of a book titled “Intercourse Positions for the Returning Vet Who Has a Double Amputation.” The good news is, you might actually be able to get into

positions that your able-bodied self could never fathom, but there will be a learning curve.

Always lurking behind any disfiguring injuries is how you feel about your body, aka “body image” and “self-esteem.” How is your partner going to respond? And if you don’t have a partner, how will you find one? Not only will you need to heal physically, but you’ll need to become comfortable with yourself. While you will probably want and need some alone time, isolation can be a devil of its own making.

To compound all of these problems, the medications used to treat depression and pain can bring their own sexual side effects.

We are just beginning to understand some of the unique problems that today’s vets are bringing home with them. You’ll need to be vigilant in your search for helpful information. Do regular Internet searches, and stay connected to veteran and military related blogs.

Be sure to know the benefits you are entitled to! This can vary from state to state.

Advice from People Who Have Been There

“I wish that I was told about the sexual reputations of all branches and how much people in military towns resented you before they even met you.” *male age 24*

“Military people enjoy sex pretty much the same as everybody else. The dangers of military service, and the travel and deployments, make an active sex life a little more challenging. I always appreciated a sexy welcome home, even though I realized that my being away increased my wife’s burdens a great deal. Popular culture paints military members as macho types who enjoy rough sex and even rape. The truth is military people are the same as everybody else in the sex department, and what works for civilians works for GIs equally as well.”

male age 54

“If it’s going to be casual sex, make sure you both agree and understand this. Don’t talk about any sexual partner with coworkers, ever.” *male 47*

“In Iraq, it was really hard... I felt too dirty and stinky to talk to girls there, and a lot of times coming back to the fob, we’d seen contact

with the enemy and were maybe upset, or are not into talking to girls because we'd just seen the edge of humanity, like a dead body or dead friend, and the last thing on your mind was having sex. Also exhaustion was a factor." *male age 23*

A Special Salute to MSgt. Glenn B. Knight, USAF Retired for advice & research. Glenn proved just how thoughtful, intelligent and perceptive soldiers can be. And a special thanks also to the active military who participated our surveys!

From the Guide To Getting It On

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