

Echoes and the Back Story Meaning of  
Into the Night

FMF-"DOC"

R.K. Bates, 1-9 and 2-4-18

This is my second attempt at completing a 100 word challenge, which is more difficult than you might think! It is but one of many handouts I have received from the Nebraska Veterans' Warrior Writing Workshop I have been participating in the past several years. We have our regular team leaders of our group, and guest speakers who share information from their knowledge and experience, how each of us can become improved writers in the telling of our stories and experiences of our lives and as veterans. My first 100 word challenge was based on my Honors Flight Visit to D.C. to see the "wall" and other historical monuments. This second challenge hits closer to home for vets, including myself, who face living with PTS/PTSD demons on a daily basis. This can develop into other serious issues if left untreated. "Remember the Night" is the title of an old 1940's movie classic. This phrase represents those who withdraw and want isolation over contact with others. (Classic example of myself.) This can lead to depression, despair, drug and alcohol substance abuse, that can lead to declining communication, which can bring on more memory and intrusive thought recollection (again, myself). These can lead to more serious consequences, like divorce, homelessness, and even suicide.

Throughout my writings, you will sometimes encounter scripture references (Job, 12:22. I am a faith-based person, and I will not shield or hide or be ashamed of that fact. Many times, on the battlefield, it was my faith that kept me steady. As a medical Marine corpsman, I saw the painful, gruesome anguish of war in treating the wounds of dead and dying Marines and even the enemy. Even when my marriage concluded and I was separated from my family, the shock and emotional pain and turmoil was one of my "darkest" periods of my life. And, yet through it all, I could still see the stars, "light always follows darkness." My faith and good friends, through my religious institution and great counseling through Viet Nam Veterans off campus outreach centers, and membership and involvement in two service organizations helped sustain me with my faith-based value system. I chose to leave my "Bat Cave-Comfort" Zone, to rediscover the light. Making new friendships, getting involved in the Warriors' Writing Class, and writing my stories are

strategies I used to fend off the PTS demons, when they try to raise their ugly heads. They are real, just as drug and alcohol demons and all the others that plague veterans. In closing, I owe so much to so many I can and cannot name. I can only say THANK YOU and pledge that I will DO, as Yoda says, there is no "try") my best to serve those in need with the skills and resources I have. Remember, go Into the Night with confidence. Own and control it, DO NOT let it control you.

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