

The Impact of Wars on My Family

by Bonnie L. MacFarlane

My Dad was drafted into WWII rather late in the game—he was in his 30's. He had physical problems as he had had rheumatic fever as a child, had a heart murmur, and later developed stenosis in several of his heart valves. Apparently, these symptoms were either not picked up at the time or not very severe.

My mother always said that she had married 2 different men. The one who went to war and the one after the war. I was conceived in Austin, Texas in the spring of 1945 and born the last day of Dec. 1945, shortly after the war ended. My dad did not see me until I was 3 or 4 mos. old.

My Dad was stationed on the Island of Luzon in the Philippines. He was in the army infantry. He did hand to hand combat, but never spoke a word of it. Mother suspected that he had to kill men, women, and children. However, whenever a war movie was on the TV, he was very attentive. Many of my male patients who were in WWII told me that they still had night mares every night. Also, they told me that the battles in the Philippines were the worst of all.

My Father was a very quiet man and we children think we got our artistic side from him. He was also very, very depressed. Looking back on it, I marvel at the fact that he went to work every day. He'd come home, demand dinner right away, read the paper, and fall asleep in front of the TV every night. He had talents: he had a gorgeous Tenor voice and used to sing solos like "Ave Maria" at a large Episcopal church, was an excellent swimmer, and according to my boyfriends, a great boy scout leader. I was always trying to cheer him up. When I was 14, Mom told me he drove himself to the VA for psychological help. They turned him down saying he wasn't sick enough. Dad died at age 60, and looked 160. He died a sad, unhappy man.

Vietnam

In eighth grade I dated a tall bright handsome boy, Roger. He wanted a career in the Military and told me his goal was to go to WestPoint. After graduating from there, he was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army in Nam. After only a short time there, he and his men were cornered by the Vietcong. I had always heard that he was shot by friendly fire, but it turned out that he told his men to escape while he stayed back and was killed by the enemy. His Mom, who had adopted him, never got over this lose.

Why are we always at War and would it be any different if women were in charge? I guess there will always be egomaniacs who want to control the World, or people seeking power, or religious feuds. If one studies various religions, they're all similar. They believe in a higher power and in treating others well.