

Coming home to “normal” life from a war zone can be a jarring experience for many troops. How they cope with this transition often depends on what happened to them while they were deployed and how they’re treated when they return.

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER TODD VORENKAMP | AFGHANISTAN & IRAQ**

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Veterans sometimes use levity as a way of dealing with the disorientation of coming home. The following email offers humorous advice to help the returning troops and their families. **U.S. NAVY**

**EMAIL TO FAMILY & FRIENDS,  
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First, while your spouse is sleeping, be sure to run a lawnmower, leaf blower, or vacuum cleaner right next to their bed. They are not used to total silence while asleep and might suffer from insomnia if not regularly exposed to loud noises.

Also, leave a flashlight near the bed, as your spouse might wake up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom, and while they’re walking around outside trying to find the porta-potty, a flashlight will come in handy.

When doing your spouse’s laundry, do not use detergent or fabric softener. The clean scent and softness of the clothing might confuse and even frighten your spouse. Wash their clothes with oily rags and gym gear.

Only provide your loved ones with food at specific times of day and mash it all together in the middle of the plate with lots of bland white rice. You can also “spice up” the meals by giving them exotic names, like Singapore Chicken, Moroccan Chicken, or Brazilian Chicken, but do NOT actually change the recipe.

Ultimately, your loved one should start to feel “normal” after about five to six months—just in time to be deployed again.



*Photo credit: Lieutenant Commander Todd Vorenkamp, courtesy LCDR Todd Vorenkamp, USN*

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