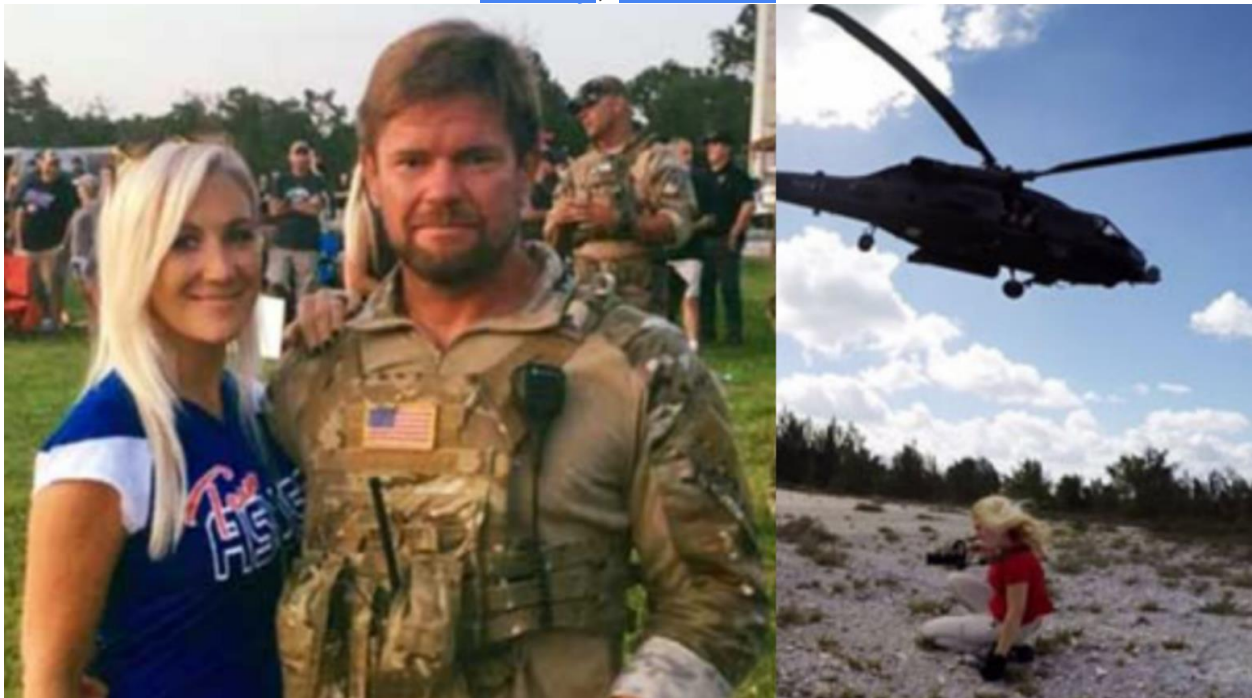


THIS ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT TODAY MAY 2021

# Spouse of elite Delta Force combat veteran opens up about impact of PTSD, and it's left us speechless

Posted by: [Eddie Molina](#) | [May 21, 2021](#) | Categories [Faith & Family](#), [Featured](#)



Many of our readers understand there is a possibility of developing Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) as a law enforcement officer (LEO). The things officers regularly experience or observe- devastating car accident scenes, murders, child abuse- become normalized day to day but the brain processes it differently.

In many cases, PTS settles in and manifests itself in variety of ways, many unhealthy, some even dangerous- excessive drinking, drug abuse, anger issues, depression, and the list goes on.

All of that can wreak havoc on the officer and his or her family, especially the spouse who must live and deal with it every day. If not addressed and treated, that PTS can evolve into Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

If you are an LEO and you think the job will not change you, you are wrong. And no one sees that more clearly than the person living side by side with you, observing this gradual change.

Few people in the world knows what it is like to live with someone suffering from PTSD better then Jen Satterly, author of [Arsenal of Hope](#).

Jen's husband, Tom Satterly, is a retired Command Sergeant Major with the U.S Army in one of the world's most elite fighting units- Delta Force. After being involved in well over a thousand capture or kill missions, it is no surprise he left the battlefield with some internal struggle that led to PTSD.

If you are the spouse of an LEO, male or female, there is a particularly good chance you can relate to Jen's experience. Living with someone who works with the decay of society will certainly have an impact on him or her as a person.

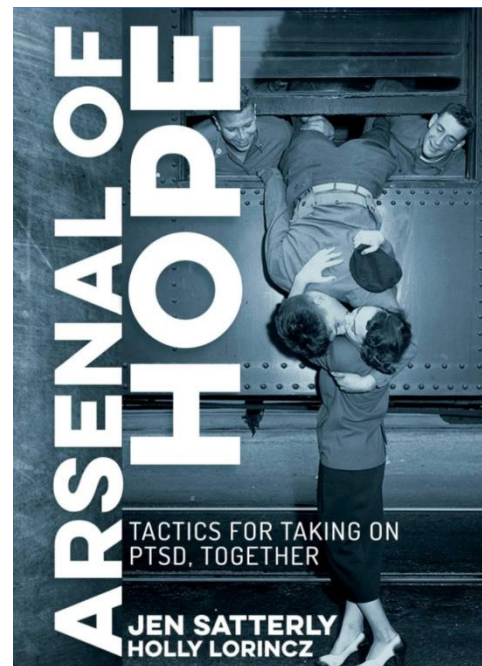
In an exclusive interview, Law Enforcement Today sat down with Jen to try to get a better understanding of what it was like to live with someone of that caliber who struggled day in and day out for years before finally finding relief.

Instead of giving up and leaving her husband like many spouses would have done, Jen decided to stay by his side and help him overcome his struggle, which included challenging him on occasion.

Jen told LET:

**“This is a very dangerous game to play with someone who can kill me in a single move, someone who in a fit of rage is capable of great acts of violence; others in his unit have killed their wives under similar situations.”**

Their relationship hit its climax on the night of their wedding. Like many weddings, alcohol was involved. What should have been a memorable occasion turned into an alcohol-fueled dispute towards the end of the night. It was not until the following morning that Tom fully understood the scope of the confrontation.



Jen said:

**“When I showed him my bruised arms...his face, I’ll never forget. Shock, disgust, and embarrassment contorted his features. He jumped out of bed and fell to his knees in front of me. ‘Please God, please tell me it wasn’t me that did that to you.’”**

As they went about their first day as a married couple, Jen did some soul searching.

Jen told LET about a critical moment that afternoon:

**“In that moment, I had to decide. Would I keep loving this man? Looking at the face of the wounded warrior before me, I knew I could not live without him.”**

Before they married, Jen had been working alongside Tom and other special operations soldiers for several years. She was responsible for filming military training exercises for the leadership.

While she was deeply embedded with them, she eventually noticed that Tom and other warriors exhibited many of the same attributes- anger, depression, anxiety, loss of empathy and compassion, isolation, and at times violence.

She figured out the common denominator was that every one of them spent months, sometimes, years in active combat zones.

Instead of choosing to walk away the morning after their wedding to seek an annulment, which she considered, she decided to stay with him and commit her life to understanding PTSD.

Jen left her successful award-winning film production company and zeroed in on the effects of PTSD.

She told LET:

**“I started to understand why Tom would unconsciously switch lanes under overpasses to avoid snipers or move away from roadkill because one too many times the terrorists had used roadkill to hide bombs. He didn’t think, he reacted.”**

It is the same reason why some law enforcement officers are uncomfortable in large crowds where space is limited, or why they must sit with their backs to the wall at restaurants or taking second looks at sketchy characters. They are assessing threats- they are constantly in survival mode that cannot be easily turned off once their shift is done.

Jen said:

**“PTSD affects each person differently, to varying degrees. A biological need for personal safety always, always has to come first, and any sense of safety security can short-circuit the PTSD trip wire. When they are home, often they want to reconnect with their families, but their mind won’t let them switch over from warrior mode to cuddly husband mode, not easily.”**

As her journey to understand PTSD evolved, she began to focus on how to help Tom control and manage it.



Jen told LET:

**“Those with PTSD must come up with a plan for how to handle the anger but do so during a period of calm. Fits of rage don’t usually go hand-in-hand with logic. Include your spouse or partner: ask them what triggers they’ve noticed and be clear in what you need from them in order for you to avoid them.”**

During her transition to understanding PTSD, Jen began to focus both on the person suffering from it *and* their loved ones.

But there’s help for everyone.

Jen said to LET:

**“Most people aren’t meant to fight this battle alone, and you shouldn’t have to.”**

If any of this story sounds familiar to you, whether you are the LEO or the spouse, you are experiencing something that can happen to anyone. There are numerous programs available to help the LEO and his or her family.

Tom and Jen created their own non-profit to help warriors struggling from PTSD, the [All Secure Foundation](#). Although their programs are designed to help special operations warriors, they never turn anyone away. In fact, they created a subsection non-profit program for the spouses called Virago- Latin for *a woman of strength and spirit; a female warrior*.

Jen said: **“This is why the All Secure Foundation created Virago, to support women who are in a relationship with either a military serviceman, veteran, or a first responder who is suffering from service-connected PTSD; everyone is welcome.”**

Tom and Jen now travel the country bringing awareness to PTSD buy telling their story of how they overcame it as a married couple.

Their goal is to expand their programs to help everyone suffering from this curable ailment known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Like many ailments, it CAN be cured, it just needs the right treatment.

And that's what people like Tom and Jen Satterly are here for.