



*From the  
Golly, Miss Molly Blog at  
www.pculbrethgraft.com*

## 50 Fun Things to do with your Disabled Veteran

1. **Not a Cross Word Competition.** Crossword puzzle competition with each person taking the same puzzle and working against the clock; could also do the same with Seek and Find puzzles or Sudoku
2. **Jigsaw Jeopardy.** Put together a jigsaw puzzle of an ideal place you or your veteran would like to visit; If space is limited, there are felt mats you can purchase that allow you to roll up your puzzle and set it out again
3. **Historic Car Collector.** Ask your veteran to name all of the cars he/she has had; record them and add to the list later as your veteran remembers more of them; ask your veteran to watch one of the car auction shows such as Mecum Auto Action on television and show you some of the cars he/she owned in the past
4. **Name the Habitat.** Ask your veteran to name all the addresses where he/she lived; look up some of the locations on Google to see how the area changed; schedule a visit to the old neighborhood with your veteran
5. **Game Night.** Play a game such as Chinese Checkers, Parcheesi, Yahtzee, or Dominoes; for the more social veteran, invite neighbors or friends for a game of Texas Hold'Em or poker with poker chips or crackers in place of money
6. **In-Home Movie Night.** Find a DVD movie that both of you could enjoy, making sure not to watch a war movie; serve diabetic-friendly or low-calorie snacks
7. **Oldies Trivia.** Purchase a trivia game that covers information from when your veteran grew up and take turns answering the questions; make your own set of trivia facts specific to your veteran's family, childhood neighborhood, or former occupation
8. **Weapons Mania.** Ask your veteran to name all of the weapons he/she handled or trained with in the military; look up pictures of the weapons on the internet or visit a store such as Cabellas that features a gun and rifle museum **[Please check with your veteran's doctor before considering this exercise]**
9. **Fun Memories.** Ask your veteran to name his/her top three fond or at least positive memories from the war; this might include recreation time, leave, friends, cultural experiences in another country; consider taking a video of your veteran while reminiscing **[Please check with your veteran's doctor before considering this exercise]**

10. **Stitch in Time.** Help your spouse take up knitting, crocheting, needlepoint, or other hand craft; if your spouse is male, remind him that many men, including Rosie Greer enjoyed this; model-making and paint-by-numbers works if your veteran is steady-handed
11. **Dicey Delight.** Play a game of chance with dice, using pretzels, crackers, or carrots for winnings; dice games can be purchased—here’s a link: <http://boardgames.about.com/od/dicegames/tp/dice-games.htm>; Wikipedia offered a website for free instructions for games to play with dice so you do not have to purchase a game: <http://www.dice-play.com/GamesDice.htm>
12. **Name the Spice.** Blindfold the veteran or ask him/her to keep eyes closed just long enough to name three to five spices placed on either a napkin or poured into a small bowl; make a meal, using the spice your veteran liked the best
13. **Pick a Yummy.** Give your veteran several URLs or websites from which to select a recipe for a special treat; serve the yummy in a unique way such as wrapping cookies in a decorated tin; save the recipe and make it again at another time for a surprise
14. **Decipher the Pic.** Take four or five pictures of items up close and see if your veteran can identify them; use the “portrait” or “macro” setting to help focus the object; consider cropping pictures to isolate a part of the photo so the clues are limited
15. **Leave an I Love You.** Leave note cards around the house for the veteran to find; when the veteran finds all that you have hidden, give him/her something nice like a small American flag, scented candle, or a package of nuts or crackers
16. **Random Blessings.** On a random day, give your veteran a small present that you have wrapped in a box, in a box, in a box for fun in opening
17. **Adopt a Child.** Sponsor a child together in a foreign country and ask your veteran to dictate a letter or choose pictures to send to your child; if you and your veteran travel, some organizations such as [Compassion International](#) will allow you to accompany them on a trip to meet your sponsored child
18. **Musical Round Robin.** You and your veteran take turns singing a new song each time and continue going back and forth until one cannot come up with a song that has not been sung; the winner gets to pick out a music CD for purchase
19. **Lobby for a Hobby.** Find out what your spouse liked to do in younger days and see if you can replicate it on a smaller scale. For example, if he/she did woodworking, try a wood-burning set or whittling for your veteran; my veteran used to shoot weapons and received training by the Army as a marksman and expert so I got him hooked on archery, which is compatible with his disability and reminds him of the weapons he used the past
20. **Make a Place.** Disabled veterans need a safe room or safe place; design and create a safe room or safe place with your veteran; if he/she already has one, add something to the place such as a bookstand, magazine holder, water fountain, or scented candles

21. **Chalk up a Chore.** Do a chore with your veteran that is challenging but not overwhelming; my spouse vacuums while I follow behind with a mop
22. **What Ifs.** Create a series of “What if” cards and sit with your veteran to answer each card; examples are “What if you could live anywhere, where would it be?” “What if you won the lottery?” “What if you could do any profession, what would it be?”
23. **Reading Time.** Read aloud a book of your veteran’s choice to your veteran
24. **Author, Author.** Write a short story together of how you met and send it to your children or close family friend; if you disagree on the facts, write two stories and marvel at the inconsistencies or write both versions into your story; illustrate with old photos or magazine pictures; you might want to use a free clip art program on-line for pictures to enhance the story
25. **Coffee Shop Hop.** Accompany your veteran to coffee shops within a five-mile radius of your home and expand outward, if desired; do a coffee shop only once until you have visited all shops with your desired radius
26. **In Your Own Backyard.** Check out your local community center for activities that might interest your veteran; if either of you are senior citizens, inquire about senior programs that you can do together
27. **Programs Supporting Warriors Hurt in Battle.** Inquire about a program that supports wounded warriors in your area; there are many sports and competitions available for disabled veterans
28. **Fuddy Music.** Find out your veteran’s favorite music when he/she was a teenager and buy or check out a CD of the music; consider dressing in an outfit from that timeline and possibly adding a decoration or two to your veteran’s safe room that will remind him/her of the “good ole days.”
29. **People Watching.** Spend an afternoon people-watching at a mall or lobby of a movie theatre; VA Hospitals often provide free coffee and cookies with large waiting areas where you can people-watch; talk about the people—speculate about their profession, issues, birth order, etc.
30. **30 Minutes of Sun.** Find a safe place outdoors with partial sun and join your veteran for some rays; pack a lunch or snack to enjoy the time; although my veteran’s medications says to stay out of the sun, he fell low on Vitamin D and now has to have 30 minutes of sun a day to be healthy; likely your veteran may have the same issues if homebound so bring an umbrella
31. **Don’t Discount the Discount.** Ask your veteran to take on a project for a grandchild, child, or neighbor where some work is required such as making a bed for a doll, crafting a tent with PVC piping and fabric, or making a playhouse from a cardboard box
32. **A Charlie Horse that Doesn’t Hurt.** Sign up for a therapeutic horse-riding session; check with your local riding center for help in finding a place that will work with the disabled; try to find a stable that has miniature horses, as these animals are used in therapy, you just can’t ride them;

miniature horses are the only animal other than dogs that are permitted to be used as service animals

33. **Seasonal Shebang.** Visit a seasonal display such as a pumpkin patch, Christmas tree farm, department store at Christmas to watch kids with Santa, a small town parade, or a country fair
34. **Create the Bucket.** Create the bucket list of things you and your veteran would like to do together and select one place to visit together within the next year. If you or your veteran cannot travel, buy an art board and create a travel board together with pictures from a travel magazine or the internet; buy a book on the place, find a CD of music from the place, serve a dish from the locale, order matching t-shirts to remind you of your virtual trip
35. **Narration Fables.** Ask your veteran to record three children's stories on a CD to give to a child along with the book as a Christmas or birthday present
36. **Veteran Stardom.** Video tape an interview with your veteran, telling a story from growing up, about the war, or a special event; on-line software will allow you to edit, if needed [Please check with your veteran's doctor before considering this exercise]
37. **Where's Donovan?** Find a friend or old war buddy of your veteran and arrange a skype, phone call, or opportunity to see each other again; ; be sure this is acceptable to your veteran
38. **Always in Time.** Create a time capsule to leave to someone special or if your veteran is young, to open in ten or so years; the items should be small and important symbols of your veteran's life
39. **Amateur Portraiture.** Contact your local high school or community college to find an art student to draw a caricature or sketch of your veteran; have it framed for a gift for your veteran
40. **Legacy Collector.** Start a coin collection for someone young; an easy collection is quarters with State names that have collector books easy to find; have your veteran go through piles of quarters and fill the books; consider other collectible items such as stamps, postcards, or key rings
41. **Taste Tester.** Conduct taste tests with different types of yogurts, crackers, cheeses, apples, dressings, etc.
42. **Aquarium Acquire.** With your veteran, select a small aquarium (one that takes the least amount of work for the caregiver); locate the aquarium in the veteran's safe room or space; consider fish, lizard, snake or even a small animal in a cage
43. **Green Fingers.** Bring home an indoor plan or seedlings for the veteran to care for and watch grow; consider growing herbs in small containers in-doors
44. **Map your Meddle.** Obtain a map of the area where your veteran grew up, wants to visit or thinks of as a positive place; draw a tour route on the map and highlight with pictures from the internet that resemble the landmarks; cover the map with vinyl by gluing the edges and use as a table top, desktop or computer mouse pad for the veteran

45. **Journal Jazz.** Either keep a journal or encourage your veteran to start a journal of his/her favorite things; use collage, scrapbooking, paint swatches, crayons, pens, or any media that seems appealing; capture positive images and events
46. **Thankful For.** In quiet time with your veteran, start a 'thankful for' game, taking turns, to name one thing you are grateful for; see how many items you can name; do the game once a month, keeping a list of what you are both grateful for (will help remind the caregiver of the good things when caregiving becomes challenging); consider putting your grateful list items on small cards and hang from a bulletin board, refrigerator, or even your Christmas tree, if you celebrate the season
47. **Nature's Cubby.** Find an outdoor space that your veteran will like and make the outdoor space as comfortable as possible; facilitate the veteran's visit to this place frequently, bringing snacks, books, or other things to pass the time; if there is no private space available for this, find the space in a public garden, park, or trail
48. **Public Day.** Visit a museum, aquarium, botanical garden, zoo, or other public place (during a weekday, if possible, to minimize crowds); make the visit leisurely without pressure to see it all with focus on the veteran's desires, even if it is to sit; I find that bodies of water are attractive and soothing for the veteran so a place with a lake, river, fountain are good places to go
49. **Oldies and Goodies.** Spend an afternoon watching old western movies or just old movies with your veteran; air pop popcorn, using a variety of non-salt spices to flavor
50. **Ransack Rummage.** Co-opt your veteran to help on a Spring cleaning day to get rid of old, unwanted items; maybe select a garage, closet, stored boxes for the project; find at least one item to repurpose for something useful as a project you and your veteran can work on together