

Talking with others helped Ed face his challenges

Ed: My name is Ed. I served in the Marine Corps from 1969-1972. Most of my tour, nine months was spent in Vietnam five miles south of Da Nang at a place called Camp Perdue. I was also stationed at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton. My tour was pretty easy compared to others. I think over the years I've probably felt guilty about surviving more than anything else as far as being there. I didn't talk about my service with anyone; no one was interested anyway. I do remember coming back in uniform and being spat at, and as soon as I grew my hair and blended in with the rest, it was regular life.

I hit that magic mark of 60 years old and wondered where my life had gone and what it could've been like, because I really didn't plan on being where I'm at now. It just was overwhelming basically to hit that 60-year mark and being unemployed as a Veteran. I had lots of jobs, and I seemed to either get laid off or downsized on most of them. My last job, I was there for 20 years. I went through three layoffs and I found myself in a situation where the skills that I had acquired over time in that job were not in any need.

There were days that went by I didn't leave the house. I had nowhere to go. Over the years, I established friendships with quite a few guys but it was in the bar. I was always in the bar, so those were my friends. But when I entered the VA, I lost my friends. I found out they really weren't friends at all, so that was hard to take and I withdrew more into myself and needed that psychiatric help more than ever.

The doctor that I was assigned to saw that I was in a mess at the time. I couldn't sit still. I was pacing the floors, couldn't sleep at night. I attended an intensive outpatient therapy program for three weeks, three times a day, three hours each day. That helped. They had other Veterans that had the same problems. I'm like anybody else, think that the problems I have nobody else has, but they do. And the therapy helped and talking with other Veterans and a Psychiatrist in that it drew out some of the things that were making me angry and why I was having psychotic episodes and it was very beneficial.



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