

I was carrying a heavy load

Marty: My name is Marty. I was in the Army with 101st Airborne. I was there from 1966 to 1971. I did two tours in Vietnam. When I landed in Vietnam they needed a tunnel rat so me being the shortest one of everybody I couldn't say...I had no choice to say yes or no, they volunteered me so I became the tunnel rat.

At that time, it didn't bother me that much. Now they caught up to me and I have my flashbacks. I get claustrophobia and all that stuff. Vietnam Veterans were known then and people still call us baby killers. People don't understand why we did what we did. I say don't judge until you know why the reason happened, what happened. Coming back out you know, I lost everybody, everybody that knew me, everybody I new, my closest friends, my brothers, because I don't have a family, that was my family when I joined the military. I lived in the streets. I couldn't even get a job being a Vietnam Vet.

Thank God that I always had...this guy he owned an ice company. He took me in, gave me a job and all that stuff and that is where you know I finally got a job. I blow at least a thousand dollars a week in bars. I would just drink and fight, drink and fight. Because my nightmares, my friends, I could picture my friends. I feel guilty that me not having a family they have family, mothers, fathers, they have got all that stuff. Here they died and I am alive. You know? That is the guilt I carry.

My relationship with people between those years I never got close to nobody, I was always afraid to get close. You know somebody would come and try to talk to me, hey come on over to the house for dinner, this ...I always found an excuse. I always tried to find an excuse for them not to be too attached to me as a friend because I don't need friends, you know that is what I always felt. Well I started at, it was a Vet Center and then I started going to the VA. We discussed well, actually there were some guys that were talking about the combat nightmares they were having, and I was carrying a heavy load, I couldn't let go. And even now I still carry a lot, but yet little by little everything is coming out. It is coming out because my experience is helping the baby brother, the Iraqi Vet and a lot of that is why in a way I let it out because I'm helping somebody.

I do feel better, my attitude, everything has changed because I found out I'm not the only one, the VA has helped me a lot. I have learned a lot of stuff from the VA. I tell all the Veterans find help and the thing is talk to another Vet. Work it together, you can't do it by yourself. If we can get together and help each other we'll be a lot better.



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