

Vet Centers can offer you the right support

Paul: My name is Paul. I served in the US Marine Corps 1966 to 68, and I served in Vietnam 1966 to 1967. I served as either Platoon Sergeant or Platoon Guide all my entire tour in Vietnam. The worst fight we were in was we were on a routine patrol, supposedly, and we were about one-third of the way to our destination and got ambushed by I thought every enemy in the whole world. That was the worst day in my life. I'll never forget that day. We lost a lot of good men that day.

I was medivacked. I was wounded, and I came to Philadelphia Navy Hospital. So, from Friday fighting for my life until Monday, it was such a culture shock that I don't think I'll ever get over that. When I got out, I was so confused. I didn't know what to do. I had gone to college. I had a degree in accounting. But I didn't want to work. I didn't want to do anything. In that time, I was having all kinds of problems dealing with the war. I thought I could handle that, but I couldn't. I just didn't know what to do with myself.

I drank a lot. I was still having nightmares and flashbacks and all kinds of stuff. I said this stuff is never going to leave me. I just managed to live with it.

I took a job in Saudi Arabia. This is whenever things were starting to get bad. I mean, the business of nightmares and waking up, that was becoming pretty common now. I struggled, and I lost that job. I couldn't concentrate enough to get a job anywhere. I read in the paper about a guy who was being interviewed at a new place that just opened in Time called the Vet Center. He was a Marine in Vietnam too. I'm reading all this stuff and I'm saying, "Wow, that's me."

So, I come down to the group, and I couldn't believe it. There were 20 guys all with the same problem. We were together a couple years. And I knew these guys, and they knew me. We were brothers. When I came out of the group I said, "I feel a hell of a lot better than I felt when I went into the group." And when I came out of my one on ones with the doctors, man, I'm on top of the world.

They want to help you. You tell them what's ailing you and believe me, they know how to take care of it. Just amazing how you can feel so bad and this will bring you right back to some kind of a better situation than you are now, believe me.



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