

An accidental death weighed on his mind

John: And there was a raging river and two guys in front of me and you could only put three people on the bridge. Two guys in front of me; he instead of going all the way he jumped to the side of the river and it was all mud and unfortunately, we were carrying a lot of equipment and stuff on our backs and our backpacks and he slid back into the river and we never found him. That bothered me you know because I was angry, you know. If somebody was shot, I understood that. Somebody getting killed in an accident, I really couldn't get that out of my mind.

I had a lot of, later on, guilt, survival guilt. I didn't want to share with other veterans because I was always thinking what I went through was... you know, I survived and I went through combat but not like maybe the Marines up at the DMZ. So, I was always comparing myself to others that had served and had seen a lot more combat than I did and perhaps was injured. I never had a scratch. Well, I had lots of scratches going through the jungle but you know I never had anything serious while I was over there.

I went to Hines Hospital, veteran's hospital and filled out all of the administrative work and, you know, "Why are you here?" and telling them that I was having problems mentally. I knew something was wrong and I knew I needed to get some help but, I mean, to admit that you got a mental problem of some sort was pretty difficult for me but I did it.



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