

JIM CRIGLER



I am a US Army Veteran.

Four years. Warrant Officer UH-1 Huey pilot. Vietnam: September 1971 - September 1972. A Troop 7/17 Air Cavalry and the 129th Assault Helicopter Company. We flew thousands of combat missions and cheated death hundreds of times. **We danced with the devil.**

I lost many friends and was shot down three times in one battle. My roommate was shot down and killed. Our butts were on the front lines of battles daily.

You cannot experience that type of combat stress and come back as the same person. Combat changed me. Returning to a country that was blaming its combat veterans for the war was too much. I fell into deep discouragement at 22.

I drank cases of scotch. Eventually I came out of that self-pity, got out of the army and put my life back together. I buried the war deep in a closet in my mind, locked the door and swallowed the key. At least I thought I did.

My war had actually never left me. During the following decades, I burned through two marriages and became a workaholic. I decided to give back and mentored combat vets, mostly Marines who saw action in Afghanistan, but I was not connecting with them in the way I wanted. Two of them attended Warfighter Advance. Through them, I met Dr. Mary Vieten who invited me to join an Advance 7 - Day evolution as a participant.

That week changed my life.

I realized that I had never healed. Through the program, Warfighter Advance gave me my life back. Today I am more centered, calm, and happy. The Advance program taught me that I do not have a disorder.

I received a new caring family of Warfighters whom I can both help and lean on when I need support. I am now on the Warfighter Advance Board of Directors, using my passion to help Warfighter Advance reach more combat and other veterans like the ones we have already trained.

Jim Crigler, CW3, Army, 1970 - 1974