

Mike Brown



I am Mike Brown. **This is my story.**

We are comrades, brothers and sisters in-arms. In our service to our country, we have seen the worst that humanity has to offer, and for much of our lives we have not dealt with it very well.

We have attempted to mask the pain, often within a haze of prescription and non-prescription chemicals. The chemicals were a temporary fix that often led to becoming a mere shadow of our former selves.

Many of us sought relief in isolation, replaying old events and avoiding new trauma at all costs. Sounds were too loud. We lost our sense of purpose. Then we slipped further and further down a steep and dark pathway.

We are comrades, brothers and sisters, who rely upon each other. You can see the pain in each veteran's eyes. We tried to mask these feelings of depression and anxiety for years, falling into a trap of believing that we were ill people who needed to be highly medicated. That lie, however, today, is dead.

We are comrades. We are not cast-offs who are ill but real people who have real struggles in life, just as everyone does.

By some miracle, in our case Warfighter Advance, we have awoken and now choose to participate in life. We have a renewed invigoration and boldly navigate through life's obstacles. As daunting as the obstacles seem, our new reality is that we fight the good fight and reap the great rewards and goodness that await us with each new day in which we have chosen to become present.

We are survivors, brothers and sisters who are veterans who did what few have done or even imagined doing.

We rely on each other as survivors and comrades, **and we heal, and we heal, and we heal**. And we thank Warfighter Advance.

Mike Brown, Master Sergeant, Marines, 1983-2004