



*Don't wait.*  
**Reach out.**

## “You are a Veteran” Long form :214

[**MUSIC**] Piano-driven track begins

[**Veteran 1**] I served twenty-six years in the Army. I was a medic, Sergeant First Class. E-7. We went in the first waves of the deployment. And when I came back, you know, I didn't come back the same way as I left.

[**Veteran 2**] I was in Eleven Bravo. It's Infantry. Boots on the ground. I wanted to be tip of the spear. Seeing 9/11 from my middle school window still plays in the back of my mind. So, when I was old enough to join, I decided to do so. Deploying is what we sign up to do. That's the purpose. That's the point of the job. I never got to do that.

[**Veteran 3**] I am a United States Marine. I was part of the Sixth Motor Transport Battalion. While I was in Saudi Arabia they were using the burn pits, and they were burning the oil wells. When I came home, I had migraines and respiratory issues. I became angry, and coming home and acting like that was a huge problem.

[**Veteran 4**] I started out as a CBRN Officer...served in the Army. I was excited. For four years I've been trained to be a Soldier and it felt like the only way to feel like a real Soldier was to get deployed.

But once I hit the ground it became real.

[**Veteran 5**] I was the, the gunner, on the top of a Humvee, um at the rear of a convoy. An IED exploded about ten feet from me. It's still kind of a tough thing to process.



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[**Veteran 6**] I have scars that will never go away. Some are external, some of them are internal, and some of them are scars to my heart.

[**Veteran 7**] I went from a place of feeling very alone, very isolated, very dark even in this light world. And I just wanted an escape.

[**Veteran 8**] When I first got out the loneliness and the emptiness that I felt...suicide was something I thought of every single day.

[**Veteran 9**] My first deployment was a lot of fighting. I had friends die. I had fellow Marines that I would talk to and call, and they had gotten help and they encouraged me to get help.

[**Veteran 3**] Some of the Veterans don't want to talk about it. The way you're trained you don't want to show any weakness.

[**Veteran 5**] It's hard to admit to yourself that you've been through these traumatic things and it has changed you. I'm not broken, I'm not damaged, but I am different.

[**Veteran 8**] I've been told, many years, "Hey man, you should talk to somebody." I'm like "Nah, I'm good." And now I find it to be the strongest thing a guy can do is admit that he needs help.

[**Veteran 4**] It feels actually even weird to go to the VA. I think it's because there's a lot more people out there that have gone through more things. I shouldn't go and get those benefits because they had it worse.

[**Veteran 2**] I think there's just a small part of me that is always going to feel empty because I didn't deploy.



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[**Interview voiceover**] If you could say anything to that Veteran...what would you say?

[**Veteran 7**] I would tell anyone that has served.

[**Veteran 6**] You deserve it.

[**Veteran 5**] We all deserve that title because we put our name on that dotted line.

[**Veteran 1**] Less than one percent of our population did that.

[**Veteran 3**] There are Veterans out there that want to help one another.

[**Veteran 8**] If a younger guy is having problems and they have programs, reach out for help now 'cuz it will change your life.

[**Interview voiceover**] Do you wanna tell them?

They're here.

[**MUSIC**] **Violins swell**

[**Veteran 1**] You deserve because you served. If you're struggling with life after service, don't wait. Reach out.

[**SUPER ON SCREEN**] **Don't wait. Reach out.**

**Find resources at [VA.GOV/REACH](https://www.va.gov/reach).**



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