

Assistance Helps Veteran Face His 'Demons'

How a Navy veteran found healing after 50 Years of undiagnosed PTSD

Nov 28, 2025

Veteran Floyd B. Banks, 71, lives in Pahrump, Nevada, with his wife, Bobbi. The couple has a blended family that includes three sons, Carl, Tavis and Jerry and one daughter, Lina.

Banks enlisted in the Navy in 1972.

“I was raised with a sense of duty and respect for my country,” he said. “I was also taught to try to make the next person’s path a little easier because of the example I set. And I wanted to learn a skill and lessons that would help me be successful in life.”

Banks served in San Diego, California, and Bremerton, Washington. He was also deployed to the Western Pacific region aboard the USS Truxton.

“We have the distinction of being the last ship to leave the duty station off the coast of Vietnam in December 1973,” he said.

After five-and-a-half years in the Navy, Banks was discharged early because of a knee issue.

“Unfortunately for me,” he said, “at the time, no one advised me that I might be eligible for VA disability.”

Today, Banks also suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), sleep apnea, plantar fasciitis, degenerative joint disease, shoulder osteoarthritis, hypertension due to Agent Orange exposure and headaches.

“Most of my injuries have meant I live with various levels of pain, which affects my mood and quality of life,” Banks said. He explained that PTSD, especially, has taken its toll.

“Where do I start? I guess an oversimplified way to explain it is that I never considered

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myself to have PTSD, for untold reasons. One being that I was raised to believe that you don't have time to be weak in this world. I thought to admit that I had PTSD would mean that," he said.

Banks' wife suspected her husband was experiencing PTSD, even if he did not realize it himself — or want to admit it. A visit to a VA medical center changed Banks' mind.

"A nurse asked how I was doing with my PTSD, and I immediately responded, 'I don't have PTSD.' Her look at that moment spoke volumes," Banks said. "That's when it hit me — I should talk to someone."

That someone was VFW Accredited Claims Consultant Debra (Debby) Johnson.

"She steered me through the process of meeting with the various professionals I needed to see for my other disabilities for which I was trying to get approved," Banks said. "Then, I finally addressed the elephant in the room."

Banks said that Johnson helped him face his "demon," PTSD.

"I never would have done it without her assistance. But because of Debby's professionalism, knowledge and gentle persuasion, not only am I dealing with my issues, but I also — after almost 50 years — have received a disability rating of 100%."

Banks encourages other veterans to take advantage of the help that is available to them.

"If you need assistance with anything VA-related, get in touch with a local VFW service officer or claims consultant. It can only make your life better.

"Oh, and also," he continued, "I am so glad that the day I contacted the VFW, Debby answered my call. My life would not have changed for the better if she hadn't!"

Learn more about the [VFW's National Veterans Service \(NVS\) program](#).