

Lidon A. Chevannes - U.S. Army, Vietnam veteran

Lidon "Don" Chevannes grew up in New York City in Harlem. His parents were immigrants from Jamaica. He was drafted into the Army and, at age 19, served a tour of duty in Vietnam in 1972. He was a communications specialist attached to the 101st Airborne Division and the Seventh Cavalry. The experience of serving in Vietnam had a profound impact on Don's life. During the last years of the war, drugs were a major problem in Vietnam, and he returned to the U.S. a heroin addict (He had not used drugs prior to his tour in Vietnam.) Don also started exhibiting symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder soon after his return, although his PTSD was not diagnosed and treated for more than a decade. Don struggled with addiction and PTSD for much of his life. Homeless and a resident at the *Soldier On* veterans' shelter in Leeds in 2004, he completed a detox program and entered and completed the Ward 8 in-patient PTSD treatment program at the Leeds VAMC. He now lives in his own apartment and works as a building manager at Soldier On. As part of his extensive community service volunteer work, Don shares his story in schools and public venues through the Veterans Education Project.