

Phillip L. Schwartz  
United States Army – Retired

### **Prologue To “Home - My Story”**

I joined the local chapter of Soldier Songs and Voices, a songwriting and music lesson workshop for veterans with PTSD; at one of our get-togethers, the word “Home” was chosen for a songwriting exercise. The word “Home” was significant to me because, in Vietnam, my mission was to find and bring people home who were forgotten and captured, prisoners. I worked with the word “Home,” for months. It drove me crazier than I already was before I realized there was no way in hell that I could write a song. I’m just not a songwriter.

I decided to try and write a poem using the word “Home,” finally, after a few more frustrating months, a lot of horrific memories, and tears, I finished writing my first poem.

This was the most challenging thing I have ever written up to that point, and yet it was very therapeutic for me at the same time.

## **Home - My Story**

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You were the forgotten

Maybe you were beat

But you were not beaten

We stomped the ground

To get you back

I left home not knowing

The true color of the jungle

It would shadow and ravage us

It was not for the weak of heart

Show me mercy

The treacherous path ahead

My mind cannot go there

Show me mercy

The brutality, the carnage

I have no words

Show me mercy

No time for fear, no time for sorrow

Show me mercy

The feeling of elation when you were found

The feeling of anguish when you were not

Show me mercy

Please show me the place I call home

Show me mercy

Fifty years later, a phone call came

Show me mercy

The nightmares begin

Show me mercy

The spider hole opened and took my soldier

Could I have been faster

Show me mercy

Maybe, my soldier, Tom, would be home too

Show me mercy

Every night I visit the atrocities of war

Show me mercy

My mind cannot rest

Show me mercy

Why did you have to call

Show me mercy

Memories buried so deep

Show me mercy

Ordinary sounds bring me to the ground

Show me mercy

Tears flow when least expected

Show me mercy

Agent orange, what did you do to me

Show me mercy

Please heal my heart and soul

Show me mercy

The first trip over made me a little bolder

The next few trips over, I was a little older and somewhat bolder

On my last trip over, I came home an empty soldier

Show me mercy

Oh Lord, Please Show Me Mercy