

Dismount
Jerry Gryzmala

One VSPA Member's biggest battle
1996

by: John Langley
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1967-68, K-9

If someone had told me two years ago that I would be dying of a terminal cancer caused by my service and exposure to the herbicides in Vietnam 25 years ago, I would have laughed at him. From time to time I had heard of Agent Orange but I didn't think I had or would ever have problems caused by it. Then, after noticing that in our part of the country quite a few Nam vets who were between 45 and 50 years old were dying of Cancer, I thought I might as well go in for a checkup. So, in January of 1992, I went to the local VA hospital for the "Free" Agent Orange exam.

The exam consisted of a blood test, EKG, Chest x-Ray, a very thorough physical exam and the taking of a verbal history. It took about four hours. About two weeks later, I received a form letter stating that all my tests looked good and if I noticed any problems to come back, but as far as the VA was concerned I had passed with flying colors.

A few days later, I received a call from the doctor who did the exam. She told me on one of my tests my blood levels showed an abnormal high level of "M" protein and asked if I could come in for more evaluation. After more testing, including a bone marrow biopsy, my doctor advised that I had bone marrow cancer. I was told that I had *two to five years to live*. At age 45, that was something I was not expecting to hear. However I wasn't going to give up. I am going to fight this battle. I served with the 3rd Security Police at Biên Hòa from 1967 to 1968. I survived that place and also survived a battle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Now with a little luck and a Bone Marrow transplant I just may survive this battle.

Jerry Gryzmala
Bad Moon Rising

On March 22, 1996, Jerry Gryzmala gave his life for his country. Jerry succumbed to a long battle with cancer that was due to exposure to Agent Orange. Along with the bad news notifying me of Jerry's death came a note that said, "*no wonder that he got cancer, the Agent Orange barrels were stored right next to the Security Police area at Biên Hòa.*" How many more will have to endure the effects of this exposure we will only know in the future. The only sure thing is that Jerry suffered a fatal wound in 1968--*and never even knew it.* **[Read: [Were you Killed In Vietnam?](#)]**

Another sad note, Paul Brown, a member from Michigan, also passed away due to a massive heart attack while sleeping. I met Paul and his wife last September in Kokomo, Indiana while attending the Nam Vet reunion. We should all count our blessings that we have our health and our senses. It would be easy to dismiss these deaths as being, "part of nature", but myself, I say these deaths are a result of an "act of war."

May their souls rest in peace....
John Langley

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