

January 4, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter on behalf of my husband, US Marine Veteran William Eddie Simmons, Jr: social security number ending in *** ** 2672. He cannot write this letter for himself, because of dying before his time with a disease that was afflicted upon him while protecting our country.

William was being treated at the Ralph H. Johnson Veterans Hospital in Charleston, SC. His primary physician was Dr. Rebecca Rakestraw. She's a very fine doctor who allowed me to know that William was one of the veterans that the doctors allowed to fall through the cracks.

William was diagnosed with lung disease and cirrhosis of the liver from drinking contaminated water while stationed at Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He also contracted Agent Orange as a result of serving in the Vietnam War.

My husband was misdiagnosed at the VA Hospital we later found out that he had liver cancer when we took him to a private doctor. Had he not fallen through the cracks he would probably had not suffered as he did and possibly still be alive today.

As a former Marine, William loved this Country. He loved serving in the military. Most of all he loved his family, but yet he suffered and died an untimely death because of the lack of concern for the Vietnam veterans, who fought hard for their country – only to return home to be looked down on.

William, like all the other Vietnam vets, fought and did what they were told. They did so bravely, proudly, and never once complained; but they were still treated as if their tour in Vietnam was worthless.

The work for my husband really began when he returned back to the U.S. and had to fight for compensation for his services. This should have not been the case for any soldier who selflessly sacrifices for their country; be it a Vietnam veteran or otherwise.

The battle for William is over, but as his widow, I am still waiting for compensation as was promised to William as a result of the water contamination, Agent Orange, and PTSD suffered after Vietnam. Let's give William what he deserves and all those veterans that have done their duty; whether they are alive or deceased.

William is gone now, but his fight still goes on for justice and for you all doing the right thing. It's been a year now and I am still waiting for his headstone and the compensation that was due him. I pray that this letter would touch someone's heart and you will do what's right.

I would like to say thank you to First Lady Michelle Obama and Mrs. Jill Biden and all the personnel that are doing a great job for our veterans.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

God bless,

Azaline Simmons, widow

Azaline Simmons
William Eddie Simmons, Jr.

cc: