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4th USA Missile Command 1st battalion. 42nd (Honest John) FA. Jan.1972-Feb. 1973

I received Orders for Ft Lewis overseas replacement Station in Washington. I thought for sure I was going to Vietnam and would never see home again. But to my surprise I was sent to Korea instead.

Upon arriving In ASCOM Korea I was told I would be going to the Army's best kept secret??? After a long bus ride in a Northeastern direction I arrived at the 38th Parallel Camp Page on the edge of the city of Chun Chon. I was assigned to the 1st Battalion 42nd (Honest John) Field Artillery of the 4th United States Army Missile Command. I was in a Honest John Rocket Battalion with 2 Atomic warheads stored in a lead building on Camp Page. They called it the metal room. It was guarded heavily from the outside and from within. Codebooks were kept in a separate room inside the metal room with 2 armed MP's. I was scared shitless. The warheads were removed on two occasions during Emergency Field Maneuvers. IE Once in the summer of 1972 a MIG Jet did a donut over our base and raced north. We immediately went to the field and headed straight north with our prescribed warheads. These warheads when removed from the lead shielding of the building emanated Gamma and X radiation. The main people who controlled the launchers and warheads in the firing batteries were FBI, Military Police and CIA. I was a wheel vehicle mechanic in HHB and worked for a SSG Foster and enjoyed my job. Working on ¾ ton trucks and jeeps and the 5 ton launcher vehicles was an experience I'll never forget and kept my mind occupied.

While with HHB I was detailed to clean out and spray a trench on Camp Page with Viet Nam Era herbicide. Right after this detail I became very sick. Cough and sore throat for 2 weeks.

I met CW3 Walter Evans the Battalion Maintenance Tech. and Sgt Rodriguez the shop foreman from the Battalion Maintenance section and requested a transfer to Battalion Maintenance. It was approved and I became the Battalion Dispatcher/Mechanic.

Behind our Motor Pool on Camp Page was a Blue Diamond Rio 2 1/2 truck with a rusty tank on the back and a sprayer. In the spring the truck was used to spray the perimeter fence and small airfield of Camp Page with Viet Nam Era herbicide. This truck was parked behind our motor pool next to a larger elevated tank that was used to store the herbicide. The truck was operated by local Korean men who would come on base early before curfew ended. They had to have special passes to be out after curfew and get on Camp Page early in the morning. They would fill the truck and commence spraying the perimeter fence before most people woke up. This was done many times in the spring to keep plants clear of our perimeter fence.

This is the tour I was exposed to Viet Nam Era Herbicide and I believe is the primary cause of my CLL. Below you will see an activity at Camp Page in my motor pool 1972-1973 like no other. PSP (Perforated Steel Plating) was removed from our motor pool parking area for this event. It was replaced afterward.