From a stiff and sterile hospital bed, recovering from injuries suffered while battling in the Vietnam War, a 17 year old boy lie frozen as he recalls the events that led him there. From his heart poured words of an innocence lost, a childhood robbed, and a life forever changed. Listen carefully as I share an original poem written in November 1970 at Great Lakes Navel Hospital by my father, my hero, and a United States Marine, Mr. Cardell Lee Whaley.

Fathers, Brothers, and Sons

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America

While in the republic of Vietnam to save mankind we dropped a bomb

Shots rang out then tears of blood ran from the eyes of the walls

Man’s learned to walk God help us to crawl

For we planted the seeds of hate into a garden of distrust then watched it grow to destroy all of us

No man is your brother no man is your friend wars always begin but they never really end

And the dead is not the only victims for their families live on and on

And in their minds memories run of fathers, brothers, and sons