

MILITARY COMBAT EXPERIENCE

View from a Tree Line

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David Gjerdingen devoted nine years of his life to serving his country during the Vietnam War. Serving as an Army operating room technician at an evacuation hospital, he witnessed significant injuries and loss of life from both sides. For Gjerdingen, the emotional and mental toll was devastating.



He says, “For the past several years, I have tried to use the VA art contest as a way to express deep feelings about my experiences. It has been a wonderful outlet for letting my artistic adventures give a face and a form to my fears and challenges.”

View from a Tree Line, the digital computer graphic artwork he created, represents that expression of feelings. Gjerdingen felt compelled to write a piece to accompany it.

*I am a tree line veteran
I have twice attempted to visit the Vietnam Memorial
I have twice failed
Dozens of us stand in the shadows
100 yards from the dark black stone
We stand apart from each other
Some frightened, some guilty, all silent
Frightened to confront our demons
Guilty that we survived
Silent in our grief
In the tree line*