

My father was stationed at Camp Lejeune from 1967-1968 as a young lieutenant in the Marines. He and my mother lived in base housing at the Tarawa Terrace subdivision (3374 Haggaru Road) after he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. I was conceived in April 1967, carried and born at the base in January of 1968. I was born underweight and with a severe skin rash that I still have to this date. As a child, I suffered numerous ear and sinus infections that diminished as I entered my teens. I married and became a father of 4 and settled into my adult life. Then in April of 2007, my wife gave me a hug that changed my life. During that hug, she felt a lump in my right breast. The lump was a malignant tumor and I was diagnosed with male breast cancer. The tumor was 2.5 Cm and was surgically removed in a mastectomy. I now have a 14 inch scar where my right breast used to be. I also lost 1 lymph node but it was not cancerous. The doctor prescribed 6 months of chemotherapy.

As you may already know, breast cancer is rare in men and even rarer in men under 60. Male breast cancer accounts for less than 1% of all diagnosed breast cancers. In July of 2007, I underwent genetic testing for the hereditary breast cancer mutations BRCA 1 and 2. Most men who develop male breast cancer carry this gene. I tested negative for the genes. I do not drink nor do I smoke. There is no history of breast cancer in my family. According to the geneticists at Shands University Hospital, the occurrence of male breast cancer in the general population without the BRCA mutations is .05%.