

JOAN DUFFY NEWBERRY, 1945-2006

'Classic and beautiful until the end'

Friends say former Vietnam nurse, who fought to have Agent Orange recognized as poison, ultimately died from chemical

Even as she lay on her deathbed, Joan Duffy Newberry, who was a nurse during the Vietnam War, plotted to help those whose lives were hurt by the chemical that ultimately took her life.

She wanted to get on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, she told friends just before she died Friday. Her plan was to get the talkshow diva to help her raise money for deformed children she met during her travels back in Vietnam earlier this year. The children's parents had been exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange during the war.

"She was a woman who saw a problem and never went away from it," said Dotty Beatty, a longtime friend who, like Duffy, was a nurse in Vietnam. "She faced problems head-on."

Duffy died at age 60 from cancer. Friends say the multiple cancers she had were caused by her exposure to Agent Orange more than 35 years ago.

Agent Orange, which got its name from the orange stripes on the barrels it was stored in, was used in Vietnam between 1961 and 1971, according to the U.S.

Department of Veterans Affairs. More than 19 million gallons were used during the war to kill vegetation around U.S. military bases, because the foliage provided cover for the North Vietnamese Army. The hospital where Duffy and Beatty were stationed from 1969 to 1970, Cam Ranh Bay, was sprayed twice a day with Agent Orange, Beatty said.

In a speech in 2004, Duffy recalled, "While I was (in Vietnam) I was too busy to notice that I never heard a bird sing. And, in fact, the only living things I remember seeing (other than people) were roaches."

In 1978, after the VA established that a dioxin found in Agent Orange caused deformities in lab animals, it set up a health registry for veterans who had been exposed to the chemical. Agent Orange was subsequently linked to a number of cancers in humans, including those that affect the reproductive organs and soft tissues, and birth defects among children of those who had been exposed to the chemical. Liver and kidney damage, a painful skin condition called cloracne and

sensory impairment disorders are considered to be linked to Agent Orange exposure by the VA.

Duffy fought a long fight to get Agent Orange recognized as a poison, and during her 25 years of activism she testified in front of Congress and spoke across the United States.

She was also a member of the Santa Fe Chapter of Veterans for Peace, which is now named in her honor.

Three of Duffy's closest friends in Vietnam, also nurses, have been diagnosed with cancers linked to Agent Orange, Beatty said. Duffy's grandson was born with an intestinal birth defect that is also linked to the chemical.

Duffy was diagnosed with breast cancer eight years ago and most recently battled ovarian cancer. She continued to argue that the United States should clean up the mess it left in Vietnam.

"Her biggest concern was that this not be passed onto others," Beatty said. "That there is a way to clean it up, that it is not that expensive. I think she felt that it was very inhumane, that we had the technology to clean it up but not the will."

Tim Origer, a Vietnam veteran who knew Duffy, said her speeches about Agent Orange often moved audiences to tears. "Her concern for other people — it never stopped," he said.

"She was classic and beautiful until the end. She was incredible."

JOAN DUFFY NEWBERRY

Mother, grandmother, isister, Veteran, Activist and friend, died peacefully in her home in Santa Fe on Friday, November 17, 2006 at 6pm.

Joan was known both locally and internationally as an activist who spoke courageously and with passion concerning Depleted Uranium and Agent Orange.

Joan served as a nurse from 1969-1970 at the 12th USAF Hospital in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.

Over the past twenty five years Joan was engaged in numerous public speaking events, testified before congressional committees, was interviewed on radio, TV and in other news media including three U.S. documentaries featuring Vietnam veteran nurses. Most recently, in March of 2006, Joan returned to Vietnam at the invitation of the Vietnamese government to address an international conference on the effects of Agent Orange.

On October 30, 2006, Joan was presented with an award by a

representative of the People of Vietnam, 'For Peace and Friendship Among Nations' for her contributions in boosting the friendly ties between Vietnamese and US people, including her advocacy for the victims of Agent Orange. Joan also received ribbons for National Defense and her Vietnam Service.

Joan was preceded in death by her parents, John and Margaret Duffy; and sister, Maggie Duffy.

Joan is survived by her brothers, John and William Duffy; daughter, Claire; son-in-law, Lawrence, and their children Joshua and Amelia. Although Claire and her family reside in Australia, they returned to Santa Fe to be at her mother's side. Joan's last weeks were filled with the joys brought through her role as grandmother to Joshua and Amelia. Joan's four legged children: Arthur, Merlin, Maggie, Daisy and Gretel, were adopted en masse and are adjusting to their new family and life in the country outside Santa Fe.

Perhaps we can remember Joan best by paraphrasing her own words in a poem she wrote as a young nurse returning from Vietnam: We grieve for you, our sister, And we grieve for your loved ones as well. We also grieve for ourselves, for we will never be free of tormenting uncertainty

What should we have done, And what could we have done.

To keep you from joining.

This heartbreaking roster of the dead?

Go with God.

A Visitation will be held at 12 noon on Tuesday, November 21, 2006, at Berardinelli Chapel, followed by a Funeral Mass at 1:30 pm at Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Church. Interment will take place at Santa Fe National Cemetery, and a reception will follow the interment at 3:30 pm, in the VFW Hall.

Pallbearers are: Daniel Craig, Ken Mayers, Roberto Gallegos, Raphiel Benjamin and Bob Josephs. Honorary Pallbearers are, Tim Origer and Robert Sinn.

The family requests that gifts take the form of donations to any of the following organizations: The Vietnam Project, 60 Ravens Ridge Rd, Santa Fe, NM 87505; Espanola Animal Shelter, 108 Hamm Parkway, Espanola, NM 87532; Wildlife Center, PO Box 246, Espanola, NM 87532; Veteran's for Peace -Agent Orange Project for Kids, 7 Avenida Vista Grande - #117, Santa Fe, NM 87508; Odyssey Hospice, 1911 5th Street, Ste. 100 Santa Fe, NM 87505.