

## My Medical History in Military Terms

If my surgeries could be viewed as military service, I would have 13 purple hearts and 9 campaign ribbons — as of July 30, 2011.<sup>1</sup> This is how I arrived at those numbers.

A purple heart would require more than just a scar or wound; it would necessitate some sort of anesthesia. I figure a campaign ribbon would be awarded for each different hospital I was in plus the three doctor's office that anesthetized me (see P1 and endoscopy in 2000 at Dr. Arbabi) plus a colonoscopy in 2010.



- P1 - 1944 tonsillectomy, North Manchester, IN, done in doctor's office
- P2 - 1954 blood poisoning, right hand, Methodist Hospital, Indianapolis
- P3 - 1982 right shoulder, exploratory surgery, Dr. Ivan, Midland Hospital
- P4 - 1984 2<sup>nd</sup> toe, right foot, straightened, Dr. Dowling, Bay City, MI
- P5 - 1988 left hip, Dr. Borden, Cleveland Clinic
- P6 - 1989 right hip, Dr. Borden, Cleveland Clinic
- P7 - 1989 right shoulder, Dr. Brems, Cleveland Clinic
- P8 - 1999 triple by-pass, Dr. Baumgartner, St. Mary's, Saginaw
- P9 - 2005 double hernia, Dr. Wolfe, St. Mary's, Saginaw
- P10 - 2008 back fusion, Dr. Roth, Beaumont, Detroit
- P11 - 2010 pacemaker, Dr. Islam, Midland Hospital
- P12 - 2010 left hip redo, Dr. Muschler, Cleveland Clinic
- P13 - 2011 atrial ablation catheterization, Dr. Islam, Midland Hospital

I subsequently received a clarification from Jack Stephenson, a high school classmate who spent 20+ years in the Air Force. His take was that I would have only one purple heart with 12 clusters. As for campaign ribbons, you can get multiple ribbons for being deployed to the same area if the deployments are far enough apart. Since I have been to both Cleveland Clinic and Midland Hospital 5X and Saginaw St Mary's 2X, that would make 16 campaign ribbons. (The additional two visits to Midland Hospital were for cardioversions in 2005 and 2010.)

The above hospitalizations do not include some 'life-long' conditions that potentially affect me each and every day, such as: 1 – right shoulder separation in 1954 that ultimately limited my range of motion, 2 – penicillin allergy that limits other drugs I can take, 3 – I.B.S. , the 'Piper curse' which 'rears' its ugly head in times of stress, 4 – BPH, an enlarged prostate, which keeps you close to a bathroom and prevents sleeping all night long and 5 – AF, atrial fibrillation, that gives my heart doctors reasons to worry. I also have had two heart catheterizations, in 1999 and 2006, to check for plugged arteries, and one heart ablation that technically might qualify for three more purple hearts because of the anesthesia and temporary scars. I did have two cataract surgeries (see Addendum) that earns me another two campaign ribbons, but probably not two more purple hearts. Finally, an eye hemorrhage and a 40 day bronchial infection in 2005 (along with the hernias) caused me to rank that year as 'annus miserables' in my life.

---

<sup>1</sup> See the Addendum section, Purple Hearts, for the latest count.

