



Vietnam Veterans of America "Stanley E. Taylor" Chapter 196 Lynchburg, Virginia



"THE LISTENING POST"

April 1, 2024



Vol 15 Issue 2

President's Comments

Vietnam Quotes

Upcoming Events

April 9, 2024, 7:00 PM, Monthly VVA Meeting

April 9, 2024, 7:00 PM, Monthly AVVA Meeting

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To the members and associates of Chapter 196,

At last months meeting, Roberta from Mission BarBQ treated all to a full meal. There was enough leftover to feed the work crew that were installing a ramp at Daniel Coffman's house. Everything came together and the timing was perfect.

Robert Crowder, Fran, Gail and myself gave a report on the Region 3 Conference held in Ashville, NC. It was one of the best I have attended with a lot of information about our health from

the VA, veterans court, and timely suggestions from an attorney.

The next Region 3 Conference will be held here in Virginia in 2025. The State Council is planning on one of our meetings running concurrently, so we should have a good attendance. All Chapters will be involved as we are planning the event to be held in Norfolk.

Jim Purdy, Robert, Freddie and myself will give a follow-up from our meeting in Edinburg.

Remember at our next meeting, we will return to our regular time at 7:00 pm.

Hope to see you there.

Keeping you informed,

David Stokes, President

This war in Vietnam is, I believe, a war for civilization. Certainly it is not a war of our seeking. It is a war thrust upon us and we cannot yield to tyranny.
FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN, speech, 1966

Our resistance will be long and painful, but whatever the sacrifices, however long the struggle, we shall fight to the end, until Vietnam is fully independent and reunified.
HO CHI MINH, statement, December 19, 1946

Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality. If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I'll go to jail, so what? We've been in jail for 400 years.
MUHAMMAD ALI, attributed, Redemption Song: Muhammad Ali and the Spirit of the Sixties

You can kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours. But even at those odds, you will lose and I will win.
HO CHI MINH, a warning to French colonialists, 1946

The Vietnam War was arguably the most traumatic experience for the United States in the twentieth century. That is indeed a grim distinction in a span that included two world wars, the assassinations of two presidents and the resignation of another, the Great Depression, the Cold War, racial unrest, and the drug and crime waves.
DONALD M. GOLDSTEIN, introduction, The Vietnam War

North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States. Only Americans can do that.
RICHARD NIXON, speech, November 3, 1969

No event in American history is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War. It was misreported then, and it is misrepresented now.
RICHARD NIXON, New York Times, March 28, 1985



Minutes March 12, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by President David Stokes followed by Prayer and draping of the POW/MIA flag
Mission Barbecue provided sandwiches and fixings' for those in attendance.

Committee Reports

Membership

VVA-209 AVVA-29

Finance

The Financial Secretary read the financial report.

Chaplains Report

Will Strong reported that he has been in touch with Daniel Coffman who is at home. Tom Current is home now

recovering from some heart issues.

Old Business

David Stokes, Robert Crowder, Fran Crowder and Gail Stokes reported on some seminars from the Region 3 Conference in Asheville NC in January. David reminded members of \$500 Scholarship from Chapter 196 and State Council.

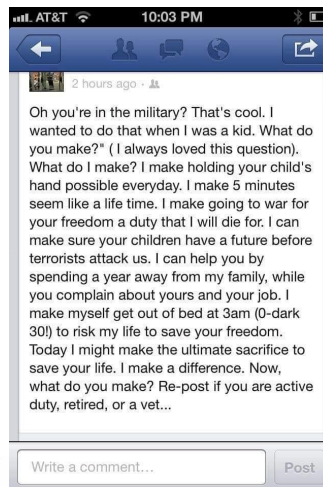
New Business

A motion was made to have a random drawing for 2 members at each meeting to pay lifetime memberships to VVA/AVVA which is \$50. There will be a workday for Daniel Coffman on Wednesday and Thursday the 13th and 14th to build a ramp. Food left over from our BBQ will be served. There will be a bean/

soup fundraiser on October 19 from 4 to 7PM with proceeds to be split between VVA and Combat Veterans. State Council is being held in Woodstock from March 22-24th. A nominating Committee was assigned to receive names for Officers/Directors. The 3 members are Charles Cole, Terry Martin and George Kolar. Please contact either of these 3 with a nomination. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted
Robert Crowder, Secretary VVA Chapter 196

NOTE NEXT MONTH MEETING IS BACK TO 7PM**



IN-COUNTRY



1970

Top Hits

1. Bridge Over Troubled Water - Simon and Garfunkel
2. Close to You - The Carpenters
3. American Woman-No Sugar Tonight - The Guess Who
4. Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head - B.J. Thomas
5. War - Edwin Starr
6. Ain't No Mountain High Enough - Diana Ross
7. I'll Be There - The Jackson 5
8. Get Ready - Rare Earth
9. Let It Be - The Beatles
10. Band of Gold - Freda Payne
11. Mama Told Me Not to Come - Three Dog Night
12. Everything Is Beautiful - Ray Stevens
13. Make It With You - Bread
14. Hitchin' A Ride - Vanity Fair
15. ABC - The Jackson 5
16. The Love You Save - I Found That Girl - The Jackson 5
17. Cracklin' Rosie - Neil Diamond
18. Candida - Dawn
19. Thank You - Everybody Is a Star - Sly & FamilyStone
20. Spill the Wine - Eric Burdon and War

Good
Ol'
Days





Welcome Home By Robin Bartlett

As a veteran, how do you feel when a stranger approaches and says **WELCOME HOME** or **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE** when out in public? Here's one man's take on it:

The phrase 'thank you for your service' started to be used in the late '90s. It became even more popular in recognition of the heroism on the part of firefighters, police, and first responders in the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11th and the War on Terror that followed. The saying is commonly used today to greet all veterans and active-duty soldiers as well as politicians and first responders. It is the "phrase du jour" for Veterans Day (originally Armistice Day) honoring those who served in the military, and Memorial Day (originally Decoration Day) honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of their country.

But some veterans, especially Vietnam veterans, feel that the phrase is overused, and may even find it offensive. These men interpret the words as meaningless sentiments such as "Have a nice day" and react with a quiet, modest "thank you" all the while thinking they have no true understanding of the meaning of those words.

If you were a combat veteran in Vietnam, humped the boonies for a year, and placed your life on the line every day in service to your country, you often believe your actions deserve more respect than what is so commonly communicated by thank you for your service. Many Vietnam veterans believe that saying those words alleviates the civilian guilt for not having served. A common belief within my group is while I was humping the jungle and eating C-rations in that God-forsaken country, you were eating french fries in the food court at the mall.

An Uneasy Thanks

According to a Cohen Veterans Network poll commissioned in November 2019, 49% of veterans don't actually like to be thanked

and are uneasy with the expression thank you for your service.

Here is a quote from my book with permission given by Robert Flournoy from a Facebook post, Reflections of an Artillery Forward Observer with an Air Cav Rifle Company: "Many of us arrived in Oakland 12 hours after leaving a fire base, some after walking point on a patrol, still wearing the red dirt of that duty, and were on the streets in cities a few hours later with some travel pay to make their way back to Ohio, Alabama, or New Jersey. And when the hugs and tears of our families were done with, we would look around, somewhat bewildered, with a head full of "what now?" Ensuing nights filled the mind with sounds of popping flares, and hammering of an M-60, the constant boom of artillery and the whop whop whop of Hueys coming and going, left us dazed and confused to have left all that behind so suddenly. Many of us sank into silence, most tried to explain our experience to uncomprehending parents, and spouses. So many sought the solace of fellow vets at the local VFW or Legion Hall, usually accompanied by liquor which too frequently led to loud, aggressive behavior. How many of us wanted to go back? Back to the jungle, to the fire bases that we hated, but where likeminded men with singular purpose treated us like brothers, silent respect and understanding hanging over us like a warm blanket. Our homecomings were, all too frequently, the beginnings of frustration and despair.

Yet, most just moved on, putting it all behind us. Regardless of how we handled the homecoming, there was never a welcome home feeling from our country much less from the people who never served. We didn't look for it, expect it, or even think about it. It was a non-issue. So, Vietnam vets became an obscurity in the landscape of America, an awkward presence that most vets acknowledged with their own silence. But, decades later, when old ghosts started creeping out of their closets, and the wisdom of age made its way into their reflections, combat veter-

ans from the Vietnam war began remembering their experiences in softer toned colors, instead of the garish bright reds and oranges that they brought home with them. A kind gentleness emerged as they sought their brothers from long ago. The greeting "welcome home" emerged not as a resentful "we never got a proper welcome", but simply as a soft nod of the head to those who made it back so long ago. Two simple words that belong exclusively to them and their kin; brothers who know – as only they can know. Those men own the words, another right shoulder patch seen only by those who also wear one there."

Vietnam vets are a special breed. We come in many shapes and colors. You will notice more and more of us these days as Vietnam veterans begin to walk in the boots of their WWII and Korean brothers. Some proudly wear ball caps denoting the unit in which they served with pins showing their decorations. Our hair is going grey. We have wrinkles on our faces, and some suffer from the ravages of age, battle wounds, PTSD, the scourge of toxic burning and Agent Orange. But as our numbers gradually decrease, just as our brothers in previous wars have faded, we ask only for a few kind words of acknowledgment that we served to protect the freedoms and life you now enjoy.

Game changer

When you meet us, I encourage you to greet us with a phrase that shows you truly care and have a deeper understanding of those of us who served in our war. There is nothing wrong with saying thank you for your service and it is sincerely appreciated by most veterans. But if you want to tell us that you honor our sacrifice, bring lumps to our throats and tears to our eyes, say Welcome Home and watch the reaction. It's a game-changer. How do you feel about it?



The Day the Marines Asked the Army for Help *By Marvin J. Wolf*

On an October day in 1966, the sun rose in the west, a man was seen biting a dog, Hades reported ice storms—and the U.S. Marines asked the U.S. Army for help. Read what this was all about...

Okay, the first three things didn't happen. But on that day when a man did not bite a dog, Lt. Gen. Lewis Walt, commander of the III Marine Expeditionary Force at Da Nang, Vietnam, called on Maj. Gen. John Norton, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) at An Khe, Vietnam, for help recovering four USMC H-35 Choctaw helicopters that had been shot down.

This is what happened next. On an October day in 1966, the sun rose in the west, a man was seen biting a dog, Hades reported ice storms—and the U.S. Marines asked the U.S. Army for help. Okay, the first three things didn't happen. Normally, the Marine Corps is the most self-sufficient of the armed services: Their infantry units, down to the squad, are larger than similar Army units; they can take more casualties but continue to fight effectively. The Corps has its own air element, both to establish air supremacy over the battlefield and for close support.



The CH-47 Chinook is a multipurpose helicopter that was often used to sling load heavy weapons, cargo, fuel in rubber tanks, and all sorts of military equipment. Photo courtesy of the author.

Nevertheless, on that day when a man did *not* bite a dog, Lt. Gen. Lewis Walt, commanding the III Marine Amphibious Force at Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam, called Maj. Gen. John Norton, commanding the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) at An Khe, Republic of Vietnam, to ask for help recovering four USMC H-34 Choctaw helicopters that had been shot down.



Powered by a gigantic piston engine, the Choctaw was big and heavy. Neither the Marines nor the Navy had anything that could lift it and carry it to a secure location for repair. The Marines had therefore developed a system for retrieving a salvageable H-34: They inserted a rifle company of some 200 Marines to provide security for a recovery team. The latter included mechanics to disconnect the downed bird's heavy transmission from its engine, then disconnect the heavy engine from the airframe. After shrouding the transmission in a net of heavy rope, a USMC H-37 helicopter—also powered by a piston engine—would hover down and fly away with the transmission. It would return and take the engine. And then return again

and lift out the rest of the aircraft.

Now no less than four H-34s had been shot down on the warm October morning in question. Four infantry companies were deployed to protect them. Lt. Gen. Walt had an entire infantry battalion of 800 fighting men tied up on guard duty, and he wasn't happy about it. He asked Maj. Gen. Norton if he had a helicopter that could lift out an intact H-34.



Slow, to be sure. But that was the Marines dealing with their own problem.



Maj. Gen. Norton, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) at An Khe, Republic of Vietnam. Photo courtesy of the author.

Maj. Gen. Norton's chief of staff called the information officer and suggested he dispatch one of his photographers to document this rare event. Maj. John Phillips, the information officer, was authorized no photographers. He had five information specialists, and one of them might have been able to handle a camera. But since he was not authorized a photographer, he was also not authorized a camera.

Fortunately, Maj. Phillips also had me. I, too, was an information specialist—then 62 days past my DEROS—date estimated return from overseas—and serving as institutional memory for a smart but very green information officer and his replacement crew. I'd spent the first six months of my Vietnam tour in the field taking combat photos with my own cameras while also teaching the other information specialists the rudiments of news photography. But by October 1966, those men had rotated home. Maj. Gen. Norton dispatched two CH-47 Chinooks so that if one was shot down the other could recover it. By mid-afternoon, I was on one of them.

At Da Nang our pilots consulted the weather gods and the Marines, calculated the maximum load that they could safely lift and fly away with, and came up with a plan: We would wait until sundown, when the air began to cool and become a little denser, providing more lift to rotor blades. And each aircraft would pump out all but 1,000 pounds of fuel. The math said that we could then lift and fly with an H-34 slung beneath us.

The first pickup went off flawlessly. I was dropped near the CH-34, positioned myself to take good photos of the Marine hook-up crew as they attached the rope net to our hovering Chinook, and then photographed the liftoff and fly-away.

The other Chinook landed and I got back on. As we headed for the second pickup, the flight engineer, a staff sergeant, beckoned to me. "Sarge, are you comfortable firing Ma Deuce?" he said. "Just in case?"

Ma Deuce was the WWI vintage M2 .50-caliber machine gun mounted in the left window. I spent my first three years in the Army as an infantryman and had fired Ma Deuce a few times. In Vietnam, the only way I could accompany troops into the field on a Huey with all seats full was to replace one of the door gunners. Months earlier I graduated from the Air Cav's ad hoc door gunner school and then flew more than 100 combat missions as a door gunner, mostly in a Huey. But I had never fired Ma Deuce from a moving helicopter.

"I need to be on the deck talking to the pilots so they can make the pickup," he added. "Sure," I replied. I moved to the window and checked that the gun was ready to fire, that there was a smooth path for the ammo to climb from its box into the feeding slot, and that the gun moved smoothly vertically and horizontally.



A mortar platoon is delivered to the battlefield by a CH-47 Chinook. Photo courtesy of the author.

In minutes we were descending toward the pickup. With the flight engineer prone on the deck, peering through a tiny window and chatting with the pilots through his headset, I took up a watch, scanning the ground, near and far. Nothing dangerous in sight except 200 Marines. I felt our ship slowly rising, taking the slack out of the cable connected to the hook by which the recovered bird was tethered. Then we began a slow left turn to align the centers of gravity of both aircraft.

Not 50 yards away, a man in "black pajamas" and a straw hat covered with sod stood up in his spider hole. He raised a 57 mm recoilless rifle to his shoulder and took aim. I lined up my sights and fired a short burst. My bullets landed short and skipped over his head. He fired.

Our Chinook shuddered. A fist-sized hole appeared 10 feet away on my side of the fuselage. Its twin appeared on the other side. The one on my side was a hand's span from the engine. That's the only reason my life didn't end in a flaming explosion. Before I could fire again, several Marines swarmed the man in black pajamas. Meanwhile, the flight engineer jumped up, whipped off his field jacket, pulled a Bowie knife from his belt, and cut an arm off the jacket. A roll of green duct tape appeared from somewhere.

Our pilots released the cable and the H-34 fell away. I noticed that there was an inch of hydraulic fluid sloshing around on the deck. Hydraulic fluid, I knew, was very flammable.



The Day the Marines Asked the Army for Help *By Marvin J. Wolf*

Continued from Page 4



A badly damaged Chinook (on the ground) is recovered by a First Air Cav CH-53 Flying Crane. The Chinook was repaired and returned to service. Photo courtesy of the author.

In half a minute, the flight engineer found the severed hydraulic line, stuffed his jacket down it, and then taped it shut.

In the cockpit, our pilots were cursing aloud and struggling with the controls. I peeked and was astonished to see both pilots with hands on the controls.

Flying a big helicopter like a CH-47 requires the assistance of hydraulics to move external control surfaces. Without them, it's like trying to handle an 18-wheeler going full speed on an interstate without power steering or

power brakes. Except that a helicopter requires maneuvering in three dimensions, not two. So our pilots worked together, announcing each maneuver and together pulling or pushing the appropriate pedal or stick.

After a long, slow, flight we landed safely at Da Nang. Trailing the pilots, I walked around the bird, shooting photos and listening to them talk.

Apparently, the 57 mm recoilless had fired a HEAT round—high explosive, antitank. It was designed to pierce through the thick armor of a tank. The HEAT round had a soft nose that collapsed on impact to shape a charge that could pierce through the armor. All this, of course, in the blink of an eye.



A CH-47 Chinook based at the Army's First Cavalry Division base, known as the "Golf Course," lifts off with a 105 mm howitzer on a sling. At the bottom left is the gun crew. Photo courtesy of the author.

Our Chinook was not armored. A rifle bullet easily pierced the thin aluminum hull. So the HEAT round punched a hole in one side, flew across the interior, then punched a second hole in the other side before exploding. Exploding outside our aircraft.

The paint outside the exit hole was pitted and scorched. We were very, very lucky. And one more thing: Our aircraft was one of the first 100 delivered by Vertol, a division of Boeing. Upon delivery, Army pilots flew several test flights and decided that the hydraulic system, although built to original specifications, was inadequate. Rather than tear it out and replace it, Vertol installed a second system, designed to act in tandem with the first. The HEAT round had severed one hydraulic line, but quick action by our flight engineer limited the loss of fluid. With great effort, our pilots controlled our flight and landed safely. Without that second system, we would have been doomed to crash.

The second Chinook recovered the remaining Marine helicopters. Mission accomplished. By morning our Chinook had been repaired. Both aircraft returned safely to An Khe. Lt. Gen. Walt was kind enough to send a letter of thanks to every man who flew the mission.

You're welcome, Jarheads. Any time.

**I was that what others did not want to be.
I went where others feared to go.
I did what others failed to do.
I asked nothing from those who gave nothing.
I solemnly accepted the thought of eternal
loneliness and despair.
I have seen the face of evil, felt the sting
of hate and terror.
I have cried, prayed and hoped... but most of all,
I have lived times others would say were best forgotten.
At least I am able to say that I am Proud of what I am.
I am an American Soldier.**

**Charles Bullock
RVN 1967-1971**

**Vietnam Veterans of
America—Chapter 196
Lynchburg , Virginia**



OF AMERICA

STANLEY E. TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPTER 196
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA



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Lynchburg, VA, 24504**

www.vva.org

www.vva-vasc.org

Give This to a Fellow Vietnam Veteran...

The Vietnam Veterans of America association is a "home of our own" - a community of fellowship with people who share your experiences, needs, and hopes for the future. Agent Orange is still with us and our numbers are dwindling, probably at a much faster rate than we would like it. That makes it even more important for Vietnam Veterans to have a viable and strong organization to represent us in Washington

Membership is open to U.S. armed force veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between Feb.. 28, 1961 and May 7, 1975, or in any duty location between Aug. 5, 1964 and May 7, 1975.

To have a fellow Vietnam Veteran join, either cut out the application and give it to the Vet or better yet, give your copy of our newsletter

to him or her. Don't forget that a copy of their DD-214 with their membership application is required.

Families, friends, supporters, and veterans of other eras can join the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America and receive the same benefits, including a subscription to The VVA Veteran.

BECOME A LIFE MEMBER

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA Return to: Vietnam Veterans of America, P.O. Box 49030, Baltimore, MD 21297-4930

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New members must submit a copy of their DD-214 along with this application and dues payment.