



# “THE LISTENING POST”

May 1, 2021



Vol 12 Issue 3

## President’s Comments

## Vietnam Quotes

### Upcoming Events

May 11, 2021, 7:00 PM, Monthly VVA Meeting

May 11, 2021, 7:00 PM, Monthly AVVA Meeting

May 31, 2021 Memorial Day

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To the members and associates of Chapter 196

Things are slowly beginning to return to normal or as close to what normal used to be. With the governor easing restrictions, I still don’t see us having any kind of fund raiser anytime soon.

If you have been by the Legion recently, there is a POW/MIA marker out front on the walkway. The Legion wants us to sponsor a plaque listing the numbers from the Vietnam War. As soon as a local company is selected, we will cover our part. Other organizations will cover WWI, WWII, and Korea.

Congratulations to Kristen Kahaneh and Jessica Viehweg who

each received \$500 scholarships from our chapter. The State Council will also award two \$500 scholarships. If you have a grandchild who is entering college or already attending college or in a trade school, you need to go on line and submit the application to Jim Blount. Deadline is in June.

There will be a Memorial Day ceremony this year at Monument Terrace. Last year's program was very simple due to the Covid restrictions. This year there will be the regular program with seats, speakers and the color guard. I hope you can attend, but if you are unable, then please take a moment and say a prayer in remembrance of the men and women who died for our country.

Hope to see you on the 11th at 7:00 pm.

Keeping you informed,

David Stokes, President

The war against Vietnam is only the ghastliest manifestation of what I'd call imperial provincialism, which afflicts America's whole culture – aware only of its own history, insensible to everything which isn't part of the local atmosphere.

*STEPHEN VIZINCZEY, London Times, September 21, 1968*

It has been said that the United States was deceived into entering and expanding the Vietnam War by its own overoptimistic propaganda. The record suggests, however, that the policy-makers stayed in Vietnam not so much because of overly optimistic hopes of winning ... as because of overly pessimistic assessments of the consequences of losing.

*JONATHAN SCHELL, The Real War*

I have to keep my mouth shut about Nam though. All of these guys want to believe they were fighting an honorable war, and that their conduct deserves respect. They want the public to treat them like they're heroes--like the WWII vets were. Instead, smart ass, pampered kids call them names and throw dog shit at them.

*BUD RUDESILL, Hurricane Ginger*

No event in American history is more misunderstood than the Vietnam War. It was misreported then, and it is misremembered now.

*RICHARD NIXON, New York Times, March 28, 1985*

Vietnam was a country where America was trying to make people stop being communists by dropping things on them from airplanes.

*KURT VONNEGUT, Breakfast of Champions*



## Minutes for April 13, 2021 Membership Meeting

Chapter President David Stokes called the meeting to order at 6:00PM followed by The Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer and draping of the POW/MIA banner.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

**MEMBERSHIP VVA-** 217 members  
**AWA-** No report

**FINANCIAL** Report was given by Financial Secretary.

### OLD BUSINESS

Mike Morris has resigned the position of Chaplain for Chapter 196 to pursue other endeavors.

Vietnam Veteran

and Foreign Conflicts Foundation has moved to the old Saunders Construction building in Arrington (Nelson County) and are presently looking to move to a new facility. Chapter 196 donated \$500 to the Foundation last month.

Valor Farms in Altavista has changed their Volunteer times to the 1st and 3rd Saturdays each month from 8-12.

### NEW BUSINESS

Discussions were held on a number of our chapter members who have recently

dealing with health problems of themselves or family members.

Two (2) Scholarships were given this year to Granddaughters of chapter members:

Kristen Kahaneh, Granddaughter of Bob Sherman  
Jessica Viehweg, Granddaughter of John Poliey  
Congratulations to them.

Respectfully submitted  
Robert Crowder, Secretary VVA Chapter 196



## This Day in History-Jan 16, 1964

President Johnson approves Oplan 34A, operations to be conducted by South Vietnamese forces supported by the United States to gather intelligence and conduct sabotage to destabilize the North Vietnamese regime. Actual operations began in February and involved raids by South Vietnamese commandos operating under U.S. orders against North Vietnamese coastal and island installations. Although American forces were not directly involved in the actual raids, U.S.

Navy ships were on station to conduct electronic surveillance and monitor North Vietnamese

defense responses under another program called Operation De Soto. The Oplan 34A attacks played a major role in what became known as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. On August 2, 1964, North Vietnamese patrol boats attacked the destroyer USS Maddox, which was conducting a De Soto mission in the area. Two days after the first attack, there was another incident that still remains unclear. The Maddox, joined by destroyer USS C. Turner Joy, engaged what were believed to be more attacking North Vietnamese patrol boats.

Although it was questionable whether the second attack actually happened, the incident provided the rationale for retaliatory air attacks and the subsequent Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which became the basis for the initial escalation of the war in Vietnam and ultimately the insertion of U.S. combat troops into the area.





## Experience A Fierce And Frenetic Combat Mission: Helicopter Fighting in Vietnam

THE VETERAN SITE.COM BY DAN DOYLE

Imagine, for a moment, being on a six-man Recon patrol.

You are spread out with a good 10 to 15 feet between you, moving slowly and warily through the jungle, every muscle tense, our senses on high alert. You are heading back to the LZ you had been inserted into only an hour or so before, because you have found a fresh, very recently used company-sized, NVA staging area hidden under the thick canopy of the forest.

Your team leader and radioman have been busy radioing in the coordinates and reporting on what you are seeing. There are sleeping areas, cooking areas, all cleared out, well camouflaged and able to accommodate well over a hundred men.

Command says to get the hell out of there and to get back to our LZ for an immediate extraction.



Source: YouTube/woodymitchell  
Hueys led the charge in Vietnam.

Your team gets back to the bomb crater atop a small, open, elephant grass covered knoll. The sharp blades of elephant grass are 10-12 ft tall. One of the team sets a claymore mine just off of the trail you have made through the elephant grass, just in case there are any enemy troops following you.

As you wait nervously for the helicopters there is nothing but silence! The air is heavy with humidity. It's midday hot. Then you hear movement in the grass from the direction you've just come from. It is slow and deliberate. There are more than one of them out there in the elephant grass.

They are close, maybe twenty yards away.



Source: YouTube/woodymitchell  
A helicopter team fly a mission over Vietnam.

In that moment, you can hear your team's six M-16 safeties going to semi, or full auto position. Then the team leader hits the plunger on the claymore and the silence is split by a deafening roar as the claymore blast tears through the elephant grass and anyone who might be in front of it.

Just as suddenly, the distinctive "crack-crack-crack" of AK-47 fire comes from three directions. All six of our M-16s return the fire in short and long, intense bursts.

### Firefight!

Then, just as suddenly, silence again. It is eerie. You can hear your own nervous breathing and that of your team members. And each of you take quick glances toward the sky hoping to see the gunships and extraction helicopters coming in.



Source: YouTube/woodymitchell  
Hueys lined up at an American base in Vietnam.

It was at times like this that the troops on the ground valued those helicopters, their pilots and their crews more than anything in all the world. The two videos attached to this article will give you a sense of the courage, the skill and the fierce, uncompromising dedication those helicopter pilots and crews possessed, and how much they meant to us on the ground who were caught in the middle of it. Those pilots and crews were some of the bravest men in Vietnam. And we reconners and infantrymen loved them.

As the writer, Joe Galloway says in one of the videos, to us they were "God's own lunatics."

When they got the call, they came in and did not hesitate to enter the kill zone to pick us up, to get our wounded out, to bring in needed food, water and ammo supplies. They had very little protective armor, and they were not fast, but we knew that they were not going to stop in their efforts to help us on the ground.



## Years After the Terrible Siege at Khe Sanh, a Vietnam Veteran Reunites with His Fellow Marines

THE VETERAN SITE.COM BY DAN DOYLE

The year was 1968, it was January, and the Tet Offensive had begun. My unit, Bravo Co., was at a forward air base called Khe Sanh — now surrounded by a force of about 20,000 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) troops — and, for seventy-seven days, the Marines at Khe Sanh would endure daily artillery, rocket, and mortar barrages.

Within days we had dug deep into the ground to make bunkers and eight-foot-deep trenches, connecting them in an effort to find some level of protection against the endless barrages. All too often, the size of the artillery and mortar rounds made all that effort an exercise in wishful thinking.



### REUNION AND REFLECTION

That was 46 years ago. Today, I am in Sparks, Nevada, attending a reunion with my Marines from Bravo, 3rd Recon for the first time. It is proving to be a powerful experience. We are old men now. We were in our late teens and early twenties then. We were thinner, had all of our hair, and had the muscle and the energy of youth then. As life and luck would have it, we are old men, now in our late sixties and early seventies in varying stages of health.

But when we look at each other's ID tags and remember those names, we embrace. That brotherhood born in the crucible of that far away war reignites, and we settle quickly into recounting our old memories. While some of the shared memories are full of the pathos of those days, there is much laughter in our conversations, too. Somehow we have always been able to use humor to deal with the weird reality we found ourselves in. Many of our conversations are born out of that mutual experience and a sense of wonder that we survived all of that and even went on to have families and careers. We made lives for ourselves. But we never forget those whose lives ended back there. They are still missed and mourned for as if it were yesterday.

The Tet Offensive is widely remembered as the turning point of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, but nine days earlier, the North Vietnamese launched an assault on the remote Marine outpost at Khe Sanh. Two months later — well after the U.S. beat back the surprise attacks of the Tet Offensive — Khe Sanh remained under siege.

Many of these men have been coming to these reunions for years. This is my first time to be back with my brothers from Bravo Co., 3rd Recon. It has surprised me how quickly I felt at home with them all. There are men from the whole Battalion here, so there are many that I did not know then and am meeting for the first time here. But that doesn't make a difference — we are all Marines (even we Corpsmen).

### TEDIUM AND TERROR

At the time the siege began Bravo, 3rd Recon about 110 men. At the end of it we had lost 19 of our brothers and many more had been wounded. We were a small unit on the base and our typical task of reconnaissance, being the "eyes and ears" of the 3rd Marine Division, had been rendered moot by the siege. We did not have to go sneaking around in the jungle looking for the enemy; the enemy had surrounded us and was at our perimeter. You could see them and their trenches creeping closer, testing our defenses every day. As a result we were often called upon to do other things.

For example, we were called upon regularly to collect the garbage on the base and then take it outside of the wires to the dump site. This was not as easy as it may sound, as the artillery and mortar barrages could come at any time. Getting caught out in the open, above ground, standing on a pile of garbage in the open bed of a truck, nowhere near a bunker was not good.

It seemed crazy, but it was an absolute necessity. We were already overrun with rats. They didn't need any more encouragement. When we went outside the wire to the dump site, we went with weapons locked and loaded. We pushed that trash off of the back end of that truck like madmen and retreated back behind the wires as fast as we could. Corpsmen were assigned the duty of burning the waste in the outhouses every day.

That meant being exposed to sniper fire, or being away from the bunkers and trenches while you were engaged in this nasty job. But we did it, every day.



We would be called on occasion to help out at Graves Registration too. This was the difficult job of identifying and body-bagging our fellow Marines. Most of us were 18-22 year old kids, but we already knew the reality of death intimately. We lived with the threat of it on a daily basis. We smelled it. We touched it. And it touched us.

### BROTHERS, AGAIN AND ALWAYS

My Bravo Co. and some of the men from Delta Co. were the only elements of the Battalion at Khe Sanh, but we all went on Recon patrols in our small squads and share the unique realities of that experience. We all know what it means to have each other's back. These men cared for one another, protected one another, helped one another with an affection unlike any other. This brotherhood is a phenomenon of war that much has been written about, but to be a part of it is one of the most cherished things in our lives. We are never strangers to one another. Even though we see each other rarely, when we do get together, we are brothers again.

Being here with my Recon Marines again has been a very moving experience for me. I am enjoying the old camaraderie and am taking it all in, for we will part again and go back to our homes to carry on with our lives as usual. But for these few days we can step out of the usual and remember that unusual reality that we shared and survived together so many years ago.

It is good to be with my Marines again. They are good men, one and all. I love them. They are my brothers.



## Doug Webster Vietnam War

Doug Webster served our country during the Vietnam War in the United States Air Force. Doug was born in Huntington Park, California. His father served in the Merchant Marines.

In 1972, Doug was a student at UCLA in the Reserve Officer Training Corps program (ROTC). After graduation he was commissioned into the US Air Force as a 2nd Lieutenant. He was sent to Pilot training in Mississippi, however, a short time later the Air Force decided they didn't need new pilots. Doug was then directed to Navigator training for the C-130 Hercules aircraft.

From 1973 to 1977, Doug was assigned to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines. As the Squadron Navigator on a C-130, they would fly sorties (missions) throughout the South Pacific to deliver cargo and airlift to islands like Taiwan, Guam, South Korea, Australia, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. During his two tours at Clark, Doug was promoted to Captain.

On 29 April 1975, during

the fall of Saigon, the Saigon Airport was under attack and the last three C-130 planes arrived for the evacuation of personnel. The C-130 Hercules was designed to seat 92 people, but during the evacuation they removed the seats and were able to load more than 200 people into the cargo space. Doug's plane landed under high threat conditions; they immediately unloaded a BLU-82 "Daisy Cutter" bomb, to make room for the evacuees. As they taxied to the personnel loading area, they saw flashes which were explosion. The wing of their aircraft took a hit of shrapnel from the explosion. The C-130 personnel immediately evacuated the plane due to the leaking fuel and the possibility of an explosion. Doug and his crew loaded onto the last C-130 to depart the Saigon Airport. They would be the last fixed wing aircraft to depart. Helicopters were used to continue the evacuation.

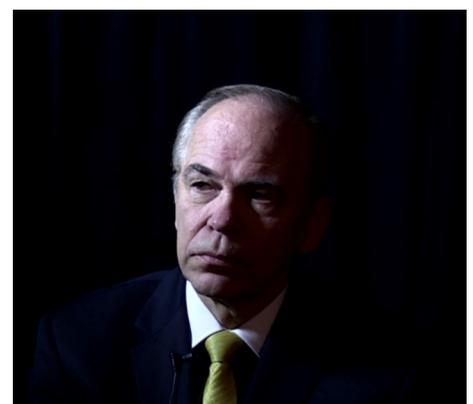
In 1977, Doug transferred to McCord Air Base in Washington to the 62nd Airlift Wing, Air Mobility Command. After that tour, Doug was promoted to Major and was transferred back to Clark Air

Base in the Philippines and assigned to the 374th Tactical Airlift Wing. Doug retired from the Air Force after his last tour at the Pentagon.

From Jan-Sep 2004, Doug was a Senior Executive Management Appointee during the Iraq war and was responsible for working with the coalition.

Doug is very proud of their accomplishment during the fall of Saigon and he appreciates the service of people and families he served with.

Thank you Doug for your service to our country.



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



**OF AMERICA**  
STANLEY E. TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPTER 196  
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**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.

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