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



#### March 1, 2024

# THE LISTENING POST"

Vol 15 Issue 1

## **President's Comments**

**Upcoming Events** 

March 12, 2024, 6:00 PM, Monthly VVA Meeting

### March 12 2024, 6:00 PM, Monthly AVVA Meeting

March 28, 2024 Vietnam War Veterans Day

### Happy St. Patrick's Day Day March 17th



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To the members and associates of Chapter 196.

As I write this, we have just returned from the Region 3 Conference in Ashville, NC. This was a very interest- before hand. For those ing conference with em- of you who were not at phasis on veterans heath, well being, finan- the chapter donated cial planning.

Robert Crowder, Gail and I will do a detailed summary at our meeting. They will be doing most of the reporting as I was appointed Sgt.-at-Arms and basically all I did was open and close the doors to the conference room hundreds of times each day. I should have charged .25 each time.

I will propose several changes at our meeting which if voted on and approved should strengthen our membership.

I understand City Council approved the Soldier's Cross and I want to thank everyone who attended for a show of support.

March 29th is the official Vietnam Veterans day in Virginia. Mission Bar B-O has a free sandwich that day. Call and check on the time the February meeting, \$1000 to the Vietnam Veteran's Foundation to help with the up keep of the "Wall," which is our legacy to the country.

Remember the March meeting time is 6:00 pm instead of 7:00. Hope to see you there.

Keeping you informed,

David Stokes, President

This war has already stretched the generation gap so wide that it threatens to pull the country apart. FRANK CHURCH, speech on the Senate

floor, May 13, 1970

Vietnam Quotes

You have a row of dominoes set up; you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is that it will go over very quickly. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, press conference, April 7, 1954

But also out here in this dreary, difficult war, I think history will record that this may have been one of America's finest hours, because we took a difficult task and we succeeded.

RICHARD NIXON, remarks to American troops of the First Infantry Division, Di An, Vietnam, July 30, 1969

I love the smell of napalm in the morning. It smells like victory. FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA, Apocalypse Now

Hell no, we won't go! ANONYMOUS, Anti-Vietnam War slogan

Television brought the brutality of war into the comfort of the living room. Vietnam was lost in the living rooms of America -- not on the battlefields of Vietnam MARSHALL MCLUHAN, Montreal Gazette, May 16, 1975

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

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.







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## Minutes from February 13, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by President David Stokes followed by prayer and draping of the POW/MIA flag.

#### **Committee Reports**

#### Membership

VVA-207 AVVA-26

#### Finance

The Financial Secretary read the financial report. Chaplains Report

In the absence of Chaplain Will Strong,,David reported that Daniel Coffman continues to improve and reported that he would be moved to Liberty Ridge for rehab at a later date.

#### Old Business

The 8X8 brick for installation at the new LPD Headquarters has been ordered. David reminded the members in attendance to attend the Lynchburg City Council meeting on January 27 to show support for the installation of the Soldiers Crossat Monument Terrace. David reported on items discussed at the Commanders meeting at Salem VA Hospital. .The

City of Lynchburg had charged the chapter for services rendered in setting up and security for the 2023 Veteran's Day services and had recently sent additional charges. David is checking to see if the last ones are legitimate or double charges.

#### **New Business**

David reported that Region 3 would be held in Asheville NC the week on Jan 27.

#### Motions

A motion was made and approved to donate \$1000 to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, A motion was made and approved to pay \$186 to continue the Chapter's internet service.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted Robert Crowder, Secretary VVA Chapter 196







LIFE BACK AT BASE CAMP... NO SWEAT!

















## Larry Taylor, most recent Medal of Honor recipient dies at age 81 By Todd South

President Joe Biden awards the Medal of Honor to Capt. Larry Taylor, an Army pilot from the Vietnam War who risked his life to rescue a reconnaissance team that was about to be overrun by the enemy, during a ceremony Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2023, in the East Room of the White House in Washington. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

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The most recent Medal of Honor recipient died Sunday after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Capt. Larry Taylor, 81, waited 55 years before his piloting heroics that saved the lives of four men during the Vietnam War were recognized with the nation's highest award for military valor.

President Joe Biden presented Taylor with the medal at the White House on Sept. 5, after a years-long effort by friends, fellow soldiers and officials to have his June 18, 1968 actions reviewed.

The president said in his remarks that when he called Taylor to inform him he would receive the medal, Taylor said, "I thought you had to do something to receive the Medal of Honor."

"Well, Larry, you sure in hell did something, man. If you ask anyone here, I'm pretty sure they'd say something — you did something extraordinary," Biden said at the ceremony. Roger Donlon, the first American to receive the Medal of Honor for actions in the Vietnam War, died Thursday of complications from Parkinson's disease. He was 89.



Army Sgt. David Hill led the effort to see Tay lor recognized. Hill was one of the four soldiers saved by Taylor.

Hill and his three fellow soldiers were conducting a nighttime reconnaissance mission near the Saigon River in South Vietnam when multiple enemy platoons surrounded them. They were nearly out of ammunition after an intense firefight, and they prepared for what they believed was an imminent enemy attack.

In a whisper, they radioed for help and Taylor was on duty with Troop D (Air), 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division about 30 miles away.



Capt. Larry Taylor, circa 1967. (Army)

Taylor rushed to his AH-1G Cobra helicopter with his co-pilot and two other soldiers in a separate Cobra.

Unable to spot the U.S. troops in the dark, Tayor told the men on the ground to alert him with a radio call when he was directly overhead. Once located, Taylor told them to mark their position with flares, which brought an intense wave of enemy fire on their position. As the ground troops fired their remaining ammunition, the two helicopters fired from above on the enemy.

With his ammunition, Taylor told the ground team to reposition their claymore and personnel mines toward the northeast and

southeast. Taylor then made another pass over the enemy to distract them as the ground troops detonated their mines. These actions allowed the U.S. troops to reach an extraction point Taylor had identified.

Landing amide heavy enemy fire, Taylor's helicopter was on the ground for about 10 seconds. With only two seats in the aircraft, the ground troops clung to the helicopter's exterior skids and rocket launchers as Taylor flew them away to a nearby safe location. They hopped off the helicopter, ran to the front and saluted the pilot who'd saved them. That would be the last time they'd see each other for more than 30 years.

Within a few months after the rescue mission, Taylor would leave Vietnam. By the time he left active duty in 1970, Taylor had been promoted to captain. He flew about 1,200 combat missions, of which he estimated that 1,000 were supporting long-range recon patrols. Army information shows that Taylor's helicopters took enemy fire on 340 of those missions and were forced down five times. The Army later gave Taylor the Silver Star Medal, which Hill only learned about at a 1999 reunion. He thought Taylor deserved much more. He made two attempts over the next 20 years that failed to gain any traction. But after finding new information not previously submitted, including interviews with the surviving soldiers, a third submission, made in 2021, proved successful.

Taylor grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and joined the Army Reserve Officer Training program at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He became an Army aviator in 1967 and deployed to Vietnam.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Taylor was awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, and received the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star, among other awards.

His remains will be buried at the Chattanooga National Cemetery, home to those of fellow Medal of Honor recipients Charles Coolidge and Desmond Doss, the Chattanooga Times Free Press reported.

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## THE LOST PATROL OF DA NANG BY JACK WELLS

On May 12, 1966, a 14-man Marine patrol was ambushed and wiped out by Viet Cong forces near Da Nang, Vietnam. Despite search efforts and reinforcements, 12 patrol members were killed. Only 2 survived the ambush. The loss was devastating for the Marines who had arrived in Vietnam just a year earlier. Outnumbered and outgunned, Marines courageously fought for their lives on a killing ground near Da Nang.

At 6:30 in the morning on May 12, 1966, a 14man reinforced squad from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, left the company perimeter near the village of Bao Tran, about 15 miles southwest of Da Nang, on a routine security patrol in a broad valley east of the Vu Gia River. A May 11 intelligence report stated that a company from a Viet Cong battalion had moved into Do Nam, a hamlet near a small finger lake, about a mile northeast of Bravo Company's position.

About an hour later, the Marine squad, designated BP10, approached a village and came under small-arms fire from the east. The squad, led by Sergeant Dallas Young, responded with 20 rounds of small-arms fire and five rounds from an M79 grenade launcher. It then advanced toward the enemy. Later, Young radioed Bravo commander Captain Norman Henry and told him the squad had apprehended a suspected Viet Cong. Young added that his men were moving toward a tree line to check out a small group of VC they had spotted. At 8:30 the patrol was near the bank of the Vu Gia and reported a water buffalo blocking the path. Henry ordered the men to avoid the animal if possible but shoot it if attacked. At 9 a.m. the Marines reported that they had killed the water buffalo.

The patrol came under harassing fire at 9:15. The Marines returned fire and reported that the VC were fleeing. During the pursuit Young requested fire support, and Bravo's mortar section shot an 81mm spotting round. The patrol could not see where it fell, so Captain Henry ordered a cease-fire to be sure the rounds didn't hit his own men. About that time, radio communications with BP10 ended.

When the transmissions stopped, the Bravo patrol had been moving through rice paddies northeast of where the Vu Gia and Thu Bon rivers flow together on their path east toward the sea. The Marines dubbed the area "Dodge City" because of the many "shootouts" that occurred there. An area of rice paddies on the west side of the rivers' confluence was called "Arizona Territory," after the rugged and sometimes dangerous terrain of America's Southwestern badlands in the 1800s. The region had been flooded with the blood of gun battles almost since the day the Marines arrived in South Vietnam the previous spring.

Legend has it that in early spring 1966, at a ceremony in Hanoi, General Vo Nguyen Giap promised President Ho Chi Minh he would wipe out the 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, as a present for the leader's birthday (May 19). In describing the fate that awaited the Marines in Arizona Territory and Dodge City, Giap allegedly used the term di bo chet, translated as the "walking dead": The Marines should be considered already dead, just not buried yet. The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, proudly and defiantly adopted "The Walking Dead" as its nickname.

In May the Marines started an offensive called the Ky Lam Campaign, designed to clear the enemy out of a broad swath south of the Thu Bon River all the way to the coast (one of the rivers in that region is named Ky Lam). The 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, under Lt. Col. William Doehler, was responsible for the western portion of the campaign around the Dai Loc District, where BP10 was patrolling on May 12.

When radio communications with BP10 stopped on May 12, Captain Henry, the Bravo Company commander, sent a reaction squad from 1st Platoon to locate the lost patrol. Moving quickly east, the reaction force tried to follow BP10's route. Around 10 a.m. the reaction squad, led by Staff Sgt. Earl Davis, was moving through a small village "trying to regain radio contact as we went along," recalled Lance Cpl. C.R. "Ray" Maurer, a member of the squad. "We came into a large open graveyard. Almost immediately we were brought under heavy small-arms and mortar fire." Davis requested mortar fire from Bravo, and the squad moved forward. "As our requested mortar fire came in, the enemy mortars ceased," Maurer said.

At 10:30 the reaction squad heard a heavy volume of small-arms fire, M79 rounds and hand grenade explosions east of its position near Do Nam. "We were only receiving sporadic sniper fire, which led me to believe the heavy fire was coming from Sergeant Young's squad," Maurer said.



Thinking the reaction squad had found the missing patrol, Henry requested an aerial observer. By chance, a U.S. Army AO was flying nearby and spotted the reaction squad moving toward Do Nam. The pilot made a low pass over the squad and fired four rockets into a trench line in front of the Davis' unit. On another pass the AO dropped a smoke grenade to the Marines. Written on it in grease pencil was a message: "10 VC in trench." Davis figured his men could handle 10 VC and continued toward the village. A few minutes later the A0 dropped a second smoke-grenade message: "10-20 VC in tree line, I'm calling Arty"—artillery fire. Davis ordered his men into trenches next to a nearby road and advised Henry of the warnings. Bravo made contact with the A0, and Maurer heard him say, "Your point is catching hell, you'd better get up here fast."

"We guessed that the AO had seen Sergeant Young's squad forward of our position," Maurer said. "Davis contacted the AO and was told that a trench line by Loc Thuan village, to our front, was swarming with VC."



Around 11:45 Henry sent the rest of Bravo Company to rescue the embattled Marines, with 1st Platoon commander 2nd Lt. Bruce Capel and his remaining squad as the point element. Meanwhile, Davis' reaction squad was unable to reach Young's BP10 because it ran into another Viet Cong force and was pinned down.

"The rest of the day was chaotic, with airstrikes, artillery and gunfire going on all around us," Davis said. "Luckily, we found shelter in another trench line. The rest of Bravo came up from our rear, and we were able to pull back into their lines." By 12:30 p.m. all of Bravo was heavily engaged, but the company's 81mm and 60mm mortars failed to silence the enemy's weapons. Henry asked for additional artillery and air support. After an artillery barrage from 2nd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, the action died down for about 20 minutes, and then the enemy opened up again with small arms and mortars. By this time, however, McDonnell F-4B Phantom IIs from Marine fighter-bomber squadron VMFA 542 were overhead. The jets' first runs on the entrenched VC in Do Nam temporarily silenced the enemy guns.

"At that time we reorganized and went back out to locate BP10," Davis said.

At about 1:20 p.m. Maurer, in the reaction squad, spotted two members of BP10, Pfc. James Binkley and Pfc. Reuben Morales, crossing an open field about 150 yards in front of him. Maurer, Pfc. Robert Mettert and Lance Cpl. Bernard Triano ran

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## THE LOST PATROL OF DA NANG BY JACK WELLS

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toward the two men, who were severely wounded, and helped them back to the safety of the Bravo perimeter, while other Marines provided covering fire.

"When we finally got inside the perimeter," Morales said, "the first thing we asked for was water." Morales and Binkley were also given first aid. Binkley had been shot through both arms and could not move either of them. Captain Henry asked the two men, before they went under sedation, where the rest of the squad was. Morales and Binkley pointed to the northeast and said they were all dead.

Binkley and Morales later recounted the tragic story of the lost patrol. BP10 had been lured into an ambush by two or three Viet Cong companies, estimated at 250 soldiers, from the R-20 Main Force Battalion, who were equipped with machine guns and a 57mm recoilless rifle. During the battle "the radio was hit and we couldn't call the company," Morales said.

BP10 was crossing a rice paddy when its point man was shot, followed by the Navy medic and a Marine on the right flank. As bullets poured into the patrol, one struck Morales in the head, and he went down. The Marines' only shelter was a small paddy dike. "When someone tried to run, he was hit," Morales said.

One who tried to make a run for it was Lance Cpl. Edgardo Caceres, the machine gunner, who had only two days left to serve in Vietnam. Caceres was hit in the back, got up and started running, only to be hit again. "I knew he was running for help," Morales said. "He fell three different times. After being shot, I stood up. I was dizzy but could see the Viet Cong coming toward us. The other guys who could stand stood up, firing away. The wounded were shooting too."



By the time the VC reached the dike, a low mound of dirt in front of the Marines, Morales was out of ammunition. "I was ready to start swinging my rifle, when I got hit in the neck," he said. "I fell on my back, but I was not unconscious. I heard all the noises—the mortars and grenades. A few seconds later, it stopped. Then the shooting started again. I opened my eyes and saw the Viet Cong shoot two other guys out in front of me on the second paddy dike. I heard them coming toward me and closed my eyes.

"They took my rifle, a grenade I had, and ammunition. Then one picked me up by my shirt to search me, but dropped me back. I was waiting, thinking, When will he pull the trigger? More shooting started, and the two VC near me started moving away when our mortars started firing. I looked and saw them running back into the tree line. I heard another Marine calling, 'Corpsman. Over here!'"

Navy Corpsman "Doc" Pedro Muñoz, the medic, was constantly moving up and down the perimeter during the battle. Wounded more than once, he continued to treat the men until he was killed. "I heard our troops [men from the reaction squad] trying to get to us, but they couldn't," Morales said. "After a while, the other Marines stopped hollering. I was scared. I thought we had been abandoned."

Binkley, like Morales, had feigned death when the Viet Cong overran the Marines. As the sun got higher, temperatures rose above 100 degrees that day, and the two men lay in the blistering heat for more than three hours. When the Marine artillery and mortars forced the VC back into the tree line, Morales saw Bravo in the distance and decided to take a chance. He crawled around the paddy looking for other survivors. "As I started to crawl," he said, "I expected the VC to shoot me in the back. There was a Marine with his legs over the paddy wall. He said he couldn't move, and I told him I'd be back. I could see our troops across the rice paddies, but they were moving very slow." Morales saw three others lying face down. He figured they were dead.

He then crawled over to Binkley. The two lone survivors headed toward their Bravo comrades and safety. The other Marines of Bravo Company continued their fight that afternoon. "Using the information we got from Morales and Binkley, we moved forward," Davis said. "As we were approaching the tree line, the VC opened fire with mortars and small arms." Lieutenant Capel was maneuvering 1st Platoon when he "was hit both from the side and the front," Davis said. When Capel fell, fatally wounded, Davis assumed command of 1st Platoon and rallied his men as they crossed more than 200 yards of open paddy under intense automatic weapons and mortar fire.

The commander of 2nd Platoon, Lieutenant Bob Jadlow, remembers Capel, who had reported to the Marines just two months earlier, as a "brave, hard charging, gentle giant." Capel had been on the University of Illinois football team that won the 1964 Rose Bowl and had played on the Quantico Marines team in 1965.

Shortly after 1:30 Doehler, the battalion commander, reinforced Bravo. He moved Company D and a platoon from Company A to link up with Henry's company. By 6:15 Henry had established a defensive line near Hoa Tay, a village not far from the lost patrol battle site. He ordered the reaction squad, which had suffered five heat casualties, to pull back to company lines. The three units were then consolidated in a 360-degree defensive perimeter around the village.

Meanwhile Marine aircraft were arriving: F-4s, Vought F-8 Crusaders and Douglas A-4 Skyhawks joined Bell UH-1 Iroquois "Huey" gunships in close-air-support missions. Nine airstrikes were run at half-hour intervals. Marine artillery fired 242 supporting rounds. The enemy force became disorganized and broke into small groups.

"The final outcome was that 175 VC were killed and a large number wounded," Davis recalled. "We found out through our interpreter the next day that the VC forced people from three villages to help them carry away the bodies."



The next morning, May 13, Doehler moved his com-

mand post to Hoa Tay and ordered search-and-clear operations. Early that afternoon Bravo Company recovered the bodies of the 12 dead Marines from the lost patrol, BP10, near the western tip of the finger lake.

Sergeant Davis said it appeared that a dying Caceres had made sure the enemy could not use his M60 machine gun to kill other Marines. He had placed a grenade in the breech and lay on top of the gun after pulling the pin. Caceres was awarded a posthumous Silver Star, as was Doc Muñoz. Davis received a Silver Star for his actions after Lieutenant Capel was killed.



The 9th Marines of the 3rd Division operated in Arizona Territory and Dodge City until early April 1967, when the regiment moved to Quang Tri, South Vietnam's northernmost province. The 5th and 7th Marine regiments of the 1st Marine Division then took over responsibility for Arizona Territory, Dodge City and Go Noi Island, an area (not actually an island) on the south side of the Thu Bon River across from Dodge City.

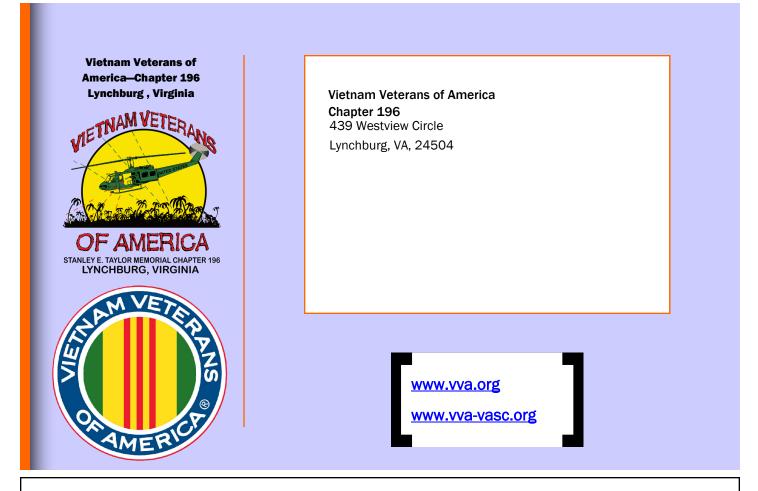
In 1968—which began with the enemy's Tet Offensive at the end of January—Arizona, Dodge City and adjacent areas became even more dangerous. It would be the deadliest year of the entire war for the Marines.



After repeated operations to clear the Viet Cong and NVA from Arizona, Dodge City and Go Noi, the patience of 1st Marine Division ran out. On June 1, 1968, a flight of nine C-130 Hercules aircraft, on what was called an "inferno mission," dropped 55-gallon drums containing a total of 31,000 gallons of fuel, which was then ignited in an attempt to burn down the thick foliage that the enemy used to its advantage. A heavy thunderstorm, however, made the effort ineffective.

Marines from the 1st Engineer Battalion arrived at Go Noi on June 6 with bulldozers to clear all foliage and structures. The commander of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Marines, Lt. Col. Albert Keller, reported that after 18 days the area looked like a "parking lot for a major ballpark in the United States."

Jack Wells served in Vietnam during 1968-69 as a first lieutenant and artillery forward observer with Alpha and Bravo companies, 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and later as executive officer of H Battery, 3rd Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, at Fire Support Base Six-Shooter north of Da Nang.



#### **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 then 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 VE	TERANS OF AMERICA Return to: Vietnam Veterans of A	America, P.O. Box 49030, Baltimore, MD 21297-4930
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Chapter No196 Phone( )	[ mail	
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and May 7, 1975, or any duty station between August 5, 1964, and May 7,		
New members must submit a copy of	their DD-214 along with this application	and dues payment.