



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



## "THE LISTENING POST"

May 1, 2022



Vol 13 Issue 3

### President's Comments

### Vietnam Quotes

#### Upcoming Events

May 10, 2022, 7:00 PM, Monthly VVA Meeting

May 10, 2022, 7:00 PM, Monthly AVVA Meeting

May 31, 2022 Memorial Day

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To the members and associates of Chapter 196, at last months meeting, we were treated to a full meal provided by Mission Bar-B-Q. They are coming to town across from Walmart on Wards Road at the old Panera Bread location. Grand opening is on May 3rd. During Armed Forces Week, each day you will receive a free sandwich in appreciation for your service. Army Monday 5/16, Marine Corps Tuesday 5/17, Navy Wednesday 5/18, Air Force and Space Force Thursday 5/19, Coast Guard Friday 5/20. All are invited to a lunch with heroes on Saturday, May 21, 11:00 - 2:00. Let's plan on attending and show our support as they really look out for veterans.

On April 20, Ms. Heath Lee gave a slide show and presentation about her best selling book, "The League of Wives." We had a good showing. Charles Cole reported that Vienivey Matthew, grandson of John Poiley received a \$500 scholarship from the chapter. The

deadline has passed but you can still apply to the State Council for an application. Go on line to apply. On May 28 at the Legion pavilion, we will celebrate with a remembrance for Mrs. Ruth Taylor Perry. She was a Gold Star mother and our chapter mom. Time is 3:00-5:00PM. She loved all of her veterans, especially us "Nam" vets.

The chapter again this year sponsored a delegate to the American Legion's Boys and Girls State. The nominating committee presented the slate of officers and directors. This will stay on the floor for one month at which time we will take nominations from the floor. After that we will vote and all will be sworn in. Each position is for a two year term. President - David Stokes, Vice President - Freddie Pleasant, Secretary - Robert Crowder, Treasurer - Jim Fishel, Directors; Jim Purdy, Dan Coffman, Art Ross, George Kolar and Jim Hendrickson. This is your chapter and we are here to serve you. You have had time to consider becoming an officer/director. Now is the time to come forward and get more involved with leading the chapter into anew era as things are changing rapidly almost everyday. Hope you will come to the meeting and show you support and vote.

Keeping you informed,  
David Stokes, President

I think we have all underestimated the seriousness of this situation. Like giving cobalt treatment to a terminal cancer case. I think a long protracted war will disclose our weakness, not our strength.  
*GEORGE W. BALL, remarks to U.S. President Lyndon Johnson during a White House meeting, July 21, 1965*

In revealing the workings of government that led to the Vietnam War, the newspapers nobly did precisely that which the Founders hoped and trusted they would do.  
*HUGO L. BLACK, judicial opinion, June 30, 1971*

The Vietnam War is more than 50 years old and veterans of that conflict are aging. We need to get them to share their stories and experiences during the war with young people who know very little about it.  
*RODNEY WHATLEY, "PSC Theater Director Bridging Gaps With Play About Vietnam War", Pensacola State College News, October 18, 2016*

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*

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*

America: Love It or Leave It.  
*ANONYMOUS, Pro-Vietnam War slogan*

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*



# Minutes for April 12, 2022 Membership Meeting



At 7 PM our meeting opened with a special rewards dinner from Mission BBQ. (Thanks to Roberta Sonner, Community Ambassador) Chaplin Will opened with a prayer & blessings on our food.

New members:  
Thomas Dodson, Air Force 71-73  
Guests:  
Danielle Young  
Matthew Young

Freddy Pleasant reported on membership... 209  
Gail Stokes reported on Auxiliary membership...30

Jim Fischer gave treasure report an Otto Davis made a motion the report be accepted as read.

Chaplin Will, gave report on his surgery, (still improving). Jim Hendrickson reported that he was now cancer free. David reported that John Mason's surgery went well. Gary reported that Richard Brooks had surgery in Florida, is now back in Lynchburg

at Virginia Baptist Specialty Hospital, 5th floor, room 4. Prayers for recovery are needed.

Jim Hendrickson reported that the LAVC and Virginia Technical Institute repaired his house flooring. David said that a special grant was available to Veterans in need.

VVA 196 made about \$800 on the spaghetti dinner fundraiser.

NEW Business:  
A VVA Scholarship is being given to John Polley's grandson. In Georgia. Congratulations to Matthew Vinweg. David mentioned that scholarships are also available at State Council Which will be held at the American Legion in Lynchburg, on June 25-26th. Send to Jim Blount.

Bob Sherman memorial will be held on May 1st, at Mount Carmel Methodist Church, on Perrowville road, Forest, VA.

Mrs. Perry Remembrance ser-

vice will be held on May 28th at the American Legion Pavilion from 3-5. Chapter will provide Pizza's.

Mike Brady reported on the Hillcats game kickoff tonight. Veterans can get into the ballpark free on July 2nd, they will place a large flag on field for veterans to hold. (5:30pm start, if you want to help). Andy Anderson presented the slate of officers for 2022. If anyone is interested, be prepared at next meeting to put your name in for any position if you are interested.

Jim Tennant reported on Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association escorting the Honor Flight which is Friday at the D-Day memorial 9:00am, and return on Sunday around noon. Come out and support!

Meeting adjourned after closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted:  
Gary A. Witt

### IN-COUNTRY





# Veteran, Martin Freeks

Martin Freeks served in the NAVY USNR. Martin served one year and 17 days in the reserves and one year, 9 months, and 29 days active duty. Martin served one year, 9 months, and 16 days on sea service and ordered to active duty 30 AUG 1966. Martin's dad also served in the Army. Martin's MOS was Machinery Repairman. Martin served on USS JOHN W WEEKS, DD701 and a destroyer at home port Norfolk Virginia.

In all of Martins sea duty, Martin saw no real action. Although ,off the coast of Yemen, the ship was set to Battle Stations. Later the crew was told that two Swift Boats were seen approaching and battle stations were call as a deterrent. The battle ensign was flown at that time. The ensign is the largest American flag that this ship displays to show who the ship represents.

Martin received orders that he was being inducted into the Army, two Navy recruiters came to his house and he joined the Navy Reserves. Martin was ordered to active duty a year late and assigned to the John W. Weeks DD 701. Four of my friends were assigned to the same division , Repair division and a Bedford County sailor was assigned to R Division. James Kidd , Buster Kidd , brothers, Ed Smith , and Larry Harris a graduate Brookville.

After being discharged, Martin went to work at Griffin Pipe as a

machinist and worked there for 35 plus years and retired at age 55.

Martin then went to work for RR Donnelley where he was employed until his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Martin said that he started attending the weekly Monument Terrace Support The Troops Rally somewhere around week 670 and attended with my first with the intention of presenting veterans with my wife's print "*Hero For Peace.*" Martin said he was struck when he first started coming to the rallies about the openness that he received from the Veterans. Martin stated "All visitors are your friends."

Martin enjoys being at the weekly rallies and doing what he does best, trying to make things run smoothly, such as setting up the banners, PA system and keeping the "Warm Room" in shape with refreshments, treats and all the memorabilia.

A little over five years ago Martin met Dr. Walt Ray at the Monument Terrace Support The Troops Rally . Dr. Ray was interesting and Martin offered to give him print, which he accepted. Dr. Ray came back two weeks later and informed Martin that he had given the print to President elect Donald Trump. Martin said "one thing you will learn from the rally, you never know who you will meet on a given Friday."

On the News and Advance web site under archives, Monument Terrace is an interesting pictorial history of the terrace going back over 100 years honoring Lynchburg citizens who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Names are etched in stone and the many war memorials from top to bottom.

Martin is also a member of the American Legion, Post 16, Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 196, and on the board of Lynchburg Area Veterans Council. Martin volunteers for various duties helping these organizations.

Martin said "I'm honored to have a veteran's brick in the sidewalk with my wife's name and mine". Martin learned that you can have your wife's name on the brick if the veteran has their name on it.



# Underground Horror: The Tunnel Rats of Vietnam



Sgt. Ronald A. Payne seen entering a tunnel in search of Vietcong with a flashlight and M1911 pistol.

The underground war of Vietnam had a subterranean aspect reaching far beyond the awareness of the American military brass conducting the war. From the beginning, the Viet Cong knew that they didn't have the means to defeat the United States. But they also knew that, even if they couldn't win by conventional means, they could keep their fight alive as long as they could disappear from one raid and reappear to execute another. They were the invisible enemy for the exasperated American troops. That vast network of tunnels below the ground and out of sight provided the Viet Cong with the hiding places that a guerilla army used to thwart a superpower.

The Viet Cong relied upon a network of small access holes just two feet wide and three feet deep that led to communication tunnels which encompassed a maze of caverns and caves typically less than six feet high that reached as far as the border of Cambodia. Those tunnels were the nerve center of the Viet Cong military.

The tunnel-building began during the French occupation as Vietnamese peasants, using tin bowls and their hands created a labyrinth of connecting burrows that would, by the time the Americans replaced the French, provide the Viet Cong with a military base that allowed them to infiltrate the capital of Saigon with spies and saboteurs. As a Viet Cong officer told a British reporter after the end of the war, the tunnels functioned "like a thorn stabbing the enemy in the eye." Down in the tunnels, the Viet Cong had air, water and sanitation. They built air-raid shelters, latrines, hospitals, kitchens, conference centers, sleeping rooms, and print shops. Rice and water were stored in the tunnels, Artillery captured from the Americans was stored there as well. The Tet Offensive of

1968 was planned in the tunnels and when the operation was launched, the tunnels were home to thousands of Viet Cong soldiers.

If the tunnels were the secret weapon of the Viet Cong, the Tunnel Rats were the unsung heroes of the American forces. In their 1985 book, *The Tunnels of Cu Chi*, BBC reporters Tom Mangold and John Penycate told the story of the American Tunnel Rats, a saga they learned about for the first time from the Viet Cong, who admired the Tunnel Rats as the best soldiers among the American forces. The Tunnel Rats, those who survived, did not tell their own story. Those who returned home came back to a divided country where the Vietnam War was bitterly opposed and the soldiers who fought it faced hostility from their fellow citizens. But Mangold and Penycate learned that the Viet Cong vividly remembered and respected the Americans who chased them through the underground maze armed only with pistols, knives, flashlights and courage.



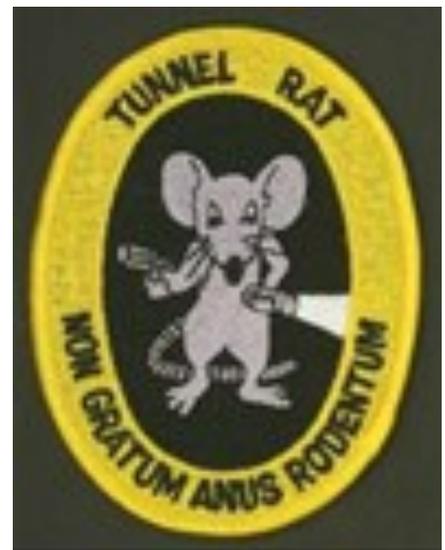
The Tunnel Rats, a unique fighting force, were careful to use nothing that would dull their senses, not drugs, not even chewing gum or aftershave cologne. Relying on their senses of touch and hearing, they used their fingertips to search for booby traps in pitch black darkness. Their mission was deadly in its simplicity: using a small-caliber revolver, they were to kill, capture, or entomb the Viet Cong. They could only fire three shots in a row because if six shots were fired, the enemy would know that the American was out of ammunition.

At the most, there were 100 Tunnel Rats. Most met their end in the tunnels. The Tunnel Rats went into the holes with no idea of what they might encounter below the ground. Perhaps they would be met by a snake tied to a length of bamboo with a piece of string. If the

Tunnel Rat didn't check the ceilings with a flashlight, he risked being bitten in the face or neck by the snake. Or perhaps, the Tunnel Rat would be met by a tripwire that would open a box filled with scorpions. The Viet Cong also used hornets, spiders, bats centipedes, and even plague-bearing rats.



"There weren't many tunnels up North at Khe Sanh however in Danang and south there were many. One tunnel complex was under the PX at Marble Mountain by DaNang base. They had a hospital and barracks for the Viet Cong. They also had many spider holes everywhere. Just big enough for one man with a grass cover to hide and cause havoc and set up ambushes." Vietnam Veteran Jim Wodecki



After Saigon fell in 1975, Vietnam preserved the Cu Chi tunnels as war memorial parks. Today, tourists can crawl through parts of the tunnels that are regarded as safe, eat a meal that would have been familiar to a Viet Cong soldier, see the booby traps, and fire an AK-47 on a firing range.



## 34 SONGS ABOUT THE VIETNAM ERA

1. **"We Gotta Get Outta This Place"** – The Animals (1965) – while not explicitly about Vietnam, the song's themes became a popular anthem with the troops.
2. **"Feel Like I'm Fixin To Die Rag"** – Country Joe McDonald & The Fish (1965) – Written by a former Navy man, this satirical song became an iconic protest song of the Vietnam era.
3. **"Leavin' on a Jet Plane"** – Peter, Paul, & Mary (1967) – Not written about the war directly, but it again became a song associated with departure for Vietnam.
4. **"War"** – Edwin Starr (1970) – A clear anti-war song which rose in popularity at the height of the Vietnam War.
5. **"Give Me Love (Peace on Earth)"** – George Harrison (1973) – While written about the war in Bangladesh, the song became an anthem of peace at the end of the Vietnam War.
6. **"Susan On the West Coast Waiting"** – Donovan (1969) – About a young man who is drafted into Vietnam.
7. **"Going Home"** – Normie Rowe (1967) – From an Australian pop star, a song associated with coming home from service in Vietnam.
8. **"Chicago"** – Graham Nash (1971) – A song about the 1968 protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.
9. **"Nineteen"** – Paul Hardcastle (1985) – An anti-war song, the title refers to the average age of a soldier in Vietnam.
10. **"Vietnam"** – The Minutemen (1984) – A strong statement against the political motivations for the Vietnam War.
11. **"Run Through the Jungle"** – Creedence Clearwater Revival (1970) – Though written about the prevalence of guns, the song's lyrics lead many to associate it with Vietnam.
12. **"Ballad of the Green Berets"** – Barry Sadler (1966) – A steady ballad about the heroism of the Green Berets.
13. **"Still in Saigon"** – Charlie Daniels Band (1982) – Song tells the story of a man who was drafted into Vietnam, returned to a divided nation, and is plagued by memories of his time in the war.
14. **"7 O'Clock News /Silent Night"** – Simon and Garfunkel (1966) – Covering the current events at the time, including Nixon's urge to escalate the war effort in Vietnam.
15. **"All Along the Watchtower"** – Bob Dylan (1967) – Many have interpreted the song's lyrics as a reflection of the desire to end American fighting in Vietnam.
16. **"Billy Don't Be a Hero"** – Paper Lace (1974) – Though released after the war's end, the song tells the story of a woman learning how her love has died in war.
17. **"Bungle in the Jungle"** – Jethro Tull (1974) – Because of the song's lyrics about spending time in a jungle, many interpret the song to be about Vietnam.
18. **"Draft Morning"** – The Byrds (1968) – A song that refers to the absurdity of the draft.
19. **"Give Peace a Chance"** – John Lennon (1969) – An anthem for peace at the height of the Vietnam era.
20. **"Gimme Shelter"** – The Rolling Stones (1969) – About the unique circumstances of the Vietnam war and the scramble to survive.
21. **"I Ain't Marching Anymore"** – Phil Ochs (1965) – A strong anti-war song released as American involvement in Vietnam began to escalate.
22. **"I Want To Come Home For Christmas"** – Marvin Gaye (1972) – A song in tribute to the troops in Vietnam for the holidays.
23. **"Masters of War"** – Bob Dylan (1963) – A song condemning the rapidly growing military-industrial complex.
24. **"Ohio"** – Neil Young (1970) – A song about the killing of 4 students in an anti-war protest at Kent State University in 1970.
25. **"Peace Train"** – Cat Stevens (1971) – A message of peace as the war in Vietnam continued.
26. **"Search and Destroy"** – The Stooges (1973) – Song's title and lyrics refer to a military strategy common in the Vietnam War.
27. **"Sky Pilot"** – Eric Burdon and The Animals (1968) – A song about a chaplain who blesses troops before going out on a mission.
28. **"Straight To Hell"** – The Clash (1982) – References to the fate of children fathered by American soldiers in Vietnam.
29. **"What's Going On"** – Marvin Gaye (1971) – A song lamenting the fate of Vietnam era youth and the great divisions the war sparked in society.
30. **"Waist Deep in the Big Muddy"** – Pete Seeger (1967) – A song interpreted to refer to the escalation of the war in Vietnam.
31. **"The Unknown Soldier"** – The Doors (1968) – A song that tells the story of news reports on Vietnam.
32. **"Question"** – The Moody Blues (1970) – A peace song about the futility of the Vietnam War and war in general.
33. **"Okie from Muskogee"** – Merle Haggard (1969) – A song to support the sacrifices of the troops fighting in Vietnam.
34. **"Happy Christmas (War Is Over)"** – John Lennon (1972) – A popular anti-war song, preceded by an anti-war campaign led by Lennon and his wife Yoko Ono.

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



**OF AMERICA**  
STANLEY E. TAYLOR MEMORIAL CHAPTER 196  
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA



**Vietnam Veterans of America  
Chapter 196**  
439 Westview Circle  
Lynchburg, VA, 24504

[www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org)

[www.vva-vasc.org](http://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 64299, Baltimore, MD 21264-4299

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**ELIGIBILITY:** Membership is open to U.S. armed forces veterans who served on active duty (for other than training purposes) in the Republic of Vietnam between February 28, 1961, and May 7, 1975, or any duty station between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975. Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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