

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Tellico Village VFW Post 12135



Randall (Randy) Leyshon was born in Youngstown, Ohio in July 1940. His father, Randall, worked for the local YMCA and his mother was a teacher. He also had a brother, Robert, six years younger. Robert served in the Navy and recently passed away two years ago. Randy's father also attempted to enlist in the military, but was denied entry due to being medical unqualified. However, that did not stop his father from supporting his nation during WWII. Randall organized a physical training program in the YMCA to get potential service members physically fit and ready to enter service to support the war effort. Randy's father, Randall, was recognized by the President for his efforts and was awarded a certificate of recognition for his support to the nation.

Randy eventually graduated High School in Dearborn, MI in June 1958. He then attended Miami University of Ohio and achieved his Bachelor's Degree in 1962 with a major in History and Government and with a Minor in English. Randy worked for three years until he was eventually drafted into the Army in 1965. Randy entered the service in his hometown of Youngstown, Ohio. While back at home and preparing for entry into the service, Randy met his future wife Patty and they began dating before he went off to Basic Training (BCT). He reported to Fort Benning, GA in October 1965 for Infantry Training. After BCT, he went back home and quickly became engaged to Patty before heading off to his Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) at Fort Dix, NJ. After graduating AIT, he had a couple weeks at home and married Patty on April 30, 1966. After AIT, Randy was accepted to

Infantry Officer Candidate School (OCS) and reported to Fort Benning, GA in May 1966. After graduating OCS, he was commission as a Second Lieutenant, where he stayed at Fort Benning to serve as a Tactical Officer for the OCS program. Eventually he was promoted to First Lieutenant and became the Executive Officer (XO). He also attended and successfully passed Airborne and Pathfinder Schools and earned their respective badges.

Randy then received orders to deploy to Vietnam on January 1st, 1968 and served as a Commander for the Pathfinder Detachment, the 214th Combat Aviation Battalion in Bear Cat, then moved on to Dong Tam at the latter part of his tour where he worked with the Thai military as an advisor to the Queen's Cobra Detachment. During his time in Vietnam, Randy earned the Combat Infantry Badge. He redeployed back home to Youngstown, Ohio after his tour in Vietnam on December 31st, 1968. Randy and Patty then moved to Ft. Carson, CO where he served as a Mechanized Infantry Commander. He was the Commander for Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 61st Infantry, 5th Division, which was one of his proudest opportunities in his career. During his command, he replaced a commander that was recently relieved and he was assigned a company of Soldiers that were lacking

clear purpose and direction. Captain Leyshon brought his company together and assessed that their mission was dependent on the results of the next Battalion Command Maintenance Management Inspection (CMMI). The whole Battalion recently failed the previous inspection and a re-inspection was scheduled. However, during the preparation for the inspection, CPT Leyshon's unit received another unit's inventory, which meant that his unit had to prepare double the amount inventory of equipment, with half the normal manpower that would usually be assigned to care for the amount of additional inventory that was added to the unit's Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTO&E). CPT Leyshon provided clear purpose, direction, and motivation to his Soldiers, ensuring there was necessary support for the unit to reach their goals, and they placed third place in the overall Division during the CMMI re-inspection. He ensured his troops were properly recognized for their efforts for bringing the unit's status from failure, up to being one of the best units in all of the Division. In November 1969, Randy fulfilled his obligation to service and separated from the Army, and returned back to Youngstown, OH. Over the next 11 years, he worked three different jobs. He worked for a Highway Guard Rail Component business, a Salesman for James & Weaver Furniture Business, and eventually a Sales Manager for Castle Stationery and Furniture Company.

Around 1981, Randy and Patty made the decision build and run a gymnastics gym in their hometown of Youngstown, Ohio. Randy and Patty had two children, Curt and Lisa, who were heavily involved in gymnastics during their childhoods, so it felt natural to Randy and Patty to open their own gym within their local community. Curt was a Captain for the gymnastics team and eventually graduated from the Naval Academy. He then served a career in the Navy and retired as a Commander. Lisa graduated from Eastern Michigan University, where she also was a Captain for the gymnastics team. Randy and Patty ended up running Mahoning Valley Gymnastics for 20 years and eventually decided to sell the business and move to Tellico Village, TN. Randy worked for Office Furniture Outfitters until he retired in 2022. Unfortunately, after 56 ½ years of marriage, Patty passed away on September 30, 2022. Randy looks back on his life with Patty and says their marriage and life together was the best thing that has ever happened to him. They have two wonderful kids, Curt and Lisa, and between the two of them, they have blessed Randy and Patty with four granddaughters.

Randy is a founding and charter member of the Veteran of Foreign Wars Post #12135, who operate out of Tellico Village. During the development of the Post, Randy recognized an opportunity to bring honor to the Post by recommending the Post's namesake of a Medal of Honor recipient, 1st Lieutenant Alexander Bonnyman, Jr. He led the initiative to seek the approval from the family and they graciously agreed to authorize the Post to bear his name. Randy has become close with the decedents of the 1LT Bonnyman family and keeps them updated on the Post achievements and goals in supporting the Nation's veterans and their local community. Randy served as the Junior Vice Commander and as the lead for Poppy Sales for three years in VFW Post #12135.

The Tellico Village VFW Post #12135 General meeting is held at 7:00 p.m. in the Tellico Village Yacht Club every third Wednesday of the month. Further information can be found on the Post website at <https://www.tellicovillagevfwpost.org/>.