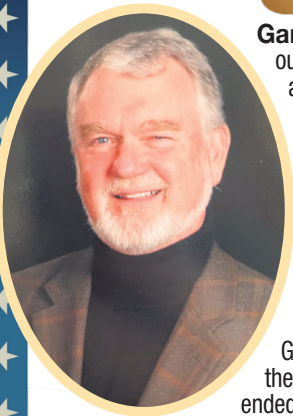


# VETERAN OF THE MONTH

## Tellico Village VFW Post 12135



**Gary Kimball** was born in East Detroit, MI in 1947. He was the fifth out of seven kids to be born to his mother, who was a homemaker, and his father, who was a machinist. Growing up in school, Gary was close to his classmates and enjoyed living in a safe and friendly neighborhood. He worked a paper route and made friends with his elderly neighbors. By the time he graduated High School in 1965, he knew most of his classmates and the majority of his neighbors.

After High School, Gary pursued an apprenticeship in tool and die at the Chrysler Corporation. He worked closely with men who were older than him known as “hard hats.” They treated Gary as one of their own and mentored him as an apprentice for the next four years. It was just five months after his apprenticeship ended that he received his draft notice and joined the U.S. Army in 1969. Gary attended basic training at Fort Polk, LA and then his advance individual training to be a helicopter mechanic at Fort Rucker, AL. After six months of training, he was immediately transferred to Vietnam at the age of 22. Once he departed the plane in Vietnam, Gary described it as “stepping into a sauna” due to the heat and humidity. He started out as a helicopter mechanic and soon moved to helicopter maintenance scheduling. He quickly caught the attention of his Company Commander and was selected for the Officers Club to do bar tending. This additional duty gave Gary the opportunity to fly with the pilots on various assignments. The opportunity also presented him with a faster path for promotion. Eventually, his tour of duty ended and he separated from the U.S. Army in 1971 as a Sergeant / E5. His awards and decorations include two Bronze Stars and an

Army Commendation Medal.

After honorably separating from the military in 1971, Gary moved back to East Detroit and worked in sales for automotive components. He also attended college at Oakland University and received his bachelor's degree in Political Science in 1975. After working hard for many years, his responsibilities ultimately culminated to his appointment as Vice President of Excedy. During his time at Excedy, Gary met and married his wife Susan Kimble in 1987. Susan worked in Real Estate, and together, they had a daughter. Eventually, the market started a down turn and he left Excedy in 2002 to start another job in sales. It wasn't until 2015, Gary and Susan decided it was time to retire and moved to Tellico Village. Gary joined the Veteran of Foreign War (VFW) Post #12135 in 2020. He has enjoyed working with his fellow veterans. For the majority of his adult life, he did not discuss his military service until he found that unique comradeship that a person can only get with people who experienced similar life experiences. He currently realizes that his fellow Vietnam veterans are now over 65 years old. Due to their service-related diseases and injuries, he strives to enjoy their company for as long as he can. Gary also participates in VFW projects, such as Memorial Day Flag planting and Buddy Poppy Campaigns, to support his local communities. His time in Tellico Village has also granted Gary many opportunities to meet with people from his hometown, which is always a great surprise. Gary and Susan like to attend car shows and wine groups and enjoy their life in Tellico Village.

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/>.