

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Tellico Village VFW Post 12135



Coleman (Colie) Lee was born in August 1947 in Poughkeepsie, NY, where he lived with his mother and father. His mother was a homemaker and his father was a WWII veteran who served in the Army. His father entered the service prior to WWII and was eventually discharged sometime after WWII. His father was a Tech Sergeant in 10th Army Artillery in the Gilberts and Marshall Islands. He also participated in the Battle of Okinawa. Prior to his discharge, his father worked in the G2 (Intelligence) section for a General. Once discharged, he returned home and worked as a salesman for Youngstown Kitchen. Colie attended Poughkeepsie High School and for three of those years, he attended a machine shop vocational program.

After his graduation in 1966, Colie was notified to take a physical in preparation for the draft. Once he passed the physical, Colie decided to enlist in the Air Force in September 1966. He attended Basic Military Training (BMT) at Lackland Air Force Base (AFB). At the end of BMT, he was given the opportunity to take a by-pass test to be a machinist. Even though the Air Force cadre told him he wouldn't be able to pass, Colie still participated in the testing, "Aced the test," and was able to by-pass Machinist Advanced Individual Training (AIT). He was immediately qualified as a machinist and was assigned to his first duty station in Charleston, SC with the Military Airlift Command. After a year, Colie was then reassigned to Ching Chuan Kang (CCK) Air Base in Taiwan (Nationalist China). During his tour, he volunteered to be on-call for Temporary Duty Assignments (TDY's) into Vietnam to support the war effort. While in Vietnam, Colie could be there for a few days to months where he would set-up his machine shop and fabricate parts or perform maintenance on military vehicles. After his tour in CCK was complete, he was then reassigned to

Columbus AFB, Air Training Command, running the machine shop until he was honorably discharged in 1971.

After the military, Colie returned home to New York and worked as a tool maker for Western Publishing Company for the next 13 years. Additionally, Colie also decided to re-enlist, but into New York's Army National Guard (ANG). He was assigned as a Turret Mechanic for the 156th Field Artillery, Alpha Battery. During his time with the ANG, he also served as the unit's Armorer and Nuclear, Biological, Chemical (NBC) Noncommissioned Officer (NCO). He was eventually honorably discharged from the ANG after seven years. Colie then worked as a technician with Caterpillar for 13 years and moved on to work at the Integrated Employment Company (IEC) for six years. During his time with the IEC, Colie's main responsibility was working with people who had disabilities to find employment and other supportive services. Eventually, Colie left and moved on to work with the Red Hook School District for seven years. During his time there, he worked in different positions throughout the school district, which included maintenance, bus driver, and custodian. He was also involved with the Employees Union.

Colie entered retirement in 2010, where he and his wife (Tina Lee) decided to travel up and down the east coast in a 5th Wheel Camper. They would visit the state parks and volunteer as staff within the parks. Colie's volunteer duties would be in maintenance and park host, and Tina's duties were park host, administrative roles, and/or welcome/nature center staff. Eventually, in 2019, they both decided to enter full retirement and moved to Vonore, TN to be close to family. Colie and Tina continue their volunteer efforts in their community. Colie is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post #12135 and is assigned as the Judge Advocate. Colie has been a member of the VFW since 1971. He also served as a Post Commander for Post 6196 from 1973 – 1975. Tina also does missionary work and is an evangelist. They both volunteer with their local church. Colie and Tina are enjoying life together in their retirement and spending time with their family.

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.tvvfw.org/>.