

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Bill Martin

Part of the Illinois Public Media ([WILL radio.tv.online](http://WILL.radio.tv.online))
Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project

Interview # VRV-V-D-2015-076

Bill Martin, a forward observer for artillery units supporting the infantry during the Vietnam War, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Illinois Public Media – WILL AM-FM-TV Central Illinois Vietnam War Stories project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: 05/27/2015 Location: WTVP, Peoria, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: H. Wayne Wilson

Technical Support (Videographer): WILL Staff

Transcription by: Illinois Public Media staff

Edited by: Illinois Public Media staff

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The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield,
Illinois.

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Abstract

Bill Martin, *Veterans Remember*, VRV-V-D-2015-076

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Bill Martin lived in North Pekin, Illinois at the time of the interview. He graduated high school in 1965 and joined the U.S. Army on December 13th of that year. He began his military training and Advanced Individual Training in Fort Polk, Louisiana then moved on to Fort Irwin, California. Martin eventually shipped out on the USS Barrett from Oakland, California to Quy Nhon, South Vietnam. He served for eighteen months in Vietnam, spending the bulk of his time working at LZ Tom, an artillery firebase near Highway 1 in the northern part of South Vietnam. He served with the infantry as a forward observer for artillery units, calling in fire missions against the enemy. When not assigned as a forward observer, he sometimes rode shotgun for convoys in a gun jeep armed with an M60 machine gun. In one action he was hit in the leg with mortar shrapnel; the shrapnel that was still in his leg often set off metal detectors when he returned to the United States.

After Martin got out of the military in 1968, he returned to his work at Caterpillar since he had been an employee before going to Vietnam. He stayed at Caterpillar and retired after thirty-seven years. During this time, Martin participated in numerous veteran organizations, as well as projects that continue to aid and celebrate American war veterans. One of these projects was the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Springfield, Illinois. He visits the memorial every year.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Bill Martin; forward observer during the Vietnam War; Springfield Vietnam Veterans Memorial; North Pekin, Illinois; Quy Nhon, South Vietnam; Fort Irwin, California; Fort Polk, Louisiana; USS Barrett; Fort Lewis, Washington; anti-war protests; convoy; LZ Tom; 92 Bravo; Caterpillar

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