

# [***'What Do You Say to a Vietnam War Veteran?' Harris Faulkner Seeks Answers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1V-HNJ1-JBR6-9005-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** Fox News host Harris Faulkner crawls into enemy tunnels and explores booby traps in a new special about a divisive war.

**Body**

While U.S. Army Specialist Jerry Augustine was dodging enemy bullets and Agent Orange dropped from American airplanes in Vietnam, he assumed he was doing so with the support of his nation's citizenry.

"I was proud in my uniform," he says of his return home in 1967, before adding: "Everybody was turning away from me, and I couldn't understand it."

Augustine's anecdote is one of many told in a three-part series hosted by Harris Faulkner that dropped today on [*Fox*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) *Nation*, the streaming service companion to the [*Fox News*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/fox-news?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) Channel.

"I just left my buddies in the jungle," Augustine tells Faulkner. "They're getting killed every day. What's wrong with our country?"

He says that when he got to his house, he took off his uniform and didn't put it back on for 50 years.

The show, dubbed *Vietnam: Footsteps of my Father with Harris Faulkner*, has the host visiting battle sites where her dad, Lieutenant Colonel Bobby Harris, served two terms as a combat pilot during the Vietnam War.

Throughout the series, she carries the military burial flag presented to her when her father died on Christmas Day 2020.

In an interview with *Newsweek*, Faulkner explained her goal with the show: "I wanted to answer the question, 'What do you say to a Vietnam War veteran?' Because, 'Thank you for your service' doesn't cut it."

The show includes a brief history, including how Vietnam got its name in 1802 after it was ruled by various Asian dynasties. In the mid-1800s, it was a French colony and it remained so until it was invaded by Japan in World War II.

After Japan's defeat, the French reoccupied the southern half while communist leader Ho Chi Minh seized control of the north, sparking the first Indochina War. America, seeking to stop the spread of communism, sided with France and by 1953 it was supplying 80 percent of the monetary support. A year later, the country was officially split in two, though Ho Chi Minh declared war to get it all, backed by the Soviet Union and China.

President John F. Kennedy, already dealing with the Berlin Wall and Fidel Castro's victory in the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion in Cuba, drew a line in the sand in Vietnam, providing American advisers, equipment and training to those who were fighting the communists. After Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson committed U.S. ground troops to the effort.

Americans pulled out in 1973, and three years later, the north and south were merged to form the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Some of the more compelling portions of Faulkner's show has her descending into underground tunnels where the North Vietnamese launched sneak attacks on American soldiers, and where'd they'd seek cover from U.S. bombs during air raids.

Faulkner is also shown booby traps, including a hole with spikes sticking up from the bottom that is disguised as a patch of grass. An expert tells her they were meant to cause catastrophic injury rather than death so that multiple soldiers would have to care for the wounded while others were made to search the area for more traps, slowing them down and making them vulnerable to attack.

They were "a special breed," she says of the U.S. soldiers who had to deal with the tunnels and traps. "We've got a lot of heroes. Our warriors were amazing."

During one episode, she's with U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Marc Knapper, who has been leading a team to find Americans and Vietnamese solders from both sides of the conflict who are categorized as "missing in action" or "prisoners of war," and she stumbles upon breaking news.

As Knapper and his team explore a helicopter crash site and are seen draining shallow lakes in search of the fallen, he's alerted that they have identified the remains of American 1st Lieutenant Ron Forrester.

"So, December 27, 1972, he lost his life. And today, we now know who he is," Harris says to Knapper. "You bring warmth to my heart."

In the final episode, Faulkner speaks to two men who fought on opposite sides during the war but are now friends, and the pair have dedicated their lives to helping victims of Agent Orange, the toxic chemical the U.S. sprayed—to the tune of 11 million gallons—to clear foliage so they could find the enemy.

It's "nothing short of a miracle," she says of the friendship between U.S. Army Specialist 4th Class Matt Keenan and To Nam, a retired lieutenant colonel in the People's Army of Vietnam.

On the day Keenan left Vietnam, he saw an airplane land in Da Nang with 200 Vietnamese women and children "crawling out of the back of that plane because they had to escape from the horrors of the war north," Keenan says.

That memory, he says, "inspires me to be a different type of soldier; a soldier of peace."

Faulkner doesn't spend too much time revisiting the opposition to the war that was raging stateside, though one veteran briefly recounts the killing of four protesting students at Kent State University in 1970.

And, after going over the Tet Offensive, a battle the Americans and the South Vietnamese won, though at a heavy cost, she shows protesters in the U.S. chanting, "The whole world's watching."

While Faulkner doesn't mix modern ***politics*** into the show, she told *Newsweek* that she was reminded of the conflict between Israel and [*Hamas*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/hamas?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) while making the show, noting that the North Vietnamese slaughtered 3,000 civilians at one location during the Tet Offensive when the communists launched a major offensive across the entire country on a holiday that typically was regarded as a day of ceasefire.

"Communism was an evil movement of energy, much as we see with Hamas where they use people as human shields and let you blow up families in order for their side to persevere," she told *Newsweek*. "Basically, we were fighting terror in Vietnam but we didn't know it at the time."

During her interview with *Newsweek*, she answered the question she set out to explore, the one about what Americans should say to a Vietnam vet.

"Thank you for loving our nation so much that you would go so far away in her name," she said.

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2393763/harris-faulkner-vietnam.gif)

**Graphic**

Harris Faulkner in Vietnam

Courtesy of Fox Nation

Harris Faulkner speaks to military historian Brian DeToy on a boat on the Saigon River. Faulkner hosts a three--part series that revisits the Vietnam War.

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