

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Patriot of the Month

April 2015



Jim Crooks

Sponsored by:

Armstrong Chapter



Jim graduated in 1954 at Palm Beach High School in West Palm Beach, Florida, and enlisted in the Navy on July 27, 1954, at the age of seventeen, about 3 weeks before turning 18. He left by train for boot camp in San Diego with the train stopping various times along the route picking up recruits. After graduating from boot camp, he came home on leave, then reported to San Francisco and from there was flown to Honolulu, Hawaii, where he was stationed out of Pearl Harbor on the USS Walker, DDE-517. The USS Walker, a destroyer ship, was part of the seventh fleet and was commissioned during World War II and saw a lot of action during the war as well as the Korean War.

Jim spent six months at his homeport of Pearl Harbor, then six months in the far East, then back to Pearl Harbor for six months to the dry dock for repairs and training, then to the far East again for another six months. The six months in the far East included Midway, Japan, tip end of Korea, Formosa, Hong Kong, Okinawa, Philippine Islands, Singapore, crossing the Equator, then back to Pearl Harbor. The mission of the USS Walker was to protect anti-submarine warfare which protected the battle group of aircraft carriers.

Jim enlisted under the Kitty Cruise which meant he had to be discharged the day before he turned 21 years old. He was a radar operator and received an honorable discharge as a Petty Officer Second Class on August 12, 1957 (4 days before his 21st birthday) at San Francisco, California and returned to Florida by plane. Jim received the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Medal.

Jim states he had a very enjoyable time during his time in the service and recalls a special meal at Christmas and Thanksgiving which he always enjoyed. Each sailor would adopt a child for the day from the orphanage and give them a gift and eat with them. Sunrise services at Pearl Harbor was another occasion he enjoyed.

Jim attended Palm Beach Junior College on the GI Bill and graduated in May 1961. He also attended the Banking School of the South at Louisiana State University for three summers and took various banking courses at the University of Florida at Gainesville.

He was married on April 6, 1962, to Jane Dailey of Jupiter, Florida and they had two children who are Kevin Crooks and Kristi Johnson. They have four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Jim worked at Praft-Whitney Aircraft in Florida where he taught in the training school for 6 years, Investment Diversified Services Company as a district manager for 5 years, banking industry as a loan officer and eventually an executive vice-president for 12 years. He and his wife moved to Georgia and purchased a Christian bookstore where they worked for 10 years.

After the children graduated from college and were married, Jim and his wife came to Missouri as missionaries for Stonecroft Conference Center where they stayed for 4 years. He was then asked to join the staff at the Branson United Methodist Church. He later pastored a church for 5 years at Lockwood, Missouri, Mount Vernon, Missouri, for 4 years, then Glasgow, Missouri, for 5 years. He is presently the pastor at Jefferson Avenue Methodist Church. His wife, Jane, is pastor at Red Rock Methodist Church. Jim states he has no intention of ever retiring as long as his health permits. He stated he was privileged to have gone on an Honor Flight on October 10, 2011. He is a member of the American Legion and Lions International.

The members of the Armstrong Chapter DAR are proud to nominate Jim Crooks as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for his service to our great country.