

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Patriot of the Month

March 2016



Debra Wilson

Sponsored by:

Rock Island (formerly Eldon) Chapter



Debi entered the United States Army under the delayed entry program when she was a senior in high school in Norwalk, Ohio. At the time of her enlistment the Vietnam War was winding down and she wanted to become a medic. After completing her basic training at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, she was sent to Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, for her Advanced Individual Training (AIT). There she was trained as a medic and on her way to realizing her dream. She was up for deployment to Germany but instead was rerouted to Ft. Polk in Vernon Parish, Louisiana, and assigned to the motor pool. Ft. Polk reminded her of the military base depicted in the TV series M.A.S.H. It was an old base closed by the military in 1973 and reopened it in 1974 just before she arrived. "It was nicknamed little Vietnam because it reminded the soldiers so much of the conditions in Vietnam," says Debi. "The barracks were old, it was just an old, old base." She was charged with maintenance of Army ambulances and Jeeps. Debi credits her father with helping her be successful in the motor pool assignment. "Thank goodness my father taught me how to do that stuff because that's not what I joined up to do," says Debi. She received an honorable discharge after two years of service.

Once she returned home to Ohio she realized that, although her medic training was the equivalent of a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Ohio did not recognize that training. She worked briefly in an Ohio factory before returning to nursing school. Debi worked in an Ohio hospital as an LPN and worked all floors on the medical side – ER, cancer ward, maternity. Once she moved to Missouri she worked on the skilled nursing facility floor of St. Mary's Hospital in Jefferson City for several years before going to work in the Capital Region Medical office in Eldon where she spent the last five years of her working career.

Debi has been married to her husband Lee for seventeen years and is currently the primary caregiver for her aging mother who suffers from dementia. Debi is active in her church acting as church secretary, helping maintain the grounds of the church and performing any other duties the church may need. Her family and her church are her priorities and that is where she devotes her time and energy.

The Daughters of the Eldon Chapter DAR are proud to nominate Debra Wilson as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for her patriotic service and commitment to our great nation.