

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors



Patriot of the Month January 2017



Patrick Kevin Kelly

United States Army

Sponsored by
John Sappington
Chapter



Patrick Kevin Kelly's military service follows in his father's footsteps – a World War II veteran, and has been passed on to his daughter – an Iraqi War veteran. Patrick's childhood dream of flying developed as he watched planes take off and land from St. Louis' Lambert International Airport directly over his elementary school. He earned his private pilot's license at the age of 17 and then entered the United States Army at the age of 18, beginning with basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana. This included basic flight helicopter training. He then transferred to Fort Walters, Texas for primary helicopter training. His final flight training was in Fort Rucker, Alabama for advanced level training. When his training was completed, he was stationed in Vietnam at Pleiku (Central Highlands). He flew the UH-1 Huey helicopter and the CH-47 Chinook cargo helicopter throughout his tour in Vietnam. When he left Vietnam, he finished his last bulk of time in Hawaii flying Medivac for returning veterans.

Patrick did admit that he earned air medals while in Vietnam. The air medals were given out by flight hours. You earned one air medal for every 25 hours in combat. He does not know how many he earned as they didn't mean that much to him and the crew, they were just doing their jobs.

He was involved with Firebase 5 and 6. These were two battles of significance that he was involved in. Sadly they culminated in his Company Commander, Major William Adams and his crew, being shot down and killed. Patrick said "If you are looking for a hero it is Major Adams. For his actions and bravery he received the Congressional Medal of Honor (posthumously)." Patrick succinctly described his tour in Vietnam as "often marked with hours and hours of boredom marked with moments of terror." He was discharged at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Immediately after discharge, he began his career flying helicopters, first with a local company and then a private service in a nearby state. He eventually became a pilot for a national airline and remained with them for many years and many mergers. He recently retired. Patrick is married and he and his wife have six children and nine grandchildren.

Patrick serves on his local parish counsel. This includes as a chair for the Rite of Catholic Initiation for Adults, as well as evangelization, development of prayer group formation and co-chair with his wife for the local parish flea market raising \$13,000 of much needed funds in three days. Previously he assisted in establish the local parish meals program, homeless shelter, and a variety of other activities both in the parish and in his community. He is always there to help care for the needs of family and friends. His service to his country is much like his service now in his community. Patrick sees his service as his privilege and not just a responsibility, burden, or duty. Patrick is a gentleman and true humanitarian.

John Sappington Daughters are proud to honor and recognize Patrick Kevin Kelly as Patriot of the Month for his patriotism and dedication to our great nation.