

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month



April 2018



Louise "Lou" Graul Eisenbrandt

United States Army

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Prairie
Chapter

Lou grew up in Illinois, seven miles from Scott Air Force Base. She wanted to travel to faraway places, just like her friends from the base. By the time she entered St. Joseph's School of Nursing after high school, she made the decision to join the United States Army "to see the world." In May, 1967, Lou walked into a recruiting office, picked up the necessary papers and two days later took the Oath of Enlistment. Lou's military "duty assignment" during her senior year of nursing was to stay in school.

In June 1968, she accepted the Florence Nightingale award for having the highest grade point average in her class from St. Joseph's School of Nursing. In November, 1968, she headed to

Officer's Basic Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and in January, 1969, she reported for duty at Walson Army Hospital, Fort Dix, New Jersey, for her first duty assignment.

In September, 1969, she received orders to Vietnam, arriving in-country on November 1st. Lou served as a Medical Surgery and Emergency Room Nurse at the 91st Evacuation Hospital, Chu Lai, South Vietnam. She cared for American GIs, South Vietnamese soldiers, and civilians, even Viet Cong and North Vietnam Army soldiers. From malaria and hepatitis to double amputees, massive head traumas, and deadly bullet wounds; Lou saw it all.

Lou said, "Caring for wounded United States and foreign soldiers as well as Vietnamese civilians, exposed me to an intensity of nursing that was truly life-changing. Working to save the life of a young man who has been critically wounded or holding the hand of a victim who is near death, are experiences I shall never forget."

In January, 1970, Lou received a Letter of Commendation for Distinguished Service. She also received the Army Commendation Medal which is presented for sustained acts of heroism or meritorious service in Vietnam.

Since 1970, she has made four return trips to Vietnam, the latest in September 2014, when she joined 11 other veterans making their first return trip to the country. Lou said, "the changes in the country have been amazing, especially in recent years."

For the past 30 years, Lou has been sharing her experiences with students and community groups. In addition, she is Chairman Emerita of the board of Turning Point, where she participates in classes and teaches a class. Her other interests are travel, photography, golf, and gardening.

In 2002, Lou developed symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The Veterans Administration agreed that it was a result of her exposure to Agent Orange. Since then she has become an advocate for those seeking a cure for Parkinson's disease.

In June, 2015, she published a memoir on her year as an Army nurse during the war entitled, "Vietnam Nurse: Mending and Remembering". In 2017, Lou began serving on the board of Veterans Voices Writing Project, which encourages veterans to express themselves through the written word. She is also a member of the Military Writers Society of America.

Lou and her husband, Jim, have been married for 46 years. They have two children and two grandchildren.

Prairie Daughters are very proud and honored to recognize Louise "Lou" Graul Eisenbrandt as Patriot of the Month and extend to her their deepest appreciation and gratitude for her patriotism, service, and dedication to our great nation.