

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

December 2020



Richard Lee Sleightholm

United States Navy

Sponsored by:
Alexander Doniphan
Chapter



Richard Lee Sleightholm entered the US Navy on January 13, 1963 in Kansas City, MO, during the Vietnam conflict and served four years active duty until December 13, 1966. He then served two more years in the Reserves until his honorable discharge on January 17, 1969.

Richard served two years in Milton, Florida at Naval Auxiliary Air Station Whiting Field until early 1965. Whiting Field is a Naval air training base for future Naval aviators. He was assigned to Squadron VT-3 and worked on the wash rack for planes for a couple of months then was transferred to West Line. Within six months, he made plane captain and was responsible for six to eight planes (T-28's) daily.

After about a year on the line, he was invited to go night flying. His duties consisted basically the same tasks except that he worked with wands at night to direct airplanes to their spots and the night flyer had to stand wheel watches at the end of the runways to make sure all the landing gear were down.

After two years, Richard was transferred to the *USS Ranger CVA-61* Aircraft Carrier to Fuels Division, Repair 7. He worked on the flight deck, hanger deck, fuel section and even made napalm bombs. The ship set sail for the Gulf of Tonkin on a WestPac Cruise. He was put in charge of repairs with two other seamen at night on aircraft refueling stations. One problem kept happening in the fueling stations. Each station had a brass priming impeller on the pump that kept getting hot and shutting down whenever the fuel wasn't constantly flowing. Since Richard had engineering-mechanical talents, he figured out that if just 4/1000" was milled off the priming pump impeller that would eliminate this continuing problem. His suggestion was adopted.

In 1966, their ship returned to San Francisco and then to the Naval shipyard, Bremerton, Washington. Richard said that he enjoyed his time in the Navy and had made some great friends throughout.

Richard earned the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation, the Honorable Discharge Lapel Button, and the Vietnam Campaign Medal w/1960 device.

Richard retired a year ago and is married to Mary A. Williams Sleightholm. They raised two fine sons. Richard and Mary are expecting their first grandchild in a few months.

Alexander Doniphan Daughters are very proud to recognize and honor Richard L. Sleightholm as Patriot of the Month for his very patriotic and dedicated service to our great nation.