

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Patriot of the Month

December 2015



George Oscar Tankersley

Sponsored by:

Eldon Chapter



George entered the United States Army at the age of 21 on March 10, 1966. After completing his basic training at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri, he completed his Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) in Advanced Artillery Surveying. "We did fire directional control for the artillery. When someone called up and wanted to shoot at a spot we figured out how to get it there," says George. His only duty location was Vietnam. He spent 22 months four days in country. While on his tour of duty he was awarded the Vietnam Citations, Army Commendation Medal and Bronze Star for Meritorious Service. He received an honorable discharge on March 7, 1969.

In order to give me an idea of what his job was and the conditions under which he worked he shared the following story – "I had driven an officer and interpreter to a village that they said we had shot artillery in. When we were out there they were talking to them and they decided that maybe we did. Finally the village chieftain was over there and I said to him in Vietnamese, '3 o'clock,' and he said, 'No, no, no,' and finding out what time it hit we found out that it wasn't us it was the Vietnamese people that were firing and not us. And the officer said next time leave the interpreter home.'

He enjoyed his R&R time and was able to visit Sidney, Australia, Hong Kong and Taipei, Taiwan. "What is different about Vietnam compared to the wars today," says George "is the religion. It was mostly Catholics and Buddhists. Very different from the wars today."

During his tour he also did some 'crater analyses.' "That's where you go out to a crater, stick a pole in the ground, get behind it and see what direction it came from," says George. "From the angle you could tell how far out it was." The best advice he ever received in the Army was "Don't volunteer for anything." When he got to Vietnam his scores were so high they offered to send him to officer school. He did not want the responsibility of an officer and opted to remain in Vietnam. What he would tell a young person wanting to go into the service today is "Have a positive attitude and do what you have to do. It won't be pleasant but do what you have to do." He was just young enough that for the most part his time in country "wasn't that bad. They weren't shooting at us every day."

Once he returned to Missouri he attended Lincoln University on the GI bill receiving 151 college credits but no degree. He had a wife and son and his father was a building contractor so he joined his father in the contracting business and started building houses.

He has been married to his wife Kathy for 40 years and they have two children. Unfortunately they lost their son but their daughter lives in Missouri. He cares for his 97 year old mother who still lives on her own. George has been active with Habitat for Humanity and has helped build five houses. He previously served on the board of directors for Habitat for Humanity. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus and a life time member of the VFW.

The Daughters of the Eldon Chapter DAR are proud to nominate George Oscar Tankersley as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for his patriotic service and commitment to our great nation.