

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Patriot of the Month

April 2016



Donald Risinger

Sponsored by:

Caroline Close Stuart Chapter



After high school, Don Risinger went to work with his brothers in the jewelry business. One day, at the age of twenty, he dropped into an Army recruiter's office and enlisted. After basic training as part of the Guided Missile Battalion, he worked with German V-2 scientists. When basic training was over, he then shipped to White Sands Proving Ground. His job was to provide support for photography, optics, electronics, fueling, etc. He served as a photographer and film processor and soon found himself in the film processing area taking still and motion pictures of missile tests.

When he was discharged from the Army he was immediately hired as a civilian to work in the film-processing lab. Don and his crew came up with a solution to develop the film in less than 48 hours ... seeing results in a timely manner was critically important to the job. He and his team received incentive awards for their procedure.

When Don was a boy in St. Louis, he became part of a youth group at the Salvation Army. There he learned to play the trumpet. While at White Sands, he played with various groups. Today he does not play with a band, but does volunteer to play Taps at the funerals of veterans.

Don had a woodworking hobby and specialized in making big wooden toys for kids. When he was younger, he was in the Archery Club in White Sands.

At age eighty-seven, he still lives in Las Cruces. His wife Stella has passed, but he has grown children and stays close to his family.

Don's niece, Marilyn Hartnett, is proud of her uncle. She recalls, "Uncle Don was the third youngest of my father's brothers—there were nine siblings and my father the oldest of eight boys and one girl. I remember how kind Don was and was always smiling and friendly to those around him. He went into the service while I was still in high school, but we remained close through visits and letters. One particular favorite story of him was on my wedding day. There was a lot going on that day and he had driven from New Mexico just for my wedding—he felt a loyalty to his oldest brother as I was the first of all the cousins to be married. I remember we were running around preparing for the reception and I had to run to the store for something and he lent me his car. To my dismay, while backing out of the parking lot I ran into a signpost and dented his fender. I was very nervous and scared to go home but not to worry. He just said do not worry, I will take care of it. His calm demeanor stuck with me all these years and taught me patience that has stayed with me. I love this man like a father."

The Daughters of the Caroline Close Stuart Chapter and Daughter Marilyn Hartnett, are proud to nominate Donald Risinger as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for his patriotic service and commitment to our great nation.