

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors



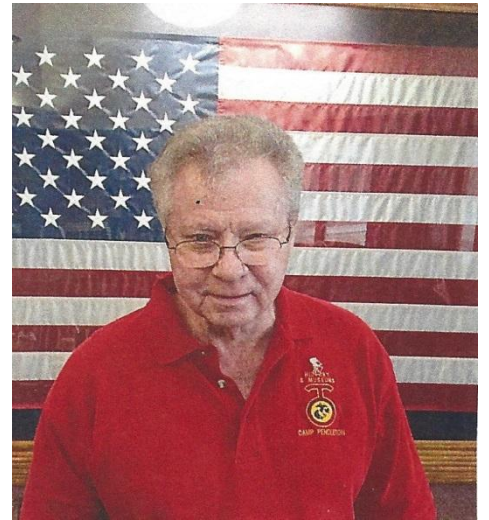
Patriot of the Month
September 2017



William “Bill” McNeel

United States Navy

Sponsored by:
Missouris Shoal
Chapter



After Bill enlisted in the United States Navy in 1961, he was sent to San Diego, California, for basic training. Bill was trained as an Aviation Electrician’s Mate. His main job would be to start the engines of the airplanes on the flight decks of Aircraft Carriers. Bill was stationed on the *USS Kitty Hawk* (CVA-63). Bill’s home ports were San Diego, California and Jacksonville, Florida. While on the *Kitty Hawk*, Bill was also stationed at several ports around Japan. He referred to Japan as his home away from home.

Bill would help start the engines of about 200 airplanes everyday beginning about 4:00 a.m. Those planes would fly their designated missions looking for the enemy and would return to the carrier at midnight. Then he slept for four hours and then he began starting engines again.

Bill relates, “At one time when we were close to Laos one of our airplanes was shot down and we had to go into rescue the pilot. Also an airplane was shot down over Vietnam and the pilot was captured. The pilot finally escaped after two months and eventually made it back to our ship. We had to get permission from President Johnson in order to go in after this pilot.”

After the last trip, his ship came to port at San Diego, California, where they unloaded the ammunition and equipment. Now the ship was several pounds lighter and six feet higher in the water. The *USS Kitty Hawk* was now in dry dock for four years and Bill was sent to Bremerton, Washington where he was discharged in August, 1964.

Some of Bill’s medals and awards are: Expedition Forces of Southeast Asia, E Medal, and National Defense Service Medal.

One meaningful experience for Bill was when President John Kennedy stayed overnight on the *Kitty Hawk*. They put on a large air show for him giving him nothing but the best. They were very pleased to have the President visit the ship. This visit was not long before the President was killed. There were 4,200 servicemen stationed on the *USS Kitty Hawk*.

Bill's civilian career was with Missouri Power & Light, beginning as a lineman and worked up to become Superintendent of the District in his local county area. Eventually the company became Ameren UE, St. Louis, where he worked as Superintendent for 34 years before he retired at age 55.

Bill belonged to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Elks Club, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Kansas City Urban Development, and Kansas City and Excelsior Springs, Missouri Chamber of Commerce.

Bill is married and he and his wife have one daughter, two sons, and three grandchildren. He and his family attended the Christian Church. He also has a brother who lives nearby.

Missouris Shoal Daughters are proud and honored to recognize William "Bill" McNeel as Patriot of the Month for his dedicated patriotic service for our great nation.