

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month



December 2017



Gary DeRigne

United States Army

Sponsored by:
Prairie
Chapter

Gary joined the Kansas Army National Guard in October, 1965. He went to basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana and advanced individual training at Fort Dix, New Jersey. He also served at Fort Riley, Kansas, and Fort Carson, Colorado.



After being activated for active federal service from the Kansas National Guard in 1968, Gary volunteered for and was sent to Vietnam as a replacement with D Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). He served for three months as a rifle and point man, then after a bad firefight in which several of his platoons Non-commissioned officers were wounded or killed, he was battlefield promoted to platoon sergeant and acting platoon leader. He served in the platoon sergeant role until a firefight a few months later, when his company was surrounded by a North Vietnamese regiment, intent on annihilation. Gary was wounded during the opening seconds of the battle, but continued to do his job until the battle ended the next morning. He was medevacked to a field hospital for surgery, then placed on light duty until his return home late November, 1969.

Back home Gary was harassed and called a "baby burner" by war protesters, to whom he responded, "I never burned even one baby." Gary suffers from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, hearing loss and a constant ringing in his ears, heart disease, and other health issues from his exposure to Agent Orange.

Gary's medals, badges, and citations include: Bronze Star; Purple Heart; Air Medal; Combat Infantryman's Badge; Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry; Unit Citations; and National Defense Medal. His service in the National Guard during riots after Martin Luther King was murdered was very "meaningful" as well as serving as an infantryman in Vietnam. Gary was discharged in Oakland, California, in December, 1969.

Gary worked for a major Manufacturer Company for 33 years where he served as Senior Vice President of Engineering Services and Information Systems. He then went to work as an Executive Vice President of an Internet Service, and then as President of a Property Management Company.

Gary is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, and Military Order of the Purple Heart. He taught nine years as Adjunct Professor of Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility at Rockhurst University. He oversaw an outreach program to support strategic assistance to a local community service non-profit. Gary founded and led a technology committee at a local community food network and later became Board President. He is a frequent speaker at community gatherings on the subject of war, its aftermath, and the issues facing veterans and their families. He supports veteran organizations locally and nationally. Gary authored, "One Young Soldier," a novel about the Vietnam War. He is married and has two grown sons and twin grandsons.

Prairie Daughters are very proud to honor and recognize Gary DeRigne as Patriot of the Month for his very dedicated service and patriotism to his community and our great nation.