

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors



Patriot of the Month
February 2018



Kenneth Rucker

United States Navy

United States Army



Sponsored by:
Missouris Shoal
Chapter

Kenneth entered the United States Navy in September, 1966, and went to San Diego, California, for his basic training. After basic, he was assigned to the *USS Valley Forge (LPH-8)* where he was assigned to the Gunnery Division and went through several training sessions before deployment to Vietnam. He arrived in Vietnam in November, 1967, and was there until August, 1968. Their mission was to support the 305th Marine Division from Da Nang to the Demilitarized Zone. Kenneth's job was to work on the Medivac Squad and to disarm all Wounded in Action and Killed in Action before landing on the ship. He returned to Vietnam in February, 1969, until March, 1970, working security in Da Nang.

He relates that while working on the Medivac Squad, one experience he well remembers was when he and some fellow medics had checked into the barracks the first night after the enemy hit the ammunition supply of the Landing Ship, Tank. The next morning they took all of them to the site of the explosion to pick up body part pieces. His previous experience made it a little easier for him, but most of the other guys could hardly handle it.

His assignment after this was Internal Security on Patrol. He drove a Jeep with a South Vietnamese man along as an interpreter to several posts to make sure they were alright. This distance was about ten miles and he never wanted to take the same path every time in case the interpreter would let the enemy know. At Deep Water Pier when the mortar fire started coming they abandoned the Jeep and got in the bunker for protection. When they came out later, the Jeep had been destroyed. He worked 30 days and nights, 12 hours shifts, 7 days a week.

Kenneth's medals include: National Defense Service Medal; Three Bronze Stars; Navy Unit Accommodation Ribbon, and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal. He learned life's lesson while in combat that everybody is expendable, including yourself and that carries through your whole life. He was discharged from active duty in Long Beach, California, in March, 1970. He then joined the United States Naval Reserve in 1973, and served until June, 1976. In February, 1978, he joined the United States Army Reserve and served through 1981.

Kenneth started in Northern Missouri and during his working career he owned and operated the following business after turning a failing business into a prosperous one and selling it: feed business; service station with 3 bay mechanic job; plumbing business; politics (eight years county Assessor and four years Presiding Commissioner); sold real estate; certified bank appraiser, and a landscape business. He continued farming through his working career. He is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Eagles, Masons, and the Lutheran Church where he has served as Trustee and President of the Board.

Kenneth has three children, two step sons, and one step daughter. He resides in a Veterans Home.

Missouris Shoal Daughters are proud to recognize and honor Kenneth Rucker as Patriot of the Month for his very patriotic dedication and service to our great nation.