

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

December 2020



Terrill F. Wilkison

United States Navy

Sponsored by:
Saint Charles
Chapter

Terrill F. Wilkison enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 19 October 1961 and flew in an airplane for the first time to his boot camp assignment in San Diego, California. His specialty training as an Electronic Technician was at Treasure Island outside San Francisco followed by submarine school at the New London Submarine Base in Groton, Connecticut. His training continued at Dam Neck, Virginia, near Virginia Beach, to learn computers and inertial navigation.



During his service, Petty Officer Wilkison was assigned to the USS *John C. Calhoun* SSBN 630 (a James Madison-class fleet ballistic missile submarine). He rode the *John C. Calhoun* to the Newport News Ship Building and Dry Dock Company; he lived in Newport News, Virginia for next couple of years while the ship was being outfitted. At one point, he literally crawled through the nuclear reactor while it was being built onboard to be qualified on the ship's workings.

The ship then went to Cape Canaveral and fired its first test Polaris Missile (a submarine-launched ballistic missile). During his time in Charleston, South Carolina he went on patrols for 70 days. The sub and crew would leave the port to go the sea buoy and play tag with a Russian Trawler. It would then dive and go on patrol for 70 days underwater, returning to surface in the same spot where it dove. The ship would be turned over to the next crew and Petty Officer Wilkison would spend the next thirty days at R&R, followed by training and such until the ship returned. The crew would then spend the next 30 days refurbishing it in Charleston, then head out to sea again on next 70-day patrol. He was based out of Charleston, South Carolina until his discharge on 19 October 1967.

Petty Officer Wilkison served as an Electronic Technician and he achieved the rank of E5 or Second Class Petty Officer. He was awarded Dolphins (similar to wings bestowed on pilots) as a qualified Submariner SS designation as well as the Good Conduct medal and National Defense Service medal.

He was married in 1965 and the couple had a boy and a girl and now also has two grandsons. In civilian life, he went to work in the computer industry until his civilian retirement.

Saint Charles Daughters are very proud to recognize and honor Terrill F. Wilkison as Patriot of the Month for his patriotic and dedicated service to our great nation.