

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors



Patriot of the Month

May 2021

Robert M. Sandfort

United States Army



Sponsored by:
Saint Charles
Chapter



When Robert M. Sandfort studied at the University of Missouri, ROTC was mandatory for the first two years of enrollment and he chose Army Advanced ROTC. He was commissioned in June 1964 as a 2nd Lt. He also wanted to pursue an advanced degree, so he requested and was granted a four-year academic delay to earn a Ph.D. degree. He was very nearly finished with his thesis in the late summer of 1968 when the army insisted they needed him ASAP. He was ordered to Fort Benning for the officer's basic course in October 1968. He had advanced in rank to 1st Lt. while still at the University. In January 1969, he was ordered to Fort Meade, Maryland to duty at the National Security Administration. Dr. Sandfort was advanced in rank to Captain in April of 1969 and spent the next almost two years performing research in a small laboratory in College Park, Maryland; mostly on a new class of Magnetic memory materials suitable for storing and encoding data. In October 1970, he completed his tour of duty and began consulting with Monsanto on the class of materials and devices on which he had been working while at NSA, while completing his thesis. He accepted full time employment at Monsanto in February 1971. He received his Ph.D. degree in Electrical Engineering in June 1971 and retired his commission in October 1971.

Dr. Sandfort had an interesting experience while on a trip to St. Petersburg, Russia as a tourist in 2003. When he left NSA, he was told, "Don't go to Russia," which he hadn't for thirty years. After he left the service he had been visited by a CIA agent to debrief on what might be of interest to the US intelligence community in terms of technical development. He and his wife were on a Baltic Cruise that stopped in St. Petersburg. Visas were not needed to go ashore and some of the cruisers decided to see the Hermitage Museum. All of the people in their party went through Customs and Immigration with no problem – except for Dr. Sandfort. The inspector looked at his passport, looked at him, made telephone calls, sent copies of his passport somewhere, and sometime later, he said "Da," and let him through. The party had to wait on the other side for him, and that was not amusing for them. Who knows what triggered the delay, but he can guess!

While at Monsanto, Dr. Sandfort conducted research into a variety of materials and devices for advanced integrated circuitry. He has twelve patents, has authored several technical papers and served as Vice-President of Europe-Africa for Monsanto Commercial Products Company while living in England for five years. When Monsanto sold the Commercial Products Company Dr. Sandfort returned to the United States and was in charge of the U.S. domestic world area as Vice President. He helped take the company public in 1995 and was President and COO of the MEMC Corporation until he retired in December 1997.

Dr. Sandfort and his high school sweetheart Janine have been married for 56 years and have three children and seven grandchildren. He is very active in the community and has been on the boards of United Way of St. Charles, Lincoln and Warren Counties; Friends of the Missouri State Archives, St. Charles County Historical Society and Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Charles.

Saint Charles Daughters are proud to honor and recognize Robert M. Sandfort as Patriot of the Month for his patriotism and invaluable service to our great nation.