

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

December 2022



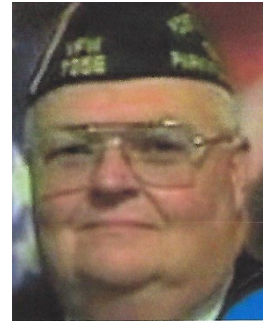
Robert Eckerle

United States Air Force

Sponsored by:

Alexander Doniphan Chapter, NSDAR

Robert "Bob" Eckerle graduated from East Central high School, Tulsa Oklahoma in 1961. After graduation, due to receiving a Pro Deo Patria (Boy Scout God and Country) scholarship for Midland College in Fremont, Nebraska, he left to further his education. His major was to be pre-med. In 1962, he transferred to the University of Tulsa in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He changed his major from pre-med to Business Administration then to Military Science. He also joined the Air Force ROTC. By the Spring of 1964 he decided that maybe the college scene was not for him. He took and passed every test to be a pilot in the Air Force. All went well until he found his ears could not handle the pressure required for the flying program. He went back to TWA and became a ground serviceman.



In August 1964, he knew that Vietnam was rapidly becoming a possibility in his life. Bob met with the Air Force recruiters and was immediately accepted. He wanted to become an electronic technician and nothing else. On September 8, 1964, he raised his hand and pledged his allegiance to the United States of America and joined the Air Force in Chicago, Illinois. He was assigned to the 3723rd Basic Military Training Squadron at the Lackland Air Force Base in Sam Antonio, Texas. Because of his training in the ROTC, he began his basic training a grade above the rest of his class. After six weeks of training, he was sent to Lowry Air Force Base, Denver Colorado, 34215^t Student Squadron. After he graduated from the AIM-4 school, he was given orders to report to George Air Force Base, California, 479th Munitions Maintenance Squadron, Tactical Air Command. While there, he had the opportunity to attend field training classes on missiles at night. Bob enrolled in advanced training on the sidewinder and on the MK342 test set and became a five-level skilled mechanic with both.

While at Lackland, Bob returned to his passion of Scouting and helped the base Boy Scout troop as an assistant scoutmaster. He also worked with the Civil Air Patrol for a while.

By the end of the summer 1966, Bob received his orders for Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam with the 412th Munitions Maintenance Squadron. September 9, 1966, he landed at Ton Son Nhut AB, Vietnam. Shortly after arriving at Ton Son Nhut, he received his next stripe as an Airman pt class but that was quickly changed to Sergeant. The primary mission was to ready the missiles, load them on trailers and transport them to the flight line. A year passed with several problems that arose with the missiles. Bob was there with suggestions along with others that took care of the problems. In 1967, he received a citation for distinguishing himself by meritorious service as Missile Guidance and Control Specialist, Cam Rahn Bay Air Base, Republic of Vietnam from September 11, 1966 to September 9 1967.

As August of 1968 drew closer, Bob had a decision to make. Should he re-enlist or get out. On September 8, 1968 he accepted his honorable discharge from active duty and was placed on a two-year inactive reserve.

Upon returning home, Bob went back to work for TWA. He held many positions. When times got bad for the Air Line, Bob left and became a Police officer for the Weatherby Lake Police Force and the Sheriff's Department. He distinguished himself in these areas as well. He helped get the PMS (Police Management Systems) program up and running for the Platte County Sheriff's Office. In February 2004, he retired his Sergeant's commission as a deputy and was promoted to a civilian position as Director of Information Technology and continued at this position until retirement January 2, 2008.

After retirement, Bob didn't sit back and rest on his laurels. Since he had given up his leadership at both his church and with the Boy Scouts, he turned to the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars). In 1999, he joined South Platte Memorial VFW Post 7356 in Parkville, Missouri. Since that date he has held the following positions. Junior Vice Commander, Senior Vice Commander, All State Commander, Department National Home for Children Chairperson, Captain all State Commander, All American Post Commander, National Community Service Post, All American Post Quartermaster, National Aide de Camp, District 3 Commander, District 3 Chief of Staff and National Recruiter Century Award. Many of these positions he has held multiple times.

Bob and his wife Linda make their home at Weatherby Lake. His health now makes it difficult for him to be active in many things, but he is always available to anyone that has a question. It is my honor to nominate Bob as Patriot of the Month.