

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

February 2023



Earl A. Whitman

United States Navy

Sponsored by:
Rachel Donelson Chapter, NSDAR

Earl A. Whitman joined the US Navy on March 11, 1959 after graduation from Pierce City High School, Pierce City, MO. He was stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Training School where out of over 100 recruits, he was named the Honor Man of the Company 141. He then completed training as a Machinist Mate and was subsequently stationed in San Diego, CA. There he received further training in air conditioning and refrigeration. Traveling by troop ship to Hawaii and Japan, he was assigned to USS Bridgett DE 1024, and remained with this duty until discharged from service in June 1963 as an E5 Petty Officer, Machinist Mate.



On board the USS Bridgett DE 1024, his training allowed him to maintain engines for the vessel, keep air conditioning and refrigeration systems functioning, and make fresh water for the approximately 150 service members on board. During his time in service he remembers being called back from leave during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Always prepared, he recalls the potential visit by President Eisenhower and all on board being in dress blues, although the President never got within five miles of the ship. Another interesting assignment was a goodwill tour to Seattle in 1962 for the World's Fair to show off the ship to the public. Earl remarks that his Navy service enhanced his ability to work with others and follow procedures, which helped him in civilian life.

After leaving service, he relocated to the Mesa/Phoenix, AZ area to be near his parents and married and had four children. His military experience qualified him for a variety of positions in carpentry, concrete work, and ac/refrigeration. This was a time of growth and construction in the area and he stayed until he relocated to Kansas City in about 1991. Again using his skills and experience from his time in the military, he worked in property management until his retirement in 2002.

He and Joan Bowen (who was a classmate in Pierce City) married in 2001, and they later enjoyed many happy years at their lake home in the Warsaw area. They relocated to Springfield MO in 2013. Both enjoy gardening and volunteering and continue this dedication with a variety of organizations in the Springfield community. Of special interest to both Earl and Joan is the Blue Star and Gold Star memorial markers. They were involved in the establishment of a Blue Star marker at the Truman Dam Overlook while living in that area, and since moving to Springfield have assisted in the establishment of a Blue Star at Springfield National Cemetery, and both a Blue Star and Gold Star at Springfield Botanical Center. Earl volunteers countless hours at the Botanical

Center and Nathaniel Green Park, tending gardens for Federated Garden Clubs, maintaining plantings around the memorial markers, and helping with other projects as needed. He is a dedicated Hillbilly Garden Club member and gets great satisfaction sharing plants with others. He also volunteers with Sammy's Window, a program that assists foster families.

Earl's brothers also had a strong commitment to military service. His oldest brother, Victor, served in the Army in WWII as a medic. Stan was in the Army during Korea; Dennis was in the Army during the time of Vietnam; and his youngest brother, Joseph, was in the Navy, also during the Vietnam War. Earl says Joseph later died of medical problems associated with Agent Orange exposure while in service. Thus, his special interest in both the Blue and Gold Star memorials is naturally dear to his heart.

For his military service to our country, along with the dedication he has shown in his volunteer work in our community, especially in the creation and maintaining of our local Blue and Gold Star memorials, the Rachel Donelson Chapter is proud to nominate Earl Whitman for Patriot of the Month.

