

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

May 2023

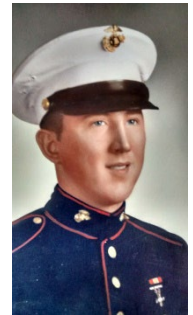


Mark Radtke

United States Marine Corp

Sponsored by:
Henry County Chapter, NSDAR

In 1967 Mark enlisted in the Marine Corps. He went through bootcamp and advanced training at camp Pendleton in San Diego, CA. He was then sent to Memphis, TN and Lakehurst, NJ school training. Mark was in the Marine Corp but went into the aviation division to be around the planes. His job involved the catching gear/arresting work. His first regular duty station was at El Toro Air Station in CA where he spent about a year. His CO told him the next orders to come through would be his and he was ready to go to Vietnam and expected those orders, instead he was told his next duty station for 2 years would be Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii.



While in Lakehurst, he pulled guard duty for the large hangers where the huge helium-filled blimps were stored. Hangar No. 1 measures 961 feet long, 350 feet wide and 200 feet high. At each end are two pairs of massive steel doors, mounted on railroad tracks. These double doors are structurally separate from the hangar itself. Each door weighs 1350 tons and is powered by two 20 horsepower motors, although provisions were made to open the doors manually, which required the assembled manpower of nine men. It had a huge catwalk to the top that was supposed to be checked each night but was too high for anyone to actually climb it. The hanger was so tall it had its own weather happening inside including rain.

Mark spent his military career as a recovery chart for tactical support and for his first 6 months at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay, he lived with 6 guys in a 3 bedroom house that was at the end of a peninsula with a runway. Their job was to always be prepared and ready for any airplane landing emergency. If there was a plane with hydrolic failure, or other issues, they would run out and arrest (catch/hook) the aircraft to get it stopped and then get it off the runway as quickly as possible so things could continue to operate.

When Mark left the military, he owned his own business involving heat treating steel for about 10 years. Then he found a career with Mill Stone Coffee which was later bought out by Proctor and Gamble from where he retired.

Mark has 2 daughters with his wife who passed away. He is now married to Mary and they keep busy with their many children and grandchildren. Mark is a great HODAR and helps the local DAR any time he can.