

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

November 2023



## Terry Shallenberger

### United States Marine Corps

Sponsored by:  
Platte Purchase Chapter, NSDAR

After being a troubled child and youth for seventeen years as a 'Navy Brat', Terry Shallenberger elected to enlist in the Marines at age 17. A few days later he woke up in a bunk on Paris Island facing thirteen weeks of basic training wondering just how he had gotten there and what had he been thinking? As the weeks progressed, the scary process of being a trainee, broken down and then rebuilt into a Marine commenced. Every minute of Terry's time was regimented. He didn't move without instructions, didn't eat or sleep without permission. If one member of the platoon failed, they all failed. Gradually, the Platoon of which Terry was a member became a unit, with each member supporting themselves and the other members. His passing basic training was cause for rejoicing. Terry finished another few weeks of 24/7 basic training at Camp Lejeune with firearms training, forced marches, maneuvers and learning how to be a Marine.



After taking a basic general personality test, Terry was rated high enough that he was sent to Communication Crypto School. But because he was still seventeen, he could not be sent overseas. That had to wait until he was 18. He got his GED, and went to communications school in Florida. He lost his Top Secret clearance needed for communications when his sister was sent to a Communist country by the Peace Corps. This changed his future from communications to administration mess duty in Camp Pendleton.

As soon as he was 18, he was sent to Viet Nam as a 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division Liaison. He moved troops around. When troops arrived, his job was to get them where they were supposed to be. This included them being sent to the front lines, R and R, home, or another location. It required organizational skills. The compound where he was stationed was near Da Nang Air Strip. He was near when the Tet Offensive occurred. One time his compound was flattened down to the last blown-up truck. They had to rebuild from scratch.

He was scared all the time. Sometimes he got angry at the damage done by the enemy. He became an expert at rolling out of bed, going flat and belly-crawling away from danger. Terry spent thirteen months in Country as a liaison. He extended his service by six months as a driver in the 1<sup>st</sup> Motor Transport Division even though he didn't know how to drive at first. However, it wasn't long before he could drive any vehicle from jeeps to transport trucks. So instead of sending troops he was one of the troops being sent.

They had a lot of trouble with Vietnamese children and civilians willingly or unwillingly putting timed grenades in vehicle gas tanks to have them blow up unexpectedly. The North Vietnamese were never seen but they were able to blackmail civilians and forced them to act against the Americans.

Terry served in Vietnam for nineteen months then was sent to Norfolk, VA as a Sergeant in the communications office. For his service he was awarded the National Defense Medal, Vietnam Service Medal 6, Vietnam Campaign Medal 60, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/Palm, Good Conduct Medal, Rifle Sharpshooters Badge. He then spent two years in the Reserves. When his tour was up, he did not re-enlist in the Marines because he had never been a responsible civilian adult and he wanted to try that.

Terry says "I owe the Marine Corps for what I am today. I wouldn't do it again but I couldn't buy what the Marines gave me for any amount and it has kept me going for fifty years."

Terry has been married for more than thirty years. He has worked in several fields, among them electronics, truck driving and jobs requiring specialized organizational skills. He volunteers for local charities and is able to repair items to sell. He is a proud member of the Patriot Guard Riders, a volunteer motorcycle group. They escort veterans to cemeteries and protect their families from disruptions. Their purpose has grown to provide many forms of assistance to first responders, our veterans and their families.

Platte Purchase Chapter DAR is honored to present Terry Shallenberger as its Patriot of the Month.