

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

March 2024



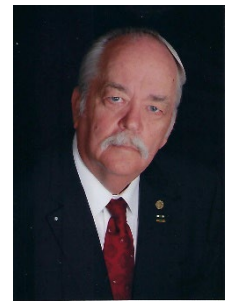
Charles A. Farris

United States Navy

Sponsored by:

Little Blue River Chapter, NSDAR

I enlisted on November 19, 1965, as a senior in high school. I knew I was not ready for college and did not want to chance being drafted. Upon graduation in May 1966, I reported to Great Lakes for recruit training. After Boot Camp I went to Naval Training Center, San Diego for Basic Electricity/Electronics Prep (BEEP) School and then to Fleet Training Pacific for Sonar Technician (Surface) "A" School. Following "A" school, I was assigned to the USS Richmond K. Turner DLG- 20.



I made a West Pac cruise in 1968, spending numerous days in the Gulf of Tonkin. The ship performed Search and Rescue missions for downed aircrews and plane guard for the USS America, CV-66. Upon my return to the States, in December 1968, the Navy was having a drawdown, and feeling I was ready to advance my education, I left the Fleet, attended UMKC and completed my reserve obligation. As a Vietnam veteran, I was spit on, called numerous names, including "baby killer" and threatened.

In 1972, I decided to reenlist and was fortunate to be assigned to NAVCRUITCOM, Kansas City as an STG2. In December 1994, my reenlistment physical/audiology examination indicated high frequency hearing loss in my right ear, which disqualified me from continuing as a sonar technician.

To cross rate, my only option, according to the regular Navy, was to be reduced in rate by one paygrade. Not wanting to take that path, I contacted a fellow recruiter at the Olathe Naval Air Station and was fortunate that the Naval Air Reserve, Training and Administration of the Reserves (TAR) community needed Aviation Fire Control Technicians (AQ). In 1975, I applied and was accepted, then sent to NAS Millington, TN for Radar "A" School.

Following "A" school, I was assigned to VA-303, an A-7 squadron at NAS Alameda, CA., with a designation of USNR-(TAR). While assigned to VA-303, I was the Integrated Weapons Team (IWT) supervisor, Quality Assurance (QA) Avionics Rep., member of the Nuclear Weapons Loading Team and after promotion to First Class Petty Officer, I was leading Petty Officer of the

Line Division. I was also full systems and "Turn and Taxi" qualified on the A-7.

With no billet in the squadron for a PO1, I was transferred to NAVAIRRESCEN, NAS Miramar, CA, and was TAD to AIMD, working in the F-4 Radar Shop. After 6-7 months, I was sent to Instructor School and upon completion was assigned to NAMTRADET 1013 as an instructor of Organizational and Intermediate Maintenance on F-4 Radar. During this time, squadrons were transitioning to F-14 aircraft and therefore, the F-4 detachment was shut down. I was then assigned as an instructor for the APS-96 Radar and Air Tactical Data System on the E-2 Hawkeye. After instructor duty, I returned to the NAVAIRRESCEN as the Command Career Counselor.

In 1982, I was transferred to Naval Air Station Dallas, Texas. I was TAD to AIMD working again in the F-4 Radar Shop. In 1983, I was selected for Chief Petty Officer and was assigned to VF-202, an F-4 Fighter Squadron. While at VF-202, I had many different jobs, including Division Chief, Line Chief, Maintenance Control Chief and Command Chief. In 1987, I was selected for Senior Chief Petty Officer and was transferred to NAS Atlanta as the Quality Control Officer and later as Maintenance Control Senior Chief.

In July 1990, I went back to Miramar as the Quality Assurance/Avionics Coordinator for Air Wing 30, annually inspecting the seven different Air Squadrons in the Air Wing. Selected for Master Chief in 1992, I became the Command Master Chief of VF-301 and stayed in that billet until my retirement on December 31, 1994.

During my 28 year career I received the Navy Commendation Medal, three (3) Navy Achievement Medals; two (2) Meritorius Unit Commendations Medals; two (2) Navy "E" Ribbons; Good Conduct Medal (5th Award, 92NOV01); Naval Reserve Meritorius Service Medal; two (2) National Defense Service Medals; three (3) Vietnam Service Medals; two (2) Armed Forces Reserve Medals; Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal; Expert Rifleman Medal; and Expert Pistol Shot Medal.

The most interesting job I had was working on the flight deck as a coordinator and the best advice I received was to act like the next step pay grade and to be job diversified.

I am a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Lee's Summit where I have been a worship leader and currently am an usher. In 2011, I joined the Hickman Mills Educational Foundation and have been Executive Director since 2013. I am a member of AF&AM Lodge #617 where I served in many offices, including Worshipful Master in 2011, when I became the first son of a Worshipful Master of Swope Park Lodge to serve in that position. I am a member of the Grandview Memorial VFW Post 8100 and the American Legion.

In the 30 years since leaving the Navy, I have worked as technical support for a software company in Richmond, MO, manager of the shoe department at JC Penney and a wine consultant/driver for PRP Wine Company.

The downside of my career was the fact that it cost me 2 marriages and caused stress with my 3 sons due to the moving every 3 to 4 years and not being available like a parent should.