

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



**PROUDLY HONORS**  
**PATRIOT OF THE MONTH**  
**JULY 2024**



**WAYNE R. BILL**  
**UNITED STATES ARMY**

**SPONSORED BY:**  
**JANE RANDOLPH JEFFERSON CHAPTER, NSDAR**

Wayne was raised in Webster Groves, Missouri. Upon graduation from high school in 1962, he attended Central Missouri State College in Warrensburg, Missouri, where he met his future wife, Betty. He was deferred by the draft twice while in college, but during his last year he was drafted to go into the service.

In May 1967, Wayne graduated from college and enlisted in Officer Candidate School. After spending six weeks of Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, he was sent to Fort Sill in Lawton, Oklahoma, for Advanced Artillery School. Fort Sill is the national headquarters for artillery training. Following six weeks of Advanced Individual Training, Wayne progressed to Officer Candidate School for six months. He graduated and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in August 1968 and was given a month's leave to spend time with his family. Wayne and his wife, Betty, were married during this time.



Wayne received orders for Fort Bliss, an Air Defense Artillery Base in El Paso, Texas. He served in the Group Supply Headquarters for one year before he would see his name on the list to be assigned to Vietnam. From Seattle, Washington, Wayne boarded his flight to Vietnam and the conflict that awaited him. In August 1969, he arrived in Cam Ranh Bay and was moved to Da Nang, Vietnam. There, headquarters assigned him to the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery.

Wayne served as a First Lieutenant and platoon leader in an M42 Duster, Quad-50 Battery, stationed near the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) between North and South Vietnam. He led M42 Duster tanks which manned six soldiers in each tank, one as a driver and the other five on top of the vehicle. Wayne also rode on top of one of the tracks. They were one of the four batteries of the 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery, and Wayne was assigned to C Battery. Each M42 Duster held two guns which shot 40-millimeter shells. Wayne's platoon also supported the Seabees. The Seabees' assignment was to check for buried bombs/mines and to spray Agent Orange to kill the vegetation, allowing the soldiers a better view of the dense foliage along the highway.

While Wayne's platoon was on patrol searching, the Seabees would precede them in their assignment of spraying vegetation. This was unfortunate as Wayne and the soldiers in his platoon would return to camp bearing the brunt of the Agent Orange herbicide on their clothing. (*Production of Agent Orange*

*ended in the 1970s. The dioxin contaminants are highly toxic and continue to have harmful impacts today).*

One conflict that stood out in Wayne's memory while serving in Vietnam was when Mai Loc Camp, a Special Forces Camp, was overrun by the NVA (North Vietnamese Army), and Wayne's platoon had two tracks stationed at this location. To their astonishment, this camp had hidden underground bunkers under the center of the camp which saved many lives. Then here comes "Puff, the Magic Dragon", an AC-47 gunship that fires 6000 rounds per minute. The AC-47's call sign was "Spooky" but ground troops affectionately called it "Puff the Magic Dragon" because the Viet Cong thought it was a fire-breathing dragon. The airplane fired its guns around the outside perimeter of the camp. This was followed by a Battery of the 5th Mechanized Infantry Division which killed all the remaining invaders in the camp.

On the following morning, Wayne arrived at the camp and had a memorable discussion with Captain Shinseki of the 5th Mechanized Infantry Division. Years later, to Wayne's surprise, the captain achieved the status of General Eric Shinseki and served as the seventh United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs under President Barack Obama.

The best advice Wayne received was from his captain, Captain Truesdale; "Don't tell your men to do something you wouldn't do." Wayne spent 12 months in Vietnam. In 1970, he was flown back to Fort Lewis in Seattle, Washington, where he was honorably discharged.

Wayne received the following medals during his service in the military: The Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Republic of Vietnam Bronze Gallantry Cross, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and The American Warrior Achievement Medal.

After his honorable discharge in 1970, Wayne returned to Central Missouri State University receiving his MBA (Master of Business Administration), then went to work for Swift Meat Company. After five years, he moved to Ames, Iowa, as a partner in a fresh meat business. Wayne would in time move to take a position with Ralston Purina as District Sales Manager in Fulton, Missouri. After 20 years with Purina, Wayne began working as an International Marketing Specialist with the Department of Agriculture for the state of Missouri. Wayne spent 10 years with the department before retiring in 2010. During his tenure, he was elected to the MOSERS (Missouri State Employees' Retirement System) Board of Trustees for six years and was Board Chair for two years.



Wayne is a lifetime member of the local VFW Post 2657, in which he held the following positions: Commander for 2 years, Quartermaster for 7 years, and Trustee for 3 years. He loves to renew friendships and volunteer at the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars). Wayne was on the Fulton City Council for eight years and has served on the Fulton Parks and Recreation Board since 1990. As an avid baseball fan, Wayne coached Fulton youth baseball teams for over 10 years and was the

Director of the Bambino Midwest Plains Regional Tournament in 1990. Fulton's Bambino team proudly placed 2nd to Colorado!

Wayne and Betty have been married for 55 years. Wayne enjoys watching his son play tennis in California; being entertained by his granddaughter, Reese, playing both beach and indoor volleyball; and his grandson, Eli, who challenges him with video games, new technology, and his swimming. But, playing golf is Wayne's true passion, but quickly wears out. He also enjoys walks and exercises at the city recreational center, Legends. With the gift of a new kidney, he would love to do more work around the house, volunteer, and play longer rounds of golf!