

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

July 2024



Donald Jeffries

United States Navy, Air Force

Sponsored by:
Gayoso Chapter, NSDAR

Donald Jeffries was born in 1943, in Indianapolis, Indiana to Bill and Dorothy Jeffries, when his father was with his World War II (WWII) Army armor unit preparing for D-Day in England. Shortly after WWII ended, his parents divorced. When Donald was eight years old, his mother married Thelbert Lowenstein, of the Caruthersville, Missouri area, who became his stepfather. Donald attended Sacred Heart Grade School and high school in Caruthersville. In 1963, he enlisted in the Navy and attended "Boot Camp" and tech schools at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center near Chicago, Illinois, the combined time of which covered one year.



He became a "Tin Can" sailor, by serving onboard the USS Lynde McCormick, which was a first-generation guided missile destroyer, for four years, while homeported in San Diego, California. His service included time in the Pacific, including pulling into seaports of Japan, Hong Kong and the Philippines, operating off the shores of Viet Nam and upriver in Viet Nam. After separation from the Navy, he spent one more year as an Inactive Navy Reservist.

While attending Riverside City College, in Riverside, California, he enlisted in the California Army National Guard in 1979. During his third year with the Army Guard, he transferred over to the California Air National Guard, while attending San Jose State University. The Army time and the first three years of the Air National Guard was as a reservist. In 1984, he obtained an active-duty position with the unit and served as such until 1992, when he began active duty with the California National Guard Counter Drug Task Force and also maintained a reservist position with the Air National Guard unit. In 1999, he retired from the military as an Air Force Master Sergeant, in charge of Mortuary Affairs.

His Air National Guard unit was not just a reserve unit. It was an active rescue unit first performing joint rescue operations with the US Coast Guard, including space shuttle returns which dropped into the Pacific Ocean. Once the Coast Guard training was completed, the unit operated on its own. The unit was given operation decorations twice by the Coast Guard. It was also an active participant during the Middle East wars.

Donald received the following military personal "awards and decorations", in order of highest to lowest: Air Force (AF) Meritorious Service Medal, AF Commendation Medal, AF Achievement Medal awarded three times (One for gathering drug evidence which resulted in the prosecution and imprisonment of drug traffickers.), Air Reserve Forces Meritorious Service awarded four times, National Defense Service Medal awarded two times (Viet Nam, Desert Storm), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal awarded two times (Viet Nam), Viet Nam Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal (San Francisco earthquake 1980s), AF Overseas Award (Viet Nam-Navy), Armed Forces Reserve Air Force Medal, AF Longevity Award awarded five times, Republic of Viet Nam Campaign Medal issued by South Viet Nam, California Good Conduct Medal, California Service Medal, California Counterdrug Service Award for 7 years, California Drill Attendance Award for 16 years.

The Gayoso Chapter Daughters are extremely proud to recognize and honor Donald Jeffries as our Patriot of the Month for his dedication, patriotism and service to our great country.