

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



Proudly Honors
PATRIOT OF THE MONTH
NOVEMBER 2024



ROBERT VOSKAMP
UNITED STATES ARMY
SEPTEMBER 1970 – SEPTEMBER 1972
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

Sponsored by:
Reverend John Clark Chapter, NSDAR



Robert Voskamp was raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated from St. Louis University High School in 1966. Bob received his bachelor of science degree in business administration in 1970 from St. Louis University. Due to his low draft lottery number, Bob was drafted soon after his college graduation and was inducted into the United States Army where he served from September 1970 until 1972.

Bob entered the service as a private and did his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. In basic training, Bob noted that those who were drafted were designated differently than those who had enlisted. The designation for draftees was "US," which was the prefix to their service number, while the designation for those who had enlisted was "RA," which stood for Regular Army. Those prefixes were used when addressing the drill sergeant. As a draftee, Bob had to respond to the drill sergeant with "US, drill sergeant." Similarly, those who had enlisted had to respond with "RA, drill sergeant."

Upon completion of basic training, Bob was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia, for Military Police (MP) training. After completing this training, Bob was assigned to serve as an MP at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Bob discovered that finishing his college education was a factor in him receiving this assignment, as all the MPs assigned to West Point were college graduates. Bob served at West Point until he was honorably discharged in 1972. Awards he received for his service were the National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Marksman Badge with Pistol Bar, Sharp Shooter Badge with Rifle Bar, and Expert Badge with Grenade Bar.

At West Point, he and the other MPs provided security for the base. One of their duties was to secure the perimeters of the base to keep out unauthorized people who tried to enter. At night, the MPs would set up floodlights to illuminate the area, and they would block the entrances. A sad part of Bob's duty was serving as a member of the Honor Guard at the funerals that took place at West Point. Anyone who graduated from West Point could be buried there, as well as

those with special exemptions. There were numerous funerals held there; these were mainly funerals for young men killed in Vietnam. It was heart-wrenching seeing the grieving families at the funerals of these brave young soldiers.

Bob noted that some of the best guys that he met in his life were those that he served with in the Army.

After his military service, Bob worked in the Business Development Division of McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing), selling aircraft. A highlight of his career was when he worked in Washington, D.C., from 1984-1990, during the Reagan era. While there, he divided his time between the Pentagon, promoting McDonnell Douglas' aircraft to the military, and promoting the aircraft on Capitol Hill. He worked with his McDonnell Douglas associate, Pete Conrad, who was both a former Navy fighter pilot and an astronaut who was the third man to walk on the moon. They were promoting the McDonnell Douglas C-17, a large military transport aircraft. In their presentations, Bob would explain the aircraft, and Pete Conrad, the experienced fighter pilot, would provide his endorsement of it.

Bob also worked on the F-15 program during his career at McDonnell Douglas/Boeing. The F-15 was developed by McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis and had its first flight in 1972. Boeing currently makes an advanced version of the F-15, called the F-15EX, which is produced in St. Louis and is being flown by the U.S. Air Force worldwide. Bob is proud to have been part of this important military program.

Bob spent the latter part of his career traveling to the Middle East/Asia for Boeing. After a very fulfilling career, Bob is now retired and enjoys spending his time on the golf course.

Bob credits his father for instilling in him a sense of patriotism, respect for the military, and the duty to serve one's country. His father's WWII military service provided Bob with an example of these qualities. Bob's father, Lieutenant Leonard Voskamp, was a decorated WWII Army Air Force pilot who was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. The medals were awarded to him by Lieutenant General George C. Kenney, Commanding General of Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, and Commander, Fifth Air Force; General Kenney sent a letter to Leonard's wife with details of what Leonard did to earn the DFC. General Kenney said that Leonard "was cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flights in the Southwest Pacific Area from August 29 to October 1, 1943. He took part in more than fifty missions, dropping supplies and transporting troops over territory that was continually patrolled by enemy fighter aircraft. Often landings were made on fields that were only a few miles from Japanese bases. These operations aided considerably in the recent successes in this theatre. In the letter, General Kenney also praised the "courage and resourcefulness" of all the young Americans fighting in the Southwest Pacific against the "aggressor nations."



Bob related a harrowing experience his father encountered as a pilot during one of his flights. After flying for about three hours on an engineering flight, the fuel lines clogged and the engines died. His father was forced to ditch the aircraft in the South Pacific, six miles off Lae, New Guinea. Bob's father and the radio operator had to tread water for six hours until they were picked up by an Australian fishing boat; the co-pilot and crew chief drowned, making the ultimate sacrifice for their country.



Here's a picture of the general pinning the D.F.C. and air medal on. Was he a scold? It seems to me that's do, and was.

I love you so much!

Bob

Bob is extremely proud of his father for the dedication and service to our country that he exhibited during his WWII military service.

(COPY)

HEADQUARTERS FIFTH AIR FORCE

A.P.O. 925

November 20, 1943

Dear Mrs. Voskamp:

Recently your husband, Lieutenant Leonard W. Voskamp, was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross. It was an award made in recognition of courageous service to his combat organization, his fellow American airmen, his country, his home and to you.

He was cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flights in the Southwest Pacific Area from August 29 to October 1, 1943.

He took part in more than fifty missions, dropping supplies and transporting troops over territory that was continually patrolled by enemy fighter aircraft. Often landings were made on fields which were only a few miles from Japanese bases. These operations aided considerably in the recent successes in this theatre.

Almost every hour of every day your husband, and the husbands of other American women, are doing just such things as that here in the Southwest Pacific.

There is a very real and very tangible contribution to victory and to peace.

I would like to tell you how genuinely proud I am to have men such as your husband in my command, and how gratified I am to know that young Americans with such courage and resourcefulness are fighting our country's battle against the aggressor nations.

You, Mrs. Voskamp, have every reason to share that pride and gratification.

Very sincerely,

(Signed) George C. Kenney,
Lieutenant General,
Commanding.