

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Proudly Honors

GERALD JOSEPH LISKA

UNITED STATES NAVY
HOSPITAL CORPSMAN
SECOND CLASS (HM2),
JUNE 1962 – JUNE 1967

WOUNDED IN ACTION – DECEMBER 15, 1966

as

PURPLE HEART PATRIOT

AUGUST 2025

Honoring His Service and Sacrifice

Sponsored by: Dorcas Richardson Chapter, NSDAR



My name is Gerald J. Liska (aka "Jerry"). I joined the Navy in June 1962 to avoid being drafted into the Army. After basic training, I spent four years working and teaching in the physical therapy department at the U.S. Naval Hospital in San Diego, California.

As my four-year enlistment ended, the Vietnam War escalated, causing a shortage of medical personnel. I extended one year and was assigned to U. S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion Nine (NMCB9). NMCB9 was set to deploy to Vietnam.

NMGB9 arrived in Vietnam in early 1966. The main base was located on the beach of the South China Sea just north of Da Nang. I worked with other corpsmen at the base hospital. After months at the main base, one morning I was detailed to Hill 55. The corpsman at Hill 55 was wounded that morning. Hill 55 was a small detachment of about 30 to 35 Seabees located about 16 miles south of Da Nang. There was also a small detachment of U.S. Marines providing security. The previous year, the Hill suffered a Viet Cong attack with one Seabee killed and several wounded.

The main task of the Seabees on Hill 55 was to maintain the road both north and south of Hill 55 and construct a bridge to cross a river that cut through the south road a short distance from the base of the hill. A small temporary ferry was used to take military vehicles and equipment across the river one vehicle at a time. A marine bunker and tank maintained a security point at the river's edge on the south road.

Approximately an hour before sunset on December 15, 1966, a small marine vehicle called a M50 Ontos (U. S. Light Armored Tracked Anti-Tank Vehicle with six 106 mm recoilless rifles) approached the Hill a mile south of our position when it began taking enemy small arms fire from a tree line about two hundred yards west of the road. The vehicle fired its recoilless rifles at the tree line, then turned north to continue towards us while under small arms fire. We also started taking small arms fire. During this ambush, I was thrown from the truck into the roadside ditch. We watched the Ontos go by with what looked like a wounded Marine clinging to the top of the vehicle. We continued to take enemy fire as we made it on foot to the security point.

The next morning, while sitting at my position providing security along the south road for the Seabees, I began to have severe pain in both my back and legs. I could not *move* without severe pain. I was taken by jeep to an aid station in Da Nang. After one night in Da Nang, I was transferred to the Air Force Hospital in Cam Ranh Bay. I spent about a month at Cam Ranh Bay, then transferred to the U.S. Naval Hospital at Great Lakes. I received an honorable discharge in June 1967.