

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



Proudly Honors
**PATRIOT OF THE MONTH
SEPTEMBER 2025**

ROBERT M. O'NEAL
UNITED STATES ARMY

SEPTEMBER 4, 1957 – NOVEMBER 12, 1960
SPECIALIST 5 (E-5)

Sponsored by: Sarah Barton Murphy Chapter, NSDAR



Robert was born February 1, 1939, to Robert Palmer O'Neal & Nancy Ann Monroe O'Neal in Manchester, Connecticut. Robert P. and Nancy Ann relocated from sunny Southern California to the Northeast due to the job offer at Pratt & Whitney aircraft engine company in Connecticut. Robert P., a recent Aeronautical Engineer graduate, secured a job working with a wind tunnel to increase the speed of jet engines. After the fateful day of December 7, 1941, He became aware that the United States had just entered WWII. He joined other states informing the Connecticut Civil Air Patrol. He recruited men with pilot's licenses to enter the military. Enlisting high school boys, he trained them to spot foreign incoming aircraft, as he was familiar with all aircraft in the skies. In 1944, he changed his career path to the Aviation Branch of the U.S. Marine Corps. His permanent assignment was Cherry Point Naval Air Station, North Carolina.

Robert's nickname, Bobby, lasted through high school. He read everything in sight, laughing at the Mad Magazines. He excelled in school, skipping the sixth grade. The Presbyterian Church sponsored a Boy Scout Troop. Joining together with his best friend Thomas, they guided other boys with the outdoor activities, especially cooking over a campfire while camping under the stars. He played his cornet in the school band, performing at half-time for the football games on Friday nights and during basketball season in "Tin Can Band". He could be found after school hours and on Saturdays, bagging groceries at The Colonial Grocery store. On occasion, he would walk alongside Senior citizen ladies, carrying their bags, earning a modest tip. He graduated from New Bern High School, the Spring of 1956.

He was excited to be accepted in the Fall of 1956 at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. Classes were much more advanced than expected. Taking a break from studies, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. While serving at Fort Benning, Georgia, he was recognized as Soldier of the Month. His next assignment was Fort Gordon, Georgia, where he made rank quickly to E-5. The last duty station, Seoul, Korea, was assigned to the 8th Field Army, located between Seoul and Inchon. O'Neal trained soldiers using live bullets on the rifle range, with targets up to 520 yards away. Two Korean nationals repaired the targets. Battles during the Korean conflict (1950-1953) left behind

unexploded munitions of artillery and rifle bullets. Demolition experts swept the areas. The found materials, both underground and on top of the ground, were safely detonated in deep trenches. He enrolled in several on-base University of Maryland college courses, liking Russian the best. At the time of discharge, his rank was E-5. Through his experiences, he appreciated the maturity gained in those Army years. Utilizing the G.I. Bill, he returned to Duke a more serious student. His job at Duke University Research Hospital was being attendant in the Psychology Unit. He completed his Business Degree in three years, with four years of Russian Studies in June 1963.

Upon graduation, he accepted a position with General Motors in Detroit, Michigan. While in the Heating and Air Conditioning section, one of his duties was to test drive the latest improvements in the Air Conditioning System Southwestern deserts during the scorching Summers. In the coldest of winters, he tested the latest improvements in the heating systems in snow-laden Canada. After 12 years with GM, he changed car companies to Volkswagen, relocating to Arlington, Texas, for 13 years, and mastered learning to speak German. Relocating back to Michigan and GM/Delphi, Bob's job was supervising one of the assembly lines. This would be his final change, as he suffered a near-fatal heart attack with severe damage to his heart. His early retirement began.

Fleeing harsh winters for sunny Florida, they chose to reside in The Villages, in central Florida, since 2001. Bob & Carol joined many activities. He enjoyed the camaraderie of The Sons of the American Legion. On May 23, 2018, he was treated to an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. The veterans traveled by buses along the Tidal Basin of the Potomac River, viewing the monuments of Thomas Jefferson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, John Paul Jones, and George Mason. Next route, the Washington, Abraham Lincoln, World War II, Korean War Veterans, Martin Luther King, Jr., and D.C. War Memorials. He returned a grateful veteran. In 2021-2023, he served the Legion as Commander of Post #347, the largest Post in America. Currently, he serves in the Post Honor Guard for veterans' funerals.

Bob is married with three adult O'Neal sons, one grandson, and two granddaughters. He volunteered in The Villages Hospital Emergency Room for over 10 years, until 2020, when the influx of COVID-19 ceased all volunteer hours. Living in The Villages, Bob & Carol played a lot of golf! They love the music of Jimmy Buffett and became "Parrot Heads". They are often seen singing the lyrics along with the entire group! For quiet times, Bob always has a book in his lap. From November through the basketball season, of course, Bob pulls for Duke! He has three younger sisters, Nancy, Patsy, and Peggy.