

# MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



*Proudly Honors*  
**JAMES D. CATO**  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
SERGEANT (E-5)  
JUNE 1, 1970 – APRIL 1971  
WOUNDED IN ACTION



*as*  
**PURPLE HEART PATRIOT**  
**JANUARY 2026**

*Honoring His Service and Sacrifice*  
*Sponsored by: John Sappington Chapter, NSDAR*



James D. Cato was drafted into the Army in May 1969. He began his military career by completing basic training at Fort Leonard Wood. Following this, he was sent to Fort Hood in July to begin training with the tank division. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Cato was deployed directly to Vietnam.

Once in Vietnam, Mr. Cato was stationed in Quang Tri, which was the last large city before the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). He spent the remainder of his service here. His responsibilities included driving tanks to the front line to help clear booby traps that had been set. According to Mr. Cato, the traps and mortars posed less danger while inside the tank, but Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and other rockets were the greatest threats to the tanks.

Mr. Cato feels that he has matured significantly during his time in the military. He recalled that the best advice he received was not to worry about dying and to live every day to the fullest. One of the highlights of returning to base was participating in large barbecue's with fellow servicemen. He remembers that the race issues present stateside were also evident in the service, but they weren't openly discussed.

Mr. Cato remembers an incident involving a high-ranking officer who flew in to reprimand him for not writing to his mother. After his mother reached out to the Red Cross, the organization contacted the correct division, resulting in the officer personally waiting for Mr. Cato to write a letter and then hand-carrying it to be sent to his mother.

During his service, Mr. Cato was injured when riding in a tow tank after his own tank broke down. The group was attacked with RPGs, and shrapnel struck him behind his ear. He also recalled suffering from severe food poisoning that required him to be medevac'd out. On the day he was scheduled to return home, he received his medals in the field from a major in Khe Sanh.

He returned home and worked at a variety of positions with Monsanto, KV Pharmaceuticals, and Roland Industries, and as a school bus driver. He has been married for 50 years and has two daughters and two grandchildren and continues to live in St. Louis.