

MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



Proudly Honors
PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

JANUARY 2026

JAMES D. CATO

UNITED STATES ARMY

SERGEANT (E-5)

JUNE 1, 1970 – APRIL 1971

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 barbecues 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.

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.

