

# MISSOURI STATE SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



## Proudly Honors PATRIOT OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2026

**JAMES BARNARD, JR.**  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
UNITED STATES NAVY  
UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE  
STAFF SERGEANT (E-6)  
1971 – 1983

*Sponsored by:*

**Elizabeth Carey Chapter, NSDAR**



James "Jim" Barnard, Jr., a self-proclaimed "poor, dumb country boy" from Harrisonville, Missouri, joined the Marines when he was 17 years old. It was 1971, the Vietnam War was going on, he dropped out of school, and he knew he was facing the draft, so he enlisted in the Marine Corps to get the branch of service he wanted.

His first airplane ride was to boot camp in San Diego, where he made Lance Corporal. Jim earned the rank of Lance Corporal after boot camp, and his first assignment following boot camp in San Diego was jump school in Fort Benning, Georgia. This is where he learned to safely "fall out" of an airplane, and it was at Fort Benning that he earned his gold wings and developed his love of flying. The gold wings signified Jim's specialization and experience in either flying or parachuting.

From Fort Benning, he went to Okinawa, Japan, where he received specific training to prepare for operations in dense, tropical environments and learning survival skills tactics for harsh jungle-type terrain. In Recon School, he gained skills in land navigation, diving, parachuting, and small-unit tactics to survive in Vietnam's thick foliage and environmental hazards.

After recon training, he was sent to Vietnam where he became a squad leader, qualified with an M14, became a Corporal, and a Non-Commissioned Officer. He spent thirteen months there and re-enlisted to stay with his recon team. The six-man team patrolled in Cambodia, Laos, and the Ho Chi Men Trail. He did 25 months in Vietnam, just two months short of two tours. He intended to reenlist in 1974, but he was told he would have no choice of duty and no chance of going back to his fleet in the Pacific.

After Vietnam, Jim went to North Carolina and spent three months at Camp Lejeune before being sent to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

He left the Marines as a Sergeant, returned home to Harrisonville, and started college under the old GI Bill. He stayed out of the military for eight months before making the decision to join the Navy. He went to the naval reserve center, and in San Diego was assigned to the USS Downs, headed for Pearl Harbor, where he was home ported. He worked as a quartermaster for twelve years before leaving the Navy.

After leaving the Navy, Jim joined the Army Reserve. He was sent to Fort Sam Houston, where he was trained as a medic. He served as a medic for two years, and he retired from military life in 1983.

During his twelve-year military career, Jim earned the Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Citation Ribbon, Department of Defense Ribbon, and Vietnam Campaign Ribbon with one star.

Jim said combat experience made him realize how short life was, and it taught him to appreciate the little things and just being alive. And while there was no hero's welcome for the Vietnam veteran on his return home, he appreciates that young people now have expressed interest in his time in Vietnam. He enjoys talking to them about his military career.

Jim works with Vietnam veterans today and has sponsored many of them in Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous. Even in retirement, the love of flying has remained, and he continues to fly as often as time allows.