

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month



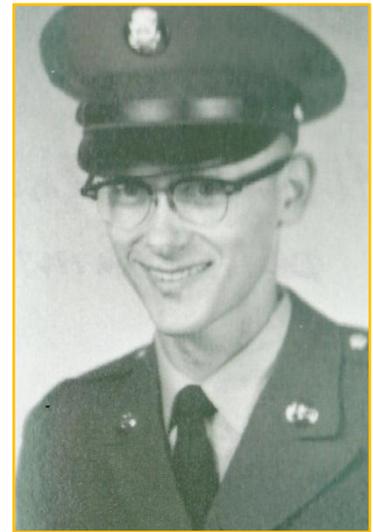
April 2018



Charles Jobe

United States Army

Sponsored by:
Jane Randolph Jefferson
Chapter



When Charles graduated from high school in 1966, he knew it was a sure thing he was going to be drafted if he did not go to college. Yet, that only delayed it. This was at a time when our country did not believe in the war the country had entered into. He had what was called a good job right out of high school, but he did enroll at Linn in their Electronics School. In 1962, not much was known about electronics. His parents could not see any future in electronics and basically talked him out of attending electronics school.

The job he had was paying what four year college graduates were starting out at. In 1964, Charles married Kathleen and was the Parts Manager at a new car dealership. Then in 1966, he received his draft notice. At that time, each county had to draft a certain number of men, it did not matter if you were married or even a father. In March, he went with a group of draftees to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, where they took their physicals and then they were taken back to their homes. In November he received his letter to report back to Tuscomb and was bussed to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, for basic training. Charles then enlisted in the United States Army. He was asked what he would like to do and he said work in the parts area, the Army said sign up for two more years and he could do that. He said NO. After basic training, he was sent to Fort Lee, Virginia, for training on vehicle schematics and ability to identify various military vehicle parts as a Stock Control Specialist. He said, "I am sure all the tests they gave him in basic showed that was his strongest area."

Charles and Kathleen knew other married couples who when the husband was drafted would just sit and say, "I am in the Army, poor me." We said we were going to use this as an opportunity to see everything we could anywhere we were sent. Stationed in Virginia, Kathleen moved with Charles to Texas, when he was transferred. He worked in a supply office at Fort Hood, Texas, with the 2nd Armor Division. After about six months, he was transferred to a new unit that was being activated called 5th of 46th Infantry, which was getting ready to go to Vietnam. He was the Prescribed Load List

Clerk or in civilian life, Parts Manager. His job was to get the parts inventory built up to a 100% fill rate. Others coming back from Vietnam were telling him what items were hard to obtain over there. With this information, he was getting extra parts but had to hide the extra ones. He did not even know where they were being hidden.

When the unit left for Vietnam, they flew out of Austin, Texas, on a commercial type 707 Jet. He had his camera around his neck and some of the guys said, "You are taking your camera to a war!" I told them I was taking the scenic tour. Refueling stops were made at Anchorage, Alaska, and Yokohama, Japan. They landed and processed into country at Chu Lai in March, 1968.

The unit then moved out on a hill called LZ Gator. It had been completely stripped of all vegetation. The first week or so we got very little sleep as there was small arms and artillery firing most of the night. His job kept him out of Kitchen Patrol and guard duty for a while. But, after losing men in A through E Companies out on search and destroy missions, Charles started having a lot of nighttime guard duty. However, he still had to do his parts job during the day. This meant he was up all night and up all day. The guards not only had to guard the perimeter, but, the perimeter of the artillery unit on the hill next to them. When these big guns started firing, it would shake the hillside. The guards were told the concussion from them would break the speaker in a radio. His job took him into Chu Lai every day to order parts and to get rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers repaired.

In Vietnam they were part of the 198th Infantry and that was part of the Americal Division though the 198th was based in Chu Lai. If anything very major broke on their Jeeps, the 198th would tow it off to a salvage yard and not replace their Jeep. Since it was very hard to get replacement parts, we found out where they were taking their Jeeps. We would then take a mechanic to the back side of the salvage yard, he would get the part we needed, and then we would go back and pick him up.

Charles said he always tried to do his best at any job he was given. Some could not believe that he was drafted and still worked hard at his job. At one point his parts records were inspected and the inspectors could only find one small thing wrong. The inspector sent a letter saying other units should use his parts department as an example. The officer who was second in command at LZ Gator was not thrilled; he thought something had to be wrong somewhere and the inspection team just could not find it. After Charles' replacement arrived, Charles was taken to two other units not too far away to look over their parts records prior to the inspection team's arrival. Some of those records were in a real mess.

Charles was one of the lucky ones to come home in one piece. Agent Orange did get him, but other than that, he only had to have seven stitches while in Vietnam. Since this was an injury while doing my parts job and not in combat, he was told it did not qualify for a Purple Heart.

At one time, they had men supporting a unit near the Cambodian border that were very primitive people. They not only fought with rifles, but with spears and machetes.

Charles received his discharge papers the last of October, 1968. It was monsoon season and the water was just two or three inches from going over the road, so he was sent a day early to Chu Lai to start his discharge process. Then he went by C130 to Cam Ranh Bay for more processing before boarding a commercial jet for Guam, more tests and then to Fort Lewis, Washington, and the final discharge. At Fort Lewis, they found out we had not had access to food or water for about 48 hours so the base prepared a steak dinner for them about 8:00 pm that night. "Coming home was not easy because of the way people looked at the war and for you for going there," said Charles. He further stated, "I was very quiet for about 40 years about being in Vietnam. Even the people I worked with didn't know for years I had been to Vietnam."

Charles and Kathleen have one daughter, one granddaughter and one grandson. He worked about 40 years as a parts manager at new car dealerships. He was among the top sellers for several years and was awarded a few trips and several two and three day outings. Charles is a member of the First Baptist Church where he has served an active Deacon for many years and a Deacon Emeritus for about 12 years. He is a life time member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Charles volunteered his time and skills as Secretary-Treasurer of his local county volunteer fire department for many years. He also volunteered at Windermere Baptist Conference Center to help serve meals and perform manual labor as needed.

Charles says he is proud to be an American and live in the land of the free. His time in Vietnam opened his eyes and showed him how fortunate he was.

Jane Randolph Jefferson Daughters very proudly honor and recognize Charles Jobe as Patriot of the Month and extend to him their deepest appreciation and gratitude for his very dedicated, patriotic service to our great nation.