

VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Tellico Village VFW Post 12135



Patrick "Pat" R. Brooks was born in San Diego, CA., coming from a military family. His father spent 32 years in the Navy and retired as a Chief Petty Officer. Pat's brother served also in the Marines. Growing up, his mother was his hero. As a military family, they lived in many locations around the world during his childhood. When his father was away on missions or moving onto the next base to establish their next living quarters, his mother was there, taking care of everything at home. She would have to organize the household and move the family to meet up with his father. Pat was very proud of his mom. His parents retired and settled in Fresno California. Pat recalls a saying by his father that has stayed with him from childhood through his professional career, "Son remember this, if it moves salute it, if it doesn't, paint it navy gray." This saying taught Pat to respect others at all times.

In 1965, Pat received a draft notice one year after graduating college. He entered the Air Force Reserve as a Finance Officer. Then after two years, Pat volunteered for Active Duty and attended Pilot training. After training, he was sent to Vietnam, flying the C-7 Caribou, delivering supplies to Special Forces Groups. After his time on active duty, he again joined the reserves as a pilot. Pat was also activated for 10 months in support of Desert Storm. In addition to flying the C-7, he also has a cumulative 6,000 hours of flying time with the C-5 A and B. It was around 15 years ago, that Pat started recalling his time in Vietnam when he met someone in Tellico Village. They introduced him to the C-7 Caribou Association, where they would meet during annual reunions. There they would discuss the missions they flew and it was then when it really hit him close. Through reflecting back and speaking with his peers, he realized the missions that he conducted really meant something to the war effort. The C-7 Caribou Association allowed him to recall his service and reflect positively on

his time as an Air Force pilot.

Outside his time spent in the Reserves, Pat also held a career as a commercial pilot. He had his start with Transamerica, flying passenger and cargo jets. Throughout his time in the airline industry, he has worked with multiple airlines until he retired from flying in 2003. In his working career, Pat served 26 years in the Air Force, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel, and served 27 years in the airline industry. Some of his awards include: Air Medal w/3 Devices, Air Force Commendation Medal, Combat Readiness Medal w/5 Devices, Vietnam Service Medal w/1 Device, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal W/2 Bronze Service Stars. Pat graduated from Fresno State with a Bachelors in Economics also completed his Master's in Business Administration, through Southern Illinois University.

Pat joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post #12135 four years ago as a lifetime member. He is also an active member with the local American Legion Post #256. One of his major responsibilities in the American Legion was the Boys and Girls State Program, where they selected 350 students annually to participate. The boys would go to Tennessee Tech and the girls would go to Lipscomb University. The emphasis of the program was to teach these High School Juniors the importance of American government. The students would learn leadership skills, form governments, elect their own government officials and participate in sport activities. The programs were also supported by local political figures and the state supreme court. Pat led this initiative for 14 years and he was very excited to work with the kids throughout the whole experience.

Pat believes in giving back to veterans, either through the American Legion or VFW. He also believes in supporting his local community where he serves as a Loudon Reserve Police Officer and assists with local law enforcement needs.

Pat met his wife Lesley Brooks in California and they have been married for 36 years. She is now retired and was active with the Loudon Police department serving as Director of Volunteers in Public Service (VIPs). Pat and Lesley are due to move to Florida this year and they will dearly miss their friends in Tellico Village, Loudon Police Department, and the community.