



**The Tipton County Veterans Council and the Tipton County Museum,
Veterans Memorial and Nature Center
Veteran of the Month for February, 2018**

John Vincent Moeller, Jr.

John Vincent (Butch) Moeller, Jr. joined the Navy Reserve in 1979 shortly after graduating from high school. He completed basic training then Basic Electricity and Electronics School in Orlando, Florida. In January 1980 he transferred to Navy Training Center Great Lakes for Gunner's Mate school where he learned hydraulics and advanced mechanics as they apply to gun mounts, missile launchers, and fire suppression equipment and maintenance and safe operation of small arms weapons. The most important lesson he learned was "if you ever see a Gunner running, try to keep up!"

His original enlistment was in the Reserve's "4 by 10" program which guaranteed him a minimum of four and maximum of ten months technical training. Before he completed the ten months, he tried to remain on active duty but was told he had to complete four years in the Reserves first. He returned home to Mobile, Alabama and worked in retail selling men's suits for a year before becoming an industrial roofer for several years. In February of 1983 he returned to active duty and was assigned to USS SANTA BARBARA (AE-28), a floating ammunition ship. That was before the time of cell phones and there were no ship-to-shore phones for personal use at sea, everything was snail mail. One of his buddies, Sailing Sam, received 6 to 8 letters at every mail call; while the rest of the crew got little or none. Butch asked him how he got so much mail, and he told Butch about the USO program for pen pals. Butch got involved with it and met Kathy, his soon-to-be wife. According to Butch, that was 32 years ago; and she still puts up with him.

In October 1988 he transferred to Navy Recruiting District Houston and was advanced to First Class Petty Officer. While there, he was awarded the Nuclear Recruiter of the Year for enlisting more potential Nuclear Engineers in the Houston area than anyone did anywhere else. His proudest accomplishment while in Houston, however, was the birth of his son, James. His next assignment was onboard USS RANGER (CV-61), an aircraft carrier homeported in San Diego. He embarked just in time for RANGER's final deployment before decommissioning; that was the year his daughter, Katrina, was born.

His next assignment was onboard USS DULUTH (LPD-6), where he was selected as DULUTH Sailor of the Year. After shore duty at the Joint Service Law Enforcement Academy at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, he reported onboard the amphibious assault ship USS WASP (LHD-1) in 1999. There he worked with shipmates who would turn up later in his life: Sherri Onorati, David Quinn, and Joe Pucciariello, with whom he remains close with to this day. His final duty station was Naval Air Station Memphis in Millington, Tennessee.

Butch served his country for 26 years, 8 months, and 16 days - time that he would gladly repeat if given the opportunity. In addition to earning the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist and Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist breast insignias, Butch was awarded numerous medals for his service. They include Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with 4 gold stars, Meritorious Unit Commendation with 2 bronze stars, Navy "E" ribbon with 3 bronze stars, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, Good Conduct Medal with 5 bronze stars, Southwest Asia Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal with bronze star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Sea Service Deployment ribbon with 4 bronze stars, Navy Recruiting Service Ribbon, Navy Expert Rifle Marksmanship Medal, and Navy Expert Pistol Marksmanship Medal.

Butch enjoyed a fruitful career as a civilian before fully retiring in 2012. He is Post Commander of VFW Post 4840, treasurer of DAV Post 116, and a member of the Tipton County Veterans Council. He and Kathy attend St. William Catholic Church in Millington. He was nominated for Veteran of the Month by Wanda Bellow.