


# VETERAN OF THE MONTH

July 2024

VFW Post 12135 - Shawn Tallant



Shawn Tallant was born in Philadelphia PA, but calls Sussex, Wisconsin his home where he spent his high school years. He comes from a military family where several uncles served in WWII, his Dad served during the Korean War, and multiple first cousins who served in Vietnam until present. "I remember growing up and wanting to go to the US Naval Academy, and then on to service in the US Navy," says Chota Hills resident, Shawn Tallant. "My parents tell me it is because as a youngster, I started following the career of Heisman Trophy winner Roger Staubach who attended the Academy, served in the Navy and went on to a professional career in Dallas. They could be right." By the time Shawn was in high school in Sussex, Wisconsin, he had joined the Navy's JROTC, and subsequently applied and received an appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, where, after four years he received a Bachelor's of Science and his commission as an Ensign in the US Navy.

After graduating from the Naval Academy, Shawn was assigned to naval aviation where he received his "wings of gold" in 1980. His first deployment was flying the A-7 Corsair off the Dwight D Eisenhower (CVN-68). After which he transitioned to the FA-18 Hornet, which he flew through 1998, finishing as the Commanding Officer of VFA-192, deployed on the USS Independence, homeported in Japan. Over this period, Shawn flew off nine different aircraft carriers, accruing over 5,000 single seat flight hours and 950 carrier arrested landings. Subsequently, Shawn was selected for major command and received orders into the CO/XO pipeline for nuclear aircraft carriers which commenced with two years of graduate level nuclear power training. From there, he became the Executive Officer of the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower, and later commanded an amphib, the USS Nashville (LPD-13). Shawn retired in Oct 2005 where he was the Navy's Aircraft Carrier Requirements Officer working with the design team of the latest "Ford Class" aircraft carrier. Shawn served nearly 28 years as a career Navy officer serving in peacetime and conflicts from the Gulf War

through Operation Enduring Freedom, retiring with the rank of Navy Captain (O6). Following his Navy career, Shawn worked as a business executive for over 17 years in the DoD Aerospace industry. Shawn is a graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy (BS), Troy State University (MSHRM), the U.S. Air Force Air War College and of the Navy's rigorous Nuclear Power School and Nuclear Prototype Graduate Level Engineering Programs. He has numerous decorations including the Legion of Merit (2), Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal (2).

During Shawn's senior year at the Academy, he met his wife, Joanne, a Navy nurse who was stationed at the Naval Academy. They married about 6 months after graduation and they will celebrate 46 years of marriage in November. They have two grown children, Michael and Kristin, and three grandchildren. His son, Michael, carried on the family military tradition, serving in the Army's 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan.

In August 2020, Shawn and his wife, Joanne, retired to Tellico Village where they continue to look for new adventures and ways to "pay it forward!" During the past four years Shawn has been a member of the Tellico Singers (2-years), the Tellico Village Cruising Club, the Tellico Village Computer Club, Tellico Lakes American Legion Post 256, the Vice President of the Tellico Village Retirement Club (RMC), and is an officer in the Tellico Village VFW Post 12135 (501(c)3) - its Post Commander from 2021-2023. Most recently, he has joined the Board of Directors for "Our PLACE," as a volunteer Vice-Chairman, which provides support programs for participants and families facing the challenges of Alzheimer's and dementia.

Shawn often says: "In many ways, my military experience made me who I am today. Theodore Roosevelt said, 'You have never lived till you've almost died. For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected will never know.' I truly believe that. When someone says, 'Thank you for your service,' I reply, 'You're welcome. You, and your family are worth it.'"

The Tellico Village VFW Post #12135 General meeting is held at 7:00 p.m. in the Tellico Village Yacht Club every third Wednesday of the month. Further information can be found on the Post website at: <https://www.tvwf.org/>.