

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

November 2023



Denny J. Merideth III

United States Air Force

Sponsored by:
Gayoso Chapter, NSDAR

Throughout a career in the U. S. Air Force Denny saw tours of duty as a Commander, Liaison Officer, and F-15 Combat Instructor Pilot. Highlights include serving as the Senior Military Advisor for Royal Saudi military forces in southwestern Saudi Arabia, Commander of Air Liaison Personnel in the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division, and Instructor Pilot for the Royal Jordanian Air Force. Tours took him to locations including Korea, Denmark, Iceland, Germany, Jordan, and Honduras. He led numerous multi-aircraft missions In Red Flag exercises over the Nevada desert, intercepted Russian aircraft over the north Atlantic, flew missions over the Arabian Peninsula, and trained fighter pilots for air combat. He was lauded during each assignment for dedication to duty and determination to improve combat capabilities.



Denny returned to work with his brother on the family farm and be near his mother after retiring from the Air Force. Shortly after arriving Denny was elected as the first independent State Representative to the Missouri House of Representatives since 1891. He became the senior member of the Budget Committee and worked diligently to ensure Missouri had a balanced budget in difficult economic times. He strove to serve both as a dedicated public servant providing dedicated constituent services and as an engaged legislator. He was recognized by his colleagues as the most "capable legislator in the House".

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Denny joined the U.S. State Department as a Foreign Service Officer. He led a dynamic political team of U.S. and U.K. civilian and military personnel throughout Helmand Province in Afghanistan where he was the Senior U.S. Political Advisor. As Head of Political Section and principal political advisor to the Ambassador at U.S. Embassy the Hague he directed a range of activities related to European security issues, including NATO and EU European Security and Defense Policy. He was a frequent lecturer at Leiden University and member of roundtable dialogues at the Hague Center for Strategic Studies. At the U.S. Embassy Manila, he served as the Executive Officer for the Ambassador's outreach efforts and synchronized the Mission's 27 separate federal agencies. He was recognized by Ambassador Nolan as the consummate "soldier, statesman, diplomat" and that in "both performance and sprit he is a true symbol of Excellence in International Security Affairs". He was praised by another Ambassador's observation that "Denny's interlocutors often stated how much they appreciated his

clarity of vision, ability to explain complex developments, inclusive approach, and friendly, open style."

In 2013, Denny retired from the State Department so the family could be closer to his wife's mother who was suffering health problems. Denny soon began to seek out opportunities and initiated two separate business start-ups as well as becoming the USAF Academy Head Rugby Coach.

Denny spent a significant time coaching rugby around the world taking teams on tours to New Zealand, Australia, England, Wales, Germany, and Canada. He coached local teams in the U.S., Manila, and the Netherlands, as well as, assisted with the Philippine National Team. Wherever he has been, Denny gave back to the community, often through membership on school boards and mentoring. He served on local school boards, a hospital board, and community groups including duties on International School Boards in Krakow, Manila, and The Hague.

Denny has picked up several awards through the years and has ratings as a Commercial Pilot, Certified Scuba Diver, Parachutist, Nationally Certified Rugby Coach, and Instructor Pilot.

Denny and his energetic wife Heidi have four children and six grandchildren. Danica, the oldest daughter graduated from Cornell University and lives in Gordon, Texas with her husband and two sons. Erin graduated from Seattle Pacific University and lives with her husband and two children in Edmond, Oklahoma. Denny IV graduated from USAFA in 2014 and is a helicopter pilot stationed at Langley AFB, Virginia with his wife and daughter. Kristofer graduated from the University of Denver in 2016 and is a Remotely Piloted Aircraft pilot stationed at Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota where he lives with his wife Kaiti and their son Arthur.