

Ronald Lynn Wheeler

Petty Officer Third Class

Culinary Specialist

U.S.S. DeHaven (DD-727) Summer-Class Destroyer

Service dates: Aug. 9, 1966 – May 27, 1969

Honorable Discharge

Navy of the United States

Fort Worth, Texas

Aug. 30, 1948 – Feb. 3, 2018

Awards & Decorations: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon

Death attributed to Agent Orange exposure and Parkinson's disease.
Inurnment at Greenwood Cemetery, Fort Worth, Texas.



Navy Commendation Citation (in part)

“,,,significantly contributing to the interdiction and destruction of North Vietnamese waterborne logistics craft and military target ashore. Due to the superior and noteworthy performance of **USS GEORGE K. MACKENZIE**, the flow of arms and supplies from North Vietnam to the South was significantly hindered both on land and at sea. Immediately subsequent to fighting fires aboard **USS FORRESTAL**, the officers and men of **MACKENZIE** conducted Sea Dragon missions with determination, zeal and professionalism in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.”

Remembrance from PO-3 Wheeler's son, Donald...

My father was the very definition of *military*. He was focused and determined to succeed at anything he laid his hands on. He taught my brother and me at a very early age that having a great work ethic will always get you further in life and it will earn the utmost respect.

My father was strict and structured with us. He always kept us in church as he loved God.

With these great qualities, this is how he showed us his love. He worked hard all his life to provide a good life for his family. We were his priority in everything he did.

He loved cars... all cars. He could take any old car full of rust and bring it back to life. As teenagers, we'd help our dad. We were always in awe of his talents and what he was teaching us. We spent countless hours helping him restore our first cars – a '68 Camaro and a '76 Camaro.

Little did we know that as teenagers working on these cars kept us out of trouble. Did I mention he was smart too? His smile would light up a room. His laughter was contagious and when he looked at us, he would beam with pride.

Once he retired, he was ready to start a new chapter in his life with his cars as a hobby. Unfortunately, retirement wasn't about rebuilding or restoring cars as much as it was trying to rebuild and restore his health. We did get some time together before he passed, and we started to build his Nomad.