

HOWARDS CHOSEN AS MILITARY FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Sid Howard is no stranger to serving others. As a Storekeeper Third Class in the United States Navy, volunteer firefighter in La Vista and as a husband and father, he's worked and served most of his adult life.

For his service in the Navy from 1966 to 1969, Howard and his wife Linda and their three daughters and their families are being honored as this year's Military Family of the Year during the Salute to Summer Festival on Saturday, May 28.

Sid and Linda both grew up in South Omaha, and Sid was attending Omaha University in 1965 when he received his draft notice for the Vietnam War. He decided to enlist instead and left for basic training with the Navy in January 1966.

For a short time Howard was in submarine school, but a popped eardrum soon sent him down another path, which first led to a communications unit in New Jersey. "There were no windows where we were based and I didn't like that and I said, 'I have to get out of here. I'll volunteer for Vietnam.'"

Soon he found himself on the USS Cavalier in 1967 and then the USS Duluth, both of which cruised up and down the coastline from Danang, eventually taking an active part in 13 different operations, including one that involved a prisoner exchange with North Vietnam.

Howard discharged from the Navy in October 1969, and he and Linda moved back to Omaha. In December 1970, they moved into their house in La Vista. "We were going to buy a house in Omaha, but somebody bought it ahead of us," Howard said. "CG Smith was building out here, he had models down from the fire hall, and he said, 'I've got a couple with foundations that are available.' The people buying this house their loan never came through so we were able to buy it."

When they moved in, they didn't have a driveway or sidewalks or a stoop into the house. "I must be out of my ghord," Linda said. "Those were the good days, though," Howard added.

From 1981 to 1994, Sid served as a member of the La Vista Volunteer Fire Department, eventually achieving the rank of Assistant Chief before he retired. "Living in a community like this you get to know people. Our kids played sports for La Vista, they were in everything, the Stepperettes and things like that," he said. "It was nice living here as a married couple."

La Vista has always been home, and probably always will be, Howard said.

