

## JOHN L. PATTON – Biography

John met his wife, Margaret Smith, while serving in the Navy stationed in Pensacola, Florida. They married in 1945.

They had two sons, Rex and Ronald, and John dedicated his life to raising his boys.

In the early 1960s, when his oldest son showed interest in baseball, John began organizing the first little league sports association in the Cedar Hills-area of Jacksonville, Florida. He became its first president and, with other volunteer dads, cleared the first ball field with their tractors and mowers. This location is called Mellot Field, and today still hosts young ball players and their families for sponsored games and tournaments.

In 1971, John's two sons teamed up in motocross racing. John became their mechanic and headed up their pit crew. From his years as a Navy airplane mechanic during World War II on aircraft carriers, where he helped keep planes in the air by any means, his skills as a motocross mechanic were extraordinary. John modified Yamaha engine parts to be more reliable and improve performance for his sons' motocross venture. After its representatives met with John, Yamaha would incorporate these modifications in future designs.

John earned his real estate license while stationed at his last naval base in Jacksonville, Florida. He practiced in this field for many years. While in real estate, John discovered a little-known area of St. Johns County called Orangedale and fell in love. John and Margaret decided to build their forever home there and raise their boys in the perfect place for boating, swimming, and fishing on the St. Johns River. He still resides there after 58 years and loves the river to this day.

## JOHN L. PATTON – Timeline of Service

- March 23, 1923: Born on a farm in the village of Valier, Illinois.
- December 1940: Joined CCC Camp in Mount Vernon, Illinois.
- May 21, 1941: Joined the Navy for active duty doing boot camp AMM school in San Diego, California. Assigned to the VT3-Torpedo Squadron aboard the U.S.S. *Saratoga* leaving for Pearl Harbor.
- Dec. 15, 1941: Arrived in Pearl Harbor. He said Ford Island “looked and felt like hell.”
- Jan. 11, 1942: U.S.S. *Saratoga* left Pearl Harbor to join the U.S.S. *Enterprise* where they were torpedoed and returned to Pearl Harbor for repairs.
- June 1942: U.S.S. *Saratoga* was back in action at the Battle of Midway where they lost all but three of its planes.
- August 1942: U.S.S. *Saratoga* was torpedoed again and his squadron went aboard the U.S.S. *Enterprise*.

- Aug. 24, 1942: On the U.S.S. *Enterprise*, they entered the Battle of the Eastern Solomons, where they took three direct hits that killed 77 fellow crewmen and wounded 91. They returned to Pearl Harbor for repairs.
- October 1942: Back in action at the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, the U.S.S. *Enterprise* took two hits killing 44 crewmen with more than 70 wounded.
- April 1943: After receiving six Bronze Stars during World War II, John was reassigned to the states. He served as an instructor for the rest of his Navy career in Newfoundland, Kansas, Indiana, Honolulu, Virginia, Tennessee, and Florida.
- July 7, 1961: Retired from the Navy while stationed at NAS Jacksonville.
- Sept. 25, 1961: Hired into U.S. federal civil service as "O&R" (overhaul and repair) planner and estimator.
- April 30, 1978: Retired from U.S. federal civil service.

**Total Federal Service Time: 36 years, 8 months, 4 days**