



## **Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution**



## **December 2006 Patriot of the Month James Sylvester Cunningham**

James Cunningham graduated high school in 1943, immediately joined the U.S. Navy, and served until 1946 aboard the USS UVALDE AKA-88 in the South Pacific during World War II. He returned home and married Alva Jane Sappington in 1947. He went to work for MFA Oil Company in Columbia, Missouri. When the Korean Conflict broke out, he returned to the Navy and served in Cuba, Bermuda, and Newfoundland. He achieved the military rank of E-7 Chief Petty Officer.

James earned the following honors/citations:

- Combat Action Ribbon
- Asiatic-Pacific Medal with two battle stars
- Philippine Liberation Medal with one star
- American Defense Medal
- WWII Victory Medal
- Navy Occupation Medal (Japan)
- China Service Medal
- National Defense Medal

James became very active in his community and continued his association with the military through organizations, such as the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He is a Past Commander and Life Member of the American Legion Herbert Williams Post 202. He is the Chaplain and Life Member of VFW Post 280. He acts as chaplain in military burial services for the VFW.

Additionally, James is a Life Member of Forty and Eight, National Chief Petty Officers Association, Patrol Craft Sailors Association, American Veterans (AMVETS), Naval Reserve Association, and Navy Seabee Veterans of America. He is a charter member of the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington D.C., the World War II Memorial, the U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion No. 6, and Missouri Amphibious Navy. James is the Past Skipper of the Navy Club of Columbia, Missouri, a board member of the Columbia Service Men's Center, and was coordinator of the USS UVALDE AKA-88 reunion from 1985-2002.

James also belongs to the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Sons of Union Veterans, Sons of the American Revolution, Descendants of Mexican War Veterans, and the Boone County, Missouri, Historical Society. He is a member of Twilight Masonic Lodge No. 113; Moolah Temple, A.A.N.O.M.S. in St. Louis; the Tiger Shrine Club of Columbia; and many other Masonic related organizations.

James retired from MFA Oil Company in 1990 as Vice President of Administration. He and Alva have one daughter and one granddaughter. They are members of Calvary Baptist Church in Columbia.

Alva is a member of Columbian Chapter NSDAR and proudly nominated her husband, James, for Patriot of the Month.