

**Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution  
Proudly "Spotlights" our November 2010  
Patriot of the Month**



**Elmer Halley**

**Sponsored by:**

**Margaret Miller  
Chapter  
Huntsville, Missouri**

Elmer enlisted in the U.S. Navy in May of 1943 and left for the service just a week before his high school graduation. He went to boot camp and attended a twelve week medical training Corpsman school in Farragut, Idaho. Elmer was then transferred to Bremington, Washington, where he worked in the maternity ward of the naval hospital. On December 7, 1943, he was sent to the Naval Base at Pearl City, Oahu, Hawaii, where he treated many casualties from raids on the Pacific Islands.

Elmer, along with five doctors and eleven other pharmacist mates, flew to the island of Saipan, in July of 1944. Attached to the Army Civil Affairs Section, their job was to care for the more than 18,000 civilians encamped on the island after our military forces took over Saipan from Japanese control. The island population was made up of Chamorros, Koreans, Japanese, Kanokas, and others. Elmer's group was transferred to a newly built Quonset hut hospital, where he served as senior corpsman on the orthopedic ward. While he was there, Japan continued to bomb the air base.

For over four hours, one Sunday afternoon in August of 1945, Elmer's unit was placed on an LSV5 ship, which had been converted into a makeshift hospital ship. Elmer's unit joined an armada of approximately 250 ships (troop, aircraft carriers, etc.) and headed to Japan for the signing of the peace treaty. From Elmer's crew position in the harbor, he was able to see General Douglas MacArthur, Japan's Hirohita and others on the *USS Missouri*, as they signed the treaty ending the war and giving General MacArthur supervision over Japan.

When Japan released American Prisoners of War, Elmer's ship took a load of them back to the Philippines. Among them was Willis Bragg Minor from Huntsville, Missouri, who had been captured and held prisoner for over three years by the Japanese. Elmer wrote home that Willis Bragg Minor was alive. Elmer's letter was the first news they had received about Willis Bragg Minor in Huntsville as it arrived before the War Departments notification. It was a month or more before Elmer's unit could find transportation from the Philippines back to Saipan. His unit got a ride to Guam on a Merchant Marine tanker and then flew back to Saipan. On Christmas Day 1945, Elmer returned to Treasure Island, California. He took thirty days leave and then reported to Great Lakes Naval Base, Chicago, Illinois, where he was discharged February 1946 as a Pharmacist Mate Third Class.

Elmer states: "It was an honor to serve my country during that time of crisis. Many sacrifices were made by so many in order to keep our freedom – may we never take it for granted. While we were there we always knew we had the prayers, support, and love of our nation behind us, as they too, were so willing to make their own sacrifices. Truly this was a proud time for America as we banded together – one nation under God - and He blessed us with the victory."

Elmer's awards include:

- Star for Battle of Saipan
- Victory Medal

Elmer made many friends during his service days and one of them became like a brother to him while overseas. Elmer is a loyal friend to many and an exceptional baseball player. He is retired and at age 85, he mows five to six lawns every week during the summer.

In 1951 Elmer married Sallie Snell. They have four children and seven grandchildren.