



Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Patriot of the Month
January, 2013



Gilbert “Gib” Keith

Sponsored by:

Missouris Shoal Chapter DAR

Gilbert “Gib” Keith was born March 10, 1923, in Trenton, Missouri. He attended school and graduated from Trenton High School in 1941. After graduation he was employed as a photographer in Columbia, MO. On January 14, 1943, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

He volunteered as a photographer but as there were no openings for photographers, he was sent to Florida for his Basic Training and was temporarily assigned to an infantry radar unit school. He attained the rank of Staff Sergeant upon graduation, and two days later was assigned to the U.S. Air Base, located at Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, CO. During his stay at Peterson Field he was assigned to a B-17 Bomber Unit. Later his aerial photo unit trained on B-24 Bombers at Mt. Home, Idaho.

His unit was transferred to a B-29 Unit at Hays, Kansas, then to Seattle, Washington, and then they were sent overseas. They shipped out on a Liberty ship to Pearl Harbor where they stayed for three days to take on supplies. This was in January 1944, and while in Pearl Harbor he saw the ship Arizona still burning after three years. There were nineteen photographers in his outfit.

For almost a year, Gib was based on Guam with the 330th Bomb Group. When they landed on Guam, the Americans were building airstrips getting ready to bomb Japan. Their first mission in April, 1945, was to put at least 125 planes in the air for incendiary raids over Japan, targeting chemical and industrial areas. There were 500 B-29 Bombers in the 330th Bomb Group and 125 had to fly on each raid. The photographers rode along on these missions assigned to take pictures of the war. The bombing missions over Japan would take eight hours, as it was nearly 8,000 miles round trip. Gib tells of seeing one Japanese Kamikaze fly straight into a B-29 Bomber as it could not maneuver fast enough to get out of the way. The day the Atomic Bomb was loaded for the mission over Hiroshima all the facilities on Guam were closed down totally. Nobody was allowed on the airstrip.

Medals and Awards Gib earned were the Combat Medal with 2 Stars, Good Conduct, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 2 Stars, WWII Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, and the State of Missouri Veteran Medal.

Gib received his honorable discharge from the Air Corps January 14, 1946, at Jefferson Barrack's, St. Louis, MO. He was employed in civilian life by the Division of Commerce and Industrial Division until 1973, when he went to work for the NW Electric Cooperative until he retired in 1988.

Gib and Dolores were married in Trenton in 1942. They have two daughters, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Dolores passed away in 2003. Gib is a member of the First Christian Church, the FW, the American Legion, the Masonic Order, Veteran's Home Assistance League, and the Civil Air Patrol.

The Missouri Shoal Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution are proud to honor Gilbert "Gib" Keith as Patriot of the Month and thank him for his service to our country.