

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



## Patriot of the Month

October 2015



Joan Pavlovic

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John Sappington Chapter



Joan Pavlovic graduated from a girl's school in 1942. WWII had begun and many of her classmates went to work for the Map Service. After passing a test for mechanical aptitude, Joan went to work as a metal smith at an Army Air Base. The U.S. Army sent her to school in Nashville to learn about airplane parts, tools, and equipment.

On her twentieth birthday in August 1944, Joan was sworn in to the U.S. Navy. Friends and co-workers supported her decision. Her mother did, too; however, she was watching her only child leave home and at the same time was very proud of seeing her daughter become a WAVE.

Joan went to basic training at Hunter College in New York. She did not do a great deal of sight seeing, but remembers vividly seeing Carmen performed at Madison Square Garden. The WAVES marched together as a large group to the subway station in order to catch the train to the opera.

After Hunter College, Joan was assigned to the Norfolk Naval Air Station in Norfolk, Virginia. It was joined to the large naval Operating Base, home to battleships and carriers. Joan worked in a huge aircraft repair hangar which was divided into smaller shops. She was the only WAVE working in her specialized area where metal was cut and airplane parts riveted. Joan's received the Good Conduct Medal while serving from August 1944 until 1946.

Joan's work uniform included dungarees and a chambray shirt. When she left the base, she was required to wear a dress uniform which she liked. She said, " Before I ever enlisted, I was impressed with those beautiful navy blue suits, their white gloves, and their hats with that white top." She recalls they also wore summer, seersucker uniforms.

When Joan was asked how she felt about her military career, she said, "Really, truly I loved it. I didn't want for anything." She believed she was treated fairly, and the base was well operated. She said there was entertainment, and she also felt protected. Marines escorted the WAVES to the chow hall even when their late shifts ended.

The most memorable and exciting moment for Joan was Victory in Europe Day. "When everything stopped, just closed down. And we were just free to roam the base all evening long. We went, the church bells . . . the church doors were open on the base, and we were just sitting down . . . and talking to each other . . . and it was the same on VJ Day."

Joan left Norfolk in 1946. She admits the U.S. Navy experience made her grow up. She learned to get along with different kinds of people and loved the companionship of new friends she met in the WAVES. Although Joan didn't have any siblings, she found true sisterhood in the Navy.

After leaving the service, Joan returned to St. Louis, Missouri. She married and had two children. Joan taught fourth grade in the Mehlville School District. She was very pleased to have the opportunity to take an Honor Flight several years ago to Washington, D.C. She belongs to the American Legion Post 404, and she is a Daughter of the American Revolution, a member of the John Sappington Chapter MSSDAR, NSDAR.

The Daughters of the John Sappington Chapter DAR are proud to nominate Joan Pavlovic as Patriot of the Month, and they extend their sincere gratitude for her service and commitment to our great nation.