

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Patriot of the Month

June 2015



Clifford Eugene (Gene) Copenhaver

Sponsored by:

James Monroe Chapter



On February 18, 1943 Clifford Eugene (Gene) Copenhaver left home to serve his country. He was 19 years old. Gene took his basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. He was placed with the 45th Infantry Division 179th Regimental Combat Team, 160 Field Artillery Battallion, and by September he was in North Africa. He was then sent on to the South Italy campaign in early October where he was responsible for the 105mm Howitzer cannons. He was in the assault landing at Anzio on January 22, 1944 and helped defend the beachhead against violent German attacks for three months. Gene was then sent to the Rome-Arno campaign and helped liberate Rome. In August 1944 he participated in the assault landing in South France and then the Rhineland, Ardenne and Central Europe campaigns. He helped in the freeing of the Dachau concentration camp.

Gene was honored for his bravery with the Bronze Star. He received the Good Conduct Medal, Africa/Europe/Middle East Campaign 7 Stars, WWII Victory Medal, Army Occupation Medal (Germany) and the French Croix de guerre (with Palm). He was honorably discharged in October 1945.

When Gene left the service he returned to northeast Missouri to farm. He married Doris in 1948, and they will celebrate 67 years in April. Together they have been blessed with a daughter, Cathy, son, Jerry, 4 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren. Gene continued to farm until five years ago. He has been active in the VFW, where he served as Chaplain. He is a member of the American Legion and has been a member and strong spokesman for farmers through the NFO. Gene has always felt strongly that people should be told of the horrors of war and has spoken to numerous school groups in Missouri and Illinois. Even at the coffee shop he has frequented in the last few years, he shared many stories of his experiences in the war. Sometimes he would pause and say, "Some things are best left unsaid." Etched in his mind are the images and odor of piles of human bodies awaiting cremation.

In 2009 Gene went to Washington, D.C. to the WWII memorial with seven family members including his son, son-in-law, grandsons and great-grandsons. It was a wonderful family experience for all.

Gene, now 91, served his country in cold and mud without ever getting a furlough so that his family and country could be safe. He is a faithful, strong and compassionate person. He has received numerous honors; however, is any amount of praise sufficient for what he endured for our country?

The Daughters of the James Monroe Chapter DAR are proud to nominate Gene Copenhaver as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for his patriotic service and commitment to our great nation.