

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



Patriot of the Month

November 2015



Bernard B. Bailey

Sponsored by:

Ozark Spring Chapter



Bernard Bailey joined the Navy at Jonesboro, Arkansas in April 1942. He immediately boarded a train for San Diego, California. He said his training included the obvious: how to behave and how to march. The latter was not his favorite past time.

He was assigned to a B-24 Liberator squadron on a remote, South Pacific island. He spent many hours flying over the Pacific in the bow turret of a B-24. His assignment was reconnaissance, and they took aerial photographs to be used in bomb damage assessment. Sometimes Bernard performed the duty of a rear turret gunner, but they did not carry bombs. However, he was close enough to observe the cloud from the A bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

The aircraft had no pressurized cabin. The crew wore electric heated suits to keep warm while flying at high altitude. They had no oxygen. Bernard could not wait to get out of the suit once he landed as it was very hot on the ground.

Bernard left the service as an Ordnanceman First Class via Okinawa in October 1945. He boarded the USS Arkansas and sailed into San Diego harbor upon reentry into the United States. He was awarded an Air Medal for his service. The award reads, "Awarded the Air Medal by President Truman for flight operations against enemy Japanese forces in Western Pacific Combat Area from March 23 to July 6, 1945.

When he returned from the service, he joined his father in the mercantile business. This didn't last long as a Sears Roebuck store came to town and put them out of business. In 1953, he began farming. He was a member of the Elks Lodge. He was also an active member of the American Legion where he served as Vice President.

Bernard was an avid tennis player and enjoyed the game until he was 86 years old. He and his wife had a motor home and toured all fifty states and Mexico after he retired. He has two children, a daughter in southern Missouri and a son in northern Tennessee. He says, "They are the best two children in the world."

Ozark Spring Chapter proudly salutes Bernard B. Bailey, a spry veteran who proudly served in World War II.