

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution Proudly Honors



Patriot of the Month

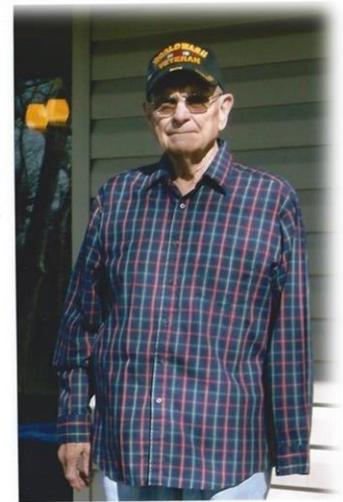
August 2016



Leonard Crowl

United States Navy

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Gilead Rupe Chapter



Leonard Crowl, a ninety-year-old military veteran was born on November 6, 1925, and has lived in Odessa, Missouri, for 56 years. In 1944 at the age of 18, he joined the United States Navy in Kansas City, Missouri. Leonard's duties and experiences provided him with many memorable moments that he can recount, to this day, in full clarity. He was a diesel mechanic on a brand new Landing Ship Tank (*USS LST-949*) manufactured in Boston, Massachusetts. Leonard was stationed in the South Pacific. His duties aboard the LST were dedicated to the boisterous engine room at the very bottom of the ship. He kept the engine constantly oiled and used the Captain's signals to adjust the engine speed. At 10 knots (10 knots=11 mph), it was considered one of the fastest LSTs but was still easily outrun by all other ship classes. Even large aircraft carriers were able to outmaneuver it. Because of this, the crew nicknamed these ships the Large Slow Targets. The crew took on their load of tanks, artillery, trucks and other supplies from New York harbor.

During Leonard's service, his ship invaded Okinawa. The ship beached, the 1st Marine Division got off and the remaining ship crew anchored off shore. The LST immediately became an emergency hospital ship, going back and forth to shore to take on more wounded. Doctors and Corpsmen used the LST to provide emergency medical care. Once fully loaded, the LST moved them to the naval hospital ship further out at sea.

After the war, Leonard's ship was one of the first to pilot into a Japanese harbor. The LST docked all along the Japanese coast before completing its mission and going back to the United States by way of Hawaii. The ship was stranded for a month there due to a generator malfunction. The men were left with only one operating properly, another permanently disabled and a third broken down. Two working generators were needed to make the ship move.

With the war's end officially declared, Leonard and the rest of his crewmates were at a stalemate. The official end of the war prevented any additional parts from being sent to the LST from the United States government. By law, the war's end also meant the men were denied access to the new parts located within the ship's own storeroom because these must be accounted for when decommissioning the ship. So after a month of being stalled in Hawaii, Leonard asked the Skipper how badly he wanted to go home. The Skipper was in favor as long as he could plausibly deny how the generator's fuel injector "miraculously" began working again. Leonard had taken the generator's fuel

injector apart, cleaned it up against naval rules and the men were on their way. Leonard's journey in the Navy began as Seaman and ended as Motor Machinist Mate Second Class.

Leonard's medals included the Japanese Occupational Service, American Campaign, World War II, and Asian Pacific Campaign w/2 stars, Navy Pin, Asian Pacific Bar and Discharge Pin. He was discharged on June 26, 1946, in St. Louis, Missouri.

As a civilian, Leonard returned home to a farm in Lowry City, Missouri. He then moved to Independence, Missouri, where he found work at Greener Harvester making combines and it was during this time he met the girl next door, Berdina Miller, an operator for Southwestern Bell. They were married October 15, 1948. Later he worked for a Kansas City street car company, then Union Wire Rope making cables for various machinery, light polls and bridges, and later Standard Oil Refinery for nine years.

In April of 1959, Leonard and his wife bought a farm near Odessa, Missouri. Leonard got a job as a Night Watchman for the city of Odessa for a year, and after a farming accident took his left hand, he began working for the highway patrol at the weigh station. While working at the weigh station, Leonard started Hilltop Greenhouses and sold his produce and plants to Kmart and other businesses.

Throughout his life, he has always had a heart for service. He volunteered for Native American Missionary Services traveling from Canada to North Dakota and other parts of the United States. He also served in prison ministry in Oklahoma. Later, he became a fulltime caregiver for his wife until she passed away in February 2015. Since then, Leonard has helped the local senior center with fundraising, serving on its board and keeping the community informed about the center's needs. He recently received recognition by the State of Missouri for his service to his senior center. Additionally, Leonard is an ordained minister of the Restoration Branch RLDS Church.

He was married to his wife, Berdina, for 66 years. He has two daughters, one son, three granddaughters, two great grandsons, four great granddaughters and one great-great grandson.

Gilead Rupe Daughters are proud to honor and recognize Leonard Crowl as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for his patriotic service and commitment to our great nation.