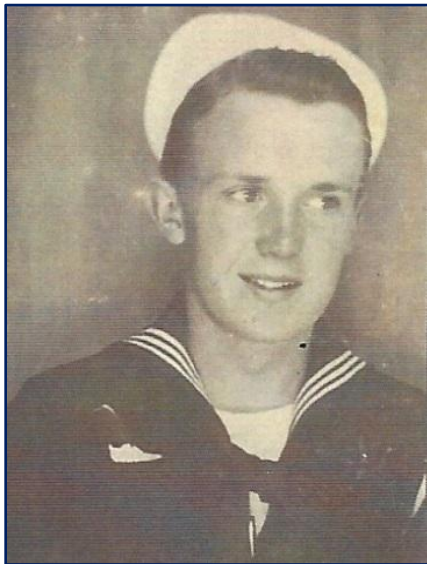


Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Proudly Honors



Patriot of the Month

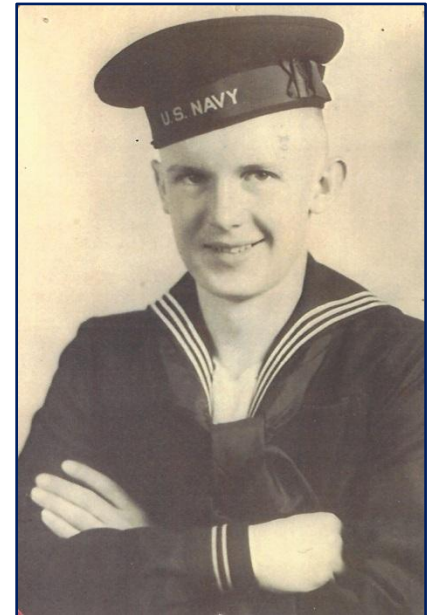
November 2017



Clyde Clayton
Stanford

United States Navy

Sponsored by:
Saint Charles
Chapter



Clyde enlisted in the United States Navy in January, 1944. There were six friends that enlisted together. Some of them were already 18 and some, like Clyde, were only 17 and had to have parental permission in order to join. Clyde's mother signed for him to join. They were all in basic training together in Farragut, Idaho. After basic all of these friends went to separate assignments.

Following basic training, Clyde was sent to Gunner School in Wills Point, California. He spent most of his time training on the one-man 20 mm guns because he was to be a carpenter's mate on a dry dock and that is the only gun that was on deck. He went to Timarron, California and waited until his dry dock was commissioned and then went aboard.

USS Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock (ARD 23) was towed from place to place by tow boats. It was a very important vessel in the war used to repair ships in forward battle areas. A floating dry dock looks like a shoe box with the top and end removed. The hull, or bottom, and wing walls, or sides, of a floating dock contain compartments. Water enters these compartments, making the dock sink low enough for a ship to enter. Pumps then suck the water out and the dock rises, lifting the ship out of the water. Wooden blocks and spars help support the vessel. When the repairs are completed, the compartments are flooded again until the dock sinks enough to allow the ship to float. Such docks can raise an average-sized ship in from one to two hours.

Clyde built the wooden blocks and spars that shored up the ship. When this job was done, the others did the repairs on the ship. They had ships all of the time except for when they were under way. These ships had all kinds of damage from holes in the sides to battered fronts where they had rammed or been rammed by submarines.

The captain was sure that everyone stayed busy at all times, thus in spare time, Clyde and his fellow shipmates built a second story that contained bunks and a lounge area. They also heard that the captain loved to sail and so they built a sailboat for him. No idle hands at any time.

In January of 1945, Clyde was transferred to the *USS Franklin (CV-13)*. The Franklin was better known on Naval lists as CV-13 and to her own people by her nickname, "BIG BEN". All of the decks on the ships of the time were made of wood and Franklin needed carpenters.

Clyde had been on the Franklin for two short months and they were nearing the coast of Japan for an all-out war when the ship was hit. Bombs and a suicide plane hit first in the aft or back part where Clyde was located. Exploding bombs, shells, rockets and other armament and fires raged in ever increasing fury. Clyde manned his 20 mm gun first with fear, anxiety, nervousness and confusion as to what had really happened. Soon these emotions were overtaken by his training, anger, and a sense of duty. He says that he just automatically did the job that he had to do. The fire and continuous explosions proved too much for those in that section of the ship and the order was given to "ABANDON SHIP". Over the side and into the sea, Clyde and many of his mates joined dead and dying injured mates. He was in the water for over an hour when he was rescued by the Destroyer *USS Marshall (DD-676)*. This ship and staff nursed the wounded, made them warm, and took them back to Guam. They all felt that their ship had sunk and only 60 miles off the coast of Japan.

Clyde would have no way of knowing what was taking place on the Franklin or "BIG BEN". She was still under attack, burning and exploding and yet managed to continue to float, got a line onto the *USS Santa Fe (CL-60)*, which kept her from floating on to Japan, and then to come under her own power. Soon the hundreds of dead posed far more of a problem than the living. Many were buried beneath I-beams, steel netting, twisted catwalks and other metal debris. It could require herculean effort to recover just one deceased shipmate. A lot of work, heroism, prayers and...the ship was beginning to gain even more power and could head away.

Salvaged band equipment and a very brave captain and men pulled into Guam under their own power. Clyde and his fellow shipmates could not believe their eyes.

Other ships have seemingly defied all natural and physical laws of survival to limp home in ruined and sinking conditions, but none more impressive than the saga of "THE FRANKLIN...THE MOST DECORATED SHIP IN NAVAL HISTORY."

Clyde was discharged in California in April 1946. He worked as a salesman and is a member of the Rotary Club. Clyde and his wife, Linda, have one son, who is in the Navy, and two grandsons, and one of them is in the Navy.

Saint Charles Daughters are very proud to honor and recognize Clyde Clayton Stanford as Patriot of the Month for his brave patriotism and dedicated service to our great nation.