



*Missouri State Society Daughters of the
American Revolution*

Patriot of the Month; November 2008

Edward R. Stevens

After teaching school for a few years and before World War II, Edward joined the crew of the USS President Cleveland working as a medical orderly. It was during this time period that the Japanese attacked China. Whenever the ship docked in a Chinese port, members of the crew would go ashore. Before long Edward found himself tending to people in the small villages before and after the Chinese

attacks. Before long it became too dangerous and he was reassigned as a hospital orderly in San Francisco. Soon he was drafted into the US Army and he served in the Medical Corps. He was on duty on Pearl Harbor Day. During the attack on Pearl Harbor, he and the men in his company were ordered to the beach to dig in and protect the San Francisco shoreline from attack.

Because Edward was intelligent, well educated for the time, and a proven leader, he was sent to flight school and became a B-17 pilot. In 1944 he was sent to Glatton, England. He flew 38 combat missions. On one of the missions over Germany, the Germans shot out three of his four engines. He had to abort the mission. Unable to reach enough altitude to fly over the Cliffs of Dover, he landed the fully loaded plane on Dover Beach safely! On D-Day, he bombed enemy positions to protect the US troops. In all his combat missions he never lost a plane or crew member. After his missions were flown, Edward volunteered to stay in England instead of returning to the USA with his crew. He flew back and forth over German-held North Africa so that bombardiers could practice bombing in the desert.

Near the end of the war, Edward was chosen to learn to fly helicopters. He became one of the first licensed helicopter pilots and later became one of the first licensed helicopter pilot instructors. He was the first pilot to land a helicopter on the deck of an aircraft carrier. He spent the remainder of the war flying search and rescue missions. Edward stayed in the US Air Force until 1950.

Edward and his wife were married in Texas in 1946. They have one daughter and two sons.