

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Proudly “Spotlights” our September 2010
Patriot of the Month
Claude R. Damewood



Sponsored by:

Poplar Bluff
Chapter

Poplar Bluff,
Missouri



Claude Damewood volunteered for the Army to escape his English teacher! Claude said that it was always touch and go in his English class and finally he thought he had enough English to “get by” so he went to the recruiting station and enlisted. From the hills of West Virginia, the seventeen year old headed for boot camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky and then was sent to Panama. Claude marveled that one could swim the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans within hours of each of each other, but satisfied himself by dipping his feet in the surf as he did not know how to swim.

Harry Truman was President when Claude’s two year enlistment was finished. The word was that you were automatically extended for a year or you could reenlist. Claude thought that sounded a lot like his English teacher, so he reenlisted and was stationed in Korea with a stop on the way for some advanced training. Claude was a heavy mortar man in Panama and expected to be the same in Korea, but there was a need for medics. After training in Ito Jama, Japan he was proficient to run a sick call and take care of the wounded.

July 27, 1953 was an exciting day for the young Sergeant, happy that the armistice was being signed, when he was suddenly thrust into a situation he did not anticipate. While crossing a dry rice paddy, the heavy mortar company to which he was attached came under intense mortar and artillery fire. Claude fell to the ground for cover but did not stay there long as he heard the cry “aid man”. A shell had struck the communications tent and wounded eight men. Claude immediately went to pull the wounded out of

the burning tent and attended their wounds. He placed two of the wounded in a truck and continued their care as he accompanied them to the collecting station while rounds continued to fall along the entire route. He was later awarded the second of his Bronze Stars, this one with a "V" device for his heroic effort.

Claude's medals include:

- **Combat Medics Badge**
- **Two Bronze Stars**
- **Good Conduct Medal**

At the end of the Korean War, Claude was sent to Fort Hood, Texas and he became First Sergeant of a company. He taught advanced first aid, which he had studied while on temporary duty at Lackland Air Force Base.

Friends can certainly get people into trouble and Claude was headed that way while taking his advanced training at Lackland. The request was made, "Can you pick up this WAC and take her to her surprise birthday party?" "No problem", was his response. He married the WAC at Fort Sam Houston in 1956 and they are still celebrating.

Claude and Pat have traversed the country while he worked in the plastic industry until his retirement. He and Pat raised three children, all of whom have served in the military. Upon the death of their daughter, a Staff Sergeant, they fulfilled their promise to raise her two children when she passed away from a service-connected disability. Her son is now serving in Afghanistan.

No matter where they made their home, Claude and Pat were active in civic and church affairs and still maintain those interests.