



Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Patriot of the Month
August, 2012



Charles L. Hughes

Sponsored by:

**Missouri Pioneers Chapter DAR
Salisbury, Missouri**

Charles Hughes entered the Naval Service through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corp at the University of Oklahoma in September, 1941 and was commissioned in February, 1944.

As an Ensign, Charles was ordered to the USS Wilkes, a destroyer operating with the Seventh Fleet in the SW Pacific. The ship was in the Seventh Amphibious Corp which conducted escort duty for the army and provided anti-submarine and anti-aircraft protection as well as shore.

In August, 1944 the Wilkes was ordered from New Guinea to the Central Pacific Third Fleet under Admiral Halsey. This was a Fast Carrier Strike Force of large aircraft carriers and various other ships, from destroyers to battleships. They participated in the invasion of Palau and two areas in the Philippine Islands, along with air strikes in Formosa, Chi-Chi Jima, and Iwo Jima. During the months of action, 22 pilots were rescued from the ocean, they escorted many convoys, and survived two typhoons. Charles' various duties aboard the destroyer included communication officer and officer in charge of the 40mm anti-aircraft guns during air attack and shore bombardment.

The Wilkes was ordered to the states for a major overhaul in December of 1944, and during this time Charles became acquainted with Helen Hocum, a Navy Wave. Helen worked in Naval Intelligence intercepting and copying Japanese naval radio transmissions.

The Wilkes returned to the fleet in February, 1945, and by May, 1945, was involved in the invasion of Okinawa. Also, during this time they were involved in many shore bombardments and air attacks, including Kamikaze aircraft attacks. During WWII the USS Wilkes received a total of ten battle stars.

After the war ended, Charles was ordered to Inchon, Korea, for three months of occupation duty then back to Charleston, South Carolina, in November, 1945 where the Wilkes was decommissioned.

In March, 1946, Charles was ordered to Lakehurst, New Jersey, for Lighter-than-Air training. He qualified as a Naval Aviator and flew blimps for two years. Helen and Charles were married at Lakehurst during his flight training.

Charles continued to reside on the family farm and married again in 1986 to Anna Mary. He has one son, a veteran of the Navy Submarine Service, two grandsons, and five great grandchildren.

He is a member of the Military Officers Association, the Tin Can Sailors, the Naval Airship Association, Life Member of the United States Naval Institute, for which he was honored at the U. S. Naval Academy in 2002 as a 50 year member, and has served as president of the USS Wilkes Association.

Charles' awards, medals, and ribbons include:

- American Defense Service Medal**
- American Campaign Medal**
- Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal**
- Victory Medal**
- World War II Occupation Medal, Navy**
- Armed Force Reserve Medal**
- Navy Reserve Medal**
- Philippines Liberation Medal**
- State of Missouri Commemorate Medal**
- Philippine Presidential Unit Citation**

Charles has been a lifelong member of the United Methodist Church. Anna Mary is an active member of the Missouri Pioneers Chapter DAR, Salisbury, MO.