



**Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Patriot of the Month
December 2013**



Leroy Godat

Sponsored by

Poplar Bluff Chapter

Leroy Godat joined the United States Navy in 1944. He was known as a 'Feather-Merchant,' a yeoman, keeping records, ship's log, inventory, and ordering supplies on a Landing Craft Infantry - LCI. He received amphibious training in Maryland and then was sent to the Pacific Theatre.

Leroy spent his Navy service on an LCI with the Pacific Fleet. He explained the landing craft drew only five feet of water, a depth above the range for torpedoes being fired from enemy submarines and gunboats. The LCI's carried from 35 to 40 men. The LCI's could draw up to shore, open bays, let down ramps, and the fully equipped infantry would then walk on shore. The LCI's were armed with four 20mm guns and one 40mm gun and would

provide cover for the infantry going ashore while the big ships might be a mile out at sea shooting over them at enemy targets on shore.

The LCI's also provided smoke screens for the bigger ships when the Japanese kamikazes flew down the channel from Kiese, an island off the norther tip of Okinawa. A unit of six LCI's created huge clouds of smoke by burning oil in giant fog machines, which engulfed the big ships making them difficult for the kamikazes to spot.

A student of history, Leroy secured a copy of his ships log from The National Archives. He has compiled a day by day record of his tour of duty, interspersed with personal remembrances, letters to and from home, maps, and photographs that he took and developed aboard ship. There are three large volumes compiling his record of duty from 1944 to 1946.

The war didn't end for our military after Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and Nagasaki which occurred a few days later. Leroy explains they were then sent to the northern tip of the Yellow Sea, putting Marines ashore up the rivers to occupy China from the Japanese. Reviewing some of his memoirs he has complied, he shares that on September 25, 1945 they sailed from Tientsin to Tsingtao, Taku China then back. It was a bitterly cold winter aboard ship while in the Yellow Sea.

Leroy recalled that his unit took part in one of the largest sea invasion by amphibious forces in history. Beginning on April 1, 1945, west of Okinawa they took an island a day for six days, finally taking Ie Shima, where war correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed.

Leroy was discharged as a 2nd Class Petty Officer and returned home in May of 1946. According to Leroy he earned several awards, some were a service bar for battles in the Philippines, one for the Atlantic, and one for the occupation of China. He married his sweetheart Charlotte Allison on September 30, 1946. They have three children, Michael, Susan, and Ken, and five grandchildren.

Leroy was a design engineer for Wagner Electric in St. Louis, Missouri, for forty-three years. Upon his retirement from Wagner, he worked as a civil engineer in De Soto, Missouri, for many years. He and his wife have actively volunteered in area schools mentoring children. Leroy now cares for his ailing wife and continues to research local history, indexing cemeteries, and pursuing the family genealogy.

The Poplar Bluff Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution are proud to nominate Leroy Godat as Patriot of the Month and thank him for his service to our country.