

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution



## Patriot of the Month

January 2016



*Roy C. Kenagy*

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Prairie Chapter



Roy Kenagy is the perfect example of the World War II veteran, who served his country as a very young man, came home to work hard, raised a family and is a wonderful senior member of his community. His mother died in 1929, and since Roy was only 17 years old, his father had to sign for him to enter the Navy in 1942. He was immediately assigned to a new ship, the USS Wichita, which traveled to North Africa to support action against the Germans and then on to the South Pacific to engage the enemy from Japan. Roy was trained as a water tender, a position that was vital to the ship, because he kept the power going to the engines and for the guns that were fired on the enemy planes and ships. Roy learned how to maintain the boiler room equipment and the need for attention to details with the delicate boiler mechanism.

The USS Wichita had 8" guns and 5" guns, as well as five aircraft and about 2000 Navy men on board. Roy was paid \$21 per day, and was overwhelmed early on by the huge ship, the large number of men on board and being so far from his Midwest home. Roy has many memories of his time on the Wichita, and he is animated when telling about the men and officers that he met during these years. One vivid memory was when the Germans shelled the ship in North Africa and shells hit the wall of the USS Wichita, and went through his bunk, and how lucky he was to be on duty and not in his bed at that exact time!

Roy was glad to receive his honorable discharge after V-J Day and return to civilian life, although it proved to be harder than he realized it would be. He and Betty were married, and as a young man with only the Navy training, he struggled to find a job that would fit his temperament and skills. For several years, Roy worked various jobs and finally discovered that he liked the world of heavy equipment, and was very good at operating those machines. During this time, he and Betty began raising a family in the Kansas City area, then moving to Raymore and retiring there after working at Reno Construction and later at the Lake City Plant. Roy enjoys the outdoors, feeding backyard birds, deer and other local wildlife and is known as a wonderful friend and neighbor. At 90 years old, he is active and outside very day, and even traps fur-bearing animals as a part-time activity when in season. Roy can relate the history of his neighborhood and his town, and keeps current on the news and politics, and is never without an opinion! But foremost, Roy is proud of his military service and his role in the U.S. Navy during World War II. His memories are full of that time in his life and he shared that the writing of this nomination is one of the first times he has talked openly about his experience as a young man during World War II.

The Daughters of the Prairie Chapter DAR are proud to nominate Roy C. Kenagy as Patriot of the Month and extend their gratitude for his patriotic service and commitment to our great nation.