

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month



November 2017



Dr. Robert Lewis Cole

United States Army

Sponsored by:
Alexander Doniphan
Chapter

Robert Lewis Cole was born in Missouri and lived on a farm. He went to a one-room schoolhouse where his mother was his teacher. After 8th grade, he moved to Belgrade, MO to go to high school. Robert described Belgrade as "a wide place in the road." He attended and graduated optometry school in Chicago, Illinois. He married his wife, Mabel, in October, 1940.



In 1944, Robert Lewis Cole was a young graduate of Northern Illinois College of Optometry and had only been married a short time when he said a letter appeared in his mailbox from the United States Government saying, "Greetings, you have been selected for service in the US Army." He was drafted and started serving his nation in July, 1944. His first duty station was Fort Hood, Texas, but he said, "After four weeks, someone woke up and sent me to Camp Barkley, Texas." After 12 weeks at Camp Barkley, Robert went to Pennsylvania, and then on to New Port Beach, Virginia, and from there he departed to Naples, Italy. He served his country as an optometrist at the 105th Station Hospital near Pisa, Italy.

When asked what was his most meaningful experience or memory during this military service he said, "I was in Italy and stationed near where Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were killed and hung...I can recall the Italians in the streets afterwards saying, Finito, Finito..."

When the war was over, Robert was sent back to the States; his last duty station being Camp Campbell, Kentucky, known today as Fort Campbell. While waiting to be shipped home, the actual day before, he awoke to the news that he had become a father to a daughter, the eldest of his two daughters. With the rank of T-4, Robert was discharge in St. Louis, Missouri in June, 1944.

In 1948, Robert opened his optometry office in Liberty, Missouri and years later he sold his practice to another optometrist. Robert retired...not once, but three times, saying, "I just didn't like being retired, so I went back to work and did so until age 80!"

Robert and Mable celebrated 73 wonderful years together. He was a very active member of his local United Methodist Church, having served as Sunday school superintendent, on the board of directors, on the usher team and did other jobs through the years. Robert was a charter member of his local Sertoma Club and he loved to square dance. However, he said his passion above all other of his many hobbies was making stained glass. He and Mabel loved to travel abroad, having been to Europe, Switzerland, Mexico, Russia and Canada...just to name a few places they visited.

In May, 2017, Robert went to Washington DC with the Honor Flight Network of Kansas City. He said his favorite part of the trip was getting the opportunity to see the World War II Memorial. After the flight, he was presented with a Quilt of Valor for being the oldest veteran, 98 years of age, on that flight. The quilt is proudly displayed at his residence.

Alexander Doniphan Daughters are very proud to recognize and honor Robert Lewis Cole as Patriot of the Month for his very patriotic and dedicated service to our great nation.