

Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Proudly Honors

Patriot of the Month

December 2022



Lawrence Plaster

United States Navy

Sponsored by:

Rachel Donelson Chapter, NSDAR

Lawrence Plaster, 99 years old, was born at Souder, Missouri, and grew up in Ozark County during the depression. He graduated from Gainesville High School. In 1941, he married his high school sweetheart, Wilma Wade. He enlisted in the US Navy in 1944. He went to Oklahoma to enlist because he knew if he enlisted in Missouri, he would be sent to the Great Lakes area for training. He wanted to go somewhere where it was warmer. He was sent to California, but his training lasted only three days. He was immediately shipped out to an aircraft carrier, the USS Manila Bay, in the Pacific. He had never been on a ship before. His job was to get planes off the deck in seconds and to help them land safely. His ship was twice hit by a kamikaze pilot. He was given the rank of 3rd Machinist Mate. His ship was the first into Tokyo Bay after the surrender. The Bay had been mined and after the surrender, the mines had been cut loose. Lawrence slept on the deck because he did not want to be trapped below deck should the ship hit a mine. During his time in the service, Lawrence received the Good Conduct medal, and several campaign medals/ribbons.



Lawrence returned home in 1946 to Almartha, Missouri, but soon enrolled at Abilene Christian College in Texas. He played basketball for the school, worked at every odd job he could find to pay expenses, and graduated in less than three years. He returned to Missouri, taught, and coached basketball first at Hartville, and then Niangua. He was offered a job at Ava. While he was teaching and coaching there, an opportunity came for him to purchase the Western Auto Store in Ava. He owned and operated it for 21 years. During this same time, he also had a construction/plumbing company, furniture store, and a real estate office.

Lawrence and Wilma were married for 76 years before her death. They had two daughters and a son. They have eight grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren, and seven great-great grandchildren.

Lawrence was active in the community, serving as president of the Lion's Club and as mayor of Ava. He belonged to the Church of Christ and served as elder, Sunday School teacher, song leader, and sang in the church quartet. Sports were always his hobbies, playing basketball and golf. He is a big fan of the Kansas City Chiefs. He now makes his home at the Mt. Vernon Veterans Home and attends church in the community.

The Rachel Donelson Chapter DAR is honored to sponsor Lawrence Plaster for Patriot of the Month.