

# Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

## Proudly Honors

### Patriot of the Month

July 2024

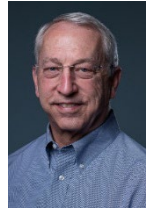


## Christopher Bouchard

### United States Air Force

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Chris Bouchard's father, Charles Bouchard, was the aircraft commander of a B-24 bomber plane when shot down by enemy fire in WWII. Knowing the plane would soon crash, he instructed his crew to bail out over German occupied territory in France. One airman died of wounds suffered from shrapnel that hit the aircraft in flight, the remaining crewmembers survived their parachute jump. Two evaded enemy capture, nine were captured and spent the remainder of the war in German Prison Camps. Charles was the last to leave the plane, only to be shot at while in his parachute and then floated dangerously close to the fireball of the crashed 8-24. He landed in the backyard of a home in Nogent-sur-Oise, France.



German soldiers were on Charles shortly after the parachute landing. The Germans escorted him the easiest way out of the yard, which was through the home, where the occupants graciously offered him a drink of what looked like water. He did not realize until after drinking the second glass that it was wine. He was temporarily held in a make-shift cell in a school building the Germans had occupied where he was clandestinely helped by a young French girl to escape. If caught by the Germans, Janine would have been severely punished and likely killed.

Charles was a prisoner for about a year in two different prison camps. As WWII came to a close in 1945, the prisoners were freed by General Patton's troops. Charles continued to serve in the Air Force and retired in 1963. At that time, he moved to St. Louis, Missouri for employment at Boeing Aircraft (formerly McDonnell Douglas).

While a surviving WWII prisoner of war, Charles continued his respect for the military and became a loving father to three sons and one daughter, where military service was seen as a duty to the country. All three boys served, and his daughter married a service member. So touched by Janine's bravery under the watchful eyes of the Germans, he named his daughter after her as did one of the other prisoners.

Charles' granddaughter and great-granddaughter also carry the name of Janine. Charles wrote his memoirs describing the ordeal and the lessons learned after retiring from Boeing and before his death in November 1985. His memoirs are a tribute to the thousands of service members who endured so much or gave the ultimate sacrifice.

His son Chris Bouchard wrote the introduction to the memoir and secured its careful archival with the State Historical Society of Missouri where it can be retrieved today. Chris continues to keep his father's story and its lessons alive by giving presentations to community groups.

Chris graduated from the University of Missouri with a bachelor's degree in Geology, was commissioned after graduating from Air Force ROTC and began active duty 2 days after graduation. During his ten years of active duty, he completed pilot training at Williams AF Base in AZ, he was stationed at Castle AFB in CA, Wurtsmith AFB in MI, Vance AFB in OK, and Carswell AF Base, TX. Chris received an MBA from Central Michigan University while on active duty. After separating from the AF in 1983, he purchased a business in Columbia. He joined the Missouri Air National Guard in 1987 where he became the comptroller of the Lambert Air National Guard Base and retired in 1997.

Decorations, medals, badges and citations are numerous for his service and include: Air Force Outstanding Unit Award; Meritorious Service Medal; Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster; Combat Readiness Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with one device; Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with one device.

For nine years Chris was in business for himself. After selling his last business, he worked in the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for 24 years, a program of University of Missouri Extension. He was the SBDC State Director where he provided leadership for the statewide program. The SBDC is a national, university-based program with lead offices in each state that deliver services to small businesses and entrepreneurs. While in the SBDC, he served as the vice chair of the National Small Business Administration's SBDC Accreditation Committee, was part of a three-member team that consulted with the government of Egypt that was interested in starting an SBDC program, escorted Missouri small businesses to Japan to expand their markets in the far east and facilitated workshops and consulted with small businesses in Bulgaria when free markets first opened.

After retiring from the University in 2016, he was hired by the Missouri United Methodist Foundation to start a new grant funded program teaching clergy to become more effective financial leaders. He currently has his own business providing executive coaching and business consulting services.

Chris is a familiar face in the community because of his current and past service activities. The lists includes: serving on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central Missouri, member of the Columbia Airport Advisory Board, including a term *as* the chair; member of Rotary and is a two-time past president; a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer; a Love Columbia volunteer; a REDI board member; and served for 13 years for the Missouri Quality Award as an examiner, senior examiner and a member of the Board of Overseers.

In all that Chris Bouchard does, he practices the lessons taught by his father and learned on his own from military and civilian service. His patriotism clearly reflects the mission of The Daughters of the American Revolution with dedication to historical preservation, promotion of education, and encouragement of patriotic endeavor. Clearly, Chris Bouchard is an ideal DAR Patriot of the Month.