



LIVING LEGACY



STEVE BENEDICT PAVLOV

Born: November 25, 1923
World War II
Navy
Served: 1941-1946



Steve Benedict Pavlov was born in Meadowlands, PA on November 25, 1923 to parents, Andrew Pavlov and Cecilia Pilarcik Pavlov. Steve remembers, “My father traveled from the United States back to his native Czechoslovakia to find a wife. He saw a beautiful girl out in a field and went up to her and said, ‘We are going to get married.’ They did marry and soon had two daughters: my sisters Ann and Mary who were born in Czechoslovakia. The family traveled back to the United States to Meadowlands, PA. That was where my brother, Andrew II (Butch), and I were born. My family then moved to Piney Fork, OH in the late 1920’s. I am the third of four children. Dad was a coal miner who worked at the Piney Fork mine. On one occasion, the coal mine whistle blew and we all ran to the mine because we knew that meant there had been an accident and my Dad was working in the mine when the whistle blew. Dad had been in the old works of the mine and gotten into some black damp. He had lost his breath, and was lucky to survive.”

Steve remembers, “I had fun as a kid playing tag and hide-and-go-seek with my brother and sisters and our friends on the street in front of our house in Piney Fork. My best friend as a young boy was Joe Slivinski. I liked to build model airplanes from balsam wood and dreamed of someday being an airplane pilot. We had a dog named Brownie. I think he was a beagle. We loved that dog, but he got hit by a car and died as we watched helplessly.”

Steve went to elementary school in Piney Fork for six years. He attended school in Smithfield, OH for six years and graduated from Smithfield High School on May 27, 1941. Steve recalls, “One of my friends and I agreed that we should join the Navy together. So two days after graduating from high school, on May 29, 1941, I went to the recruiting office and enlisted. I didn’t know that my friend had changed his mind and backed-out. So I was to report to Cleveland, OH for indoctrination and sent on to Great Lakes, IL for Basic Training – alone. I got my first tattoo in Chicago. It is the Navy anchor and wreath on my left upper arm. The tattoo cost me \$2.00. I hoped I would get to go to Europe and fight in the European Theater as I had a desire to see if I could find my relatives in Czechoslovakia – a young man’s dream. But I ended up assigned to the American Atlantic coast shore and then assigned to the Pacific.”

After six weeks of Basic Training at Great Lakes, IL, Steve was tested for the Pilot’s Training program. He passed all the written tests with ease and was scheduled to attend Pilot Training in January, 1942. But when he had his in-depth medical evaluation, the doctors determined he had a runny right ear that had been compromised from a botched tonsillectomy performed when he was a child. Steve was told he could not be approved for Pilot training because of the ear. He was devastated. His dream of being a pilot was gone. But he decided he would become a top-notch mechanic to repair the planes he loved so much.



Left: Steve with his sister Ann; Center: Steve Pavlov;
Right: Steve with his father Andrew

July 16, 1941

Steve Pavlov's
class graduates
basic training

Great Lakes,
Illinois

W W W



Steve was sent to Detroit, MI for 16 weeks of specialized training where he became an Aviation Machinist – Class A. After successfully completing the training, he received Advanced Carrier training and was assigned to Norfolk, VA. It was at Norfolk where he heard the news about the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese – December 7, 1941. Steve was assigned to a squadron and supposed to report for duty on the USS Yorktown, but his orders changed. He explains, “I remained at Norfolk for about a year. I would make a repair to a plane and then go up in the air with the pilot to make sure the plane was ready to perform correctly. Some mechanics didn't do this. But I felt it was necessary to go see for myself if the plane was ready for combat. The pilot trusted my repair and I went along to demonstrate that I, too, had faith that I had made the proper repair. I trained the pilots to better understand the mechanics of their airplane. This became my mode of operation to always go up with the pilot to check out any repairs. The planes I repaired were sent to the Main Fleet for battle. I got my second tattoo while stationed at Norfolk. It is a picture of a beautiful girl and is located on my right forearm. I don't know why young people do that to themselves. But at the time, I thought getting the tattoos was the smart thing to do.”

Steve continues, “On one occasion, when I went up with the pilot to test the plane, the pilot put the plane into a nose dive that went straight down towards the ground. I didn't think he was going to pull up in time, but he did. However, we had shrubbery (treetops) hanging



Steve at age 17 (right)

on the bottom of the plane from the close call.”

Steve and his squadron were transferred to Jacksonville, FL. He had several more close calls during the next two years. One incident that occurred at Jacksonville found Steve taxiing a plane to check out a repair he had just completed. He explains, “A pilot returned from drinking alcohol and demanded to take his plane up in the air. He took off at a sharp angle and almost hit the plane I was operating. The pilot soon crashed the plane into the bay and was killed. I saw it happen. There was nothing I could do. I also incurred a fairly serious injury while working on an aircraft at Jacksonville. I ducked under the wing of a plane and didn’t see the radio antenna hanging down. The contact with the

antenna severed my nose such that my nose such that it was laid open. There was a hole in my face where I could put my finger in sideways and almost reach to my ear. The doctor was away from base whenever this occurred, so a corpsman fixed me up. He did a pretty good job.”

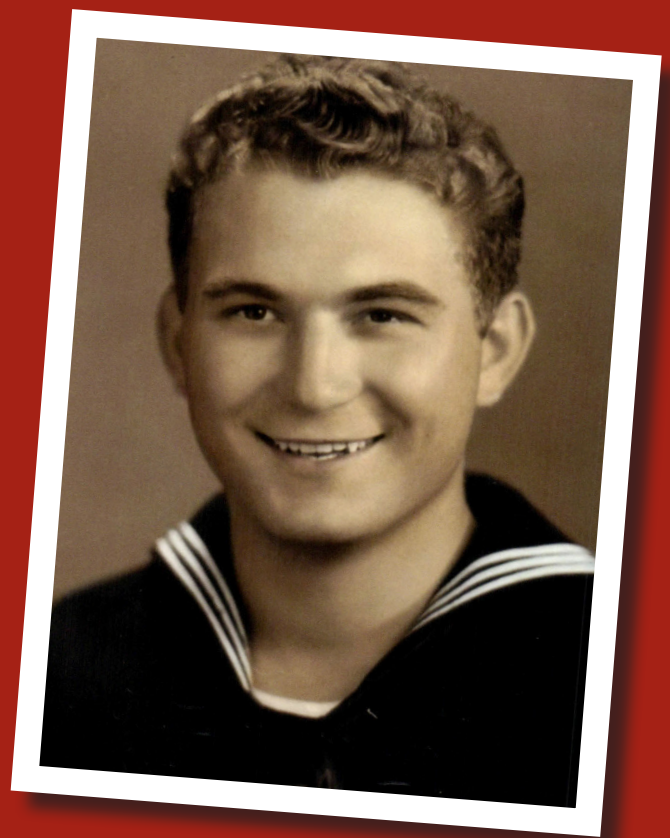
After two years at Jacksonville, Steve was stationed at Barber’s Point, Oahu, Hawaii to work on repairing the planes returning from battles in the South Pacific. He was on the USS Lexington and sent to the Indian Ocean for back-up to the Pacific Fleet and to repair the four-engine bombers damaged in battle. While on Oahu, he remembers riding a bicycle to work each morning and swimming in the ocean when he was off duty. He remarks, “While serving in the Navy, I swam in three oceans: the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Ocean. When I was a short timer ready for discharge in Hawaii, I gave my bicycle and radio to a buddy who had some time left to serve. I was stationed in Hawaii and on the USS Lexington for two and a half years.”

Steve is proud of his brother, Andrew “Butch” Pavlov II, who served in the U. S. Navy in the South Pacific during World War II. He recalls the story where Andy was taking troops to shore when the boat he was navigating was shot out from under him. Once he made it safely

back to his ship, Andy was given a hot dog to eat and a cup of hot coffee – then was sent back out immediately to get another boatful of troops. This occurred In the midst of the Battle of Tarawa (November 20-23, 1943) during World War II, when the U.S. began its Central Pacific Campaign against Japan by seizing the heavily fortified, Japanese-held island of Betio in the Tarawa Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. Steve recalls another story about his brother, “The Japanese were bombing the islands and Andy got buried in sand. The Japanese soldiers came by and thought Andy was dead. When the Japanese soldiers left, the Americans came to look for survivors. They found Andy, who was still breathing. They uncovered him and found that Andy had been shot in his ankle. The medics wanted to amputate his foot, but Andy held a 45 mm pistol on them and threatened to shoot them if they tried to amputate. They listened to Andy and gradually, his foot and ankle began to heal. Andy’s CO wanted to put him in for a Purple Heart, but Andy refused. He said he didn’t want our mother to know that he had been seriously injured.”

Steve heartily recalls, “I was in the Navy for 5 years, 6 months and 12 days! I achieved the rank of Petty Officer First Class and came home to Piney Fork, OH on December 9, 1946.” For exemplary performance and dedicated service to his country, Steve received the following awards and medals: American Defense with one star; Asiatic Pacific medal; Good Conduct Medal; American Area Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal.

Petty Officer • First Class



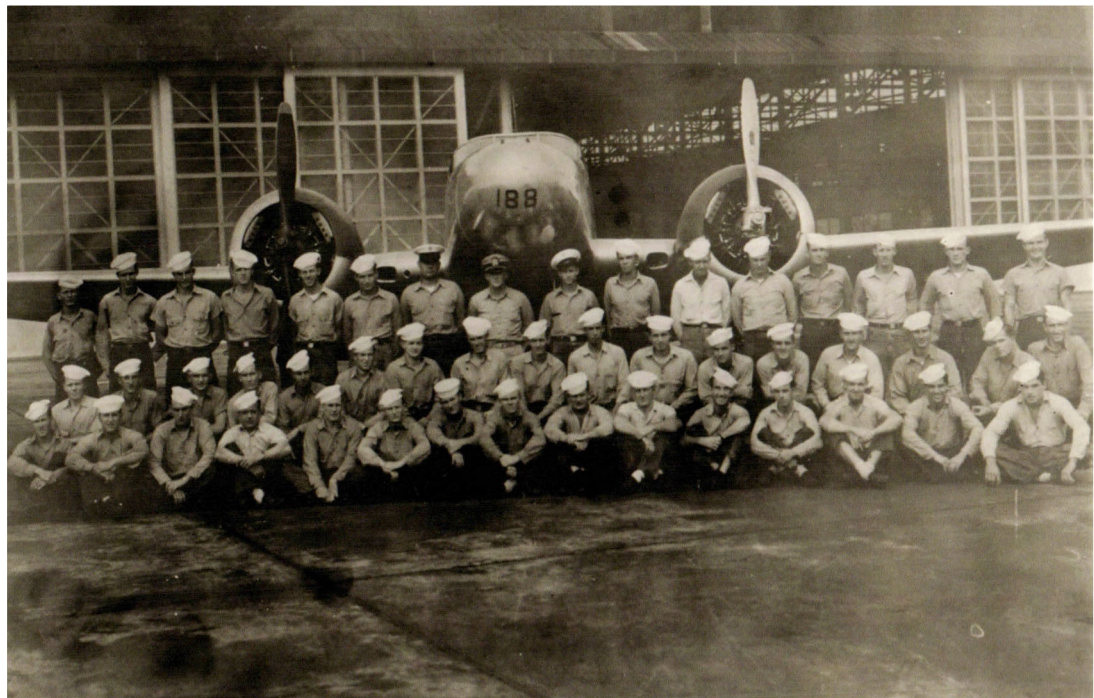
Steve’s brother, Andrew “Butch” Pavlov II. • WWII • U.S. Navy

Once he returned from the war, Steve used his knowledge in repairing airplanes to get a job in Detroit, MI at the Stinson Aircraft Plant in 1947. Steve installed the motors onto the newly built airplanes. He worked there for a short time before returning to Piney Fork. “I signed up for the Navy Reserves and traveled monthly to Steubenville, OH for training. I belonged to the Navy Reserves for 19 years.”

Steve remembers the shortage of automobiles after the war with all the returning G.I.s wanting to obtain a vehicle. He explains, “Andy and I decided to buy a car together – a 1938 Chevy. After one week, I said this was not going to work, so I bought Andy out for \$800. Later, Andy bought a 1951 Chevy Stylemaster and I bought a 1951 Chevy Fleetliner. I always liked my car a little better than Andy’s car.”

Cecil Field
Engine
Change
Crew

Jacksonville,
Florida



When asked how he met his wife, he replies, “We met when I was home on leave during the war. Some buddies and I had gone to a basketball game. We went to a local hangout called Candyland afterwards to socialize. The place was packed and my buddies and I jumped line and beat a couple of girls to the only empty booth. We felt sort of bad for taking the only booth, so we asked them to sit with us – and they did. At the night’s end, we walked the girls home. One of the girls was my future wife, Mary Lapel. Mary and I started to date and often went dancing at the Dixie Moon on Route 250 near Adena, where Mary and her family lived. Mary had been one of the ‘Rosie, the Riveters’ as she worked in an aircraft

factory in Akron, OH during the war. We fell in love and were married June 5, 1948 at St Adelbert's Catholic Church in Dillonville, OH."

Steve had returned to Piney Fork from working in Detroit in late 1947 and was working as a coal miner at Piney Fork's Hanna Coal Mine. Steve worked as a bratticeman hanging the brattices and curtains to assure proper ventilation was maintained in the coal mine at all times. He and his father both worked at the Piney Fork Mine at the same time for several years – but on opposite shifts. Most mines assigned fathers and sons or brothers to opposite shifts so that an entire family would not be lost in case of a mining accident or explosion. Steve, too, experienced walking into a section of the Piney Fork mine that had black damp. He immediately backed out of



Steve and Mary's wedding day
June 5, 1948

Steve and
Mary with
their wedding
party

June 5, 1948





Piney Fork Coal Mine 1949



Railroad Workers

the compromised section and had no ill effects from the experience.

Steve and Mary's only child, a daughter, Deborah Ann Pavlov, was born in 1952. The economy in the mid 1950's was stagnant and work in the mines became very unreliable. So Steve left the mine to obtain employment as a trackman at Nickle Plate Railroad in Adena, OH. Later, he was transferred to Brewster, OH. He traveled to work 64 miles, one way, to Brewster, OH, on a daily basis. Steve worked for the railroad for 11 years continuing the long drive back and forth to work. When the economy improved and the mines resumed a more consistent operation, he returned to coal mining working for Consol Coal at New Athens, OH. In total, Steve worked underground in a coal mine for 24.5 years. Steve had a heart attack while working the afternoon shift. He was working alone- underground in the

mine on January 10, 1979. Because the buggy to transport miners was broken, Steve had to walk for over a mile to get out of the mine. The temperature that night was 10 degrees below zero! He drove himself home and went to bed – never telling his wife how sick he felt. The next morning, his wife, Mary, insisted that Steve go to the doctor. He was sent immediately to the hospital and informed that he had incurred a serious heart attack. Later that year, Steve had heart surgery, but he never returned to work in the mine. He retired on medical disability in 1980 – after having worked for over 40 years in industry, including the mechanical work he performed during WWII.



Piney Fork,
Ohio

Over the years, the Pavlov family traveled on several vacations. Steve explains, “We went to Florida and to the Smokey Mountains several times. Once we visited my wife’s sister, Ann, in Washington DC and stayed in her small apartment for several days as we took in the sights of our nation’s capital. We went to Virginia Beach and Chesapeake Bay. But mostly, we were content to stay home.”

Steve continues, “One of my good friends is Frank Prevot in Adena, OH. We met when I returned from the war and were introduced by my brother, Andy, at the Roosevelt Inn in Piney Fork. Frank is also a veteran of WWII and served in the Navy. Frank and I used to sit and talk and drink a few beers together. He is still alive and attended my 90th birthday party, but he is like me as his health is also deteriorating. My childhood friend, Joe Slivinski, remained my friend throughout my life. Frank and Joe, along with their

wives, were best friends with Mary and I throughout the years. Joe died recently.”

When asked to talk about his wife, Mary, Steve smiles and says, “We had a large garden. We grew sweet corn, tomatoes, green beans, onions, and potatoes. We also had a few fruit trees. Mary canned the fruits and vegetables and made jelly. I built shelves in the basement for Mary, and she placed the canned goods on the shelves. She was a good cook and made homemade noodles and pies. My favorite was her apple pie. She had a sweet disposition.”

Steve’s nephew, Andrew Pavlov III, states, “Uncle Steve never complains and always has a smile on his face. He always kept a clean car and his garage and workbench were always spotless with everything neatly in place.”



Left: Steve and Mary Pavlov

Right: Steve, Mary and daughter Deborah Pavlov • January 1970

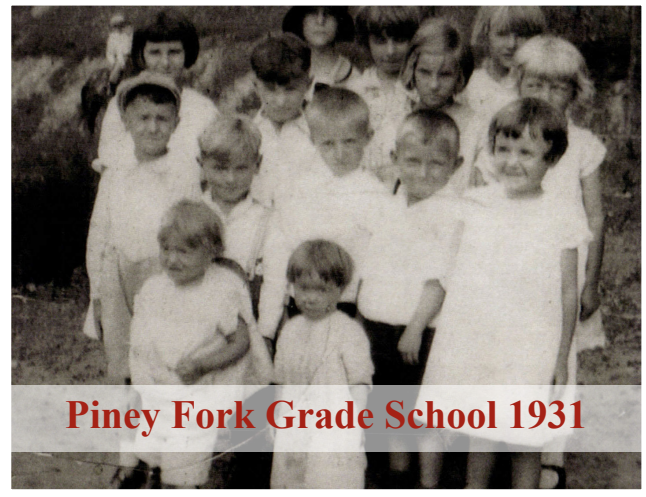
St. Casimir Catholic Church in Adena, OH has been an integral part of Steve's life. After 49 years of marriage, his beloved Mary passed in 1997. She is buried in the Olive Branch Cemetery in Harrisville, OH. Steve states he will be buried beside her someday. "When Mary died, her sister, Helen Fiutem, cooked for me and helped me out for 15 years. Other family members helped me, too, and I am certainly thankful for that support that allowed me to live independently," Steve acknowledges. Currently, Steve's health has declined, but his quick smile and sense of humor prevail. This Ohio Valley patriot and hero finds peace of mind in his final days by knowing that he served his family, community and country faithfully with a life well lived. (Written March, 2015)



Steve through the years
Left: 6 months; Center: 1st grade; Right: 10th grade



Cecilia, Steve and Ann



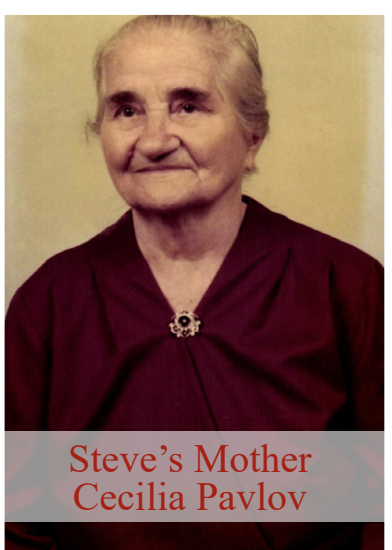
Piney Fork Grade School 1931



Smithfield 7th Grade Class 1937



First Communion



**Steve's Mother
Cecilia Pavlov**



VALLEY HOSPICE
Caring. Living. Healing.

