

Description of Military Service
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Lt. Col., USAF RET.

In OCT. 1942, I applied for and was accepted into the USAAF Aviation Cadet program. On 27 OCT 1942, I was sworn into the Army at the Texas Enlistment Center in Dallas, Texas and was sent to Camp Walters.

On 14 November 1942, I received my assignment and departed Camp Walters in route to Camp Kearns, near Salt Lake City, Utah. On 21 November 1942, I was informed that I had qualified for Aviation Cadet Training and O.C.S. While waiting for my orders to report to an Aviation Cadet Center, I was occupied by doing close order drill, K.P. and guard duty. When I answered in the affirmative to a Drill Sergeant's request for "anyone that could type", I was placed on coal hauling detail.

On 20 December 1942: After recovering from pneumonia, I was transferred to Santa Anna Pre-Flight Aviation Cadet Center.

On 15 April 1943, I was transferred for pilot training to Thunderbird Field II in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

I did quite well in all but the flight training. Flying a Stearman was more difficult than plowing a cotton field and inhaling the exhaust fumes from a team of mules. My second check ride ended my pilot training. I have never been more disappointed in my life.

29 May 1943: Reported to Basic Training Center #8 near Fresno, California for re-classification and assignment for further training. From there, on 5 June 1943, I was assigned to Aerial Gunnery and A.C. Mechanic Schools and was transferred to Lowry Field AAF Base near Denver, Colorado. Upon arrival I was promoted to PFC. Instead of Mechanic School, I found that I was assigned to A.P. Armament School. On 6 July 1943, I started classes, and on 25 July 1943, I graduated as a specialist on machine guns, bomb racks, and gun turrets.

On 25 July 1943, I was assigned to Advanced Armory Classes at Buckley USAAF Field for additional schooling.

On 21 September 1943, I was transferred to Ft. Myers USAAF Gunnery School in Florida. After shot gun firing ranges and classroom instruction, we were given instruction on firing 50 caliber machine guns from the side windows of an AT-11 at target socks being towed by a T-6 aircraft.

On 16 November 1943, two AT-11's collided and all ten gunnery students were killed along with 6 crew members. I was assigned to escort the remains of PFC Peter L. Long, who was killed in the crash, to his mother in San Antonio, Texas. Pete and I were classmates at the Santa Ana Pre-Flight Aviation Cadet Center. Since I lacked only 3 days before graduation, I was permitted to graduate early. I was promoted to Sgt. and received

my AP Aerial Gunners wings before leaving for Texas. I was awarded an AFC 612 and was ready to join a combat crew.

After returning from San Antonio, I was assigned to Transition School at Avon Park, Florida where I joined a crew of ten for B17 Crew Training. We flew practice landings, simulated bomb runs, gun practice and navigational missions. At long last I had found a job-not the one I wanted, but at least I was flying.

In late March or early April, 1944, my crewmates and I were sent to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. From there we were bussed to New York City Harbor where we boarded the Queen Elizabeth and sailed for Greenock, Scotland. From Edinburgh we were trucked to Charley Hall and then to the 95th Bomb Group (H) near Horham (h's are silent), England. After one crew member complained about the ball turret being too small, I volunteered to take that position as ball turret gunner. We flew a shuttle mission to Poltava, Russia and returned to England by way of Foggia, Italy.

My crewmates and I remained together completing 35 missions, and we all survived.

MEDALS RECEIVED: Distinguished Flying Cross; Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Commendation Medal; Good Conduct Medal; American Campaign Medal; European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 1 silver and 2 bronze stars; and World War II Victory Medal.

While enrolled in Texas A & M, I served in the Texas National Guard as a Technical Sergeant, and was called for service after the Texas City Explosion. I enlisted 15 April 1947 and was separated 23 June 1948.

I graduated Texas A & M with a Distinguished Military Student Badge and was offered a commission in the Regular Air Force. I declined and accepted a commission in the new US Air Force Reserves. I remained in the Reserves in various positions until my retirement 7 December 1982 as Lt. Col., USAF Ret.