

War Era Story Project 2012

Submitted by: Roger Adam

Current home town: Mansfield, Ohio

Age: 90

Roger Adam, of Richland County, Ohio, entered Heidelberg College on a special program sponsored by the U.S. government. He was trained as a nitrator and assigned to a TNT plant near Sandusky, Ohio. Roger was the person to mix chemicals for bomb explosives! But Roger saw all his friends leaving home to serve in WWII, and he strongly felt he should also serve in a combat capacity.

Roger enrolled in the government's V5 program, attending flight schools around the country and earning certifications as a pilot, a navigator and a bombardier. He was commissioned as an ensign at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station in Texas.

As a pilot, Roger flew the four-engine patrol bombers. "Our mission was not bombing land targets, but Japanese warships and supply vessels." His crew took on Japanese Zeros, sank a Japanese vessel, and also searched for downed American flight crews forced to ditch in the Pacific.

His unit was told by their commander early in August of 1945 to stay away from a certain area of Japan. The first atomic bomb (Little Boy) was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, killing about 70,000 Japanese. The second bomb (Fat Boy) was dropped on August 9 on Nagasaki, killing an additional 20,000 and drastically changing the nature of the war. Japan officially surrendered on September 2. (Roger flew cover for the surrender of the Japanese forces on Truk Island.)

Roger earned the rank of Lieutenant JG in 1945 and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with two stars, and several other campaign decorations. His service in the Navy lasted almost four years.

Roger returned to Ohio, married Katie, and they raised three children. He worked 36 years at Standard Tube/Tech Form, and has given hundreds of hours in volunteer service to his community.

Story recorded by Cecelia K. Whittenberger.

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