

# Fredrick D. Hummel

## U.S. Navy Aviation Mechanics Mate



**Frederick D. Hummel**

U.S. Navy

Aviation Mechanics Mate, WWII

Frederick D. Hummel entered the U.S. Navy at 27 years of age and served two years and four months as an Aviation Mechanics Mate. He was sent to boot camp at Farragut, Idaho and further training at the Naval Air Technical Training CTR school at Norman, Oklahoma. He was later sent to the U.S. Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida. Frederick graduated "Honor Man 1st Class, NATTC" at Norman, Oklahoma.

The following memories were submitted by his wife Mary. Fred was one of the first draftees from Sangamon County. When he left for boot camp, they sent him to Farragut, Idaho. It sounded like the end of the earth to me. We wrote each other

every day and I have all of Fred's letters in a bundle. The kids can read them when I'm gone and know how much we loved each other. When Fred finished boot camp and came home on leave, I took the train back to Chicago with him. I saw him off to Idaho about midnight and then caught a train back to Springfield about 2 a.m.

Within a week, he was on his way to Norman, Oklahoma for 9 months of Aviation Mechanics Training at NATTC. I soon joined him there and found a room near the University of Oklahoma campus. I got a job as cashier at the WAVES Store on base. Fred only got in town on Wednesday and Saturday nights, but we could see each other for a few minutes on base most days.

I remember one cold, snowy morning when Fred had to be back at base by 6 a.m. When we got to the gate, the guard told me to go on and drive him to the barracks. Little did he know that I had only thrown a robe and coat over my nightgown. Thank goodness I didn't have a flat tire or get stuck. I would really have been embarrassed.

After graduation, Fred was assigned to the Navy Air Station at Pensacola, Florida as a mechanic on PBV's. There were 9 separate training fields, one as far away as Alabama. I got a job in the main Ship Service Office on base. We finally found an efficiency apartment in Warrington, just outside the main gate. They were all alike. They were built in rows. Everyone made friends easily. We all helped each other. On holidays, we would move our beds out, tables in, and share our holidays with friends. We got to taste lots of regional foods.

On V E Day and V J Day, the sailors had to get special passes to come home. The complex became one big celebration with music and dancing in the streets and plenty of booze. There were lots of headaches the next day. I don't know why Fred and I were so blessed to be together. I really felt guilty as my sister Helen, who was married to Fred's brother Bill, had 2 little

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boys and Bill was sent overseas as soon as he finished at Ft. Leonard Wood. He served in the China-Burma-India Theater and drove a big supply truck over the Burma Road which was mountainous with hair pin curves and very dangerous. Bill said later that he wondered sometimes if he would ever make it home to see his family.

Fred was discharged in December, 1945. We headed home in time for Christmas. Our best gift that year, and I didn't know it then, but I was pregnant. Nine months later our first baby was born. I have a scrapbook with pictures of those war years with sugar and gas stamps in it and Fred's VE Day Pass and my dependent medical pass and my last pay check. I cleared \$46.15, withholding tax was 60 cents. Looking through it brings happy and nostalgic memories. Fred died January 21, 1980.

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Written by Mary Hummel

Auburn, Illinois