

Willis (Bill) Kirkton

U.S. Army Air Corps 467th Bomb Group and 8th Air Force



Willis 'Bill' Kirkton
U.S. Army Air Corps
Flew Over Germany In B-24

I entered military service at the age of 17 years and was assigned to Sheppard Field Texas. I also served at Montham Field, Arizona, with the 8th Air Force in Norwich, England, Harlingen Air Force Base, Texas, with the 467th Bomb Group, and the 8th Air Force in England. I served 3 years in the U.S. Army Air Force.

I was born and raised on a farm in Livingston County, Illinois. I attended a rural school for 8 grades, then went to Gridley for 2 years and spent 2 years at El Paso High School and 3 years at Eureka College. I have belonged to the Auburn, IL American Legion Post 277 for 38 years.

I guess my experience in the war was about the same as others. We were there because we felt the need to curb a tyrant from taking away our freedom of religion and government. When we flew missions, the routine was as follows. We were awakened about 2:30 a.m. by the C.O. We lived 2 crews in a hut. Only the crew flying that day was awakened. Trucks would pick us up at 3:00 a.m. and take us to the mess hall for breakfast. About an hour later, they drove us to the flight line to ready ourselves for the coming mission. We would not know where we were going until our interrogation. After mapping

our route, we were delivered to our plane for take off, which was usually at 7:00 a.m. After forming with all the other planes in our group, we would start for Germany which was around 10:00 a.m. All missions were generally flown at about 20,000 feet. Temperatures ranged from 20 degrees below zero to 60 degrees below.

After bombing the target we would return to the air base and usually landed around 4:00 p.m. The B-24's were in the 2nd Air Division. There were about 15 bases all within a 50-mile radius of Norwich, England. Each bomb group usually put up 20 to 30 aircraft. Conditions in that part of England were foggy with little clear distance vision.

I was in England from February 3, 1945 through June of 1945. I wrote to my wife every day and to my mother every other day. I was always aware of the heart-break of my mother having two sons overseas. I truly hope others felt the same. Now, after being married 54 years, a father of three and grandfather of six, I do appreciate what my parents have done for me.

Willis 'Bill' Kirkton
Auburn, Illinois