

was good because there was no animosity in the crews, but sometimes the reasons were not good, like having a religious bias. For that reason, there was some shuffling around of the crews. It was very different than today.

Most people did not pass pilot training, and since Ed did, he had the large responsibility of being in charge of his crew. His crew consisted of his copilot, navigator, flight engineer, radar operator, bombardier, and gunners. They went overseas in January of 1945.

There had been attempts to bomb Japan before that by flying from India to China, but this was very inefficient. The United States had previously owned Guam, but the Japanese military took over the entire Pacific Theater. Once our military regained the Mariana Islands, it was much easier to send airplanes over Japan and back.

Ed's crew was stationed on the island of Tinian, where there were six runways. There were still some Japanese soldiers occupying the island and hiding in caves to signal to Japan, but they did not know where and when the U.S. would drop bombs. Over the next eight months, from January to August 1945, Ed and his crew flew 32 missions dropping bombs over Japan.



The bombings started out slower in January and February, and began to pick up in March. The most B-29s flown over Japan at one time was 800, with each plane dumping 15 tons of bombs. During some of the missions, Ed and his crew were shot at by smaller Japanese fighter planes, one time by a dozen fighter planes at once. They had to patch up any holes shot in the plane after each mission. Over the course of the 32 missions, Ed's plane got 141 holes.

A typical day for Ed and his crew was waking up and having breakfast, followed by a briefing for the night mission. They would then go down to the flight line, inspect the plane, and talk to the ground crew. Once the plane was ready to go, Ed would make the 7.5-hour flight from Tinian to Japan, drop bombs and often get shot at while over Japan, and then make the 7.5-hour flight back to Tinian. They had to make sure they had enough fuel for 15 hours, and that the engines were in shape. B-29s have four engines (2,200 horsepower

each) but can fly on two, and another plane even had to glide in to Iwo Jima, halfway between Japan and Tinian, on only one engine in an emergency.

Each airplane flew a couple of missions each week. Ed was part of the 300 plane March 10th mission involved in the bombing of Tokyo, which was the most devastating bombing mission. Over the course of eight months, Ed had friends' planes go down, which was terrifying. Of the B-29s that went out, about 20% did not return. Each mission was a huge risk.

Besides dropping bombs, the U.S. Navy also planned out locations for the Air Force to drop mines. The purpose of the mines was to block shipping channels to stop materials going to Japan. With Japan cut off from their supply of food and raw materials and down to only 10% of their shipping, the hope was that they would surrender. They finally did in August 1945, and the war ended.

After the war, the Navy had to de-arm the mines that had not yet exploded. Thankfully, Ed

and the other Air Force pilots had followed their instructions, and they knew exactly where the mines were. The Army Air Force wanted to prove their value and raise funds, so they planned a nonstop flight from Japan to Washington, D.C. Ed was one of three pilots on a crew that flew one of four planes nonstop from Hokkaido. It was a 27.5-hour flight, and widely publicized.

When Ed returned home, he went to college, and graduated from USC in 1949. He started his career in mechanical engineering, first with General Electric, where he worked in New York then in San Jose. His boss became the president of U.S. Electric Motors, and hired Ed as the plant manager. He moved cities several times, living in Nashville, Tennessee, Prescott, Arizona, and back to San Jose. He worked for a couple more companies, but his role was mostly managing people. Ed enjoyed managing big organizations, and was told he was good at it! He retired at age 65.

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