



Arthur Burch

Air Force
World War II
487th Bomber group

I was seventeen years old and attending high school in Dallas when I got a six-month deferment. I joined the Air Force in the cadet corps. I went to A & M for the first six months and then got a letter from my recruiting officer telling me to get ready. It was time to go. I found out that my eyes were not up to the standard they wanted for their cadet program so I went to Air Force gunnery school.

Word had gotten out that carrots would help your eyes and your ability to see the charts so I went to drinking carrot juice by the quart to be able to pass the Air Force physical examination to get in. It worked, or at least they changed the requirements to get in. I think they changed their requirements according to what they needed.

On most bombers there was one pilot, one co-pilot, a navigator, a bombardier and the gunners. I was assigned as a gunner on a B-17. I flew out of England and was stationed in Lavenham. It was an Air Force base seventy-five miles north of London. I was there about three months. When I got there we went through all the training. With the crew together we flew practice, trial missions. We flew a new B-17 over to England and by the time we got there the war was just about to come to an end. We still flew practice missions but we never did actually fly combat missions. We went through all that time and training and then we turned around and flew back to the US with the idea that the war with Japan was still going on. We thought that they would pick our crew and go to the South Pacific. By the time we got that put together, the war over there was over. We spent most of our time as an air sea rescue unit out of Florida.

I was discharged April 1946 in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Our bomber group had

reunions at one time but we didn't fly together enough or go through combat together enough to be very close. It was only about six months. My time in the military was a plus. Of course, I knew that I was doing something that I didn't want to do again. It matured me and I know some people that I would not have known otherwise.

I was not married when I went into service, but Martha and I were dating. We were in the same high school in Dallas and were sweethearts, but we didn't get married until the next year, 1943. I had a football scholarship and lettered in baseball while I was waiting to go into the Air Force, but decided I wanted to get married and didn't want to continue to play football. I changed over to the G. I. Bill and the government paid for my education through that program. I got my degree in architecture, and we got married while I was still in the training program in Tyler.

I was a Christian when I went into service. I had a wife and mother and family who prayed for me all the time. I knew it. Both Martha and I came from Christian families. We all knew the Lord. . He has been good to me since the war.

We came to Green Acres in 1968 when we had teenagers. We were blessed with four children, three boys and a baby girl. We have eleven grandchildren who are the delight of our lives. Martha and I have been married fifty-five years.