

Richard John Faulkner
b. 10/08/1924, West Easton, NY
Army Air Force Serial # 12214475

I moved to the farm in Randallsville, NY in September 1928. Our family moved to Mottville, NY in July 1937.

I graduated from Skaneateles High School in Skaneateles, NY in June 1942. Then on October 10, 1942, two days after my 18th birthday, I signed up with the Army Air Force. I was inducted on December 11, 1942

From Syracuse, NY, I went to Fort Niagara, NY. Then to Miami Beach, FL on December 16, 1942 for Basic Training. I went to Seymour Johnson Field Airplane and Engine School in North Carolina on January 6, 1943. I entered Fort Myers Florida Gunnery School on July 17, 1943.

I then went to Dalhart, TX where I was assigned to B-17 training as a Ball Turret Gunner with the Paul Martin Crew on September 19, 1943. The Paul Martin crew went for further combat training in Pyote, TX on October 11, 1943.

In January 1944, we went to Grand Island, NB to pick up an airplane. I was processed and started for England. We flew first to Syracuse, NY but the field was covered with ice, so we kept on to Grenier Field in New Hampshire. We stayed overnight and were off to Goose Bay, Labrador where it was 40 degrees below zero. We stayed here for two days before we could get a tailwind to help get us to Keflevek Island. Due to the German air raid and an ice storm, we had to stay here for five days.

We left for England and landed at Stornaway, Scotland where we left our airplane. From here we took a train to Stone, England to receive our assignment. Gunners were sent to the wash England for more combat gunnery training on February 10, 1944.

We took a train Diss, England for assignment on March 10, 1944 to the 100th Bomb Group 350th Squadron at Thorpe-Abbotts Field. We flew five training and diversion flights.

On March 18, 1944, we flew our first mission with the bombs. There was a delay in take off for 1 hour because of fog. Then we took off for Augsburg, Germany.

The formation broke up and when we reformed we were hit by another B-17 which went down. Only two people got out of that plane. Our plane broke in half just in front of the ball turret with the wing and nose going one way and the waist and tail flipping over with me in the turret now on top. I got the door open and forced my way up and pulled myself over the side with my parachute attached on one side. I then snapped the other side of the chute and straightened myself so I was falling face down so I could see how far I was from the ground.