

## Flying Tigers Scholarship 2013

In 1944 Earl Strobeck was apart of the 69th Depot Repair squadron part of the 14th Air Force famed Flying Tigers. My grandpa decided to enlist himself into the military, so he could finish up high school, graduate, and avoid being drafted. He ended up graduating a semester early in January. On February 5th, 1944 he officially started his military service in Kessler, Mississippi where he was put through basic training. He spent 4 1/2 months there training since he would be going into World War II a few months later. He learned a lot during his time there. A month later he was shipped out to Denver, Colorado to a tech school called Lowery Field. During his time there, he learned how assemble guns and turrets. My grandpa excelled at this job and was assigned to be a part of the 69th repair squad shortly after. My grandpa was only there for a month. Shortly after leaving Lowery Field, he was sent to a training center in San Antonio, Texas where he went through more intense training. My grandpa wasn't at the Kellyfield Training Center for long. He was only in Kellyfield for a month. In October of 1944 my grandpa was sent to New York City, New York where he was sent to attend Sperry Jeryoscope School. After attending Sperry Jeryoscope School for a couple of months, he was sent home to spend time with his family until he was called to serve in the war. He spent a total of three months until he was called to service in the war.

In January 1945 he got a call saying that he would be traveling to Los Angeles, California to go to Bombay, India. The trip to Bombay, India lasted for a month, and he arrived there with many other people towards the beginning of March 1945. Once he arrived in Bombay, India, he had to take a train to Calcutta, India. The train ride was five days long. The group my grandpa had been traveling with was called the 14th Air Force, but the it was the Chinese gave them the nickname of The Flying Tigers. Once there, they were to drive trucks to China down a road called Burma Road which was known for having sharp turns and a narrow path. My grandpa recalled being a driver. It took twenty-five days to get there. They all arrived in Kunming, China in May 1945. When he was there he was part of the China Burma India Theater of Operations. During his time there, he also got a job as an office clerk secretary. This job included typing many documents and issuing supplies such as guns which he did until December 1945.

In January 1946, he was sent to Shanghai, China. Once he was in Shanghai, China, he was given an executive job position of military policeman. His duties included patrolling other soldiers and keeping a close look over military base operations. He had this job for the rest of his time in the war. As the war was coming closer to an end, my grandpa told me about how many people started to leave the war, because they had enough points to get out. My grandpa told me that he was in China a little while longer than most of the people he was with, because he didn't have enough points to get out of the war. He was one of fifty people still left in China. My grandpa had said that if you wanted to leave the war you had to have forty points to get out, but he only had twenty-four points. My grandpa as well as several other people started to get out of the war by May 1945.

I did this scholarship last year in February of 2012 and learned so much from my grandpa. I had always liked to learn about history, so this was very interesting to me. In late March 2012 I found out that I got the scholarship and called my grandpa up right away to tell him the good news. He was so happy to hear that I had got the scholarship. Little did I know that this would be

the last time I would get to talk to him. My grandpa ended up passing away last year on April 7th, 2012 at the age of 86. It was only a week or two earlier that I had found out about getting the scholarship. It was completely unexpected. I was so glad that I ended up doing the scholarship because now after taking what I learned from him last year, I can write about all his experiences in his honor. My grandpa's funeral service was held on April 16th, 2012 at the Horan & McConaty Family Chapel which followed with a graveside service at Fort Logan National Cemetery. Everybody loved my grandpa. He had a huge turnout where people from different parts of the United States came just to be apart of the celebration of his life. Members of the military gave him a twenty-one gun salute. My cousin Josh, my brother Chad and I were generously given a statue that was on one of the four corners of his coffin, of a bald eagle sitting on a branch behind the American flag. My grandma was given the american flag that was sitting on his coffin that a few members of the military folded up a put in a case that she could have, which is now in her apartment with her that she can look at daily. She has had dementia for a few years and now lives with my family here in Boise, Idaho in a retirement community. My grandpa was such a saint to put up with her during all that time. He never raised his voice at anyone and never cussed. He was loved by all his family as well as several members of the Flying Tigers. On a conference call with my family, the members of the Flying tigers shared several stories about him during the war and all of them expressed how much they loved and missed him. My family and I want to thank all the Flying Tigers for all the support they gave us during that hard time.