



**Ray
Johnson**
Navy

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Jul 5, 1922 -

BIRTHPLACE: Concordia, Kansas

SOLDIER DETAILS

DIVISION: Navy

THEATER OF OPERATION: Pacific

SERVED: Aug 11, 1942 - Nov 12, 1945

HONORED BY: Staff of Kansas Veterans Home

BIOGRAPHY

After this experience, I know there is a God in heaven. I was stationed on Attu Island, as part of Fleet Wing 8, #139 Bomber Squadron, as an AMM 2nd Class PO, flight engineer. Our mission was reconnaissance and bombing. We were on a 700 mile bombing run from Attu Island, Alaska, to the Northern tip of Japan, in 1943 or 1944. On our first bombing run we dispersed several boxes of hand personnel bombs through the flair chute onto our target, a Japanese runway. Circling around to take another strike on the runway to dump our 500 pound bombs on them, suddenly a hurricane took our airplane away from us, directly into Siberia, Russia. During this entrance into Russia we had no control over the plane, which was covered in ice. We dove so fast once I floated around the airplane like an astronaut. Our two pilots fought the controls to no avail, unable to take the plane out of the storm until we were well into Siberia. After taking a survey of the damage, still in flight, we discovered we had lost both of our generators one off each engine they had packed with ice and shorted out. We had also lost all our 40 volt electric circuit radio, radar, and top turret gun included. The pilots decided we would fly as high as we could over Russia since we didn't know our exact location; this would give us the ability to observe the area in case we were attacked as a bandit plane. Our two crew navigators figured out our location by using a ship sexton and put us on a flight course back toward Attu. Recognizing we were low on gasoline we began to throw things out of the airplane including radar, radio, armor plating, bombs, attached gasoline tanks, or anything that wiggled got pitched out the door to lighten the load which would extend our gasoline. After crossing the Bering Straits we picked up another storm in the Attu area. When we broke out of the storm we found ourselves about 5 feet off of our own runway. Upon our landing on the runway we had 3 Base Protection P38 fighters coming off the runway to take out our bandit bomber, by orders. Approaching us, propeller to propeller, the three fighters buzzed over the top of our bomber. All of the crew was interrogated separately as to where we had been all day. My interrogator asked if we had found a landing field and had a picnic. I told him to take the film out of our wings, to find out where we had been. On returning the bomber to the shop I told the A & R Chief what I threw out of the airplane. His remark was what did you do that for; I had to make a report and put it all back!