

AVIATION ORDNANCEMAN ROY D. ENDERLIN IN WORLD WAR II

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When Roy turned 18 years of age in August, 1943, he became eligible for the wartime selective service. Roy received notice to report for physical examination for the draft on 9 September 1943. At the request of William Curry Wiggins, Roy's employer at the time, the local Selective Service Board granted Roy a 2-C classification due to the financial hardship Wiggins would experience if Roy were to be selected for the draft. The 2-C classification was first issued on 14 September 1943, and was renewed on 16 November. The Selective Service Board reconsidered the November renewal, however, and reclassified him as 1-A on 12 January 1944. Roy was ordered to report for his physical examination at the San Francisco Armed Forces Induction Station on 6 February 1944, where he received certification of fitness acceptable by the Navy. Roy's Navy induction order was issued on 3 March 1944, instructing him to report to the Greyhound bus depot in Napa on 22 March 1944 to begin his active service. At his request, he was registered as a "selective volunteer," rather than "draftee!" His serial number was 888-08-54.

Once processed in San Francisco, Roy was transported by train to San Diego, California. His service record began with 8 weeks of basic training (boot camp) at the Naval Training Station, San Diego. He was then shipped to aircraft ordnance school at Norman, Oklahoma, under the rank of Seaman, Second Class. Roy received his certificate of completion of study at the Aviation Ordnanceman's School (NATTCen) at Norman on 9 September 1944. At this time, Roy qualified for promotion to the rank of Aviation Ordnanceman, Third Class, after meeting the eligibility requirement of being in the top 10% of his class.

From Norman, Oklahoma, Roy was shipped to the U.S. Naval Air Station at Kingsville and Corpus Christi, Texas, for gunnery training. At Corpus Christi, Roy excelled at machine gunnery skills. In one instance, he achieved recognition for the highest percentage of hits in a training exercise involving a 30 caliber machine gun turret mounted on a moving truck, firing at a stationary target. Roy scored about 250 hits out of about 350 rounds on that exercise. He also received the highest average grade achieved at that point in time at the school, and was personally congratulated by the base commander. Roy didn't have the heart to tell the commander that he wasn't going to be a gunner (he was too tall to qualify)! He was issued a certificate of completion of study at the Aviation Free Gunnery Unit on 23 October 1944.

Roy was then transferred to Alameda Naval Air Station, California, from Corpus Christi to await orders to be shipped out to the Pacific Theater. Word came down that volunteers were needed at torpedo school in San Diego, and Roy was "volunteered" to go there instead. Every month away from the war was a month well spent, as far as he was concerned! Roy completed advanced torpedo training at the U.S. Naval Repair Base (Destroyer base or DESBase) at San Diego on 15 January 1945.

Following completion of his training at San Diego, Roy returned to Alameda Naval Air Station to await orders. There, he was assigned as Aviation Ordnanceman, Third Class, to "V" Division (ordnance) of the seaplane tender, U.S.S. Pocomoke (AV-9). Later, he was assigned to "F" Division, with the gunners' mates. The Pocomoke had recently returned to Mare Island Naval Shipyard for alterations and repairs, having been relieved of tending duties in the Kosol Passage in the Palau Islands. The Pocomoke returned to sea (with Roy aboard) on 27 January 1945. On arrival at Pearl Harbor, the crew of the Pocomoke received orders to join the Air Force, Seventh Fleet at Manus in the Admiralty Islands, followed by various assignments in the South Pacific. The primary mission of the ship was to repair, reload and maintain PBM-type patrol bombers, along with housing and feeding of their crews. Roy's first realization that he was really in the war zone came at San Pedro Bay in the Leyte Gulf, when the crew was ordered to general quarters in response to an ineffectual air raid by a Japanese aircraft referred to as "Bedcheck Charlie." The Leyte Gulf was also the area where Roy's cousin, Milton Enderlin, was wounded in action. Another close call came during the passage of the Pocomoke through the Mindanao and Sulu Seas. There, in a convoy with a U.S. destroyer escort and an Australian frigate, the Pocomoke made contact with an enemy submarine. The intruder was apparently scared off when the convoy dropped depth charge patterns.

Following the end of the war on 15 August 1945, the U.S.S. Pocomoke continued in a patrolling status, but all offensive actions by planes were discontinued. The ship returned to Pearl Harbor on 16 February 1946, and arrived at San Diego on 28 February 1946. Roy debarked from the Pocomoke on 2 March 1946, and reported to Camp Elliot, a Marine base at San Diego. There, he put in time until paperwork could be processed to allow him 30 days' leave. This was arranged to allow him to return home on account of his father's recent surgery. After completing his period of leave, Roy reported to Camp Shoemaker, near Pleasanton, California, to complete his Naval career. Because he had not yet earned sufficient points to qualify for discharge, he spent about a month at Camp Shoemaker, tending phone calls at the camp's headquarters. Roy finally received his honorable discharge from the U.S. Naval Personnel Separation Center, Shoemaker, on 19 May 1946.

Roy's various service recognitions include participation in the Asiatic Pacific Theater and American Area, Victory commendation, and a star for participation in the invasion of Palawan Island as part of the Philippine Liberation.