pre uk

wendell lee

1944

# marching orders

My name is Wendell Ray Lee, I was born August 19,1925 in Pauls Valley Oklahoma. I grew up on a ranch owned by my father, who also ran the local dairy. I had to work on the farm and helped deliver the milk in a horse drawn cart and I loved it.

I was interested in the work right from the start and won several prizes in the local shows. When i was 15 milk started to be delivered into town in big refrigerated trucks and my dad found himself out of business. He sold all his cattle and turned one of his barns into a nightclub, it was to become one of the largest in Oklahoma.

 I attended Paul’s Valley High School in 1942 and graduated, with straight A’s, aged 17 and managed to earn a scholarship to Oklahoma State College. There I studied to become a veterinarian but by the time I was 18 I realised I would be drafted and left college and moved to California to be with my mother, as my parents were by then, divorced.

While in California I worked for the Army Quartermaster Corps and began to date my wife but I remained single for the time being.

In 1943 I enlisted in the Army as a private and went to Sheppard Field, Texas for my basic training. After which I went to Radio Operators school at Sioux Falls, South Dakota where I was fortunate to graduate as an honor student.

After, radio school I went to Yuma, Arizona for aerial gunnery school to learn to operate the 50 Caliber machine guns on a B-17. This was quickly followed by a transfer to Dyersburg Tennessee with my crew to begin flying practice missions again in a B-17.

After several weeks of practice we were ordered to the east coast by train and took ship to the UK. We arrived in the Christmas time 1944 and flew our first mission with the 849th Squadron of the 490th bomb Group on February 22. 1945.

The rest is history

Deceased. January 10, 2010. Sacramento California

