

My name is Frank L. Harrell. I was born 24 June 1921. I joined the army when I was twenty-one years old on 22 September 1942. I was inducted at Fort Bragg, NC and after about four days, I was sent to St. Petersburg, Fla., as a new U.S. Army Air Corp Recruit, where we were billeted in a commercial motel. At first we had no uniforms or army equipment. Soon we were sent to the U.S. Army Air Corp base at Clearwater, Fla., issued our equipment, and took the seventeen-week training there. After basic training, our group was sent across country to Los Angeles, CA, where I was given a choice of going to sheet metal repair school or welding repair school to become an Air Corp maintenance mechanic. Next I was sent to Kelley Air Force Field at San Antonio, TX, where I became a ground crew mechanic for a B: 29 bomber squadron. Our next training stop was in Great Bend, Kansas for further training as part of a B: 29 squadron for about one month. In February 1944 our ground crew mechanics company was sent to Norfolk, VA to await shipment to the Pacific Theatre. We were soon on board of an English troop ship headed for Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea. It was hard to become accustomed to the British chow, especially fish for breakfast, instead of bacon or sausage. We went through the Suez Canal. Our debarkation took place in Bombay, India. We were taken by train to Calcutta, India, where we joined our B: 29 squadron. The only tools we had were in the boxes we carried with us- no metal shops or shop tools. We patched damaged metal the best we could while the B: 29's flew raids on Japan across the hump and China. We were in what was called the China- Burma- India or CBI Theatre of War. When Tinian Island was taken in early 1945, the Navy Sea Bees built an airstrip that could accommodate the B: 29's, and we soon found ourselves on Tinian, while the B: 29's flew a much shorter bombing route to Japan. We knew nothing of the atomic bomb being

flown from our Tinian base until it was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan- and then the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. When the Japanese surrounded one week later, the island of Tinian went wild. Every kind of weapon was being fired into the air from small arms to anti aircraft guns. Our commanding officer ordered all personal weapons brought to headquarters until everything quieted down. In September 1945 we boarded a troop ship for Los Angeles, and landed there about thirty days later. The cross-country train ride was uneventful. On Thanksgiving Day on the train, we were hoping to have traditional turkey meal, but our food supply on the troop train did not include turkey. Since we were almost back to Fort Bragg, NC- home- no one complained. I was discharged on 26 November 1945 after just over three years in the U.S. Army Air Force, glad to be back home.

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E. Frank Harrell (November 13, 2009)

ELM CITY - Eli Franklin "Frank" Harrell, 88, died Friday, November 13, 2009.

Frank was born to Guy B. and Lena Taylor Harrell on June 24, 1921. He married Elsie Winstead of Nash County on December 20, 1945. Elsie preceded Frank in death on October 16, 2009.

One of the greatest generation, Frank served in the U.S. Army Air Corp from 1942 until 1945. He was a member of the Cox-Putney American Legion Post, Elm City. He was a former volunteer fireman in Elm City and was a shiner. Frank had been a member of Elm City Missionary Baptist Church since 1952 and was ordained as a deacon on December 5, 1956. He served on many committees and was Chairman of the Board of Deacons several times. He loved his church and he loved people. He never met a stranger.

Frank worked in the parts department of several car dealerships in Rocky Mount and Wilson. He also worked with Haynes Industrial Supply and with Car Quest in Wilson until his retirement at age 82.

Funeral, Saturday, 6 PM, Elm City Missionary Baptist Church, followed by a time of visiting and sharing.

He is survived by his daughter, Linda Petway (Milton) of Graham; son, Steve Harrell (Rosanne) of Elm City; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; brother and sister-in-law, Wiley and Roxie Harrell of Elm City; sister-in-law, Blanche W. Joyner of Rocky Mount.

Memorials are suggested to Elm City Missionary Baptist Church, PO Box 667, Elm City, NC 27822.

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