

# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR

**SSgt. Arthur Bernard Benson**



Arthur Bernard Benson was born in Michigamme, Michigan on September 2, 1924 and graduated from Michigamme High School in 1942.

Arthur began his military service in March of 1942, when he was drafted into the United States Army Air Forces, in a swearing-in ceremony in Marquette, Michigan. After the swearing-in, he reported to the induction center at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, starting his active service on March 19, 1943 and was assigned to basic training at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Upon completion of basic training, he was sent to the Pratt and Whitney airplane engine mechanic school in Flint, Michigan. Upon completion of this schooling, he volunteered for gunnery training and was sent to Wendover Field, Utah where he was trained with 50 caliber machine guns. In addition to his training in Utah, he continued training in Nevada, California and Florida. On November 1, 1943, he received his gunnery wings.

After a brief hospitalization in West Palm Beach, Florida, Arthur boarded a C-47 transport plane to rejoin his crew in Italy. After the 10-day flight, he was rejoined with the crew at the base in Grottaglie, Italy and assigned to the 719<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron of the 449<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (H) attached to the 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force. He was assigned to a B-24 Liberator nicknamed "Skipper"; his first mission was on May 13, 1944. From May to September 1944, flying 265 hours as a left waist gunner, he flew bombing missions to Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Romania, and Yugoslavia. On Arthur's final mission, September 1, 1944, he flew to Mitrovica, Yugoslavia with the 449<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group in strategic operations that targeted railroad bridges. This was Arthur's 50<sup>th</sup> and final mission, the day before he turned 20 years old.

Arthur's military citations include the Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Medal, WWII Victory Medal, Presidential Unit Citation and the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters for "meritorious achievement while participating in sustained operational aerial activities against the enemy." In addition, his 449<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group

received two Distinguished Unit Citations for their successful raids in Bucharest and Ploesti, Romania.

Upon completion of his military service, Arthur was honorably discharged from the United States Army Air Forces on October 19, 1945 at Lincoln, Nebraska.