

Hallyn Crozier, Bryce Meyer
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Richard Nelson

Born in Moscow, Idaho on April 26, 1925 Richard Nelson began a extraordinary life. The story of Richard was told by Nancy Nelson, because Richard passed away fifteen years ago. He moved to Los Angeles, California in 1929 then moved back to Idaho and attended the University of Idaho for six months. After six months of college he joined the United States Air Force in 1943 when he was 18 years old. Richard had always dreamed of being a pilot, but when people found out he didn't have perfect 20/20 vision he could no longer become a pilot. So he was sent to radio school.

He went to radio school in South Dakota, and graduated top of his class and went on to be stationed in Clovis, New Mexico. He was assigned to the 509th composite group. There he was quickly called out to his first overseas job. He had 10 hours of radio school, and was commanded to be the Radio man for the colonel on the special one of a kind B-29, the Enola Gay. The B-29 was named after the pilots mother, Enola Gay Tibbets. The Enola Gay carried the 509th Composite Group that Richard Nelson which apart of. After practicing dropping bombs over the Salton Sea, the Enola Gay and her crew were ready to end the war with the single bomb.

The plane was armed in the air at 8,000 ft then flown at 30,000 when the bomb would be dropped. On August 6th the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Richard reported back to the tinian "Results Good" the another message "Results Excellent" and a third message that said "results excellent". Then another bomb was dropped on the 9th of August by another crew, and that ended WWII. Richard served 2 years in the Air Force, August 1943 to November 1945 and

received a Silver Star. During his time in the Air Force he wrote letters to his mom which his mom saved. After his return from Japan, he completed his time in the Air Force and then moved on to complete his education at University of Southern California where he majored in Business Administration.

Upon his graduation from USC, he went on to work at a company called Imperial Brass. While employed with Imperial Brass he met the love of his life Nancy, they talked off and on then finally started dating and got married on October 10, 1953, on Nancy's parents anniversary. They built a house in Boston, then soon realized they missed the sunny weather of California, moved to Palos Verdes then to Riverside in 1976 and started a family here, they had 2 girls. And Nancy still lives in the same Riverside house.

Richard stayed in contact with the Enola Gay crew members throughout his life like Theodore "Dutch" Van Kirk. He said that he "would only go back if times were the same as they were at that time" but he was never stressed about it he also "too young to be stressed". At first, Richard did not want never to attend the 509 reunions. One year his wife Nancy forced him to attend the 509 reunion and after that he attended every year. Richard unfortunately passed away at the age of 78 but his amazing wife still carries on his legacy and goes to the 509 composite group reunions. She will be attending the last reunion next year. Richard Nelson was and still is a hero to our nation and our world, the opportunity to have the chance to hear his story was an amazing experience. Richard was a man who enjoyed life with every moment and served our Country with compassion and love for our nation.