



NAME: Joe McNamara

BRANCH OF SERVICE: Royal Canadian Air Force

SERVED FROM: September, 1942 TO: 1945

THEATRE OF WAR: Europe, Far East

(Written by Cathy King, Branch 441 Legion)

Born on January 23, 1924 in Niagara Falls, Joe was the son of Joseph McNamara and Beatrice (nee Duncan). Joe had four sisters, Helen, Marie, Peggy and Barbara.

In September 1942 at the age of 18 Joe enlisted in the air force. For the first three months, he was sent to Technical Trade School living outside of the barracks. He then had three weeks basic training at Toronto Manning Depot. Following basic training Joe was sent to Technical Training in St. Thomas for four months. At the end of this training Joe was sent to Eastern Air Command and was stationed in Summerside, PEI. The base provided advanced navigational training for pilots and navigators over the Atlantic. The squadron was 1GRS (General Recognizance Squadron). Some members of the base were temporarily stationed in Goose Bay Labrador, Gander Newfoundland and a few went to Iceland. Their base had 100 Avro Anson aircraft and about 16 Canso flying boats which could patrol for up to 18 hours. The ground crew consisted of 3,000 which included approximately 600 WACs.

There were approximately 600 mechanics on base which included aero engine mechanics and airframe mechanics. Joe was an airframe mechanic, also known as a "rigger".

The worse incident he recalls was when they had to ferry in 100 aircraft from overseas due to bad weather and heavy fog. The first 99 planes landed safely, however the last plane crashed offshore killing