

Piloting the B-24 Bomber During World War II

by BJ Farmer

November 8, 2010

Most in the Eau Claire community know **BJ Farmer** as a successful businessman in various aspects of real estate and as an avid traveler, skier, biker and tennis player. However, long before he made his mark on this community, he served his country during World War II by piloting a B-24 in the Pacific theater. With Veterans Day just three days away, Farmer told the story of the B-24 and shared some of his experiences as her pilot.

The B-24 was first built in 1939 and was first used by the British on anti-submarine patrols in the Atlantic and later as a bomber in the Middle East. When the United States entered the war in 1941, it began taking delivery of B-24s. It was used in all theaters of the war, and was eventually designated as the standard heavy duty bomber. By the end of the war, over 59,000 B-24s had been built.

There were many different models built over the years, but with a few minor exceptions, they were all characterized by the double tail, carried a 10-member crew and had 10 guns. The plane was built around a central bomb bay that could carry up to 8,000 pounds of ordnance. The B-24 was powered by four 1,200 horsepower Pratt & Whitney engines, had a top speed of 300 mph and, when fully loaded, weighted 60,000 pounds.

According to Farmer, the B-24 was a "well-behaved" plane to fly, flew well on three engines, but due to its unique design, was very difficult to ditch. Farmer flew quite a few of his missions bombing Iwo Jima from 5,000 feet, and after the war, had the privilege of meeting one of the men who raised the flag on Iwo Jima.

Farmer shared more anecdotes and responded to questions.



BJ Farmer displaying a model of a B-24 Bomber that he flew in the Pacific theater during World War II