

Adam Parsons



Adam Parsons graduated from Akron's Garfield High School in 1938. He immediately set his sights in an engineering degree from The University of Akron. However, like so many other your men of that era, the events of December 7, 1941 changed everything. Both college and high school students began volunteering for the armed services.

Adam Parsons first joined the Army and became an infantry officer stationed in southern Ohio. But what he really wanted to do was to learn how to fly, so he volunteered for the Army Air Corps. His orders were waylaid, however, and while he was waiting for his transfer, he decided to give the Airborne a try.

In June of 1942, 21 year old Adam Parsons arrived at the Paratroop Training Center at Camp Toccoa, Georgia. There he was assigned to the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) of the 101st Airborne "Screaming Eagles" Division. (Note: This was the same 506th PIR made famous by the book and follow-on television ministries "Band of Brothers".)

Colonel Robert F. Sink (the only commander of the 506th PIR throughout the war) was concerned about the combat readiness of the members of the Regiment. Knowing how enthusiastic Lieutenant Parsons was about physical fitness, he assigned him to physical fitness as the Regimental Athletic Officer. Parsons helped develop the grueling airborne obstacle course and the famous 3-mile run up Currahee Mountain, which washed out many paratrooper recruit. He remained with the 506th through November 1942 when his transfer to flight training came through.

After Adam received his pilot's wings, he was assigned to the 8th Ari Force as a bomber pilot. Because of his bonds with the paratroopers, however, he opted to fly C-47s with the Troop Carrier Command. In early 1944, he found himself in England flying practice missions for Operation Overlord with the 94th Troop Carrier Squadron which was part of the 439th Troop Carrier Group, commanded by LTC Charles H. Young.

Operation Overlord would be the biggest invasion in military history. Combined allied forces would land almost 133,000 troops on the beaches of Normandy, France on the morning of June 4, 1944. Prior to the landings, almost 23,000 paratroops would be dropped behind enemy lines all along the Cotentin peninsula. LTC Young would fly the lead ship, the *Argonia*, with first Lieutenant Adam Parsons as his co-pilot. Young chose Parsons because he had gone through the rigorous Pathfinder training and because he needed someone reliable who could take over and "get the job done" in the event that something happened to him during the mission. The *Argonia* would carry Colonel Sink of the 506th PIR, Parson's old Commanding Officer at Camp Toccoa.

Adam Parsons would continue to fly Para-drop missions along with towed glider missions and resupply missions. After air bases were established in France, he would help every major operation after D-Day to include Operation Market-Garden (an unsuccessful Allied military operation whose goal was to force an entry into Germany and over the Rhine), the relief of Bastogne (part of a major German offensive launched through the densely forested Ardennes region of Wallonia in Belgium, and France and Luxembourg on the Western Front towards the end of World War II), Operation Varsity (the airborne component of Operation Plunder, the effort by the British 21st Army Group under

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery to cross the Rhine River and from there enter Northern Germany), Operation Effective (designed to land airborne forces south of Stuttgart, seize a nearby airfield and create an airhead for further forces to land in near the Black Forest. The operation was scheduled for 22 April, but was cancelled on 18 April due to Allied units encircling the Black Forest region and making it unnecessary.) and Operation Choker II (Operation Choker II was to be an airborne landing on the east bank of the Rhine near Worms, Germany which was cancelled due to Allied ground forces overrunning the proposed landing areas.)

Despite weather, enemy fighters and “flak so thick you could get out and walk on it” – Adam Parsons, like so many other pilots and crews of the Troop Carrier Command in World War II “got the job done”.

After the war, Parsons remained in the Army Air Forces until 1946 when he opted for active reserve status. But it didn't take long for the Air Force to come calling. With the opening shots of the Korean War, the Air Force again needed pilots. Adam Parsons was called back to active duty, this time flying night intruder missions in a twin engine B-26 attack bomber with the 17th Bombardment Group (Light).

In 1966, Adam Parson was looking at another war – Vietnam. Now a Lieutenant Colonel with family and business responsibilities, he decided to retire. Like so many others of the "Greatest Generation", Adam Parsons will tell you that he's no hero. “I was only doing the job that I was supposed to do.” But that job, that war, made heroes of them all.

The Parsons exhibit was dedicated on April 8, 2006 with Adam parsons in attendance.