Flying Officer Tony Adams was in the middle of the Indian Ocean after coming through the Suez Canal on the troopship Nieuw Amsterdam when Victory in Europe was declared. By that time he had completed 36 missions over Germany and occupied Europe as part of the British Royal Air Force's Bomber Command.

It was in 1942 that Tony Adams had to volunteer for one of the three services or be called up into the Army. Having heard the terrible stories as a primary schoolboy of the devastation in Gallipoli, Tony was horrified nearly to the point of fainting and did not want to be in the Army, so he and his best mate Hugh decided to volunteer for the RAAF Aircrew and got called up for a medical. His best friend was rejected as it turned out he was colour-blind, and Tony was placed on the RAAF Reserve.

Within weeks of his 18th birthday, Tony was called upon by the Army to join a Signals Unit attached to the 7th Field Regiment and shipped across to Western Australia defending the West Australian shore from Japanese invasion, until he received the news he wanted to hear- the RAAF had called.

Like all boys in the 1930s, Tony had a great interest in the historical flights of Kingsford Smith and others but never the desire to "fly a plane".

"Within my first days at Bradfield Park and some initial training in the basics of how to march, salute officers, elementary mathematics, and learning aircraft recognition, I was asked what I wanted to be trained as. I was good at Maths but couldn't drive a car let alone an aeroplane and not a mechanical person so said, Navigator. They must have picked up that I was taught Morse Code whilst in the Army, so soon I was posted to the RAAF Base in Parkes NSW for 6 months and then Point Pirie in South Australia for 6 weeks to become a Wireless Air Gunner after flying in Wackett Trainers and Fairey Battles.

"I was officially a wireless air gunner with the rank of Sergeant," he says.

Image description: The crews of Lancaster OJ-C RAF Squadron 149 with the aircrew standing (one absent) Tony on the right, and the ground crew astride an engine.

In June 1943 Tony was ready to head to Europe. Together with 200 fellow Australian airmen and 100 New Zealand volunteers, he sailed across the Pacific Ocean to America, eventually joining the Queen Mary troop ship from New York to the River Clyde, Scotland, carrying 16,683 troops and crew aboard. There was further training until he joined No. 149 Squadron in a crew of 7 including 4 Australians, based in a village called Methwold about 30 miles from Cambridge, England. Soon enough he was taking part in missions.

"This was called a Special Duties Squadron flying Short Stirling 4 engined bombers and was pretty hush-hush as to what we did which included dropping arms, ammunition and explosives at night to the French Resistance Forces flying 500 feet above the ground to avoid radar detection".

Months later upon return to base, his squadron was on a mission in Lancaster bombers taking out German industrial targets.

Tony describes their role in the war as under very hazardous operations and on one occasion received a message via morse code to "Return to Base" as they were getting near to the drop zone in Southern France. On landing back at Methwold in the early hours of the morning he was informed the Frenchmen awaiting delivery had been captured and Oerlikon and Bofors AA Guns had been set up awaiting their arrival.

Image Description: Both Air and Ground crews are in this photo. Tony is second from the right middle row.

"You could hear the shrapnel hitting your aircraft and you would see others not so lucky burst into flames or explode. On one occasion having seen a Lancaster near us completely on fire and I had been selected to transmit by Morse Code a short report on the raid, I was trembling".

By 6th December 1944, the crew had completed 35 Operations and on landing after bombing the synthetic oil refinery at Merseburg one of the Leuna Oil Plants, Tony kissed the ground and felt exceptionally lucky to celebrate his 21st Birthday six weeks from the date.

In December 2014, Tony was one of five Bomber Command Veterans who were presented with the French Legion of Honour by their Minister for Veteran Affairs at a Ceremony at the Anzac Memorial, Sydney, for his part in these operations and recognition of the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of France.

"In November 2019 I was invited to address 200 Officers at RAAF Richmond at a Dining In Night and I welcomed the opportunity to tell these young men and women about Bomber Command in WW2 and the huge loss of life being some 40% of Australians who served in Bomber Command.
I feel it is most important that the Australian Public generally are aware of the vital part played by Bomber Command Veterans in the defeat of Nazi Germany and at such a great cost of young lives".

"There were instances during the war where I should have been killed and I wasn't - pure luck."

Back row from left

Tony Adams-RAAF Wireless Operator, John Fox - RAF Rear Gunner, Harry Soo- RAF MidUpper Gunner, Stan Willett- RAF Flight Engineer

Seated: Jim Bateman- RAAF Navigator, Wal Cryer -RAAF Pilot and Captain Geoff Jones - RAAF Bomb Aimer

Today, Tony spends his time playing bowls and being an active member of the Bomber Command Branch where he enjoys the friendships and camaraderie and sense of community it brings to his life.

←aircrew only in front of the Ground Crew's hut

Below: Crew Geoff Jones RAAF Bomb Aimer,Jim Bateman ,DFC,RAAF ,Navigator ,Walter Cryer,DFC,RAAF,Pilot and Captain,John Fox ,RAF,Rear Gunner,(standing on wheel chock),Tony Adams ,RAAF,Wireless Operator,Stan Willett RAF ,Flight Engineer,Harry Soo ,RAF Mid Upper Gunner.