

**Richard Hamilton, U.S. Army Air Corps,  
WWII, POW**

**DOB: September 22, 1922 AGE: 101**

**Service History**

- **World War, 1939-1945**
  - Branch of Service: Army Air Forces/Corps
  - Service Unit/Ship: 401st Bomb Squadron, 91st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force
  - Location of Service: Basingbourn Air Base, England; Stalag Luft IV, Gross Tychow, Pomerania, Poland; European Theater
  - Highest Rank: Technical Sergeant
  - Dates of Service: 1942-1945
  - Prisoner of War: Yes
  - Entrance into Service: Drafted
  - Military Status: veteran
  - Service History Note: The veteran served as a radio operator, mechanic, and gunner on a B-17 bomber



Hamilton is a lifetime resident of Brattleboro who was born on Sept. 28, 1922. He said that there was no electricity in his family's farmhouse when he was growing up.

After graduating from high school, Hamilton was drafted into the United States Army Air Corps in 1942 and became a radio operator on a B-17 Flying Fortress.

During one particular mission in the skies over Germany, Hamilton's bomber was shot down. Four of his fellow crew members were killed, while he and the remaining five members of the crew were able to bail out of the spinning aircraft.

After parachuting down behind enemy lines, he was immediately captured by German forces.

"What I will always remember is having arms above my head and getting down to the edge of the village, and a mustachioed tall man spit in my face," he said.

Hamilton spent the following ten months in a German prison camp. After being liberated by the Russians, he and the other prisoners were forced to march for 77 days in the winter with little clothing, food or water.

"My feet were so infected, that they were yellow and black," Hamilton said.

After returning from the war in 1945, Hamilton married his then-girlfriend, Joyce, and the two settled back in Brattleboro before eventually having children.

They worked at the Skyline Restaurant on Hogback Mountain, a popular mountaintop restaurant with views of the surrounding landscape that stretched for miles.

"Our menu was griddle cakes and sausage and pure maple syrup," Hamilton said, fondly.

Hamilton and his wife worked at the Skyline Restaurant for nearly 50 years and were married until her death in 2005.

Now, Hamilton said he enjoys spending his days sitting on his porch and enjoying the quiet of his 34-acre farmland.

And his secret for living as long as he has? Eating healthy and treating others with respect.

"Do to others as you'd have others do unto you, and love thy neighbor as thyself. I think those served me well, all the time," he said.