



# Flight Lines

The newsletter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society

Winter 2024

## MISSION STATEMENT

**Our mission is to support the Eighth Air Force Historical Society (8AFHS) in perpetuating the history of The Mighty Eighth Air Force from 1942 to the present; to honor the memory of lost comrades; and to provide social events for 8thAFHS members living in Oregon and southern Washington.**

The organization is open to anyone who has an interest in WWII aviation. It is dedicated to preserving and passing on the knowledge of those who served in air combat and ground support over Europe, the Balkans, North Africa, India, Japan and the Pacific theater, and Russia during the Second World War.

The Oregon Chapter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society holds public meetings every winter (February); spring (May); summer (August) and winter (November).

The Oregon Chapter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society is a private non-profit corporation. Donations to this organization are

### From the Editor

If you have any comments or stories to contribute, please email them to me at [dwightg600@gmail.com](mailto:dwrightg600@gmail.com), or send them to:

*Editor, Flight Lines*  
2180 S.W. 78<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Portland, OR 97225

### Treasury/Roster

As of dec. 31 The Oregon Chapter currently has a bank balance of \$2,456.57. Total income for 2023

tax deductible. State of Oregon corporate registry number 1996184

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Tom Davis .....President**  
**Bert Campbell.....Vice-President**  
**Pat Keating.....Treasurer/Secretary**  
**Bob Dean.....at large**  
**Joe Burger.....at large**  
**John Kupsick.....at large**  
**Joani Hamilton.....at large**  
**Dwight Gruber.....at large**  
**Don Keller.....at large**  
.....(open)  
.....(open)

## Oregon Chapter Ground Crew

**Chapter Chaplain.....Sophia Kennedy**  
**8AFHS HQ Liaison .....Joani Hamilton**  
**Roster Manager..... Pat Keating**  
**Programs Chairman. ....Don Keller**  
**Evergreen Museum Representative...Bob Dean**  
**Flight Lines Editor.....Dwight Gruber**  
*email dwightg600@gmail.com*

was \$2,588.00, and total expenses for 2023 were \$2,535.74. Expenses not expected to repeat in 2024 include \$300 for web design.

Meeting expenses are largely covered by the sale of lunches and other donations. The Elks Club charges \$150 for the use of the room.

We start 2024 with 70 members on the roster. 33 members have paid dues for 2024; many have paid more than the requested \$15.00

*Folded Wings*

We have late notice that Oliver Dunlap, age 101, passed way Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. Oliver was a

life member of the 8<sup>th</sup> AF Historical Society and a WWII veteran. He served with the 447<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group 842<sup>nd</sup> BS. He was a Staff Sergeant, Propellor Specialist.

***8th Air Force Historical Society, Oregon Chapter website***

**<https://www.8thafhsoregon.us/>**

**General Meeting Program February 10, 2024**



Our featured speaker this month will be the annual return of Alice Miller. Alice is a collector of historical women's service uniforms ranging from WAC service to nurses and medic uniforms to air service uniforms, which she brings to display in illustration of her presentation. The theme of this year's presentation will be "Beauty and Duty." It is another installment in her series on women in aviation and the military. She will have interesting biographies and the uniforms to go with them.

This is our traditional Ladies Day Meeting, so Ladies please come and celebrate with us. Guys, please bring your significant others, as we want to welcome and honor all the ladies. Don't forget to bring the young ladies aspiring to the military or aviation.

You'll be sorry if you miss this one, we hope to see you all there!

**Dick Pressey's Mission to Ludwigshaven**

Co-Pilot Lt. Dick Pressey, B-17 "The Liberty Run" 401BS/91BG

May 1944 - target Ludwigshaven Marshalling yards

- Crossed into Germany at 26,000 feet in the 3rd squadron out of six on the mission
- Over Strasbourg got hit with flak which hit the left outboard engine which started running rough and leaking oil - shut it down
- The Group Commander Colonel Gillespie ordered everyone up to "Angels three" climb up to 30,000 feet



Image American Air Museum

Couldn't climb on just three engines with full bomb load and was falling behind

- Salvoed the bombs and tried to catch up with the group
- Three Bf 109s came in on head-on attack and knocked out another engine and wounded the radio operator in the forehead by a shell fragment
- Colonel Gillespie vectored in three Mustangs to provide protection and they drove the 109s off
- The B-17 lost about 420 gallons of gas as a result the 109s attack which put holes in one of the gas tanks.
- Started to head back to England, and the navigator and Flight engineer calculated that at the rate of fuel loss, they would never make it back. They saw the Alps not very far away and they made the decision to fly to Switzerland and the Mustangs escorted them part way, then broke off
- After flying into Switzerland, they spotted a large field and Dick told the crew to get in the rear of the plane to help keep the nose up
- The field turned out to be a sugar beet field and the landing was rather a smooth one - on fact the crew told him that it was the smoothest landing he ever made!
- As soon as the plane came to a stop he ordered everyone to get out, in fact a couple had jumped out while the plane was still moving. Dick and his co-pilot went out through the cockpit side windows. They were afraid that the plane would burst into fire, which did not happen
- Swiss civilians showed up and the bombardier told Dick that he had failed to destroy the Norden bombsight
- Dick and his co-pilot went back inside and Dick grabbed a .50 caliber barrel and started beating on the bombsight.

- When he was winding up for another swing, he struck a Swiss Army Lieutenant in the head with the barrel whereupon the Lieutenant told him to stop and had a pistol aimed at him. Stop he did.
- He and crew were interned and Dick was put in a city of Olten jail cell and charged with assaulting a Swiss Army Officer
- He stayed in jail all night and the next day at about noon, and an American ligation of civilians in brown suits arrived and asked him what had happened and he told them
- An hour or so, they came back and told him to write a letter of apology to Lieutenant Werner Deneau. The Lieutenant came by to see him, and Dick apologized to him verbally and his apology was accepted
- He was taken from jail and interned at a Swiss internment camp named Attleboten where he was reunited with his crew. The camp was previously either a boys or girls summer camp, or a sanitarium
- Dick and his co-pilot eventually escaped from Switzerland into France and hooked up with the French underground who got them eventually to American troops. They were eventually processed back to the states
- A few years after the war, Dick said he had received a letter from the Department of State inquiring as to whether he had crash-landed a B-17 bomber in a sugar beet field in Switzerland. apparently the farmer of the field applied for retribution for the damage done to his field and crops. Dick affirmed that he had, and imagined that the farmer received some money

## Rivets

Touring the United States in a B-24 Liberator has provided the Commemorative Air Force with some surprising moments. One of their pilots told me of a special reunion with a woman and the B-24. While at a tour stop, a woman approached the pilot and wanted to know if the tail section was open or closed off. The pilot replied that the tail section was not open to the public. He asked the woman if she had a special reason to see the tail section. She said that she worked at Consolidated Aircraft in San Diego during WW II, and she thought she had built that tail section. The pilot then asked how she could possibly know if she built that particular tail. She told him that part of their quality control was to put their initials at every fifth rivet. She gave him her initials, and upon inspecting the tail, he found her initials at every 5th rivet. She was allowed to go into the tail and inspect her handiwork. She ended the special reunion with photographs of her and her aircraft. This is why we do what we do.

## Final Checkered Flag at Reno by Donald L. Keller



*The T-6 racers get ready. Their slogan; "We may not be the fastest, but we are the loudest."*

The 59<sup>th</sup> and final Reno Air Race was held in September 2023, as the racing venue is no longer available. It was a great event with unprecedented attendance. Unfortunately a mid-air collision occurred after the T-6 Gold Race, and the rest of the competition was cancelled. We send our condolences to the families involved, and the others who are affected



*Jimmy Stewart's "Thunderbird"*

Many of the Race Teams brought out former race aircraft to compete in the final Reno race. "Thunderbird," a P-51C once owned and raced by B-24 veteran Jimmy Stewart was there. A P-63 KingCobra represented Bell Aircrafts race heritage. The "Miss Bardahl" P-51 was there, along with the former Howie Keefe P-51 "Miss America." We remember her famous Red, White, and Blue paint scheme on our Cox .049 gas airplanes. It was a wonderful turnout, and a good chance to re-acquaint ourselves with the pilots and airplanes.



*Vicki Benzig's "Plum Crazy"*



*Bob Hoover's iconic "Old Yeller"*

*Don Keller*

# Next Meeting: Saturday February 10

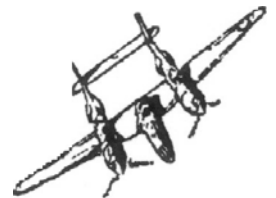
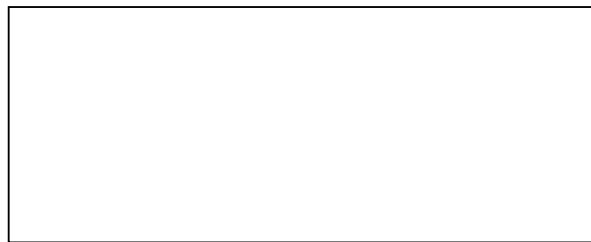
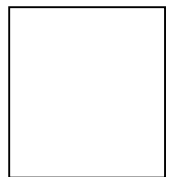
Beaverton Elks Lodge  
3464 S.W. 106<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Beaverton OR 97005

<http://www.beavertonelks.or>

Social hour 10:00am  
Meeting starts 11:15am  
Meeting ends 2:00pm



Oregon Chapter  
8<sup>th</sup> AF Historical Society  
Editor  
2180 SW 78th Ave.  
Portland, OR 97225



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

