



Flight Lines

The newsletter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society
Oregon Chapter

Spring May 2022

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 8th Air Force Historical Society holds public meetings every winter (February); spring (May); summer (September) and winter (November).

The Oregon Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society is a private non-profit 501(c) (3) corporation. Donations to this organization are tax deductible.

State of Oregon corporate registry number
1996184

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email dwrightg600@gmail.com

General Meeting May 7, 2022

Our scheduled program will be the story of Board President Bert Campbell and his service in Vietnam as a member of a LRRP team (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol). The Vietnamese knew the LRRPs as "The men with green faces." Camouflaged, silent, and very deadly, the LRRPs operated as six-man teams which were inserted deep inside hostile territory to observe and report the movements of NVA and VC forces in order to bring down the US military's overwhelming firepower on their positions, and to perform highly dangerous raids and ambushes. A breed apart from the regular infantry in Vietnam, these shadow warriors became some of the conflict's most feared units.

From the Editor

After many years of service, Jerry Ritter has honorably retired from his position as editor of *Flight Lines*. I have been promoted to edit the newsletter in his stead. I will strive to maintain the high standards Jerry set before me. As always, if you have any comments or stories to contribute, please email them to me at dwrightg600@gmail.com, or send them to:

Editor, Flight Lines

2180 S.W. 78th Ave.

Portland, OR 97225 --Dwight Gruber, editor

Treasury/Roster

The Oregon Chapter currently has a balance of \$2,856.23. As of this writing there are 44 dues-paid members, with 15 members pending, and four Life Members. 11 members are WWII veterans.

Folded Wings

Col. Gail Halvorsen, Feb. 16 2022, at the age of 101. He was affectionately remembered as the "Candy Bomber," well-known for his dropping candy to the children of Berlin, from his C-54 Skymaster during the Berlin air lift. He was also known as "Uncle Wiggly Wings," for his penchant of wagging his wings before dropping the candy.

Gail was a friend and Lift mate of our February featured veteran, David Riddle. Several of our earlier veteran members flew the Berlin Air Lift.

Lt. Cmdr. George H. Bickford Sr. USN Ret, April 12, 2022, just three months shy of his 100th birthday. A native of Portland OR, he learned to fly by age 16 and became a licensed pilot.

George enlisted in the Navy in 1942, and became a Navy Pilot. He spent the duration of WWII as a flight instructor teaching the newly-developing art of instrument flying. During the Korean War he was senior instructor for the nascent USN Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor Program. He retired from the Navy Reserves in 1965.

Briefings

by Donald L. Keller

It has been reported that Paul Allen's Flying Heritage Museum at Paine Field, Wash., has been sold to Steuart Walton, grandson of WalMart founder Sam Walton. He is an aviator, and owner of several aviation enterprises. The collection is being prepared for shipment to the southern part of the U.S.

The Heritage Flight Museum has also left Paine Field, Everett, for Bellingham, WA. This leaves only the Boeing Future of Flight Museum and the Museum of Flight Restoration Facility at Paine Field. It is still an interesting visit, but the 2 museums will be missed. In addition, the Historic Flight Foundation has been relocated to Felts Field in Spokane WA, as the FAA has now declared Payne Field to be a feeder airport for Sea-Tac.

There will be two Oregon International Air Shows this year. The first will be held at Hillsboro May 20th through May 22nd. This show will feature all female performers, including the announcers. The theme will be "She Flies With Her Own Wings, (Alos Volat Propiis)." The performers will include the F-16, F-35, and C-17 Demonstration Teams, led by female aviators. The second show will be held in McMinnville later this summer..

The Ford TriMotor from McMinnville is now owned by the Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum in Hood River, OR. It is expected to be available for passenger flights this summer.

Vintage Airframes in Caldwell, Idaho, is progressing on the restoration to flying condition of the F6F-3 formerly based in Canby, Oregon. This is a combat veteran which served on the U.S.S. Santee and Sangamon.

The B-17 Alliance will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the "Lacey Lady" coming to Oregon. Go to <https://www.b17alliance.com/> for more information.

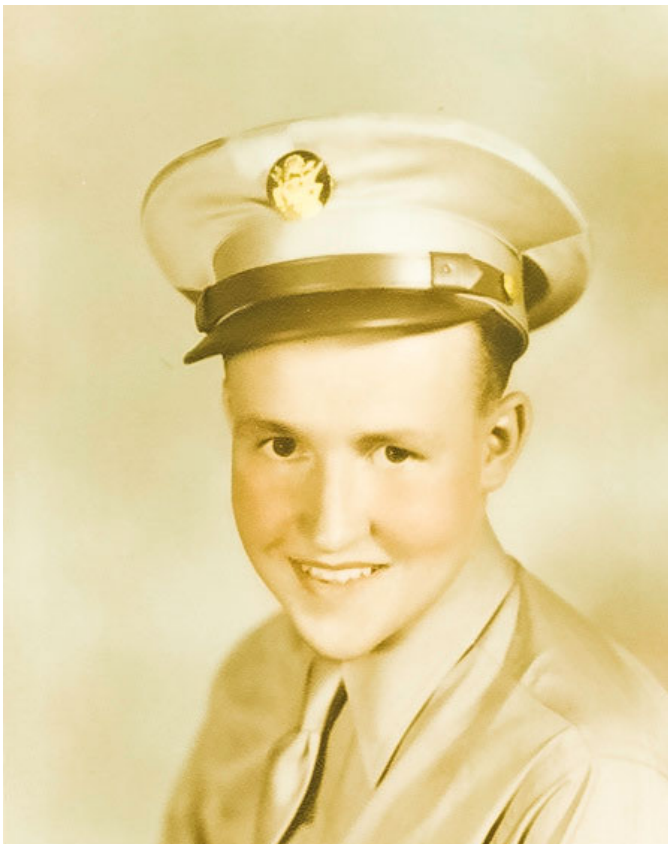


Susan Tate Ankeny, left, John Kupsick, right

Don Bourgoise photo

**August 7, 2021 Presentation to the 8th AFHS, Oregon Chapter
by Susan Tate Ankeny with John Kupsick**

On February 8, 1944, our fathers, Dean Tate and John Kupsick, were shot down over northern France. Both were stationed in Kimbolton, England and on the same mission to Frankfurt, although in different planes.



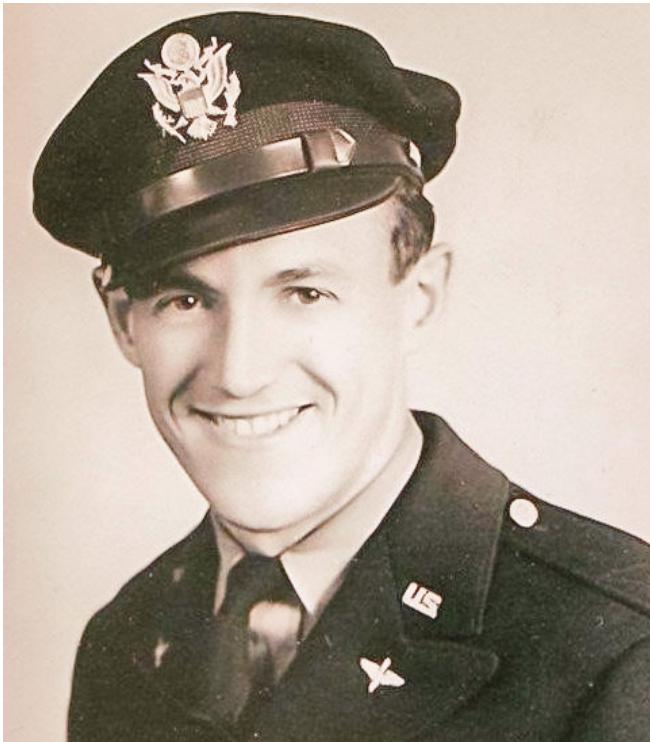
Dean Tate

Dean Tate was born in Portland in 1920 and grew up in Silverton and Newberg. He was drafted in his final semester of Pacific College (now George Fox University). At the time of his induction in May, 1942, he had hoped to become a pilot. Narrowly missing the score needed, he was assigned as a bombardier. A lifelong Oregonian, and member of the Oregon 8th Air Force Historical Society, he gave a presentation in 1993 to this group about what happened to him after being shot down and parachuting into France.

From the time I was very young, my dad told me about his experiences during World War II. I was lucky, and because of this I was able to have a book published last September called "The Girl and the Bombardier: A True Story of Resistance and Rescue in Nazi-Occupied France." When my father died, I had to face the fact that he wasn't going to write the complete story as I'd hoped. He left me a memoir dedicated to those who had risked their lives to save his, and boxes of records, photos, and letters he exchanged with his French rescuers for over fifty years. The greatest experience of my life was traveling to France to trace Dad's path, led by the same people who hid and guided him to safety in the winter of 1944.

John Kupsick was born in Great Falls Montana in 1919. His father taught him a great work ethic

from a very young age. “Be self-sufficient,” he was told. “Make yourself into something you can be proud of.” Working at his father’s grocery and flower shop gave him the focus he would need growing up through the Depression. When the war broke out he was still working for his dad and doing what he could to make ends meet. With his young wife and daughter living safely with relatives, John began his training in Texas to become an aircraft navigator.



Jack Kupsick

After training and assignment to a B17 crew, John started off on his life-changing experience into the combat zone known as Fortress Europe. The journey to Europe was not without trials that could have kept him from even arriving in England. The shuttle policy of getting aircraft to Europe was fraught with dangers itself. Bad weather delayed his crew’s departure by 3 days, and once in the air they faced extreme weather conditions over the Atlantic. Running short on fuel, John calculated they could make land in Ireland. Being a neutral country at the time, their presence could mean that they possibly would not be able to continue to England and the war would end for them there. Luck was on their shoulder that day and the local Irish Army was more than willing to assist them.

After two training missions with other crews to get a feel for the air war firsthand, John was on his fifth combat mission on February 8, 1944. The crew was made up of eight of his regular crew mates flying “Pistol Packin’ Mamma,” a veteran of 19 combat missions from the 379th BG out of Kimbolton.

Not long after passing into French airspace the formation was attacked by ME 109s and FW 190s in a frontal assault. John was manning a cheek gun when the plexiglass nose began to disintegrate in front of him. John could feel cold air rushing into his face just before he blacked out.

Upon regaining consciousness he checked the bombardier, and found he was dead. The pilot had sounded the bailout order and John exited through the nose hatch. This is when he realized he had been wounded in multiple places on his left side.

He struggled to open his parachute with his wounded hand but thankfully, after fluttering a couple of times, the canopy opened, and he felt calm for the moment. Below he could see German troop carriers following the trail of American ‘chutes coming down from the aircraft involved in the air battle above them. John’s luck proved fateful as he was blown farther away from the German vehicles. The winding roads of the French countryside were of equal assistance. His landing in France was very smooth except for the pain from his wounds.

Fortunately for John, there was a Frenchman tending a peat burner making charcoal, who had been following the battle in the sky. Even more fortunate, he was a member of the local Resistance! John had little knowledge of French language, but he could follow the hand motions to move back to the field and lie down. The Resistance member gathered the chute and burned it in the peat burner, and within minutes the Germans arrived. John knew he would be captured if the Germans walked through the field. But due to the Germans’ efficiency, they would only search the tree lines around the field. Who in their right mind would hide in plain sight?!

And thus began John's seven-month journey through the French Underground.

Dean Tate jumped from his burning B-17 after a steep dive failed to put out its wing fires. He landed in a small village churchyard. A seventeen-year-old girl named Godelieve Van Laere had watched his parachute descending in the sky. She rode her bike to find him and offered her home as a hiding place, hoping her parents would agree. Tate and two other downed airmen were hidden in a variety of locations, including a World War I bunker, before being led to Godelieve's house. At the Van Laere home, Godelieve's sister visited the men while her boyfriend, a German officer, waited outside.

When their presence was accidentally discovered by a pair of French police officers the three Americans had to be moved to Paris, but their connection there had been arrested and other arrangements had to be quickly made. Posing as French citizens, the Americans began a grueling journey across northern France through train stations where they were required to show their fake identification to Nazi soldiers before boarding. None of them spoke French.

A stop in Beauvais where their francs and dog tags were stolen by their guide, eventually led them to the farm of the Duval family near the village of Ons-en-Bray. Here, hidden in a cold barn, they spent three long weeks. There were now five evaders as they had been joined by two more Americans, as was the common practice of gathering evaders into larger groups as they were moved toward rescue. Every evening at nine, when it was believed to be the safest time, the men were brought into the Duval home for dinner and news from the family's illegal radio.

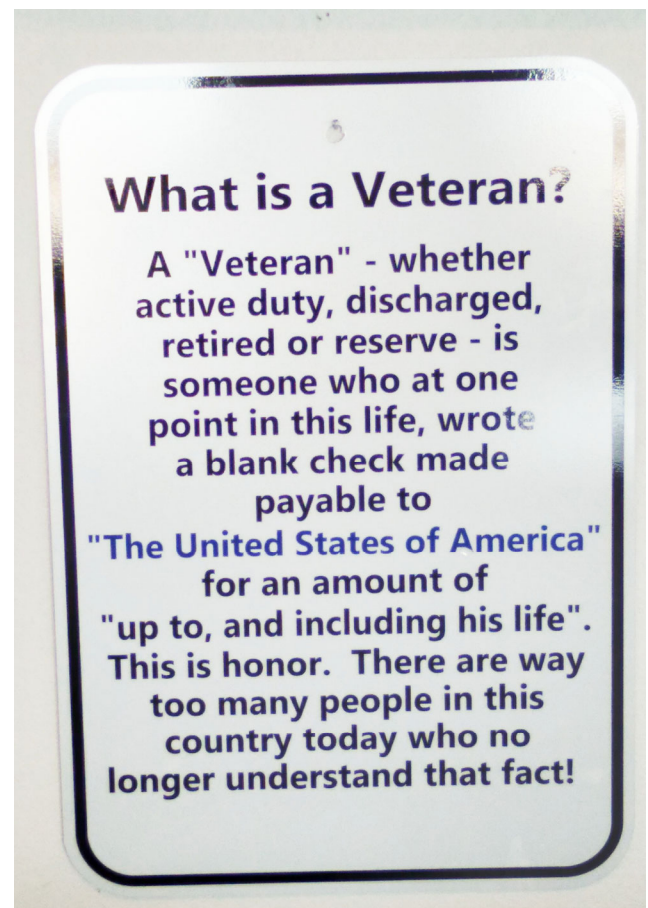
After an intense interrogation, the five Americans were taken by train to Paris. This time the train tracks were sabotaged, forcing everyone off the train for an inspection by Nazi soldiers who were less than happy about the delay. The Nazis sometimes raided trains looking for evaders. Sometimes people were killed. Tate thought he and his comrades were going to be discovered and shot, and this was the most frightening time out of

many during my dad's entire journey.

In Paris the five American airmen were hidden in two apartments. They mingled with Parisians when they were taken to a department store, to have new photographs taken for making new identify papers enabling them to travel to the Forbidden Zone on the Brittany Coast.

In the middle of a moonless night, Tate and twenty-two other men were rescued off a secluded beach in one of seven rescues carried out by the Shelburne Network, considered the most successful rescue operation in France's history. In all the missions no one was lost, and 94 Allied personnel were returned home. Each French citizen involved in these rescues risked his or her life and the lives of their families, and for that reason I wrote a book to share their stories and to express my gratitude.

--Susan Tate Ankeny and John Kupsick



Sign found in Debby's Diner, in Phoenix, Oregon.

Next Meeting: Saturday May 7

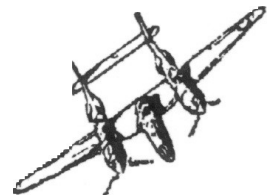
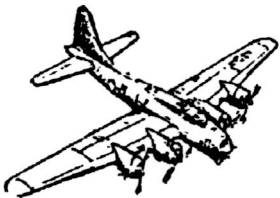
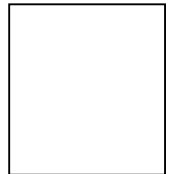
**Beaverton Elks Lodge
3464 S.W. 106th Ave.
Beaverton OR 97005**

<http://www.beavertonelks.or>

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



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