



# Flight Lines

The newsletter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society  
Oregon Chapter

Autumn 2023

## NOTICE!

### Are you a member of the B.P.O.E. Beaverton Elks Lodge #1989?

If so, you have an opportunity to defray a new cost of meetings and help ensure the ability of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Oregon Chapter to continue meeting at the Elk's Lodge.

Beaverton Elks Lodge #1989 has been a good friend to the Oregon Chapter 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS. We get a good rate for renting their facilities for our quarterly meetings. Now, the B.P.O.E. is asking us to carry insurance to cover our meetings.

When the Oregon Chapter was formed it had many WWII veteran members who were also members of the Beaverton Elks. Because of this our meetings were considered to be membership functions of Beaverton Elks Lodge #1989.

With the inevitable passing of most of the WWII veteran members, and the corresponding decline of the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Oregon Chapter membership, it has come to pass that there are no longer Elks Lodge #1989 members on the Chapter Board of Directors.

This has come to the attention of the B.P.O.E. Since there is not currently a formal association between our Chapter and the Elks, they have determined that the B.P.O.E. insurance policy no longer covers our meetings. Private insurance comes as an extra expenditure for the Chapter, taken on as the personal responsibility of one of the Chapter Board members.

**If you are a member of the Beaverton Elks Lodge #1989 we could still be covered by Elks insurance.**

Please contact Don Keller, [b17airdepo@aol.com](mailto:b17airdepo@aol.com), or text him at 503-310-7215 as soon as possible.

**The next General Meeting is Nov. 4, so this is a time-critical plea.**

**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 tax deductible. State of Oregon corporate registry number **1996184**

*From the Editor*

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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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Bert Campbell .....President**  
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**John Kupsick.....at large**  
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**.....(open)**  
**.....(open)**

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**Programs Chairman. ....Don Keller**  
**Evergreen Museum Representative...Bob Dean**  
**Flight Lines Editor.....Dwight Gruber**  
*email dwightg600@gmail.com*

*Treasury/Roster*

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The Oregon Chapter currently has a bank balance of \$2,853.90. As of this writing there are 10 WWII veterans on the roster.

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

*Folded Wings*

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There have been no reports of Folded Wings.

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

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

## **General Meeting Program November 10, 2023**

November is our Veterans Salute meeting. This year we feature a panel of three Vietnam Veterans.

Bert Campbell, our Chapter President, was in the "Big Red One" First Infantry Division. He was a member of a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol team. He has spoken previously to us about his Vietnam service, but has much more to tell.

Max Dixon. Max flew A-7A Corsair IIs with VFA-97 Strike Fighter squadron, the "Warhawks." He flew from CV-64, the U.S.S. Constellation, at "Yankee Station." He also flew the A-4 Skyhawk, though not in combat duty. He served three times with the Research Development Test and Evaluation Unit, once at N.A.S. China Lake and twice at N.A.S. Patuxent River.

C.W.O. Barry Brown flew UH-1H Huey helicopters in Vietnam with the 15th Medevac Battalion. After his Vietnam service he flew UH-1s and UH-60s with the Oregon Air National Guard. He also flew OH-58 Kiowa helicopters with the Counter Drug Unit. He participated in: Bosnia in 2000, Operation Enduring Freedom in 2003, and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2010.

This will be a very interesting panel program. We also hope to have two of our W.W. II veterans on hand. Don Anderson, a B-17 tail gunner from the 401st Bomb Group, "The Best Damned Outfit in the U.S.A.A.F." and Frank Heyl, a B-25 pilot from the 345th "Air Apache's" who are scheduled to attend.

This is a program not to be missed!

### **Veterans Take Flight** by Donald L. Keller

The Federal Aviation Administration has an exemption for vintage Warbird aircraft which operate in the Experimental license category. It is known as the Living History Exemption. It allows historic aircraft in the Experimental Classification to carry passengers for educational flights and to charge for these flights. Its regulations cover safety, insurance, maintenance, and regular inspection. The Living History Exemption is in jeopardy due to tragic aircraft accident and loss of life. Some have begun to question the program's value.

The purpose of the Exemption is to perpetuate and commemorate the memory and sacrifices of our veterans' flying service. It fulfills an obligation to educate the public about this past. The Living History aircraft are mostly owned and operated by private foundations. I have been fortunate to assist them in these educational flights, and have learned much from the veterans who volunteer their time and participate in the flights. I have come to know their experiences and the sacrifices of those who did not return: "They sacrificed their youth and future so that I could have a future and my children could have their youth and futures."

It has been very moving to watch them as they begin their own Sentimental Journeys. You can see the years roll back, and a bit of the spring return to their steps. They smile as they begin to remember their jobs and the buddies they performed them with. The smiles fade to the "30 thousand feet stare" as they remember their missions: the fears, the camaraderie, the gratefulness, the memories all come flooding back. Many will turn away slightly to hide the tears while others do not, thinking how thankful they were to survive and go on to live their lives.

Mildred Bradley, a former Boeing Engineer for the B-17 has proudly told of her days and exploits. She used her Engineering Degree to serve her country in a job and field not readily open to women.

Don Anderson a B-17 tail gunner in the 401<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group, was interviewed by a female reporter as he exited the plane after his flight. “How did it feel to fly in the B-17 again?” “It was great! No one was shooting at us or trying to kill me” he replied.

While flying in the left-hand seat of “Texas Raiders” approaching Boeing Field, R. M. “Bob “ Sturges instructed the crew on how to approach the Field after using the old Longacre’s Horse Track as the Initial Point.

Dick Pressey, B-17 pilot of the 91<sup>st</sup> B.G.’s “Round Trip Topsy,” was waiting for the B-17 to come in for a visit. As the sound of the B-17 reached his ears, he turned to Tom Davis and said; “They don’t have any turbos.” The sound of the airplane was as fresh to him as if it was yesterday.

I have stood alongside many B-17 pilots while the aircraft was starting up, and could see their stares turn inward as if they were on the flight deck again going through the procedures.

As the ranks of our WW II veterans thin, the Program now gives their descendants and loved ones a tangible connection to their veteran relatives. The crew of “Chuckie” paused the ground tour of the aircraft to enable a woman to spend time alone in the radio room. Her father was a U.S.Navy PB-1W radio operator. She would wait by the picture window to see how many hugs her father needed when he got home. One hug would suffice when he came home happy. Two hugs were needed when he was sad, because she could tell that they could not find the people who needed rescuing from the sea.

This connection has been repeated countless times over the years. John Luck rode on the tribute airplane “Nine-O-Nine.” He was a gunner, the last surviving member of the original “Nine-O-Nine’s” crew. His family members cemented their connection with him that day.

David Riddle, a pilot in the 388<sup>th</sup> B.G. was able to fulfill his wish for a flight one more time before he passed.

I have witnessed many people on the flights or tours who would run their hands over the station equipment that their loved ones used in theirs before. As historians we read books, look at the internet, and stare at the aircraft from the outside in displays or museums. We human are a sensory species. We need to not only see, but to touch, hear, experience to make that complete connection. It makes it real to us. It touches our hearts and souls. It is the Living History Exemption and Program which makes this possible.

*Don Keller*



*John Luck with Mac and Mary*



*94<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group pilot Frank Halm with Don Keller*



*Carl Gustafson with Jerry Ritter*



*Phil Azure, 92<sup>nd</sup> B.G., Jim Street, 15<sup>th</sup> A.F. pilot, and 401<sup>st</sup> gunner hold their own preflight briefing*



*Mr. Keating, 452<sup>nd</sup> ground crew, takes flight*



*Howard Bunker in flight*



*Don Millar, 379<sup>th</sup> B.G. waiting for his flight, hoping it will be better than his last one*

## 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.



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.

*Jimmy Stewart's "Thunderbird"*



*Vicki Benzig's "Plum Crazy"*



*Bob Hoover's iconic "Old Yeller"*

*Don Keller*

# Next Meeting: Saturday November 4

Beaverton Elks Lodge

3464 S.W. 106<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Beaverton OR 97005

<http://www.beavertonelks.or>

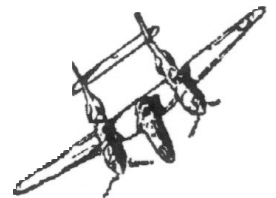
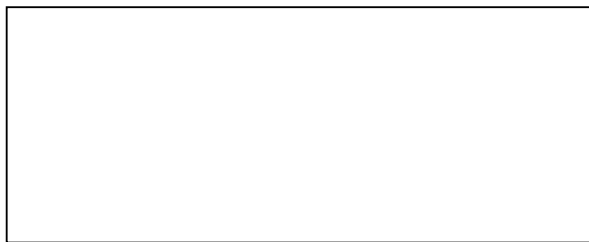
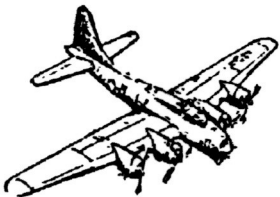
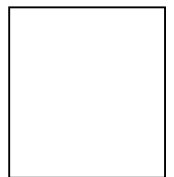
Social hour 10:00am

Meeting starts 11:15am

Meeting ends 2:00pm



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

