

# “MILK RUN”

## Oregon Chapter 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society News Update October, 2008



November 2008 Meeting is **November 1**. 10 AM till 2 PM.

The meeting was changed to this date to avoid conflict with Veterans Day.

### History News

#### ***Col. Donald Blakeslee Dead at 90***

What the Luftwaffe could not accomplish in his nearly 500 missions over Occupied Europe during World War II, time accomplished when he died at his home due to heart failure on September 3 in Miami.

After joining the RCAF for training, he was sent to England and was assigned to one of the three Eagle Squadrons. In September they were transferred into the 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter group when it was converted from the UK operated Eagle Squadrons into a USAAF fighter group.

He was awarded two Distinguished Service Crosses, seven Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Silver Stars, six Air Medals and the British Distinguished Flying Cross during WWII. In Korea he picked up the Legion of Merit, another Distinguished Flying Cross and four Air Medals.

The 4<sup>th</sup> FG was credited with shooting down 550 in air to air combat and destroying 470 more on the ground for a total of 1,020 German aircraft confirmed destroyed.

#### ***Dale Knopf dead at 86, due to a Motorcycle Accident***

Navy Hellcat and Dauntless pilot during the latter stages of WW II, with 4 confirmed Japanese aircraft kills – at night - died riding his motorcycle around a curve when he lost control and hit a tree in Madera country August 29<sup>th</sup>.

A crop duster, mosquito control spray pilot, during his career, he last flew his own aircraft a week before his final motorcycle ride. Only recently did he start talking about his combat in the Pacific war with his family members.

#### ***USS Intrepid Back in Manhattan***

After a very \$120 million retrofit, cleaning, and long overdue internal maintenance, the Essex class WW II carrier Intrepid is back along pier 96 in New York harbor.

To keep the ship from snagging on the muddy Hudson, all four 22 foot diameter props were removed. The ship only draws 28 feet – without props.

## ***Chinese Film Crew Interviewing Flying Tigers and other China Veterans***

A TV crew from China Central Television is in the US finding ground support and flying members of the Flying Tigers who served in China, as well as the follow-on units that fought against the Japanese in China. They have tracked down around 200 people so far and will the results will be available in research archives in China.

This is part of the Oral History Project in China. They are currently in Columbus Georgia interviewing Frank Losonsky who was a mechanic with the Flying Tigers (though he also was a qualified pilot.)

In just over 6 months of operational flying from December 17<sup>th</sup> (?) 1941 till disbanded it was disbanded on July 4, 1942 and turned into a regular Army unit, the 100 planes that they started off with shot down 283 Japanese planes – losing less than a dozen pilots killed in combat.

<http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/story/461863.html>

## ***12 O'Clock High Supporting Actor Dead at 83***

Robert Arthur, who was in many Warner Brothers' war movies in the 40s and 50s, died in Aberdeen Washington in early October. Along with working with Gregory Peck in "12 O'Clock High" (1949), he was in "Hellcats of the Navy" (1957) working with Ronald Reagan, "Air Cadet" (1951), and in the land warfare movie "Take the High Ground!" (1953).

## ***James "Jim" Williams 95<sup>th</sup> BG***

Williams knew two things: He didn't want to be drafted -- that meant you didn't get to choose the service you went into -- and he had a mighty powerful itch to fly airplanes.

When Williams joined the 95th Bomber Group, crews that completed 25 missions were considered finished. Soon after he arrived at Horham, that number jumped to 30, then to 35. When Williams' crew completed their 35th they followed tradition by leaving the formation during the return flight to "buzz the field." "We did a good job," he said, "right over the administration building."

He still has his bomber jacket. On the front right flap his personal story is told in simple symbols: 35 bomb-shaped patches in perfect rows - 35 completed missions flying in B-17s. One is bi-colored, a horizontal line through the middle, to represent the day Williams and his crew were shot down. Two others are marked with a small "B" -- two successful missions over Berlin.

*Editor: Readers, where's your story?*

## **Archiving History for Others to Use**

If you have material you would like to loan to Tom Philo (Chapter Secretary and one of the chapter historians) to be scanned and returned contact him for arrangements. Or you can donate permanently your material to the chapter. Either way, you will get a CD / DVD copy of everything turned in.

## **Local News and Groups**

### ***Evergreen Aviation Museum Events***

Saturday October 11 – Navy Day

Sunday October 19 – Oregon Aviation Hall of Fame inductees event 1 to 3 PM. Dick Rutan, main pilot of the Voyager, is the Key Note Speaker

Saturday November 8 – Marine Day

### ***Pearson Air Museum***

November 8 – Veterans Day Parade

December 13 – Santa in a plane -- have your kid's photo taken in one of Pearson's aircraft between 10 AM to 2 PM.

### ***Old Bold Pilots Club***

Meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month from 12 Noon till when people leave.

Meetings are at The Village Inn Restaurant; 17070 SW 72nd Tigard right at Lower Boons Ferry Road and I-5 on the west side of I-5 at Exit 290.

### ***ANA – Association of Naval Aviators***

Meetings are the last Thursday of each month at the Elks Lodge next to Gateway Transit Center. 711 NE 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Portland, Oregon. Meeting is from 11:30 till around 2 PM.

Contact LtC George Bickford (Ret) at 503-789-8061. e-mail: bick @ teleport.com

Mailing address: Flying Beaver Squadron; PO Box 432; Clackamas, Oregon 97015-0432

### ***Southern Oregon Warbirds Association***

If you live in southern Oregon you can meet x-aviation personnel at the Southern Oregon Warbirds Association (SOWA) <http://www.southernoregonwarbirds.org>.

Their meeting locations keep changing so you need to always check to see where they are meeting for both their luncheon and their dinner meeting. Elmer Giles at 541-957-9260 is the POC. Their dues are \$10 a year.

### ***Aviation Breakfast Club***

This is the Walt Bohrer Chapter and they meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month (except Easter and Monther's Day) from 10 AM till 12 Noon at J.J. North's Grand Buffet at 10520 N.E. Halsey St, Portland, Oregon. 503-254-5555; e-mail: aviationclub @ aol.com

### ***Need to do Photo or Video research?***

You are free to go over to and talk, learn, and do photo, movie, and audio research at:

The National Combat History Archive

5801 NW Cornelius Pass Road

Hillsboro, OR. 97124

TEL: + (1) (503) 597-7030

FAX: +(1) (503) 597-7037

EMAIL: Gary Mortensen [grmortensen@militarylibrary.net](mailto:grmortensen@militarylibrary.net)

## **Contact Information E-mail and Postal**

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