

“MILK RUN”

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society News Update
March, 2009



May meeting is on **May 9**. 10 AM till 2 PM.

History News

Readers, where's your story?



What is written in the books is not what always the reality

Here is a B-17G called “Flak Dodger” s/n 42-97075, is seen dropping 36 100lb fragmentation bombs during a mission.

In all the books and references about B-17s that I have, it states that only 24 100lb pound bombs could be carried – this photo defiantly shows the books are not correct!

Flak Dodger shows 9 completed missions painted on the nose. It flew in the 750 BS of the 457 BG (H). It survived

the war and flew back to the US where it was scrapped.

B-24s in the 8th AF – The Early Missions

At the last Oregon Old Bold Pilot's meeting I was talking with some of the people and stated that the B-24 crews flew a lot of “diversion” missions during the early stages of the war.

Clint Gruber, though at the other end of the table, heard about this conversation afterward, and quickly e-mailed off to me some of the missions the 93rd BG (H) of which he was a part of flew on:

35 B24s of the 93rd BG arrived in England on 7 September '42, flew their first mission just a month later. Until the 44th BG arrived on Sept 11, '43, the 93rd was the only B24 outfit in the 8th. The 389th arrived in June, but was stood down from combat

missions along with both the 93rd and 44th, while practicing for the Ploesti mission. The 389th flew its first mission from England when the B24s returned from N Africa. By war's end, there were 16 B24 Groups in the 2nd Air Division of the 8th.

Over the course of the war, the 93rd flew 396 combat missions (diversions were not counted as a mission), the most of any Group of the 8th, including the B17s. On those missions, the 93rd dropped the record 19,004 tons of high explosives and incendiaries. The loss record was also the tops. Over their 396 combat missions, the 93rd lost only 100 aircraft (40 others in accidents...a lot of them in mid-air while forming in bad weather, the others in training or ground accidents.)

Missions:

1942: Oct 9, 1942 Lille; Nov 7, Brest; Nov 9, St. Nazaire; Nov 11, St. Nazaire; Nov 14, St. Nazaire; Nov 18, Lorient; Nov 19 Lorient; Nov 23 St. Nazaire.

December 1942, January 1943, and most of February 1943 the 93rd was in North Afrika. They returned on Feb 23, 1943 to England.

1943: February 26, Wilhelmshaven; March 6, Brest, March 8, Rouen, March 18, Vegesack; March 22 Wilhelmshaven; April 5 Antwerp; April 16 Brest; May 17 Bordeaux; May 29 La Pallice.

What brought up the diversion missions conversion was that the early B-24s had an outside air temperature gauge that only went to -40F below. On the 4 Feb 1943 mission in the official diary it states:

"B-24s turn back at Dutch coast when OAT goes below -40 beyond range of OAT gauge".

Without knowing what the OAT is, you cannot calibrate the Norden bomb sight to time the bomb drop correct. Using my E6B the math for B-24s flying at 22,000 feet at -40F shows a calibrated airspeed of 165 results in a TAS of 228. If the OAT is really -50F then the TAS is 225 MPH. At 228 mph a plane is moving at 334 feet a second, at 225 it is moving 330 feet a second. On a two minute run into target then the cumulative travel distance you calculate that you will travel and what you actually travel is off by 480 feet – and you can completely miss a target such as an oil refinery.

Also, what classifies as a "diversion" to HQ does not mean it was not a combat mission. To HQ it means that the unit was sent to bomb a target with the intent of drawing up Luftwaffe fighters early to one raid so there is no time between the different raids to allow the Luftwaffe to attack the main force. After the B-26B Martin Marauders started to arrive in 1943 they became the units that often flew as a "diversion" to tie down the Luftwaffe while the B-17s and B-24s went on deep raids.

After Clint's e-mail I had to go back through all the 1942 thru June 1943 missions and update the mission spreadsheet posted on the web site to indicate on what missions the B-24s flew on.

Clint got the data from the 93rd BG book "Ted's Traveling Circus".

Berlin, March 6, 1944

This is William Dixon's story of his two Berlin raids in March 1944.

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The first to Berlin was on 4 March 1944 when 21 B-17s of the 95th BG and 10 B-17s of the 100th BG made it all the way to Berlin and back. The first BIG raid on Berlin was on 6 March 1944. On that raid the 8th AF lost 69 planes, 15 of which were from the 100th BG. Believe me I know as I was on both of those missions and was in one of the 15 lost by the 100th. 60 men in those 15 planes from the 100th were killed on 6 March 1944.

On the 6 March Berlin mission, we had been scheduled to fly in the high squadron and had taken that position, but at about 11:00 a.m. dropped into the low squadron to fill in for an abort. An hour later we were attacked and the entire high squadron was wiped out. Almost all of the lead squadron was also gone and at least one of the low squadron.

We and another plane from the low squadron joined the lead group where we were again attacked. Our No. 4 engine was on fire and our No. 1 engine was smoking and losing oil. The fire in No. 4 went out and it was still pulling power but No. 1 was at about 1/2 power. Then No. 4 went dead, started wind milling, then seized, the prop almost stopped but the crankshaft sheared and the prop broke loose and started wind milling again. We were losing fuel and the navigator indicated there was not enough left to return to base. There was no longer a formation even if we had been able to keep up with it and so at 12:55 we turned off and headed north to try to get to the North Sea and perhaps ditch. (Of the approximately 210 men in those 21 aircraft, 60 died in less than five minutes.)

It was soon realized that we could not make it to the North Sea and so it was decided to head for the Baltic Sea and Sweden. On the last little spit of land in Germany, we went right over a German airfield but no planes came up to try to intercept us and the only opposition was flak from a ship of some sort that was in the area.

We had been briefed to land at Ystad, Sweden if it was necessary but there was a low overcast and we started looking for a place to belly land when two Swedish fighter planes came up and escorted us to their airfield, Bulltofta. One of the planes flew off our wing while the other circled us. Every time he flew in front of us, we would have to fly through the turbulence he created and we were barely hanging on to flying speed. Barrick, pilot, told the top turret gunner, Johnson, to point the guns at that plane and follow him. That apparently convinced him to stop doing that because he then came back and flew off our other wing until we reached Bulltofta.

Bulltofta was just outside of Malmö, Sweden, which was the third largest city in Sweden, and as we were heading for the field, flak was fired to warn us away from the town, I believe. We made a wheels down landing although the field was a sod field and after we had lowered the wheels the thought occurred to us that we didn't really know whether we had tires or whether they had been filled full of holes. They were fine but the Swedes counted over 13 20mm holes in the leading edge of the wing of the plane and about 50 flak holes. The prop of our No. 4 engine had chewed into the engine cowling and the top blade was tilted back. After we landed, a curious Swedish guard gave the No. 4 prop a shake and it fell off just missing him. There was a hole through one of the blades of the No. 3 prop, a large hole in the No. 1 engine's cowling,

and numerous holes in the wings - but very few in the fuselage. We were taken up to the officer's mess and fed. While we were there a B-24, piloted by a Lt. Charles York, landed - they were on their first mission.

I had a New Testament with me, the only paper I had, and I asked the two Swedish pilots who had brought us in to Bulltofta to sign their names, ranks, and addresses. I still have the New Testament and in 1999 while emailing a young man in Sweden who was writing about the Americans coming to Sweden during the war, I mentioned this. He asked for their names and within days emailed back to me that he had found the widow of one of those pilots and talked to her. A few weeks later he again emailed that he had traced the other pilot, who was still living, and had talked to him.

We were taken in to Malmo and sent by train to a Swedish Army base in Falun, Sweden where we remained for about 3 days while we bought a limited amount of civilian clothes (paid for by the American Legation), then we were sent by train to Rattvik, Dalarna, Sweden.

Rattvik was a winter and summer resort town, we lived in hotels or pensiones, were paid each month by the American Legation, and remained there for varying lengths of time. As far as I was concerned, Sweden was one seven-month vacation. When we first arrived, in March, snow was still plentiful and Siljan Sjo (Lake Siljan) was covered with ice thick enough for airplanes to land and take off from it. We were able to ski until late April, and did. Most of the Americans bought bicycles and rode them around Rattvik. We were restricted to a three-mile radius around the town except when given special permission to go outside that area. We were allowed to go to Stockholm for three days each month and I took advantage of that every month.

Air Medal Ceremony for Waist Gunner for Berlin Mission

Staff Sgt. Anthony Ruda was shot down over Berlin on 6 March 1944, and was awarded an Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters due to the prior 20 missions flown - but he only saw it after the war ended.

An official ceremony was held for him finally.

http://www.tuscaloosaneews.com/article/20081228/NEWS/812270269/1007?Title=Overdue_honor

Monthly Military Roundtable Discussion

If you live near Terrebonne Parish in Louisiana you can meet and learn interesting history. In December they talked about the blimp that crashed on June 19, 1944 in the gulf while looking for submarines. It was flying out of Houma Naval Air Station.

The meeting is free and open to the public.

C.J. Christ is a historian whose work is sponsored in part by the Bollinger family of Lockport. If anyone has information that would be beneficial to his work is encouraged to contact him at 232-0402, 872-2843 or cjboat@comcast.net.

[http://www.houmatoday.com/article/20081228/ARTICLES/812289964/1008/LIVING?Title=Airman rescued from the Gulf of Mexico during World War II](http://www.houmatoday.com/article/20081228/ARTICLES/812289964/1008/LIVING?Title=Airman%20rescued%20from%20the%20Gulf%20of%20Mexico%20during%20World%20War%20II)

World War II Army Air Force veteran Calvin Lee Southard dead at 83

A B-29 wireless operator during World War II one of the most interesting tasks he had after the war was going into Mexico for five month and rebuilding a Ford Tri-Motor and flying it back to the states – it is now on display in the Air & Space Museum in Washington DC.

<http://www.greatfallsribune.com/article/20090105/OBITUARIES/901050318>

Air units Reactivated in Hawaii

Three Hawaii Air National Guard legacy units were recently reactivated at Hickam Air Force Base to support the Pacific Air Forces air and space operations.

The new 250-member Hawaii Air Guard units will augment the 13th Air Force's 613th Air Operations Center at Hickam Air Force Base. The 109th Air Operations Group and its two subordinate units - the 150th Air Operations Squadron, commanded by Col. Jackie Mathis; and the 202nd Air Mobility Operations Squadron, led by Lt. Col. Robert Hoffman - were reactivated Nov. 1, 2008.

We Went To War: New Hampshire Remembers

Is a new book out based on oral histories of World War II from people living in New Hampshire.

Written by Meg Heckman and Mike Pride and published by Monitor Publishing Co., 2008, 360 pages in hardcover. \$29.95.

<http://www.timesargus.com/article/20090104/FEATURES07/901040342/1016/FEATURES07>

Charles L. Taylor Gunner's Mate at Pearl Harbor

Charles was on the deck of the USS Honolulu firing at the Japanese during Pearl Harbor. The Honolulu was one of many ships damaged during the raid. He died in January 2009.

He is to be buried at sea.

http://www.mercurynews.com/centralcoast/ci_11370757?nclick_check=1

USS George H.W. Bush Carrier Commissioned

On January 11, 2009 the latest US carrier was officially entered onto the books of the US Navy.

The carrier is named after former President George Herbert Walker Bush who was president from 1989 thru 1993. During World War II he flew Avenger torpedo bombers off the converted aircraft carrier USS San Jacinto – getting shot down twice.

The USS George H.W. Bush is the tenth and final vessel in the Nimitz class of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, the first of which was launched in 1972.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2009-01/2009-01-11-voa1.cfm?CFID=130014447&CFTOKEN=33512065&jsessionid=de307b6ce874d44dbe576f3b2337d2911677>

James E. Swett WWII Marine ace, dead at 88

He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for shooting down 7 Japanese aircraft on April 7, 1943 – on his first combat mission. He died on January 17, 2009..

He was flying F4F Wildcats off of Guadalcanal when this engagement occurred and he himself was forced to ditch but not till after his seventh victory – due to damage by our own anti-aircraft guns shooting at him.

<http://www.watoday.com.au/world/pilot-became-an-ace-in-key-world-war-ii-battle-20090202-7vq4.html>

“Lefty” Gardner Dead at 84

He died on December 24, 2008. Lefty came to be well known to many people from the his Reno Air Race days when he flew a P-38 called “White Lightning” around the pylons for many years.

One time he was cited for flying too low and his reply was said to be that the cockpit was still at 50 feet when the wingtip picked up some sagebrush – and the rules only talk about the pilot must be 50 feet above the ground.

He won the Unlimited Gold race in 1976 flying a P-51 called “Thunderbird”.

The P-38 crashed a few years ago on a ferry flight and has now been rebuilt by the Red Bull company and should be seen flying again around the country.

Fight to save WW2 RAF bomber base in England

RAF Bicester is the most complete surviving wartime bomber base - is at the centre of a fresh battle, as a group of enthusiasts tries to save the historic site for the nation instead of it being sold off to developers.

It was opened in 1917 with the Royal Flying Corps and the first two of many Victoria Crosses awarded to bomber crews were to crews flying from Bicester. (Only 1 Victoria Cross was ever awarded to a fighter pilot during all of World War II.)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4337232/NEEDS-PIC-Fight-to-save-WW2-bomber-base-for-the-nation.html>

LST 325

LST-325 on the beach at Normandy, France in 1944.



A group of people in Evansville Indiana are trying to get this ship onto the National Historic register so that it can be preserved.

<http://www.courierpress.com/news/2009/jan/31/no-headline---01b01st/>

Production Awards

Not only did military personnel get awards but production workers also were given awards for their work during World War II.



The ability of the US worker to produce so much, so fast and so cheaply, was one of the primary reasons the war was won so quickly.

In the Pulitzer prize winning book "[An Army at Dawn](#)" a British officer was noted to state that the Americans will win the war on production alone no matter how inefficient the average soldier was.

The British at this time had a very low opinion of the US Army units fighting in North Africa and wanted them to be integrated and under their command, just like what they wanted when the troops deployed to France during World War I.

B-17s on Guadalcanal

Up until Mid-1943 B-17s were also sent to the Pacific but due to the longer distances in the Pacific B-24s were sent there. But until that time, B-17s flew out of many bases in the Pacific including Matthew Dillions who was a flight engineer on the Flying Fortress.

The Guadalcanal battle itself lasted from August 7, 1942 till February 9, 1943 and over 7,000 US and 30,000 Japanese soldiers were killed during the battles for the island.

<http://newsok.com/veteran-recounts-hell-that-was-guadalcanal/article/3344400>

Civilian Casualties during WW II

A new book is out documenting the price civilians paid during the liberation of Europe. "[The Bitter Road to Freedom](#)" examines the cost the non-combatant civilians pay when being liberated. Civilians are caught in crossfire from ground combat as well as from the bombing campaign from the air. The book notes that roughly 70,000 French people

were killed as a result of Allied bombing raids on military targets between 1940 and 1945.

Not sure if this is a revisionist book or just the facts of history that were overlooked.

"The Bitter Road to Freedom: A new History of the Liberation of Europe" (New York: The Free Press, 2008) by William I. Hitchcock.

The B-24 – The test bed for water landings

Did you know that on Sept. 20, 1944 a B-24 was deliberately crashed into the James River to test ditching procedures? This is the only time a full scale aircraft was deliberately ditched and scientifically recorded to find out more on how to build aircraft better to survive a ditching.

The information from that test was, and is still used, to train people how to ditch a plane in water.

The B-24 "was a dubious ditching aircraft," Frederick A. Johansen wrote in his 1999 book "[B-24 Liberator: Rugged But Right.](#)"

http://www.dailypress.com/news/dp-local_waterlandings_0222feb22,0,2829731.story

Local Chapter News and Groups

Golden Era of Racing Meet May 3, 2009 – R/C Aircraft that is

Mulligans, Mystery Ships, Macchis & Monocoups with Gee Bees, Folkerts and Wedell-Williams too!

Celebrate Golden Age of Aviation with a glimpse of what the National Air Races looked like in the '30's. While we don't have a real Bendix Cup, Thompson Trophy, Schneider Cup or Pulitzer Trophy, we do have these awards:

Coyote Speed Nut Cup: fastest airplane of the day

Fern Prairie Cup: airplane that best demonstrates the era

Golden Wings Cup: best all around scale model.

Come participate in an event that should capture the glory of the National Air Races on Sunday, May 3rd at the Fern Prairie Modelers Field in Washougal, WA.

<http://www.fpmc.org>

Jim Riggle, CD jim @ jimriggle.com or 503-655-3243

Note that Saturday, May 2nd is the 18th annual FPM "Celebration of Silent Flight" all-electric-power event

Wheels & Wings August 1

Wings & Wheels will once again be held at Troutdale Airport (TTD) on August 1, 2009. The event will start at 9:00am and end at 3:00pm. Rotary International will be hosting a Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser to help eradicate Polio.

Brad Fudge 503-807-5226 (cell phone)

Website: www.gorgewheelsandwings.com

Western Antique Aircraft & Car Museum

If you are at Hood River you can check out this museum. It is styled like the Shuttleworth Museum in England where antique aircraft and vehicles co-exist.

Open 7 days a week. Museum is located on Ken Jernstedt Airfield. 541-308-1600.

<http://www.waaamuseum.org/>

Old Bold Pilots Club

Meets on the 2nd 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 100th 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>. Meeting location: New Life Christian Center, 1723 NE Vine Street. Roseburg, OR and they meet on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 12:00 noon. The July / August dinner meeting is on the fourth Tuesday of those months at the American Legion Hall 406 SE Oak Street. 6:30 pm Elmer L Giles, Sec.. POC: Elmer L Giles, 102 Shadow Ranch Lane, Roseburg OR 97470 Cell phone 541 430 4165. Dues \$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 Mother's Day) from 10 AM till 12 Noon at various places now that their long time meeting place shut down. Call for details: 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

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5801 NW Cornelius Pass Road
Hillsboro, OR. 97124
TEL: +(1) (503) 597-7030
FAX: +(1) (503) 597-7037
EMAIL: Gary Mortensen grmortensen@militarylibrary.net

“Milk Run” Definition

Milk Run: noun; uneventful, routine. Slang for an “easy mission”. A combat mission where you attack the enemy and get credit for a mission toward your tour total but no enemy fighters, nor any effective anti-aircraft guns, are expected to be firing at you. Word origin based upon the routine nature of delivering milk every morning to people in the US in the 1920s. First referenced in print 1925. See “cake walk”. Antonym of Schweinfurt.

Contact Information E-mail and Postal

Secretary 8th AFHS of Oregon
Tom Philo
17502 SW Kimmel Ct
Beaverton, Oregon 97007-6877
secretary@8thafhsoregon.com
<http://www.8thafhsoregon.com>

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