

“MILK RUN”

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society News Update March 2010



Next Meeting is on **May 8**. 10 AM till 2 PM.

History News

Readers, where's your story?

Book Reviews by Mike Pungercar

"88 Days" by Byron Van Fleet - The story of Clem Pine (Klamath Falls resident) who flew with the 351st (25 missions including the Aug. 15, 1943 Schweinfurt mission) and then volunteered for another tour of duty. He was assigned to the 91st BG and on his 4th mission was on one of the planes in the 324th Sqdn hit by the Luftwaffe on Aug. 16, 1944. Lowell Getz describes the action in "Forty Seconds Over Eisenach" in "Mary Ruth Memories of Mobile". Clem was on ship "613" as the tail gunner and was wounded and bailed out and became a POW. His days as a POW included participating on the Nazi Death March in Feb. 1945. This was a part of the war I had heard nothing about.

(Note - Last week I visited Clem in Klamath Falls and interviewed him and parts of his story will be included in my book, along with stories from other vets I have been able to interview over the past year.)

"Lucky Dog" by Douglas Holt - I met Doug last summer in Mequon, WI. He is a member of the EEA and helps host events in WI when the Aluminum Overcast is on tour. The book is his personal story covering the period from when he enlisted in March of 1943 through Sept. 1945 when he received his discharge. Doug was a pilot with the 381st BG. The book is based on entries from his flight logs. He covers his time in flight school and his 35 missions.

(Note - I interviewed Doug in Sept. 2009 in Mequon)

"Brother Bob's War" by Ralph Ekwall - The author tells the story of his brother who served in the 15th AF in the 99th BG. This is the guy who did a mass mailing to the 91st GG member list. He writes about a lot of topic beyond his brothers missions (war strategies, fighter aces, the B-17 story, etc.). He also spends time talking about "Brother Bob's life in the Ekwall family. The book held my interest for some time, but I got tired of reading about "Brother Bob" this and "Brother Bob" that. I found the number of typos and formatting errors a distraction and want to make sure my end product is proofed thoroughly and end up a better product.

I would give "88 Days" a very high recommendation, "Lucky Dog" a good recommendation" and "Brother Bob's War" a lukewarm recommendation at best. It is the only book I have in my home library that I probably will not reread.

Tears in the Darkness

Reviewed on this web site (<http://www.energypublisher.com/article.asp?id=26544>) the book by Michael and Elizabeth Norman is a heavily researched book about the Bataan Death March and the aftermath. Interviews with hundreds of survivors, local Filipino civilians, and Japanese soldiers, this delves into both how it occurred, the military mistakes which General Douglas MacArthur made in field which caused a lot of suffering before the surrender, the march itself, and the "hell ships" that took some 125,000 prisoners to Japan as slave laborers of which some 12,000 died enroute due to both Japanese deliberate maltreatment as well as ships sunk by subs and bombed by planes since none of the transport ships were marked as transporting prisoners.



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Hardback from 17.99 and in paperback.

Hardcover: 480 pages ;Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 1St Edition edition (June 9, 2009) ISBN-10: 0374272603 ISBN-13: 978-0374272609

Ground Crewman Finally Gets his Medals

John Ahrens was a crew chief in the 479th Fighter Group which flew both P-51 and P38s out of England and then later on moved into France and maintained aircraft at the the front lines across France, Belgium and Germany on field bases.

"I never lost a pilot. A couple of my planes cracked up on landing, but I only lost one plane. I called my last pilot 'the kid' because he was younger than I was. He was 17, I was 19,"

He was earned the Good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle East Medal, Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, the World War II Victory Medal, a Presidential Unit Citation and an Honorable Service lapel button.

<http://www.wellsvilledaily.com/news/x1920348514/Ahrens-awarded-WW-II-medals>

Col Lee Archer dead at 90



Col. Archer was one of the pilots of the Tuskegee Airmen and went into the 302 Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group in Italy initially flying ground support missions in a Bell P-39 "Air Cobra". The unit later transitioned to the P-51 Mustang where in a fight over the Danube in October of 1944 he shot down three German fighters in a single engagement. He also is credited with destroying

six aircraft on the ground. He is also the only pilot of the Tuskegee airmen recognized as achieving "Ace" status during the war.

In October of 2005 he and three other WW II Tuskegee airmen went to Iraq to visit the current members of the 332nd Group.

He died at the end of January.

49 & 1/2 Missions

The 15th Air Force out of Italy had a different set of combat situations than the 8th. The Air Force Command considered that the Italian / Mediterranean front to be much easier than what was facing the 8th Air Force out of England so the mission requirements were higher. In the MTO – Mediterranean Theater of Operations -- flying 50 missions before finishing a tour was normal for a bomber crew. Cliff Stone was a pilot of a B-24 with the 763rd Squadron of the 460th Heavy Bombardment Group of the 55th Wing of the 15th Air Force in the European theater of operations in Italy who while on his 50th mission was shot down and spent the rest of the war in Stalag Luft I, Barth "Rest Haven on the Baltic" after his capture.

He died January 21st in El Dorado Kansas.

<http://www.eldoradotimes.com/news/x867963175/Losing-a-friend>

Alvin George 73rd Bomb Wing

Over in the Pacific flying the number of missions before a tour was officially over varied widely . Alvin was a gunner in a B-29 and flew over 30 missions before the war ended as a CFC gunner. The B-29 had remotely controlled turrets so that a single person could fire the top and bottom turret while a person still manned the tail turret.

He was a member of the CAF – Commemorative Air Force (originally called

Confederate Air Force until Political Correctness forced the name change some years ago) and owned 3 WW II a/c at one point in time.

He died in January in Atlanta Georgia.

http://www.ajc.com/news/alvin-theron-george-84-284970.html?cxtype=rss_news_128746

LST -- Long, Slow Target

LSTs played a pivotal role in allowing the allies to launch invasions all over the world. These ships were built to land on beaches – and not built to take a lot of battle punishment.

On December 15, 1944, Mindoro Island was the target of a US invasion force and in that force was a lot of LSTs including LST 605.

This is an account of one of the first really successful Kamikaze attacks by the Japanese during WW II against invasion shipping.

“Thirty seconds, separated me from another appointment with death.”

<http://www.springfieldnewssun.com/news/springfield-news/springfield-couple-learns-details-of-relative-s-death-in-wwii-535741.html>

P-51 vs P-47

From a discussion board:

“Howard Camp, a fighter pilot friend, flew both P-51s and P-47s in World War II. I once asked him which airplane he preferred. “It depends”, he replied without hesitation, “on whether you are shooting or being shot at. You want the Mustang if you are shooting and the Thunderbolt if you are being shot at!”

WASP Congressional Medal Ceremony

Congress set the date for the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) Congressional Gold Medal ceremony for March 10, 2010 at 11 a.m. at the U.S. Capitol.

Here is a press release from Senator Hutchison’s office:

<http://www.hutchison.senate.gov/WASP.html>

Tours Teach About History and Family

B-17s, B-24, and B-25 and other aircraft are already on tour around the southern USA. In Florida at Fernandina Beach one woman learned from a WW II waist gunner, Larry Carastro who bailed out of the plane, about the day her father died at the controls of his B-17 over Anzio, Italy.

http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2010-02-06/story/world_war_ii_history_is_also_a_family_history

B-17 Flying Fortress Association

Yes, there is an association for the B-17s. A newsletter is published by Don R. Hayes; 1640 Cambridge Drive; Walla Walla Washington, 99362. Web site <http://www.airwarb17.net/>; e-mail: b17assndhayes@bmi.net Don is a retired Lt. Col., USAF.

There will be a new book coming out soon called "Splendor in the Skies Echoes from the Past" which will have 250+ accounts from the men who flew in the B-17 during World War Two over Germany.

The B-17 was used in the Pacific thru mid 1943 when it was replaced by the B-24. The B-24 had a longer range of operation and due to the large amount of over-water flying required in the Pacific to get to strategic enemy bases this limited the B-17 as to what targets could be hit from the few bomber bases available in the Pacific.

P-51 Replica in Mississippi

Outside of Vicksburg there is a now a P-51D replica of Cary Salter's aircraft that he flew during WW II at Jackson's Hawkins Field. "Charlotte's Chariot" was his assigned aircraft that he flew from December 1944 until the end of the war. This replica was created by Vicksburg's Dan Fordice, one of the owners of Fordice Construction of Vicksburg.

There are also other restored aircraft at Southern Heritage Air Museum at the Vicksburg-Tallulah Regional Airport in Mound.

<http://www.vicksburgpost.com/articles/2010/01/31/news/doc4b6516fe67ad8124476815.txt>

US Postage Stamps Honor 4 Naval Personnel

On February 4 the US Postal Service issued a set of 4 stamps honoring four different Naval Personnel starting from the Boxer Rebellion thru World War II.

John McCoy got his two Medal of Honors from his actions in the Boxer Rebellion where he was wounded and in Mexico in 1914.

This is part of the "Distinguished Sailors stamps" series.

http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=50876

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Top row left, William S. Sims, commander of U.S. Naval forces in European waters during World War I, Arleigh A. Burke, a top destroyer squadron commander in World War II. Bottom left John McCoy, earned two Medals of Honor, and Doris Miller served in World War II.

Evergreen Museum Events in May & June & August

On May 29th is the start of the Cascade War Birds Fly-in for the weekend and on the same day at the museum there is a Tuskegee Airmen Panel that takes place.

On June 12 there is an American Fighter Aces Panel which just happen to co-inside with the 75th Celebration of the B-17.

On August 21 the 475th Fighter Group is having a reunion panel.

Check the museum web site for exact times. www.sprucegoose.org

B-17 Ball Turret Comes to Life

For more than a year, EAA volunteers and staff have been working to get Aluminum Overcast's ball turret operational again. Only a few B-17s in the world have working turrets, and a few weeks ago, EAA's spun for the first time since WWII. Watch how the ball turret works, as well as what went into getting it operational again.

<http://www.eaa.org/video/aaa.html?videoId=71171263001>

Local Chapter News

Archive Update

Aerial Gunnery Claims by our Members?

The Army Air Force maintained an official list of claims by pilots, and it has been published, but what about claims by aircrew members of shooting down enemy aircraft?

Could all the members please send to me the claims they filed and the claims they were awarded so we can add this into our chapter records about each of you.

Phil Richart created his "Oregon Victory Credit List" which has a entry whenever an Oregonian was on a plane and anyone on that plane claimed a plane was shot – but it is not 100% complete. There is a site for Navy Patrol Plane victories during WW II but claims of other aircraft type is not centralized.

If anyone knows of a complete history of claims by aerial gunners please let me know!

Local Aviation Groups

Old Bold Pilots Club

Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from around 11:45 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.

Evergreen Museum

Member Appreciation Day on February 27, 2010

8 am breakfast in the Aviation Museum followed by a members-only presentation by John Collins, the Paper Airplane Guy, at 8:45. RSVP required for breakfast. Call 503-434-4007 or email membership@sprucegoose.org

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 LtCol 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.

Breakfast at Twin Oaks Airpark

EAA chapter 105 [http://www.eaa105.org/](http://www.eaa105.org) holds a breakfast at Twin Oaks Airpark www.twinoaksairpark.com on the 1st Saturday of each month. Cost is \$5 and you get to eat in the hanger. Their next breakfast is at the same time as our 8th AFHS meeting on November 7th. It is a pancake breakfast so you could go there and then still get to the 8th AFHS meeting that starts at 10 AM.

Bomber Restaurant Breakfast

On the first Friday of each month people meet at The Bomber Restaurant (find the B-17 along McLaughlin – hard to miss) at 10 AM till noon. The Bomber Complex, Inc. 13515 S.E. McLoughlin Blvd.; Milwaukie, Oregon 97222; 503-659-9306

The B-17 restoration project has its own web site at:
<http://www.b17wingsoffreedom.org/>

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

“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

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