

“MILK RUN”

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society News
Update
August 2011



History News

Readers, where's your story?

8th AFHS Oregon Chapter News and how to share history with others on the last page.

American Fighter Aces Reunion

51st Annual Reunion in Orlando, Florida Thursday September 29th - Sunday October 2nd.

<http://americanfighteraces.org/news.htm>

Restoring a P-40 – One Rivet at a Time

Ken Hake, 78, had been restoring aircraft most of his life – and now is in the process of restoring his 2nd Curtiss P-40.

<http://www.saljournal.com/news/story/p-40-warhawk-for-for-SUNDAY-LIFE--July-10--2011>

Three Wellingtons in the UK

From Bob Collis in the UK:

There are in fact THREE Wellingtons in the UK.

In addition to the aircraft you mention [July "Milk Run"], there is a Mk X (10) on display in the RAF Museum at Hendon. This is the actual aircraft which appeared in the 1955 film The Dambusters.

There is also a fully restored Mk IA, N2980 "R-Robert" at the Brooklands museum in Surrey. This aircraft was recovered from Loch Ness in 1985 and completely refurbished to a superb standard.

A Research Request Example: 306th 2LT William J. Gise

Lee Cunningham sent this request to me in early July.

306 BG (H) 2LT William J. Gise, believed to have been a POW Bailed out of TN 41-24510 on 9-Oct-42 on mission to Lille, France. MACR 6706. I looked up that MACR and it has his serial number as O-660491. When I searched the POW records, nothing came up for William J. Gise, so I put in the serial number and came up with a 1LT Robert B. Hermann, 306BG/367BS, captured 6-Mar-43.

Looked up planes lost on that date from 306th and found that 1LT Robert B. HERMAN (one "n") was on TN 42-5130 MACR 939 which lists him with serial number O-660491.

So I'm thinking the Germans spelled his name with two "n",s instead of one, and the serial number O-660491 really is his, BUT the serial number for William L. Gise is in error.

Then five days later I received a phone call asking if I could create a higher quality crew photo of the Ben Olsen crew so it could be given as a gift of the daughter of Lt Olsen – *Lt Gise was on the Olsen ship as a substitute when it was shot down.*



I saw in a comment on Footnote.com in the MACR record that he bailed out but evaded and returned to the UK. Then via the NARA site I found the escape and evasion report #15 about how he evaded capture and on it he signed his real SN. I posted the correct one back into footnote MACR as a comment so others would have the correct one now and sent to Lee both complete set of MACRs that I downloaded along with the E&E report.

I also sent the complete MACR to the future husband of the daughter of Lt Olsen along with a cleaned up higher quality Olsen crew photo via email. It took me an hour and a half to do all this download and emailing. It took around 30 minutes of photo editing to rescan and clean up as much as possible the Olsen crew photo.

This shows that even official US Army Air Force Records can sometimes be wrong. In this case the Adjutant of the 306th put down the wrong SN – because Lt Gise was a substitute on the a/c shot down and used the original navigator's SN likely because he was supposed to be on the mission mission but Gise was substituted and the mission list was not updated.

Looking for A Fighter Pilot at Malta

Looking for Information on a pilot. Person's name is Carl Lee Johnson from Banks, Oregon. He was a RAF Beaufighter Pilot and was KIA Malta - Date unknown.

Contact:

Mike Howell MHOWELL590@aol.com

Want to Be Interviewed about your WW II Service? (Oregon / WA locals)

Joan Hamilton is part of the Association of Personal Historians and at the Oregon Historical Society she wants to interview three veterans as part of the Veterans History Project interviews again this year.

It's on September 10th from 11 am-3 pm at the Oregon Historical Society; 1200 SW Park Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97205.

Preregistered veterans receive free OHS admission and a guaranteed interview time. Private 30-45 minute Veterans History Project interviews will be conducted by a personal historian between 11-3 pm. Contact Joan at JHami828@aol.com . Joan is a member of the Oregon 8th AFHS and she has been doing this for the past few years and is quite good.

Walk-ins will be accepted on a space-available basis only.

OHS contact is Rachel Snow (503) 306-5237; Rachael.Snow@ohs.org

This project is part of the Library of Congress's Veteran project. Other locations for interviews are always going on. Check LOC web site. <http://www.Loc.gov>

Australian WW I Soldiers Identified and Buried in France.

A mass grave of over 250 Australian soldiers was discovered in 2009 on the battlefield of Fromelles from July 1916 – Battle of the Somme - and they have identified 14 so far. Pvt Leslie Gordon Walsh was buried with honors at Fromelles on 27 July 2011. He was Killed 20 July 1916.

<http://www.northernstar.com.au/story/2011/07/27/long-lost-relative-laid-rest-world-war-one-walsh/>

Ambition and Hooking onto those in Power

When just starting out and want to get ahead in the world you use the contacts you have around and associate with those who can allow you to get ahead in life. Martin Davidson found out that sometimes the association is not what you expect.

" . . . his grandfather had used the Nazis like any other major organization, the way an ambitious executive might view his company -- as a way to get ahead."

Documented in his book: "The Perfect Nazi, Uncovering My Grandfather's Secret Past".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/18/us-germany-grandfather-ss-idUSTRE76H58C20110718>

SS Reunion in Latvia

The Latvian Division, 20th Estonian SS Volunteer Division, was incorporated into the German Army during World War II and thus all the men were considered German soldiers with the attendant benefits. They are actually paid as such from Germany. They had a reunion in Latvia this July. Not much of a write up in the Russian



newspapers.

The photo is from the Battle of Kursk that took place in July of 1943. This was the last major offensive by the German Army against the Russians where they had an opportunity to win a major battle.

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/07/30/53940261.html>

Notebooks of Josef Mengele to be auctioned off

Josef Mengele was the doctor who not only did the a lot of initial selection of who would live and who would go direct to the gas chambers at Auschwitz starting in late 1943, he also did experiments on prisoners – the vast majority of them died as a result of medical experimentation. One prisoner who survived was dressed in a full flight uniform, put into ice water for a ½ hour and they tried a method of warming him back up. He survived that test. It was also the one they started using on all pilots (Allied and German) who were picked up out of cold water and were in hyperthermia.

All the books are from the immediate post war timeframe after he escaped and made it to South America. His diary auctioned off last year.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2016186/Nazi-Angel-Death-Josef-Mengeles-handwritten-notes-auctioned-off.html?ITO=1490>

Part of the “Atlantic Wall” now in New Orleans

Three large sections taken from the Normandy area were given to the National WW II Museum in New Orleans by the local museum in France. Three sections of 5 ½ feet high, 18 inches thick by 12 feet long were delivered. This is just a sample of the construction of beach defenses that existed from Norway to Spain – and in the vast majority of locations still exist. There was no way to effectively destroy them – so they are still there. The slabs came from Utah Beach.

<http://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Section-of-Hitler-s-Wall-sent-to-WWII-Museum-1551588.php>

“Red Tails” Movie to come out January 2012

Directed by George Lucas, this is the third movie about the Tuskegee airman that has been made. The visuals are said to much way more historically accurate than the last two that were made. The last two did not use correct a/c in the timeframes they were pretending to be set in. (P51s in North Africa, no P-39, P-40s etc).

<http://www.wikepeers.com/news/6976-tuskegee-airmen-red-tails-the-movie.html>

Tuskegee Airman Lt Col Brown

An Interview with Lt. Col. (Ret.) Dr. Harold Brown of the US Army Air Corps.

"The reason why older generals sent younger men off to war is that young men are just silly enough to think that they are invincible," Lt. Col. Brown said. "And we thought we were invincible. We thought we were the greatest thing to say good morning to another plane."

Upon being shot down the 2nd time:

"Upon reaching the village, an angry mob greeted him and took him over to a tree to be hanged. "They took me down to a tree, which was a perfect lynching tree," Brown recalled. "I assumed they were going to hang me. I was 20 years old at the time and I was trying to make myself grasp the dire situation I was in. ... It was hard to accept what was really happening to me."

One of the police officers though interceded and held the mob off.

Lt. Brown ended up in a prison camp in Nuremberg.

"He saved my life. He wasn't obligated to. ... I regret to this day the biggest mistake was that after the war was over I did not go back and did not look him up."

<http://www.foxtoledo.com/dpp/military/Lt-Col-Brown--In-his-own-words>

In Middle of Libyan Civil War – WW II Graves still Attended

The British buried their dead where they died and did not ship them back home during any of their wars. At the Benghazi War Cemetery Fatour gets up every day to tend to the cemetery where 1,214 Commonwealth soldiers are buried.

"One old British man, in his 90s, a colonel from the war, he couldn't stop crying when he found his friend," Fatour says.

The cemetery is one of four in Libya maintained by the British-based Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In neighboring Tunisia, 2,841 Americans are buried at the North Africa American Cemetery and Memorial.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/16/world/la-fg-libya-military-cemetery-20110716>

150th Anniversary of the US Civil War – 75th of the Spanish

The US Civil War is still fought in some manner by Political Correctness all over the nation – but in Spain it is still fresh in a lot of people's mind and daily actions of their civil war in which 500,000 or so died in three years. The US had 660,000 die in four years – of which around 300,000 was actually from disease and not combat.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2015701387_spainwar24.html

Finally a formal Presentation of his Bronze Star

Warren Melvin was awarded his star during the 1944 Battle of the Bulge while serving in the Air Corps in support of the ground troops. His son, who is stationed in Afghanistan with the State Department, arranged it as a surprise.

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20110726/NEWS/107265000?Title=Surprised-Winter-Haven-Man-90-Receives-Bronze-Star>

In the Navy in Casablanca

Capt. Edward Winter had a commercial license in 1939 – when the war started the Navy got him and sent him to North Africa for three years.

<http://poway.patch.com/articles/time-hasnt-dimmed-powegians-wwii-recollections>

"Mon Cher Camarade" Documentary of French Speaking American Spies

Sam Broussard of Breaux Bridge and Lt. Colonial Robert LeBlanc from Abbeville and many others from southern USA and were spies and they operated behind enemy lines.

"Historian Carl Brasseaux says Cajun translators were as important to the American War effort as the now much acclaimed Native American Code Talkers, yet the Cajun translator's contributions have been entirely ignored."

<http://www.theadvertiser.com/article/20110724/LIFESTYLE/107240312/World-War-II-Spies-Interpreters-Heroes>

The Ritchie Boys

Knowing German got you into this outfit – since you were going to go to Europe and fight them after a lot of training on the Germany Army in order to get information from captured servicemen.

Stern recalls that Corporal Walter Midener single-handedly got 340 German soldiers to surrender to him.

"He was so persuasive," said Stern. "He got the silver medal for this."

<http://www.hometownlife.com/article/20110731/NEWS03/107310459/Meet-Ritchie-Boys?odyssey=nav%7Chead>

Marching Though Europe

Ray B. Taylor was a Technical Sergeant in the 3rd Infantry Division – and they marched (with a few sea hops) from North Africa to Germany.

"We walked at a fast pace for several hours at a time. We walked from one end of Sicily to the other in 14 days. There was fighting along the way."

<http://www.tennessean.com/article/20110719/GALLATIN01/307190013/WWII-vet-recalls-grueling-march-through-Europe>

B-17 to B-17 Radio Communication

Using original WW II radios the Barksdale AFB B-17 talked via their radio to the Mighty 8th AF museum in Savannah.

<http://www.shreveporttimes.com/article/20110713/NEWS10/110712020/Restorers-two-B-17s-talk-first-time-today?odyssey=tab%7Ctopnews%7Ctext%7CFRONTPAGE>

Wolf Pack Hero – Robin Olds

He started off his combat career flying Lockheed P-38 "Lightnings" before converting to P-51s ending WW II with 13 air to air kills and 11.5 on the ground.

Old's Wolf Pack was not the P-47s of Zemke's 56 FG – it was the F4-Phantom II of the Vietnam War when it got that name – mainly due to Col Olds and Operation Bolo.

<http://www.pacaf.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123263855>

Retired Brig. Gen. Charles E. Getz

From a long line of military men – both US and German – Charles flew missions into Iran in the 1960s – the Seals jumped near the shoreline and his unit jumped into the mountains. Later in Vietnam leading combat missions then after military retirement he worked for the CIA.

<http://www.journal-news.net/page/content.detail/id/564889/Service-was-first-love-for-Brig----.html>

George Caselli gets French Legion of Honor

The 95 year old ex-Navigator of the 450 BG “Cottontails” was awarded this medal by the Consulate of France in July.

The 450th flew from Bari, Italy as part of the 15th Air Force. He flew three missions over France out of the 34 missions that he flew.

<http://www.sacbee.com/2011/07/18/3775963/wwii-airman-95-honored-with-french.html>

Aerial Photographer in the 15th Air Force

Wayne White's was a photographer in the 15th Air Force. He just published a book: “It Wasn't My Time” about his experiences taking photos while in combat. He flew 37 missions taking pictures with a K-20 handheld aerial camera.

Members of his unit thought he was dead after the plane he was scheduled to fly on went down. In reality, a change of plans put him on a different plane - one that did not crash. He was also wounded by enemy flack, losing an index finger.

[Editor: This is my K-20 Aerial camera with a red filter on. I am missing the other two filters that normally came with it. It uses 5” roll film. The biggest back on the camera was 50’ length from what I can find out. Usually it was 15’ of film.]



<http://www.mcdonoughvoice.com/featured/x121479656/WWII-photographer-keeps-story-alive>

Combat Artist Painting Solves Mystery

Herman Spoede was a member of Hellhawks Squadron who failed to return from his mission 3 July 1943 in the Solomons. It just happens that a artist was painting on the flight line that day and helped close part of the mystery.

<http://www.wfaa.com/news/local/Painting-solves-World-War-II-mystery-for-North-Texas-family-126467868.html>

British Bomber found off coast of Turkey

A local person who actually saw it crash still lives there. It is in 100' or so of water so easy for them to dive to it and start the identification process.

<http://www.worldbulletin.net/?aType=haber&ArticleID=76898>

Skull found during dredging in Pearl Harbor may be Japanese Pilot

During routine cleanup of the harbor it was found along with lots of other routine WW II era items. Jeff Fong, an archeologist at NAVFAC, earlier told the Associated Press that early analysis made him "75 percent sure" that the skull was that of a Japanese pilot.

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/skull-excavated-pearl-harbor-japanese-pilot/story?id=14128169>

Iwo Jima may no longer be a Training Base

The Navy has been using Iwo as a training base for their carrier pilots for over 20 years – initially it was to be a "temporary" thing until a different location could be found. They still have not found a permanent training home.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jWkdxwLqYAnO_3l2UbbXPOXMc_p_w?docId=8ca8c85e19854a83b51253d1e32896db

Ditched then Shot Down

Chief Master Sgt. Charles Henry "Brother" Brown was at Bury St. Edmonds flying in B-17s in the 331st Squadron, 94th Bomb Group when after a mission to Berlin they had to ditch in the North Sea due to damage. Later, on August 5, 1944 they had to bail out of their B-17 "Our Baby" and was captured.

http://journal-news.net/page/content_detail/id/564556/Chief-Master-Sgt--Charles-H--Brown.html?nav=5007

Oregon Chapter News, Archive Donation, and Contact Information

Next Oregon Chapter Meeting August 13, 2011

Jack Klein will talk about radar operations in the 8th Air Force. Jack was a former radio/radar instructor/operator in England. He was in the Army for over three years working on this equipment.

Send Stories and documents to be Borrowed / Archived

If you have items that you wish to share with others, they can be loaned to the Oregon Chapter, scanned and catalogued and then returned to you. You can always donate them permanently to the chapter if you wish. Contact Tom Philo to make arrangements for the documents.

Items in the archive are usually be posted onto the web site (see release form on web site) so that everyone can learn from what others have experienced.

Need a Ride to the Meeting?

There are many members who can no longer drive due to age so we are trying to find out those who are in need of transportation so that we can find other members who live nearby who can pick you up and then take you home afterwards.

If you would like to come to the meeting and need a ride please contact any chapter officer or board member and let them know.

Tom Davis, Bob Dean, Tom Philo, Sharon Campbell, Charlie Gallagher, Wally Groce, Bob Schuberg, Jerry Ritter, Joani Hamilton, Bert Campbell, Warren Caldwell, or Don Bourgeois. Via e-mail you can send the request to secretary@8thafhsoregon.com if you do not have the phone numbers for the people listed above.

Oregon Chapter 8th AFHS

If you wish to be removed from the e-mail list please let us know.

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