

“MILK RUN”

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society
History News Update for December 2011



History News → Readers, where's your story?
Oregon 8th AFHS Chapter News and how to share YOUR history with others on the last page.

An Abandoned Military Cemetery in the Philippines

After the US dismantled all the military bases as part of cost savings, and arguments with the Philippine government over US bases on Philippine soil, and the eruption of the volcano on Luzon, the US pulled out but did leave some military behind – an 8,600 grave cemetery that is no longer maintained.

<http://veteranscemetery.wordpress.com/>

Browning 303 Machine Gun Test – after being buried for 70 Years

After an RAF Spitfire Mk II crashed in an Irish bog in 1941 it was, of course, just left there since Ireland was neutral during the war. The pilot bailed out (this was covered in a previous issue of the “Milk Run”) but this year they went there to dig up what was left – and lots of it was remarkably well preserved. So well preserved that they were able to clean up all 6 guns, took the non-bent parts from the 6 to make one whole – and it fired off a few hundred rounds without a jam.

The dig will be shown on the BBC sometime next year.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15652440>

“Gathering of Mustangs” Book Due Out in December

In September of 2007 almost every flyable P-51 Mustang went to Columbus Ohio for a “gathering”. A book with 400+ photos about this is being published by the foundation that put the event on. There is also a video out about it from them.

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

“The Promise Kept”

My two year project in writing the book about my Dad's WWII experiences is finally completed. A 12 page transcript of a tape he left me, ended up taking me on this journey which included meeting some other men from the "Greatest Generation", men who also served in the Eighth Air Force like Dad, and who allowed me to include their stories in this book. The "The Promise Kept" is 330 pages long in a 9x6 size, and is illustrated with over 200 photos, most from 65 years back and photographed by men who served with the 91st BG in Bassingbourn, England with Dad. The book was published by Outskirts Press out of Denver.

In another two or three months it will be available on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.com.

For now anyone interested in purchasing a copy needs to go through me. The book sells for \$17.95 + \$4 S&H. I have 50 books ordered and due here by Nov. 30. Please let me know if you would like to order a book. I wish we could give copies to each of you, but the cost of publishing a book was a lot more than we ever anticipated, so we are trying to recoup our investment and also want to repay a couple of private investors who helped make the book a reality. The feedback from those who have read the book, and those who helped with proofing, has been very positive. Some of you have already placed orders, but I wanted to get you a photo of the book's cover.

To see a photo of the cover, and to read more about the book, log onto <http://www.outskirtspress.com/thepromisekept> . This is the web page where orders will be placed once Amazon and Barnes & Noble get through their backlog of books to get on line, and get to my book. I can let everyone know when they become available online, but for now, we appreciate every order received. Any book that we mail out will be signed by the author. Oh, that's me!
Please respond to me at pungercar2@msn.com when placing an order.

From Milly and I to each of you and your families - Happy Thanksgiving!

Pilot Officer Roland "Bud" Wolfe – Irish Peat Bog Story Cont'd

[Editor's Note: in a previous issue RAF Pilot Officer Wolfe was interned in Ireland after being forced to bail out of his aircraft in a common camp – with German pilot internees. Now his a/c has been excavated.]

"Public interest in Wolfe's story spread across Britain when aviation archeologists recovered the crumpled wreckage — the best-preserved Spitfire excavated in Europe — last summer. Interest intensified earlier this month when the test-firing of one the aircraft's restored Browning .303-caliber machine guns — the sound of the Battle of Britain — was aired on a BBC webcast."

<http://www.omaha.com/article/20111128/NEWS01/711289905>

A Jeep in Iowa

"It's a little too shiny, like jeeps used to be," he said with a laugh. "I get razzing from people when I take it to shows of the 8th Air Force. I tell them it was (Gen.) Jimmy Doolittle's jeep. They never had ugly-looking jeeps. They kept them shined up."

http://www.qctimes.com/news/local/vintage-wwii-jeep-is-part-of-festival-of-trees/article_1876c4b8-1713-11e1-801f-001cc4c03286.html#ixzz1fDqwJ8jF

A Machine Gunner in the 8th Infantry Division

William Allen was drafted in 1944 and arrived in France long after the D-Day invasion – but was there long enough to be awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. He was assigned to the 13th Regiment.

"Co. D is the one used to protect the other three companies — A, B and C — so they can move ahead," he noted. "The fourth company is always the heavy weapons company."

<http://www.cantonrep.com/ipadtopstories/x729318862/WWII-Then-and-Now-Machine-gunner-Allan-was-wounded-in-Germany>

98 BG (H) Reunion at Barksdale Air Force Base La

The 98th Bombardment Group (Heavy), which flew Consolidated B-24 "Liberators" during World War Two, held their reunion over the weekend of October 17 thru the 21st.

The 98th was one of the groups that flew the "Operation Tidal Wave"-- the tree-top mission to Ploesti oil fields in Rumania on August 1, 1943. The others were the 376, already in North Africa, the 44th and 93rd which were loaned out from the 8th Air Force, and the newly arrived 389th which was also assigned to the 8th.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/air-force-news/barksdale-afb-airmen-honor-ploesti-raiders.html?comp=700001076338&rank=3>

<http://www.afrc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123277223>

Two Tours in a B-17 – But only Completed One

After finishing a 25 mission tour in 1944 Captain Robert G Reeder went home on leave, then came back to the 8th Air Force for a second tour. On his 10th mission he was shot down and became a "Kriege".

Reeder said that when he was shot down, the Germans allowed him to keep his watch, only to have it taken away later by the Russians when they took over the city.

<http://www.glendalypress.com/news/opinion/tn-gnp-1026-ww-pilot-survived-crash-in-germany,0,1291488.story>

A Lead Navigator of the 493 BG (H) Gordon W. Weir

Flying in both B-17s and B-24s as part of the 8th Air Force he was quickly assigned to be a lead navigator for his bomb group. He was also lucky in that in one mission his aircraft along with one other were the only two to return to base out of the 12 that went on the mission.

<http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20111010/ARTICLES/111019962/-1/news08?Title=Gordon-W-Weir->

Honoring WW II Veterans

A short listing of various WW II veterans around Chicago including one on duty on the Arizona, an ace, a Navy doctor, and a B-17 Gunner.

<http://heraldnews.suntimes.com/lifestyles/8153890-423/paying-tribute-to-ww-ii-veteran-heroes-who-are-no-longer-with-us.html>

RAAF Pilot Sgt William Smith Identified

Shot down on May 9, 1942 over northern France, crews excavating what they thought was a Czech flown a/c discovered his remains – along with an identification disk making the task a lot easier.

His unit was escorting a "Circus" mission – a small group of bombers (sometimes just a single bomber) with a large force of fighters in order to draw up German fighters who would ignore fighter sweeps but come up to attack bombers.

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/lost-wwii-pilot-identified-as-raaf-sgt-20111128-1o2mz.html>

Severing on the Aircraft Carrier USS Bataan

Seeing a lot of the earth– mainly ocean – James H. "Jimmy" Morris was on this aircraft carrier during World War II. In one 88 day stretch the USS Bataan had steamed a total 38,773 miles in the Pacific.

"We were fortunate our ship was never hit by a Kamikaze pilot, but one came very close," he recalled. "I did see five or six of the ships in our fleet get hit, including the U.S.S. Enterprise."

<http://www.thefranklinnewspost.com/article.cfm?ID=20695>

From the Heat of Burma to the Ice of Alaska

Walter Eberhart was a parts supply sergeant in Chabua, India keeping aircraft ready to move goods in the air. The CBI – China Burma India – theatre was next to the farthest place in the supply chain of WW II – only being in China itself put you at the very end of everything you needed.

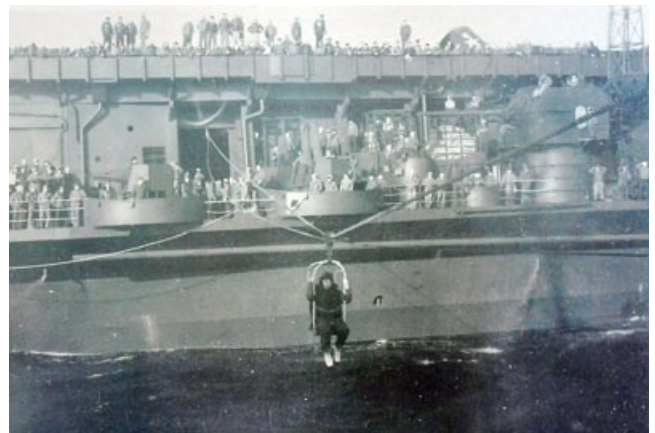
"We were out in the boonies, out in the jungle, no recreation of any kind," he said. "It wasn't a picnic."

<http://newsminer.com/bookmark/16572487-Walter-Eberhart-recalls-World-War-II-in-India-Burma>

Rescuing a Pilot in the Mid-Atlantic

A plane and pilot went over the side of a carrier in mid-Atlantic and the destroyer USS Charles R. Ware, which Dan Allen served on, came up to help rescue the pilot and get back onto the carrier.

"As a reward for saving the pilot, we got 16 gallons of ice cream from the aircraft carrier," Allen said.



Turning Shrapnel into A Ring

Slightly wounded in the leg after a Kamikaze stuck his ship just 30 feet from where he was standing, James Wesley Reach had a machinist on the ship make it into a ring.

“When I got home, I gave it to a girl. If I want anyone to know who that was, I’ll be the one to tell them.’ In other words, it wasn’t Aunt Beth,”

<http://www.shelbycountyreporter.com/2011/11/28/shelby-county-wwii-veteran-passes-away/>

Wichita May Lose Boeing Plant

The plant, which started out being owned by Stearman in 1927 and which built the ubiquitous trainer a/c and B-29s during World War II with up to 40,000 employed at the peak, may now lose the 2,100 or so people still working at the factory.

<http://www.kansas.com/2011/11/27/2118298/analysts-loss-of-boeing-would.html>

Visiting the Front Lines on Turkey Day

Since World War I commanders have often worked hard to ensure that the troops on the front line get a hot meal. That still has not changed even in far off Afganistan.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia-pacific/marine-chief-spends-turkey-day-on-war-front-young-marine-asks-where-do-we-fight-next/2011/11/24/gIQAG7lwtN_story.html

Keeping the 90th BG “Jolly Rogers” in the Air

Alvia “Alvie” Leighton was drafted in 1941 in the 4th round and in order to have some choice in his military service joined the Army Air Forces and became a mechanic. The year long planned training was cut to 9 months after the war started.

Assigned to Australia and the 90th BG (H) flying B-24s he only found out recently why one a/c that he worked on - which the crew though might not make it back due to mission length- was lost to icing and not anything mechanical.

http://www.dailyinterlake.com/news/featured_story/article_7df33202-0f2c-11e1-9927-001cc4c002e0.html

Taking St Elmos’ Fire In the Pacific

After being shot up over Kwajalen Atoll, Bill Treewater and the rest of the crew in the B-24 they were “lite up” with St Elmos’ fire while flying back through a thunderstorm.

<http://www.tcpalm.com/news/2011/nov/19/veterans-spotlight-world-war-ii-army-veteran-was/>

Being a member of the “Caterpillar Club”

Flying in the RAF Bomber Command was a lot more risky than flying in the 8th Air Force. Bob Frost was a crewmember of an RAF Wellington bomber when he was shot down over Belgium after bombing Essen.

"It wasn't [a question of] if you got shot down, it was when you got shot down. Most crews never got beyond 14 ops, we were on our 22nd."

"I never met anybody who enjoyed bombing."

The informal club was initiated by parachute manufacturer Leslie Irvin in 1922.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-15784631>

Libya – 100 years of Airpower

On November 1, 1911, the first documented use of an air to ground attack took place. Now 100 years later, still in Libya, the precision attack idea from 100 years ago seems to be routinely attainable.

<http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/columnist/vergano/story/2011-11-20/libya-air-bombing/51311726/1>

A Short History of the Higgins Boat Plant

Fighting Navy government resistance to his idea Andrew Jackson Higgins took a long time to convince the Navy that his landing boat was what was needed.

http://www.nola.com/175years/index.ssf/2011/11/1944_higgins_industries_in_new.html

WW II Aircraft Recognition Models

Saved by John Fraser Hart at the end of WW II from being thrown away, he still has the all black scale plastic models that were used to teach aircraft recognition to sailors.

<http://www.mndaily.com/2011/11/10/first-he-taught-good-planes-and-bad-planes>

Keeping a Combat Diary aboard the USS Tuscaloosa

Bon Lovingood was on the USS Tuscaloosa for over two years and he kept an informal journal diary of the goings on of the ship during that time.

"June 5, 1944 — Our captain (of the USS Tuscaloosa) passed the word that with the exception of an emergency, we would not open fire until 5:50 a.m. and only then at our designated target. At 11:15 p.m. Allied planes begin flying over us in force toward the coast of France, and then get anti-aircraft fire (from the Germans) as they begin to hit their targets. The hour will be 0630 on same day which is 40 minutes after we open fire."

"Right on time we open fire on the enemy, and there's plenty of action. The Tuscaloosa silenced Target 15 and was then assigned to Target 14-A. The USS Carey is sunk by enemy fire, but lost only five of its crew who had engine room watch. The Tuscaloosa almost hit by Target 14-A, then engaged in a four-hour battle with this target, which was an 11-inch gun on a freight car moving continuously back and forth upon a hill. Around 8 a.m. American troops landed on the coast without much loss as we know of at present."

<http://daltondailycitizen.com/local/x869146841/-All-hell-broke-loose>

Last vet of the B-17 “Dirty Deuce”

Bill Nopar was the navigator and is the last man alive of the crew who flew this B-17 over Germany after his pilot died a few month ago. He was able to keep almost all of his navigation maps and turned his notes and items into a book.

“He’s able to put all his photos, maps and letters online at 1000memories.com, a website that allows people to easily upload and tag old photos and share stories about them. The veteran’s component launched Nov. 4. A gallery featuring WWII war photos goes live today.[November 11, 2011]”

Rudy Adler, 30 stated: “We found there was a storytelling gap in the digital genealogy space. Sites like Ancestry.com are not great at allowing users to tell stories ... and social media (Facebook and Twitter) is bad at talking in the past tense. We set out to build a past tense on the Internet.”

The special page, www.1000memories.com/wwii , features video and photos collected with the goal of preserving memories of WWII.

<http://tucsoncitizen.com/arizona-news/2011/11/11/scottsdale-wwii-vet-making-sure-b-17-crews-dramatic-stories-survive-2/>

A Job, a Hobby, Now a Museum

Jerome O. Oxman came home from WW II but liked the gadgets so he signed up on a mailing list to get an R-2800 for \$300 – and got it. Now it, and many other items that were sold for a pittance after the war – is in the museum he built.

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/11/11/wwii-veteran-runs-museum-to-educate-public-about-past-wars/>

B-24 Crew Laid To Rest at Arlington National Cemetery

Shot down during a raid to Berlin on April 29, 1944 and crashing near Hannover Germany, additional remains were discovered in 2003 and complete identification was finished this year. Two had been identified after the war, 1 was unknown, the other 7 were identified after being rediscovered.

The pilots were 2nd Lt Arthur W. Luce and 2nd Lt Robert R Bishop.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/army-news/wwii-army-aircrew-laid-to-rest.html>

Coming Home on a Trim Tab and 1 Engine

Bill Fort flew the Martin B-26 “Marauder” twin engine medium bomber during WW II. The B-26 had the lowest loss rate due to enemy action in the ETO – due to its speed and the fact that it often flew tactical and not strategic bombing missions and thus never went very deep into enemy territory.

During a mission in December of 1944 Bill’s B-26 was hit, knocking out an engine, caught fire but he made flew it back to base using the trim tab when the controls were shot up.

He flew 65 missions.

<http://www.kitsapsun.com/news/2011/oct/13/former-world-war-ii-bomber-pilot-recalls-lessons-w/>

A TBF Comes Home

After decades of fighting fires and bugs a TFB Avenger Torpedo Bomber comes home to the Museum of Mountain Flying's hangar in Missoula, Montana.

http://missoulian.com/news/local/article_d0b607da-f3c0-11e0-8c43-001cc4c002e0.html

Stalin's Daughter Dies at 85 in the USA

Joseph Stalin had two sons and a daughter – one son was caught on the battlefield and after Stalin turned down an offer to swap him for a captured German General, he ended up dying in a POW camp. His other son died of natural causes, mainly alcohol, but his daughter defected to the USA in the 1960s.

<http://news.yahoo.com/stalins-daughter-lana-peters-dies-85-200721334.html>

Navy Tests another XB-47 Drone

This joins the previous test model but will also be used for carrier take-off and landings.

<http://www.zdnet.com/photos/second-x-47b-robo-drone-takes-to-the-air-photos/6331263>

A British "Cookie" is found at Koblenz

This cookie, however, packs a big burst of blast. A British 4000 pound "cookie" is an air-blast bomb designed to blow off the tile roofs of buildings so that the incendiaries in a following wave would have items to burn and destroy a city by burning it out – aka: carpet bombing a city to create a firestorm - was discovered in the river at Koblenz.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/nearly-half-german-city-to-evacuate-sunday-for-defusing-of-wwii-era-bomb-1.162031>

In September a phosphorous bomb was discovered by the train station of Schopp and in May a 250 GP bomb was found at Pulaski Barracks in Kaiserslautern.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/europe/germany/hundreds-including-americans-evacuated-as-experts-detonate-wwii-bomb-in-germany-1.155099>

More confusions prior to December 7, 1941

A Memo on possible Japanese military operations, based on what info Japanese people and possible spies were gathering, was sent to FDR on Dec 4, 1941 was published in a new book by Craig Shirley's: "[December 1941: 31 Days that Changed America and Saved the World](#)". (Amazon Link)

However - like lots of alerts and prior warnings – there was nothing saying that on “day X this military base of the USA was going to be attacked”.

<http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/sideshow/fdr-warned-pearl-harbor-attack-days-advance-164032040.html>

Oregon Chapter News, Archive Loan / Donation, and Contact Information

Next Oregon Chapter Meeting November 5, 2011

PROGRAM: The speaker is Motoya Nakamura. Nakamura has documented in photographs, as well as in oral format, the stories of veterans of the 442 RCT who live in the Portland Oregon local area.

It is hoped that two or three members of the 442 who live locally will attend.

The 442 RCT - Regimental Combat Team - fought in eight campaigns in Italy, France and Germany during WW II. A WW II regiment usually consisted of 1,200 front line infantry combat soldiers - and this RCT earned over 18,000 total decorations.

LUNCH: The meal will be a Thanksgiving style hot meal with a second lighter choice. The price will be \$13.00 which includes gratuity. The cost of the meal also covers the room rental fee so that we can use the building for the meeting.

Oregon Chapter Annual Dues

Sharon will have the dues letters at the meeting and if you can pay the \$15 annual dues at the meeting it will save the cost of an envelope and stamp. Otherwise, the letters reminding exiting members to send in their **2012 dues** of **\$15** will be sent out after the November meeting.

Any money given to the chapter ABOVE \$15 is tax deductible.

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@8thafhsorgeon.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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