

“MILK RUN”

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society
History News for December 2012



History News → Readers, where's your story?

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

Capt Walter “Wally” Groce – 56th Fighter Group



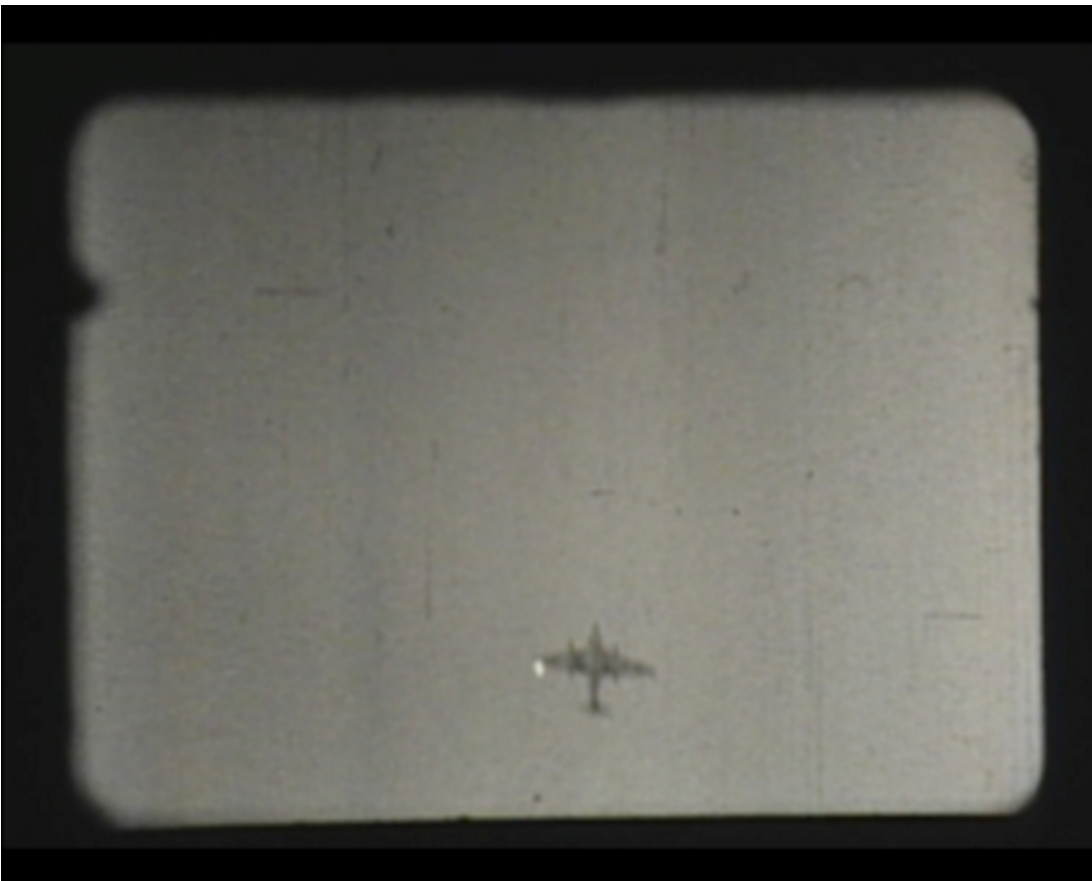
Wally was a local member of the 8th AFHS of Oregon; he died on November 17, 2012. Capt Groce flew his first combat mission on 14 August 1944 attacking rail and ground targets in Eastern France in a Republic P-47 as part of “Zemke’s Wolfpack”. The only fighter group that kept the P-47 (except for a short three week period) during their combat in the 8th Air Force. One of his gun clips appeared in an 8th AF movie #3 in 1945.

Wally was shot down a Me-262 but was only given ½ credit because a P-51 Mustang pilot also claimed it – he shot at it after Wally had already caused it to go down. He made a head-on pass at it and shot off the starboard wingtip – you can see it in his gun camera film. He also shot down Heinkel He-111, Messerschmitt Bf-109, and a Focke-Wulf Fw-190.

The film leader on his gun camera film (he had all his original film) from the Me-262 engagement.



The bullet strike on the wingtip of the Me-262 from his Wally’s P47 .50 caliber guns. The German pilot bailed out – but was killed in another Me-262 three days later.



His service is set for 5 January 2013 at 11:00 a.m. at Young's Funeral Home (http://www.youngsfuneralhome.org/dm20/en_US/locations/73/7398/index.page) on Hwy 99 in Tigard, two blocks west of Hwy 217.

Allen J. Chapin – 1st Schweinfurt Mission – Kriegie

Lt Col Chapin died at the age of 90 on October 1, 2012. He is buried at Willamette National Cemetery in Oregon. He was flying a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress in the 381 Bombardment Group (Heavy), 535 Squadron, when he was shot down on 17 August 1943 on the way to bomb the Schweinfurt ball bearing factory. He spent the rest of the war as a POW. His view of the mission is well documented in a few books as well as in our local chapter archives.



Capt. William Riegler – 39 Missions in a B-17

Flying in the 613 Bomb Squadron of the 401 Bombardment Group (Heavy) in Boeing B-17 'Flying Fortress' the plane he flew over to join the 8th Air Force was called "Pistol Packin' Momma".

Once, he looked into an enemy pilot's eyes.

"I couldn't tell you if they were blue or brown, but I could see them", recalled Riegler, who remembered seeing the flashes of the enemy aircraft's guns and tracer fire. "It was my fifth mission. I thought, 'This is it.' "

http://www.cantonrep.com/carousel/x1784769167/World-War-II-Then-and-Now-39-missions?zc_p=0

Len Heller – P-47 Mechanic

He arrived in England in 1943 and supported the Thunderbolts there – but on June 9, 1944 he was in Normandy setting up the first air base on the continent where his unit's P-47s were to operate out of.

http://www.mydesert.com/article/20120923/NEWS13/309230033/Mechanic-lent-hand-WWII-invasion?odyssey=mod_sectionstories&nclick_check=1

The Higgins Boat

The Higgins Boat was a revolutionary landing craft, made of mahogany with steel armor plating, designed and built by Andrew Jackson Higgins on the Mississippi River and tested on Lake Pontchartrain, just above New Orleans.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/invention-that-won-world-war-ii-showcased/1513924.html>

The Corregidor Tunnel Photograph



Finance Department and Signal Corps, Lateral #12, Malinta Tunnel, Fort Mills, Corregidor, Philippine Islands, April 24, 1942. Photo by Major Paul R. Wing, 228th Signal Operations Company.

Dwight E. Gard, seated fourth from the left grew up in Bend, Oregon.

http://blog.oregonlive.com/oregonatwar/2012/11/a_backstory_about_portland_ban.html

Last Reunion of the 12th Bombardment Group at Joint Base McCord-Lewis

The last, reunion of the 12th Bombardment Group (Medium) was held in October in Washington State at McCord air base. The unit consisted of the 81st, 82nd, 83rd and 434th squadrons. The reunion welcomed back a few original members of the group, like 91-year-old retired Lt. Col. Jim Miller, a number of widows, friends and well-wishers. They flew B-25 "Mitchell" bombers.

http://www.army.mil/article/88660/Army_Air_Corps_pilots_hold_final_reunion_at_Lewis_McChord/

Napoleonic Era Soldiers Re-buried

Remains of soldiers killed in Russia were re-buried outside Minsk on November 2, 2012. They were killed in November of 1812 as they retreated out of Russia.

Meanwhile in Belgium, their Archeological Service found the remains of a soldier buried at Waterloo in June – with the grapeshot ball that killed him.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/02/napoleonic-soldiers-buried_n_2065770.html#slide=1714754

Seen in a PowerPoint Slide

"There is no Bullet List like Stalin's Bullet list."

<http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/powerpoint>

Sci-Fi and Naval Warfare

Q: Has sci-fi affected the way that our navies conduct warfare?

A: This is a question that I occasionally think about. Many people point to the development of the shipboard Combat Information Center in World War II as being inspired by E.E. Doc Smith's Lensman novels from the 1940s. Smith realized that with hundreds of ships over huge expanses, the mere act of coordinating them was problematic. I think there is a synergistic effect. ***I also know a number of naval officers who have admitted to me that the reason they joined the Navy was because Starfleet Command wasn't hiring.***

<http://bdtonline.com/washingtonpost/x403306813/Foreign-Policy-Battlestar-Galactica-got-space-warfare-right-Finally>

The Flight Surgeon for the 306th Bombardment Group

Thurman Shuller of McAlester joined the Army in July of 1941 expecting to be in only a year, but Pearl Harbor and the 8th Air Force changed that. Initially assigned to Las Vegas air base, he was advised to go into aviation medicine and ended up as the 369th Squadron flight surgeon of 306th BG stationed at Thurleigh, England.

He wrote a report, citing and quoting Major General Ira Eaker, stating that crew should fly no more than 20 missions as their tour. Three weeks later it was official – 25 missions were the number of missions a crew must fly to complete their combat tour.

At the time the average life expectancy of a crew was 15 missions. During one 9 month period the overall causality rate of the 306th BG was 100%.

<http://mcalesternews.com/features/x880894140/McAlester-veteran-Dr-Thurman-Shuller-a-World-War-2-hero>

Parachuting off of Formosa

Not all planes were lost due to combat – friendly planes colliding in formation were actually “routine” in combat zones. The British expected to lose at least two planes a mission due to planes colliding at night. Robert Withee was a P-51 pilot who had to bail out when he turned his P-51 Mustang – and his wingman did not and both became members of the Caterpillar Club. Robert flew over 200 combat missions in the Pacific.

<http://www.cantonrep.com/carousel/x970312231/World-War-II-Bob-Withee-flew-200-flights-over-the-Pacific-in-P-40s-and-P-51s>

Sinking Fast – Last vets of WW II Subs meet Regularly in Texas

One of most exclusive clubs of Veterans are the WW II submariners. At the Golden Corral in Fort Worth Texas some of those that are left still meet.

“The Pargo had just blasted a Japanese tanker in half with torpedoes when it endured the most frightening barrage of depth charges from a Japanese frigate that Hewett had ever experienced. The Pargo usually evaded at 300 feet of water but was caught in only about 180 feet.

The submarine survived at least 24 depth charges, he said.

“We were really rocked around,” Hewett said. “I can tell you, I gave up. I thought we were gone for sure. My prayers were for my folks.”

But the boat survived. Hewett and his shipmates waited for another string of depth charges, sure to be fatal, but it never happened.

"I have surmised that they ran out," Hewett said. "They just didn't have any more, and we managed to get away."

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/11/26/175512/texas-world-war-ii-submariners.html#storylink=cpy>

Ralph Burbridge - aboard the "All American" on February 1, 1943



Assigned as a bombardier to a B-17 in the 97 Bombardment Group (Heavy) 414th Squadron; they flew in a B-17 they had named "The All American". While on a mission to Tunis docks they also flew into one of the most famous photos of the war of a B-17.

"... about halfway through his roll either my fire or fire from the lead ship must have killed the pilot or disabled the plane. He never completed his intended roll and rapid pass under our ship."

"WHOOOMP!"

"For one horrible instant he was right there – inches in front and above us. He passed over us with a distinctly audible swoosh," over the roar of the B-17's Wright Cyclone engines, "followed by a tremendous jar and a 'whoomp.'"

<http://b-townblog.com/2012/09/21/local-b-17-bombardier-recalls-wing-and-a-prayer-mission-on-the-all-american/>

Bailing out of a “Mickey” B-17

Bill Shelton was 17 when he joined the Army with goal of being a pilot – but like many goals he ended up as a tail-gunner of a Boeing B-17 as a replacement crew in 1943 in the 96 BG (H) at Snetterton, England.

"At Wichita Falls they came in and asked for guys to volunteer to be gunners. It was a five-week course and you made buck sergeant after five weeks. There was no other way you could earn three stripes in five weeks."

He was shot down on May 8, 1944.

<http://enidnews.com/localnews/x880894607/Surviving-World-War-II>

Speaking Code and Making Cyphers in the 83 Group Control

Joining the RAF on his 18th birthday in 1942, Bernard Morgan, was part of the “rear area” people supporting the RAF – until he landed on Gold Beach on June 6, 1944.

<http://www.crewechronicle.co.uk/crewe-news/local-crewe-news/2012/11/07/crewe-war-veteran-bernard-morgan-reflects-on-his-raf-experiences-during-world-war-two-96135-32178604/>

P-38D pieces found at an old crash site

After taking off from Selfridge Field, where the 94th Pursuit Squadron was based, 2nd Lt. Albert Voss bailed out of the P-38 Lightning but was killed due to the low altitude of his bailout, and the plane crashed into a field. Now Jim Clary is finding pieces of that crash.

http://www.dailytribune.com/article/20121111/NEWS01/121119958/wwii-artifacts-found-at-1941-plane-crash-site-in-richmond#full_story

John Demlein -- Operation Aphrodite Pilot

Drone aircraft are not new – they were made and used by both the Allied and Axis powers. Navy flying John Demlein was assigned to the Navy’s version of the Aphrodite project to fly war weary B-24s into heavily fortified German naval bases to destroy them by remote control. This is the project in which Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., was killed when the B-24 he was flying blew up to due faulty wiring of the on-board explosives.

http://blog.syracuse.com/opinion/2012/11/former_world_war_ii_navy_john.html

WW II Era Busses Soldier on – in Myanmar (Burma)

A Canada-built Chevy C-15 – built and used during the Burma campaign during WW II, still carries passengers in 2012 – 73 years after it was built and shipped off to move troops and supplies during WW II in the CBI Theatre of war. But their time may send them to the scrap heap – or a museum.

http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/11/26/15447661-end-of-an-era-myanmars-big-belly-chevy-buses-from-wwii-face-scrap?lite

In the Front Line with Anti-Aircraft Artillery

Assigned to Battery C of the 457th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion he landed on D-Day "Plus one" at Omaha beach – and then fought across Europe ending up being wounded in Germany – but was reported as being killed in action. The unit was credited with shooting down 43 enemy aircraft.

<http://www.buffalonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20121125/CITYANDREGION/121129511/1010>

Lt. Col. Herbert Eugene Carter -- dead at 95

One of the original members of the Tuskegee Airmen, he flew 77 combat missions and only had to land without using his wheels of his aircraft once. He was one of the advisors to George Lucas on the movie "Red Tails".

He died on November 8 East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika.

<http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Original-member-of-the-Tuskegee-Airmen-dies-at-95-4023283.php>

Clayton Melvin Hays – P-51 Mustang Pilot

Flying out of Italy with the 15th Air Force, a fellow pilot dropped his drop tanks – into Hay's aircraft and almost shot him down. He aborted and flew back to the Island of Vis.

"They told me I'd tear up the metal runway. They said I should bail out into the ocean. They'd pick me up. I looked around. I didn't see any boats out there. Also, I couldn't swim. I went in to land, with my wheels down, at 165 miles per hour."

He went back to Vis this year – as a tourist.

http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2012/11/a_northwest_portland_world_war.html

Leutnant Gottfried Dulias JG-53 "Ace of Spades" ME-109G Fighter Pilot

After the war not all Luftwaffe pilots stayed in Germany – some came to the USA. During a "Battle of the Bulge" re-enactment in 2009 a re-enactor met a Luftwaffe pilot at the re-enactment. Lt. Dulias also wrote a book about his life during the NAZI era and his time as a pilot – before he was shot down and captured.



[Another Bowl of Kapusta](#): The True Life Story Of A World War II Luftwaffe Fighter Pilot and P.O.W. in Russia

<http://www.soldiersandsailors.us/gottfried%20dulias.htm>

52 Missions in a B-25

Assigned to the 12th Bomb Group (Medium) he was sent to be part of the 9th Air Force in North Africa in 1942. For the next year he flew missions in a B-25 Mitchell bomber they named "Desert Warrior" supporting the British 8th Army. The US army was 800 miles away in Tunisia.

<http://heraldnet.com/article/20121111/NEWS01/711119929/-1/news01>

Bailing out at night over Indo-China from a B-24

Assigned to the 375 Bomb Squadron with the 14th Air Force – Flying Tigers -- they were originally assigned to go on mission 116 to the Philippines but instead were assigned to bomb a Japanese convoy. Flying in a B-24 named "Hilo Hattie". Several were shot down by heavy anti-aircraft fire from the ships during the attack.

Low on fuel on the return trip flying back to base at night "I knew two things: We were flying over enemy territory and we were in mountains 18,000 feet high." They bailed out.

http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2012/11/staten_island_war_hero_recount.html

Escaping from Occupied France – Code Name Burgundy

Shot down on the way to Frankfurt in March of 1944, he is captured, then freed from captivity by the French Underground – and with broken ankles, ribs, makes it across France into Spain – over the Pyrenees.

<http://www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/2012/11/11/haverhill-wwii-veteran-shares-memories-long-escape/CWE42Yb5ultJwc871Di45K/story.html>

Flying in “Canvas Coffins”

Glider Infantry pilots have the training as pilots – but once they landed they became infantry officers and fought on the ground – and had the dangers on both ends of the scale.

"They said you had to be half crazy to get on one of those and I said: 'Well, I meet the qualifications.'"

Clinton Riddle was one of those pilots in the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division landing on D-Day as well as Market Garden and the Rhine Crossing. <http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2012/nov/11/wwii-vet-flew-canvas-coffins/>

Field Marshall's Montgomery letter to the Troops

Just like General Eisenhower's letter, the British General, who was actually the Ground Commander of All Forces on D-Day and for the weeks immediately afterwards, sent his own letter to the British and Canadian troops on D-Day, June 6, 1944. In an antique store he bought a book – and out of the book fell a hand-signed D-Day letter by the General himself – signed on 5 June 1944.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2230551/Montgomerys-note-British-forces-eve-D-Day-charity-shop-book.html>

A 22 Mile "Sniper" shot

Sniping enemy soldiers has been going on eons – using specialized troops and weapons to kill enemies has been around for over 2500 years. Archery experts were used till the invention of gunpowder and then the art was passed onto them. During the US Revolutionary War, and then again during the US Civil War, gifted riflemen were recruited into snipers. Scopes mounted on rifles were used during the Civil War.

In Afghanistan they have started to use GPS guided artillery as a "sniping" weapon – and achieved a 22 mile single round hit against an enemy group with a 155 mm howitzer.

<http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2012/06/marine-record-setting-long-shot-artillery-strike-m777-063012w/>

Making War Movies – The Early Years

The invention of movie film – 35mm sized – allowed movie cameras to become mobile – though at 15 to 20 pounds they were still not very moved and were hand cranked. However, that did not stop people from making movies about war – either on the field as it often happened or on a movie set.

<http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/history/2012/11/the-early-history-of-faking-war-on-film/>

Marine Corps Activates the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 with F-35B aircraft

The newly activated unit is based out of Yuma Arizona. The F-35 replaces the F-18 and the AV8B "Harrier" that the Marines currently use.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/20/marine-fighter-attack-squadron-121_n_2164586.html

A Staff Officer in the Afrika Corps

Gerhard Hennes was a signals officer and fought in WW II in Poland, France and in North Africa – where he was captured. He now lives in Fredericksburg, Va. He has written two books about his wartime experience.

<http://oakridgetoday.com/2012/11/15/german-vet-at-roane-state-thursday-nov-15/>

<http://www.oakridger.com/article/20121126/NEWS/121129930#art-tit>

Oregon Chapter News

Membership Status & Annual Membership Renewal

The membership renewal letter was sent recently.

The Oregon Chapter annual dues are \$15 a year. People who have presented to the chapter are automatically granted membership for a full year.

Currently the chapter continues to send to people meeting notifications and information to people who have NOT paid their dues for two years before they are officially dropped from the roster. After two years all those in non-paid status are dropped from the official roster.

Please check with Sharon Campbell if you are unsure of your membership status at 503-632-7633.

When a member dies the chapter continues to send notifications for a year after being notified of their death, unless otherwise requested.

Next General Membership meeting is February 9, 2013.

Oregon Chapter Executive Board Meetings

All members can attend any Executive board meeting. The Board meets at the Elks Lodge three Saturdays before the regular membership meeting. If you can spare up to 2 hours between 10 AM and Noon you can also join the board and help make our chapter a continuing success.

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.

Oregon Chapter 8th AFHS

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

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