

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society
History News for June 2014



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.

A Happy Valley P-38 Pilot

Look Mom - I Can Fly! Memoirs of a World War II Fighter Pilot

Robert "Smoky" Vrillakas, a local Happy Valley P-38 Pilot, who escorted B-17s, B-24's, and B-26's out of N. Africa and Italy. Great reader comments on Amazon.com. See web page at: www.p38book.com Signed copies available through above address or web site.

Rebuilding a P40 for New Orleans Museum

El Cajon's Flyboys Aeroworks spent the past year-and-a-half building this sleek aircraft, a sister to the fighters the Flying Tigers flew over India, Burma and China. Work was slow — "We had to build it all from scratch," said Jenny Bishop, a Flyboys mechanic — but now this project <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2014/jan/18/flyboys-soar-p40-warhawk/> is gaining speed.

Touring the Battleship USS North Carolina

Anyone can experience the nine-level battleship in a self-guided tour following arrows and climbing up ladders. An introductory video welcomes guests to the ship before allowing them to explore the exhibit hall and climbing aboard the USS North Carolina. http://www.camplejeuneglobe.com/carolina_living/article_091b6928-7e0f-11e3-94cc-0019bb2963f4.html

***Wives and Sweethearts* : a book on love letters from the two world wars using the archives of the National Army Museum in London**

Mail service to and from troops is a blessing – sometimes.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/22/world-war-letters-wives-sweethearts>

Gene Spencer Tells True Love Story of World War II Pilot: "The Last Mission"

Based on the experience of Emma Jane Foster (Jane) and John Emil Petach (Pete) in the AVG – American Volunteer Group – aka The Flying Tigers – he tells their story and others who severed in the group from December 1941 thru their disbandment on July 4, 1942.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1706479#ixzz344mvK0HW>

A Forgotten Front – Alaska and the Aleutians

The 11th Air Force fought on US soil and was largely ignored – due to the remoteness and the unwillingness of the press to go to a miserable location, not an exotic location like the south pacific or Europe, and fought over frozen land and sea nearly year round.

One fighter group went there with 60 pilots – and 15 came back after their tour was over.

<http://www.chicagonow.com/letters-world-war-2-airman/2014/02/world-war-ii-japanese-on-american-soil/>

Spanish American War and the Rough Riders

The unit that President Theodore Roosevelt helped form, and then helped lead, during the 1898 war gets a monument in Tampa, Florida. Tampa's Rough Riders Club met at Veterans Memorial Park to dedicate a memorial to the Spanish-American War and to those from here who fought and died in the conflict.

<http://tbo.com/news/breaking-news/all/veterans-rough-riders-dedicate-memorial-to-spanish-american-war-20140201/>

The original Commander of the Rough Riders, William Owen O'Neill, was killed in action – after he refused to take cover – he was the only one standing after all his men “hit the dirt” when they started taking fire from the hill above.

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/travel/local/history/2014/05/20/buckey-oneill-rough-riders-founder/9329679/>

Filed Away Photos of Spanish American War Re-discovered

Photographic archivists from the Naval History and Heritage Command have rediscovered about 150 original glass plate photographs from the Spanish-American War that may not have been seen by the public for more than a century.

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/02/08/archivists-discover-forgotten-spanish-american-war-pictures/>

End of the Line for A-10 and U-2?

The Air Force has been trying to get rid of the A-10 since before the 1991 Gulf War – now they may have finally succeeded. Course we could sell the A-10 to any 3rd world country once we take them out of our inventory – since they are so “old” why not?

<http://www.flyingmag.com/aircraft/jets/end-road-u2-and-a10>

Joy Riding in B-17 “My Baby” of the 91st BG (H)

WW II was so involved it always seemed that someone you knew from “home” was always around in some unit nearby. So visiting a friend was natural for all. But when you are assigned to a non-flying unit, and you go along to with a co-worker who wants to visit a friend, who happens to be a pilot of a B-17 unbeknownst to you, and wants to go flying – you do.

http://www.redbluffdailynews.com/business/ci_25254412/men-connect-over-tale-b-17-joy-ride

“Five Graves to Cairo”

During WW II there were lots of spy movies – and this one directed by Billy Wilder, uses North Africa as a location and of course has General Erwin Rommel in it. The movie takes place before his promotion to Field Marshall.

There are many other places that have movie nights with WW II themes.

<http://chestnuthilllocal.com/blog/2014/03/03/five-graves-cairo-screening-march-4/>

Sunken DC-3 an Underwater Playground

Deliberately sunk by the Turkish government, for some unknown reason instead of being sold off, it now lies 70 feet below the surface in the Mediterranean near Cas, Turkey.

http://www.mercurynews.com/travel/ci_25343989/sunken-world-war-ii-plane-becomes-underwater-playground

Pilot gets to see his Old Training Aircraft He Flew

Not often is the exact aircraft that you actually flew in still around. Murray Adams was able to visit his A-20-10 Wirraway in Brisbane, Australia.

Joining the Air Force

“I managed to cheat my through the medical, but then I got put in front of a panel and they asked me 10 questions about planes and I got none right. I thought that was my goose cooked, but then the fellow in charge asked me what my favourite sports were and I told him tennis and skiing. He didn’t care for tennis but he was a mad skier and I was in.”

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/south-east/wwii-pilot-reunited-with-his-1941-aircraft-in-moorabbin/story-fngnvmhm-1226851668687>

Secret Diary of Jet Engines

Henry Storborg, while working under contract for Frank Whittle in an engineering company, kept a diary of drawings of what he was working on – the first British Jet Engine. The drawings are now being auctioned off.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2578269/The-blueprint-Jet-Age-Secret-archive-chief-engineer-worked-development-revolutionary-fighter-plane-engine.html#ixzz345HAg3i6>

Restoring a P-61 “Black Widow”

On New Guinea in January of 1945 while on a maintenance flight this P-61 crashed – it's been over 28 years since the first recovery effort – and the plane is still in the shop.

http://www.ydr.com/local/ci_25409984/wwii-fighter-plane-recovered-from-new-guinea-has

Crash of a B-24 in Idaho – Rediscovered

In January of 1944 during a practice bombing run at night, B-24 42-73365 was seen on it's 4th bomb run to pitch down and crash into the ground – all 7 on board were killed.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/may/25/ww-ii-era-plane-crash-site-rediscovered-at-inl/>

VMF 214 Pilot remembers close call aboard the USS Franklin when it was attacked

A JUDY dive bomber, a follow-on to the VAL, followed friendly a/c and then dive bombed the carrier USS Franklin as it was about to launch planes. The two 500 pound bombs had the same effect on our carrier as our dive bombers had at Midway – rendered the Franklin inoperative.

Ralph Warren was in the ready room when that happened and he had to jump off the deck to survive.

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/2014/05/26/world-war-ii-vets-cheated-death-twice-honor-fallen-brothers/9584993/>

Takes a Long Time for Some Veteran Benefits to End

There are still some benefits being paid to children of the US Civil War.

“More than 3 million men fought and 530,000 men died in the conflict between North and South. Pvt. Mose Triplett joined the rebels, deserted on the road to Gettysburg, defected to the Union and married so late in life to a woman so young that their daughter Irene is today 84 years old—and the last child of any Civil War veteran still on the VA benefits rolls.”

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303603904579493830954152394>

BBC Does a Special to Scotland's Greatest WW II Pilot - Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown

The BBC plays up the "Greatest" a bit. He is the most decorated test pilot of all time, has flown more types of aircraft than anyone in history (a record 487), survived 11 crashes, was the first person to land a jet on an aircraft carrier in 1945 and holds an MBE, OBE and CBE.

<http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scotlands-greatest-ever-pilot-captain-3633394>

A Radio Operator Gets a Medal

When their Halifax bomber was damaged over Frankfurt in March of 1945, Adelaide man Kevin Dennis, stayed at his post, transmitting messages to get to an emergency base, where the damaged plane landed. He was awarded the 1nd highest award an aircrew could get - Conspicuous Gallantry Medal.

He was formally honored at the war memorial.

The Halifax bomber could not fly as high as the Lancaster, thus as a percentage more were lost due to flak and enemy fighters since they flew so comparatively low – around 17,000 feet.

<http://www.smh.com.au/act-news/world-war-ii-raaf-bomber-radio-operator-kevin-dennis-recognised-in-ceremony-20140601-zru9m.html>

Canadian Loggers Discover Aircraft Lost in 1942

While logging a hilltop they discovered aircraft parts, including flying boots and other personal gear, and the four men on board the Avro Anson aircraft have been identified.

<http://www.newsmax.com/thewire/world-war-ii-plane-crash/2014/06/02/id/574523/>

Not Often Can You Take Pictures of Two Different Lightnings at the Same Time

This occurred at an airshow at Luke Air Force Base.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/dallas/blog/2014/03/air-show-lightning-f-35-flies-alongside-its-world.html>

The Boxer Rebellion – in A Graphic Novel Format

For those people who never really liked to read history books <grin>.

<http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-03-26/gene-luen-yang-puts-china-s-boxer-rebellion-vivid-explosive-color-his-new-graphic>

Aircraft Drones Are Not New

Aircraft drones were used by the US, Germany and other nations during WW II. Some were remotely controlled target drones – used to train naval gunners against a real moving target – scaled to match full size planes. There is one at Tillamook Air Museum. Others were radio guided glide and powered bombs. The German Luftwaffe sunk a troop ship in the Mediterranean in 1943 with their version of a drone.

<http://paleofuture.gizmodo.com/the-tv-guided-drones-of-world-war-ii-1560130671>

A “Desert Rat” of Tobruk

Fighting in 1941 and 1942 in North Afrika, enduring the 8 ½ month siege of Tobruk, Sydney Kinsman was taken prisoner in 1942.

<http://www.ntnews.com.au/news/centralian-advocate/veteran-says-thanks-to-those-who-remember-the-lost-at-war/story-fnk4wgm8-12268957962800>

Spanish American War Memorial

In Florida there used to be real correct era artillery memorial – but it was scrapped and melted down in WW II and a post WW II version was put in its place which is now the University of Tampa campus.

<http://tbo.com/Local/CommunityNews/then-now-spanish-american-war-memorial-1963-and-now-20140504/>

An Aircraft App of WW II Aircraft on Mobile Devices

Jourist Verlags GmbH has published an app of “Images and information about 300 planes that fought and serviced the Second World War are now accessible in full detail. This app offers a table of extensive statistics on each aircraft including dimensions, development history, performance and career. Both Allied and Axis nations' airplanes can be viewed in full color illustrations and a search option enables simple navigation.”

http://www.itbusinessnet.com/article/Jourist-Verlags-GmbH-Announces-Aircraft-of-World-War-II-Application-Now-Available-for-Intel-Atom-Tablets-for-Windows*-81-3257887

Local Chapter Area Oregon News

Collings bombers etc. will stop in Corvallis on June 11, 12, 13

They are taking their planes on their annual tour around the country. Go to www.collingsfoundation.org for details. The planes on tour are the B-17, B-24 & P-51.

Warbirds Over The West – Aurora Airport June 13-15th

Dinner with Warbird pilots on Friday, tours on Saturday, Awards Dinner on Saturday and much more.

See www.B17Alliancegroup.org for details.

Tillamook Air Museum has started moving all their aircraft to Madras

The collect was sold off in 2013.

http://www.dailyastorian.com/news/northwest/museum-begins-to-move-historic-airplane-collection-to-central-oregon/article_c9c32c16-526d-578f-a9c3-a33d81bf568c.html

Animation Film “The Wind Rises”

The basic premise of *The Wind Rises* tells the fictionalized biography of Jiro Horikoshi, the chief engineer behind many Japanese WWI fighter planes, on his journey to build a plane that could match the West's more advanced technology.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/hayao-miyazakis-wind-rises-wwii-fighter-planes-that-inspired-animation-master-1449194>

The 7th Annual Patriotic Tribute at Volcanoes Stadium this July 4, 5 and 6 2014

Friday July 4th designated as Vietnam Veterans Appreciation Night.

It will be a very exciting evening, capped off with an **outstanding Fireworks show**. Our very formal “Fallen Soldier” Ceremony at home plate will be for Lance Corporal William Koho, of Bend, who was killed on 14 March 1967, as he will be representing all **719 Oregon Warriors who “Walked into the Arms of GOD”** defending our freedoms in Vietnam. He was only 19.

There are **only two Vietnam Prisoners of War in Oregon**, and **one living Medal of Honor recipient in Oregon**, and we have confirmed all three for this evening, Friday, July 4th, which is very, very exciting.

Air Force Lt. Colonel (Ret) Bob Jeffrey – in 1965 as a Captain F-4 pilot, he had been in Vietnam only three days, and on his first combat mission when he was shot down, and taken **prisoner for 7 years and 3 months**.

Marine Corps Captain Ernie Brace – the longest held American civilian in a Vietnam prison. Former Marine fighter pilot serving from 1947-1961, and was shot down, his plane crashed into the Sea of Japan, and he was rescued by our USS Kidd. He then began lying in Vietnam and Laos for the CIA when he was captured. He spent **7 years and 10 months as a prisoner**, five of which were in solitary confinement, and in the cell next to him was now Senator John McCain.

Army Corporal Robert Maxwell, the oldest living Medal of Honor recipient in the United States at **93**. He served in WWII, but what an Honor to have him also even though he was not a Vietnam Veteran.

Army Major Larry Deibert, Oregon's Most Decorated National Guardsman who flew **578 combat flights in Vietnam**.

The Roswell Flight Center is bringing their drone which will perform many functions such as get the game ball from the umpire and deliver it to the pitcher to start the game, and film our post-game Fireworks from high above looking down; should be spectacular.

Our entire stadium will be ringed with 176 giant American Flags. Another 100 service flags will be posted throughout the stadium. 30 Military organizations who reach out to Military families with assistance will have a table and information on the concourse.

E-MAIL: j.howard@volcanoesbaseball.com TELEPHONE: 503-428-5246

Next General Membership Meeting for Oregon 8th AFHS is August 9, 2014

A sandwich type meal, for \$10, will be available at the Beaverton Elks lodge. ONLY If you are planning to eat contact Tom Philo via email at secretary@8thafhsoregon.com or phone him at 503-591-3227 – again **ONLY** if you are planning to purchase a meal.

Prior 2014 Programs

- Beauty and Brains – Women in the Military
- Converting Military a/c to Firefighting Program: Richard “Dick” Foy – Co founder of Aero Union Corporation.

Previous PROGRAMs in 2013:

- Ben “Flaps” Berry – Tuskegee Airman
- ;Jack Kline and the Vanport Flood
- B-29 Navigator of “Going Jesse”
- Bob Schuberg and revisiting the airfields of the 8th

All programs are videotaped and transcribed and put into our archive. You can purchase each DVD of each presentation for \$10.00.

There is no cost to attend the meeting and it is open to the public

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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