

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society

History News for February 2018



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.

National 8th AFHS Magazine Update

During the general meeting at the reunion in New Orleans, Dave Nowack told the members that due to the decrease in revenue [because of the loss of membership that last 2 years] the Society couldn't afford to continue to print the magazine, but would publish the magazine online. His statement was met with such uproar that he told everyone the Board would definitely reconsider the decision and see what could be done.

B-24 Handmaiden - The B-17 Still Gets The Groom

Last year the movie *Unbroken* did feature a B-24 in it – but not in a very starring and positive way. The plane was more in a cameo role for the hero of the movie Louis Zamperini which is based on true facts. As this article states, most every WW II movie about US heavy bombers features B-17 Flying Fortresses in the starring aircraft role.

<http://www.bnd.com/living/liv-columns-blogs/answer-man/article192348779.html>

The British Handmaiden – Hurricane to the Bride Spitfire

Another fact: Hurricanes shot down more a/c during the Battle of Britain than the Spitfire – but the Spit got the Glory.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5269283/How-Spitfire-symbol-national-defiance.html>

Aircraft Fitter at The Pyramids of Egypt, to Malta, and even in the Islands of France

One of the first to ship out to Egypt in 1940, Sidney Wickens was assigned to RAF 272 squadron in November of 1940 and stayed with it till the end of the war.

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/your-say/wacker-s-war-saw-him-in-north-africa-and-the-mediterranean-1-8308004>

WW I Commemorative Silver Coin on Sale

WW I ended in 1918 – 100 years ago this year. Most US residents have no clue who was involved and where it occurred. At least they have the 1903 Springfield on the coin but most likely not allowed to bring it into any classroom in the USA due to it being a military rifle – even if on a coin.



<http://goldrushcam.com/sierrasuntimes/index.php/news/local-news/12524-united-states-mint-begins-sales-of-2018-wwi-commemorative-silver-dollar-and-companion-medal-sets-on-january-17>

Desert P40 Restored as static display at El Alamein Museum

After 5 years of restoration – but not quite historically accurate – the Egyptian owned a/c is on display at the museum in Egypt.

The legal battle of ownership ended up as being Egypt's – since it was found in their country - and it was apparently struck from the UK as lost (guessing) in 1942, thus ownership was given up by the UK. Unlike naval ships which remain owned by the country who sailed it, planes and other items have a tangled legal trail of ownership.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5263437/ww2-plane-kittyhawk-raf-egypt-museum-dennis-copping-return-uk/>

It's Been A Dog-Gone Long Time in Coming

Chips received his medal for his war service in WW II in the MTO. The posthumous award of the PDSA Dickin Medal given made to his relatives within the Churchill War rooms in London since he had met PM in 1943.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5270495/US-Army-dog-Chips-awarded-animal-Victoria-Cross.html>

AT-11 “Kansan” Undergoing Restoration in New Mexico

The AT-11 was used to train a variety of aviation specialists during WW II – mainly navigators and bombardiers.

<https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Group-restoring-WWII-aircraft-used-in-Albuquerque-12486575.php>

WW I Idealism Transformed in WW II NAZI Ideology

Seizing on a few people to paint a whole segment of a population as being the same is standard propaganda tool. It is still effective in the current world. The Germany of 1920s saw this but the NAZI faction was most effective in getting most of Germany to believe it.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/how-hitler-used-jews-failed-wwi-era-idealism-to-feed-the-worlds-worst-genocide/>

A short history of the RAF Lancaster Heavy Bomber of WW II

The Dambusters Raid of 1943, and the post WW II movie about it, cemented the plane into the world's memory. In total, 7,377 Lancasters were produced. Almost half, 3,349, were shot down or destroyed in action.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5273105/The-Lancaster-turned-Bomber-Commands-dream-reality.html>

Victoria Cross Awarded – due to a U-Boat Captain

Accurately reporting a combat mission after capture, the Captain of the U-468 made his report that gave a B-24 commander the VC.

<http://www.wearethemighty.com/history/the-time-a-nazi-sub-captain-nominated-his-enemy-for-the-victoria-cross>

1st LT Howard Keskitalo – Lead Navigator on D-Day for the 8th AF

It was just another day at the 25,000 foot office of a B-17 in the 388th BG 563rd Squadron.

<http://www.miningjournal.net/news/front-page-news/2018/01/determination-bravery/>

The RS-1 Semi-Rigid Airship Left the ground for only a Two Short Years

WW I saw lots of static balloon spotters, but the Germans really gained the press for their rigid airship raids to England. Post war lots of ideas came up, but a semi-rigid Army airship was made due to inter-military rivalries in the USA.

<http://www.bnd.com/news/local/community/scott-afb/article194184689.html>

Book Banning Still Popular Around The World

Put in a single un-liked line in a 528 page factual book and you can be banned quickly by almost any government. Antony Beevor's 1999 book "Stalingrad", translated into Russian which was to be imported into the Ukraine, was banned from the Ukraine due to a single statement about Ukrainian troops being ordered to kill Jewish prisoners in World War II.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/beevor-historian-ukraine-ban-stalingrad/28980932.html>

Freezing Cold and Swamp Sleeping: An 8th AF Veteran and Vietnam Veteran talks

The talk could not show a better contrast of how wars are fought by having two veterans talk about what they experienced.

<http://thecourier.com/local-news/2018/01/11/veterans-give-history-lesson/>

100 Year Old Birth Certificate for Lithuania

Due to Germany winning the war in the East in WW I – Lithuania was created again. A Lithuanian researcher in the Berlin archives found the original document which created the country again on February 16, 1918.

<https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/germany-loans-lithuania-birth-certificate-for-centennial/>

Big Red 1 Goes Back to Europe

But only as a HQ command unit.

https://www.army.mil/article/199163/big_red_one_to_deploy_as_atlantic_resolve_division_level_headquarters

Bio-Weapons of WW II in the Far East

Developed and tested in China by the Japanese military, they were only used there – though plans to use them against the USA existed throughout the war.

<http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/japan-might-have-invented-the-ultimate-way-kill-aircraft-24099?page=show>

WW II Shipyard in Minnesota

Like having a Naval Air Station at Lake Tahoe seems out of place, having a shipyard in the middle of the nation in a land locked state also seems out of place – but it made sense.

<https://www.minnpost.com/mnopedia/2018/01/one-minnesota-contribution-war-effort-world-war-ii-22-navy-ships-built-savage>

War on The Home Front – Tarps and Ration Books

The movie “It’s A Wonderful Life” has scenes throughout it about life in the USA during WW II. A Gas ration book was a valuable commodity that could be lost for a number of reasons – including pleasure driving.

http://cumberlink.com/news/local/history/masland-company-honored-for-war-production-years-ago-in-carlisle/article_e9103c23-2458-5bbf-abb3-84a849722a76.html

The 92nd Infantry Division in Italy

This is one division rarely mentioned by anyone anywhere. As part of the 5th Army in Italy – really the only true United Nations Army during WW II – this WW II soldier returns home after being “unknown” since 1945.

http://www.phillytrib.com/news/black-soldier-arrives-at-final-resting-place-decades-after-world/article_936cc9d4-297f-5b54-9129-77b42a2de4d9.html

Fanta and Coca-Cola in Wartime Europe

No how dire the circumstances people like sweet drinks. In Engineering form follows function – in drinks, sales follows sweets.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/fanta-soda-origins-nazi-germany>

Dancing at 100 – A Veteran Gets His Wings

Virgil Westdale was of Japanese decent and thus was barred from flight training – and instead fought with the 442 RCT in Europe.

In 2010, he released his autobiography “Blue Skies and Thunder.”

http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2018/01/celebrated_world_war_ii_vet_vi.html

“Bookkeeper of Auschwitz” Same Guilt as Those Who Actually Killed Prisoners

Under the new German / European doctrine, a person who is just working as part of any crime operation now shares the same fate as those actually doing the crime. So someone who takes tires off a stolen car used in a crime can be charged with the crime that the stolen car was used in. The accountants of VW can be charged with the same crime that the people who rigged the emissions tests since they directly supported and covered up the crime by their bookkeeping accounting of the results.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5278555/Bookkeeper-Auschwitz-jailed-appeal-fails.html>

90 Years of Music and 35 Combat Missions in a B-24

Lt John Ferez Sr. flew 35 missions out of Shipham England in a B-24 Liberator during WW II. But his first assignment was when he was ordered to go to piano lessons by his mom at 10 years old. Those lessons paid off – he was known as a real good formation flyer.

<http://www.santamariasun.com/news/17028/wwii-veteran-pilot-john-ferenz-sr-celebrates-100th-birthday-in-santa-maria/>

The Train Timetable: Italy 1922

Find a great orator, pick an issue that everyone agrees on and a promise to fix it – and other issues – a weak existing government and you too can become a dictator – all the while telling the people up front that is what you plan to do – then do it. Benito Mussolini said and did all that with the support of the vast majority of Italians in 1922.

<https://freepressonline.com/Content/Download-the-current-issue-as-a-pdf/Features/Article/Tom-DeMarco-When-the-Trains-Ran-on-Time/93/78/56743>

Leather and Steel Flying Helmets

Early in the war US bomber crew members would put on Infantry style helmets – useful but not really geared for aerial combat by being bulky and prone to slippage. The Army Air Force quickly developed specialized helmets and flak jackets for bomber crews. One result of that research and deployment was that this B-17 crew made it home to England after combat.

<http://www.snjtoday.com/story/37294784/historic-helmet-on-display-at-millville-army-airfield-museum-to-april-1>

George G. Clarke KIA Feb 17, 1918

This Private was killed in one of the first large scale combat actions that the US Army fought in during WW I. The French initially wanted US units to be integrated and subsumed within the French Command. General Pershing stated that the US Forces will serve under US Command alongside the French, never within them.

He was in the 104th Infantry of the 26th Division. He is still MIA from the war.

http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/veterans_to_honor_world_war_i.html

An Ordinary Day near Smolensk in January 1942 under German Occupation

The Holocaust was possible due to the “routineness” of how the overall plan progressed in well-defined steps that made it seem ordinary to even those not directly involved. A new book “In Broad Daylight: The Secret Procedures behind the Holocaust by Bullets” examines how this occurred in WW II along the Eastern Front. The same pattern of making it seem ordinary is still being done around the world in modern times.

<https://www.salon.com/2018/01/20/we-saw-all-kinds-of-horrors-a-russian-girl-a-jewish-boy-and-a-nazi-massacre/>

An Operational Summary of the 1944-1945 Winter / Spring Offensive of the Soviets

The 1944 Summer Soviet offensive was only prelude to the final assault on NAZI Germany. The Real fighting in the winter in Poland and along the German border set up the final battle for Berlin for the Soviets. The Allies in the west knew that Berlin would be like Stalingrad – and the losses would be heavy in a street battle. The Allied commanders worried about losses, the Soviet leaders were taught not care about losses – if you had losses that mean you were fighting.

<http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/hitlers-last-stand-how-russia-destroyed-the-nazi-military-24119?page=show>

The Soviet's WW II Automatic Rifle – SVT-40

Based on the SVT-38, which was used during the 1939-1940 Russo-Finnish War, the follow-on version SVT-40 was fielded even though the cost, maintenance and training was substantially more expensive than the comparable bolt action Moisin-Nagant 1891 rifle. "German troops captured considerable numbers of SVTs, which were so appreciated that the Wehrmacht printed a manual on their operation."

<http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/russias-world-war-ii-nazi-killer-svt-40-semi-automatic-rifle-23864?page=show>

Spy Game Catching Up with the Past

JOHN LE CARRÉ: I think probably in many ways, more than ever. In some ways, the techniques of intelligence and the techniques of maintaining secrets have gone backwards. If you and I are gonna enter into a conspiracy now, we don't do it through the ether. We don't do it by computer. We exchange notes. We either hand each other notes-- we keep paper again. Paper is back in. Secondly, you very, very often need an agent on the spot who is going to deliver the piece of paper, the code number, the simple clue to it all.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/john-le-carre-ex-british-spys-double-life-as-a-famous-author-1/>

WW I Ace Letters Up for Auction

Lt. Edgar Taylor, born in the USA to British parents, he flew for the RAF for 4 months till he was killed in August 1918.

<http://www.foxnews.com/science/2018/01/24/world-war-fighter-aces-incredible-letters-surface.html>

Peter Jackson Using Middle Earth Battles to bring Alive WW I Battles

Going through archive film, and interviews, Peter Jackson is putting together a documentary on England's soldiers of WW I.

<http://variety.com/2018/tv/news/peter-jackson-world-war-one-film-ww1-1202670953/>

Rosie the Riveter WWII work Uniform

Comradery was not just in the front lines – it was also in the factories at the home front. *Leary's Missing Links* team was one such work unit.

<https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2018/01/24/rosie-the-riveter-historical-park-gets-prized-wwii-work-uniform/>

February 1943 Last of Germany's 6th Army Surrenders at Stalingrad

This eight-month long battle that started in June of 1942 lasted until February of 1943. The campaign cost the German, and their allies, over 350,000 dead, captured or wounded. It cost the Soviet military over a million killed, captured or wounded plus a few hundred thousand civilians killed due to a variety of causes. This battle caused the German more casualties than the total losses of the USA who were killed from December of 1941 to August of 1945 worldwide. [Note: current statistics ALSO count people who died anytime since 1945 that has any remote relation to their combat injuries, including suicide.]

This is a photo of some of the German dead who were collected after the battle but could not be buried due to the frozen ground. They were eventually put into a mass grave in spring of 1943. I am pretty sure that this was taken in the factory district looking east toward the Volga based on the buildings in the background.



Oregon Chapter 8th AFHS

Next Chapter meeting February 3, 2018

Speaker: Alice Miller and World War I

Time to renew for 2018!

The Annual Dues of \$15 can be paid at the meeting, or you can mail them in.

Contact Tom via email or phone IF you plan to eat!! Do so by February 1, 2018.

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Call for a new treasurer! I will be moving out of Oregon sometime this year and so will not be able to fulfill the duties of the treasurer position anymore. We need someone to take it over. *Without a Treasurer the chapter will be forced to dissolve due to the Sate of Oregon non-profit rules.*

The Oregon Chapter is a registered Non-Profit 503(c) with the IRS and within the State of Oregon.

The Oregon 8thAFHS maintains a person on the club roster for up to two years even if they had not renewed, or if the original member is deceased their next of kin will continue to receive all club mailings, before they are removed them from the club roster.

If a person wishes to receive the club mailed newsletter and meeting notice they need to submit the membership form along with the yearly \$15.00 dues (pro-rated if necessary) to become a member of the chapter.

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