

Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society

History News for December 2019



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.

Hitler's Birth House to Become Police Station

The private residence was purchased by Austria after years of negotiation with the descendant's original owners who had purchased it in 1913. The state had forced them to stop renting it since the owners did not want to renovate it to bring it up to current housing code – since the house is a historical heritage site and it would not be in character with the house. It would be like putting in elevators and escalators into Mt Vernon main parlor in order to accommodate ADA laws. One owned by Austria, they are no restrictions on how they gut and destroy the inside of the house. Only the façade will remain.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/hitlers-birthplace-will-be-converted-police-station-180973618/>

Hitler's Top Hat Sold Off

A German auction house sold off the Top Hat worn by Adolf Hitler when he was sworn in at German Chancellor in January of 1933. That, plus other historical items, were being sold. The hat went for \$55,000. The people buying it, in person or in Germany, had to have a background check and sign a piece of paper saying they were not Nazis. Kind of like the Munich Agreement.

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/nation/2019/11/21/german-auction-house-selling-hitlers-tophat-nazi-items-under-fire/4260722002/>

Super Guppy – A Fish Out of the Air

How do you move really oversized parts around the world – you use a Guppy to swallow it in one place and spit it out at another. This time it the cargo was NASA's Orion spacecraft. This means that the design of anything that has to be transported after assembly HAS to fit inside this aircraft – else it cannot be built.

<https://www.theverge.com/2019/11/26/20983792/nasa-super-guppy-plane-orion-crew-capsule-testing-ohio>

Sands of Time off the Welsh Coast

A P-38 Lightning that ran into engine problems and ditched in the sand off the Welsh coast in 1942 makes an appearance every few years. Now it is in "protected" status meaning only the government can access it or even recover it.

For being in salt water for 80 years it is in good shape. It should be recovered and preserved "as is" and put into a museum.

<https://www.foxnews.com/science/eerie-us-wwii-fighter-plane-protected-status>

B-26 Pilot Turns 100

Too tall for fighters, he ended up flying 150 combat missions in the ETO in the Martin B-26 Marauder.

<https://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20191111/florida-world-war-ii-bomber-pilot-celebrates-100th-birthday>

Psychology and Physiology of Plane Design & Computers

How WW II "pilot error" accidents help create the Apple MacIntosh computer.

<https://www.wired.com/story/how-dumb-design-wwii-plane-led-macintosh/>

Lose a C-47, Get Another One

What happens when one of your main attractions gets destroyed, you get another one to replace it.

<https://www.fox7austin.com/news/highland-lakes-squadron-receives-replacement-world-war-2-plane-after-bluebonnet-belle-crash>

Fleets are Still Important – as are Aircraft Carriers

At the end of 2016 when President Obama was still in office, it was quietly released saying the US Navy should be expanded.

<https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2019/11/22/former-4-star-fleet-commanders-dont-give-up-on-carriers/>

Massive Cheap "OK" "Quantity vs Quality – Who Wins

This is the problem that the Germans faced during WW II (& I) on the Eastern Front. The Germans had great quality equipment and men, but the numbers in an attrition battle allowed the USSR to win. Modern combat against the USA is the same: Great quality of USA, but not that many and each one lost makes a big dent in ability. Cheap drones and massive numbers (if used correctly) can overwhelm any military unit.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/20/russia-china-increasingly-able-attack-united-states-bases-networks-war/>

14,000 Hours Flying in the Air during Wartime – and never shot at

Sometimes you get what you want and at the same time not. Got to fly in aircraft but never in combat.

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/12/05/wwii-naval-aviation-harold-brown-left-lasting-legacy-hill-goodspeed/2610025001/>

Spitfire Returns Home

24,000 miles later it lands where it started.

https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/12/06/world/wwii-veteran-silver-spitfire-back-britain-round-world-trip/#.XfA4_OhKhE

Skimming the Ants out of your Coffee

US Soldiers living on land in the Pacific had it a lot better than their allies – and much, much, better than the Japanese they faced on the ground and in the air. However ants in your coffee body surfing was just one item in a long list of problems. Fighting the enemy was always the top problem. Kavieng was a logistical staging base for Japanese where aircraft were assembled in a factory where they were closer to combat.

But skimming ants was nothing compared to skimming aircrew out of the water.
<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/daring-world-war-ii-pacific-rescue-mission-made-history-good-reason-102882>

Carrier USS John F. Kennedy Christened

Reprising her role that she did in 1967 when the first USS Kennedy was christened by her, Caroline swung a bottle against the hull of the newest Ford Class aircraft carrier. This is only a first step before the carrier is fully operational. It will likely be 1 ½ to 2 years before the air group and the whole ship is declared combat ready.

<https://www.dailypress.com/business/shipyards/dp-nw-kennedy-christening-main-story-20191207-emo5oe4iefhe5iwumlsy6lyi7y-story.html>

The Movie “Midway”

This time around the events of the June 4,5 & 6 in 1942 off the US island of Midway is done with CGI, some real aircraft, and done with historical facts to back it up the way things actually happened. Overall, it is well done and some new facts that were skipped in the first movie version of this battle are included in it.

Side note: my local RC Flying club has an interview on tape on the 2nd DBD dauntless dive bomber who dropped on the Akagi. He flew model airplanes at our club.

<https://variety.com/2019/film/reviews/midway-review-ed-skrein-woody-harrelson-1203393080/>

WW II Escape Kits Sold At Auction

One the number of pilots being caught and put in POW camps by the Germans in WW II got to be large, the British started making “Escape Kits” to be carried. Some, however, were home made in the camps themselves.

<https://www.foxnews.com/science/rare-world-war-ii-escape-kits-sold-at-auction>

Economic Activity and WW II in the USA

USA, like Canada, Mexico and a few other Allies, never suffered any direct combat damage during WW II. While ships were sunk, the production of new, and better, ships more than made up for the hundreds of ships lost in combat. This analysis shows how the USA economy improved, for all, during the war.

“The war-time production that made the US economy ‘the arsenal of democracy’ was a tremendous accomplishment. In a very short time span, the US economy produced 17 million rifles and pistols, over 80,000 tanks, 41 billion rounds of ammunition, 4 million artillery shells, 75,000 vessels, nearly 300,000 planes, and many more items and services for the war”

<https://voxeu.org/article/world-war-ii-america-spending-deficits-multipliers-and-sacrifice>

Listening to WW II Radio Broadcast via the Internet Archive

Before the internet there was really no way to listen to old radio broadcasts at all. Now, thanks to people who spent the time transferring them, you can.

<https://archive.org/>

Dazzle Ships

Surface, and especially submarines, have to estimate, size, speed & direction in order to put a shell or torpedo into an enemy ship at any significant distance. One way to confuse the calculation was to use dazzle paint on the ship to confuse that calculation.

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/dazzle-ships>

Chinese Laborers on the Western Front

WW I was a world war, and people from around the globe participated. One group of laborers were Chinese. They were hired directly from China to work behind the front lines. In one of the British cemeteries that I went through along the Somme battlefield there were gravestones for some of the Chinese who died and were buried there.

<https://www.ugent.be/en/news-events/china-shanghai-joint-lab-ww1-history-research.htm>

Movie “1917”

After the Battle of the Somme ended in December of 1917, it started on 1 July 1916, the Germans built a new fortified line and retreated to it. This movie uses that as a basis to build a story of trying to stop another blunder like that of 1 July 1916.

<https://time.com/5743259/1917-movie-sam-mendes/>

Iron Coffins

If you were in the German military in WW I, and WW II, the best chance to be killed was in a U-Boat.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2019/11/risky-business/>

Oregon Smokestacks

During the height of 1942 of “Get in the War Effort” the city of Portland scrapped the USS Oregon, which had been used as a training ship, for the war effort. Almost all but the mast and smokestacks were given away. The hull was used as an ammunition barge and it cost more to convert it to that than what it was worth.

Now the smokestacks are without a home.

<https://www.koin.com/news/special-reports/where-we-live-saving-battleship-oregons-smokestacks/>

From a Dunkirk Paddle Door to Stalag Luft III

Les Rutherford was a regular infantryman at Dunkirk, but he did not want to be captured so he found a door and swam out to sea. Picked up by the Navy he made it back to England. He then went into the RAF as a bomb aimer in 50 Squadron for the next few years – till he was shot down on 20 December 1943 over Frankfurt. He died at 101. His diary showed what it was like in a POW camp.

The International Bomber Command Centre has a physical building and a memorial to those who served in the Second World War. It includes a digital archive, which belongs to the University of Lincoln.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7752095/Veteran-escaped-Dunkirk-paddling-sea-shed-door-dies-aged-101.html>

WW II Missing Submarine HMS Urge Found off of Malta

An ongoing survey of wrecks around battlefields located the HMS Urge. Using maps of minefields laid down by the Germans, who kept meticulous records of all minefields on land and water, allowed it to be located.

<https://www.livescience.com/wwii-submarine-wreck-hms-urge-discovered.html>

100 Miles A Day

In the archives of the Czech Republic, Soviet War Plans from the 1970s revealed a plan to Blitzkrieg Germany and France to reach the Channel Coast in 8 Days.

A traffic jam of monumental proportion would have blocked it easily.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/nazi-germany-soviets-had-plan-013000837.html>

Some Facts About Col. Jimmy Stewart

One of the movies that Col Stewart did was "Flight of the Phoenix" where he played a grizzled old pilot. He could easily identify that part since he flew 20 combat missions over Europe in a B-24.

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/606913/james-stewart-facts>

Analysis: How the Philippines Fell so Easily to the Japanese in 1942

On paper the Americans and Philippine soldiers should have easily held off the invasion. The actual preparation and training of the forces by General MacArthur, ensured that they could not do much but fight a delaying action then surrender.

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/heres-why-america-stood-no-chance-against-imperial-japan-philippines-98057>

V-Disks – Music for the Troops

Lt. G. Robert Vincent created V-Disks so that music and radio shows could get to the troops. "Everybody thinks they were V-for-victory discs," he said. "Actually, I named them for myself, V for Vincent."

The Reason he had to: The American Federation of Musicians was in strike against the recording industry. They were not allowed to record any new music till they got royalties from Juke boxes and on the radio.

<https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/11/30/free-records-8-million-of-em/>

War Plans of the USA Before Pearl Harbor

Every government makes contingency plans. The USA had defensive plans for the Philippines and the Panama Canal, but it also had plans for attacking Japan if the Japanese Empire attacked in SE Asia.

<https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/2017/12/07/franklin-roosevelts-pre-pearl-harbor-intervention-plans/>

Keeping Racial Balance in The British Military

The British Empire was always aware of local political and racial problems in running the Empire. WW II was no different on both operational and political implications of assignments and commands, especially when it came to Jews in the middle east being assigned to units fighting in North Africa.

<https://jewishlinknj.com/features/34822-political-correctness>

Firing a WW II .50 Cal Ball Turret

Restoring a ball turret so that it can be fired, and you can crawl into it and fire it.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_TaK0WZj2k&feature=youtu.be

The South Irish Horse has a Book

It existed for only a short time, 20 years, but it fought, without horses, in WW I.

<https://www.argunners.com/review-south-irish-horse-great-war/>

WW I Battlecruisers SMS Scharnhorst Found off the Falklands

Sunk by the British in early part of the WW I it was found after a 5 year search.

<https://www.foxnews.com/science/world-war-i-battlecruiser-wreck-discovered-falkland-islands>

Modern Air Defense Flak

Phalanx Air Defense in action in Israel. They are shooting and taking out incoming rockets.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV3BTyjfcPs>

Oregon Chapter 8th AFHS;

Next Chapter meeting February 8, 2020

Alice Miller is the tentative scheduled speaker. She has a vast array of early aviation uniforms that she owns and will have on display.

Doors open at 10 AM at the

Beaverton Elks Lodge

3464 SW 106th Ave

Beaverton, Oregon 97005-1941

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

Take Highway 8 - aka Canyon Road, to get to 106th Avenue. 106th is on the north side of Canyon road. The entrance to the club is ¼ mile down the road on the right – a very small sign points to the entrance.

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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 one year 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.