

8th AF Meeting February 06, 2003

Pledge of Allegiance

Lead by Tom

Invocation

Silent Prayer (Our chaplain was not available) with dedication to the Shuttle astronauts killed in the shuttle Columbia during re-entry.

General Meeting Notes

Anniversary

This year was the 10th Anniversary of the local chapter. Many thanks to Andy Brown for starting this chapter. Round of applause went to him.

Displays

Don Keller had a model of a Focke-Wulf FW-190A-5 and a book on display concerning the pilot, Obltn Joesf "Sepp" Burmheller, who flew that a/c.

In memory of Ernest Zapf there was a B-17 A/C Window display with pictures of Thorpe Abbots, home of the 100th BG in memory. Ernest flew in the 351st Sqd out of that base.

Membership

176 Members total.

Robert McQuaw is a new member.

Try and bring in more associate members. In order to carry on the chapter we will need to get more Associate Members starting now.

8th AF National meeting in October in Denver Colorado. 2004 in Kansas City.

Clint Grueber will fill in on Board for rest of year.

Collins Foundation

Bob Miller talked about the Collins Foundation B-24 tour. Carl Gustafsen is the local sponsor for the Oregon 8th AF chapter. The B -24 should be here sometime in May or in June.

Introduction of Guests

- Roy Musti B-17 388th BG.
- Walt Fisher (joined as an Associate member)
- Ray Winters, & wife, Mr and Mrs Quin? Entertained the troops.
- Mel Roth, from Denver.
- Paul Defrey
- Danna Osburn
- Phil Miller (Marine Corps pilot in Vietnam)
- Billy Bob Williams
- Ron Ferral (Navy vet from the S. Pacific, was on the Missouri in Tokyo Harbor)
- (two other people whose name I did not catch).

Speaker

Cal Graham, who was written about in the book "The Greatest Generation" on pages 4-7 by Tom Brokehaw, was the speaker. He wrote a book (self published) called "Under the Samuri Sword".

He was in Battery G of 60th Coast Artillery on Corregidor when the war started.

One of his opening quips at the meeting was that it was "Great to be in a AA battery and he could "look down" and see Air Force Pilots -- a first for him."

He has talked to grade schools in Vancouver. He told a story about young person asking him how old he was — at the time 80 — and boy said "wow you look it!"

He then talked about people's views on the US flag -- meanings vary according to who you are, how old you are and your life experiences. Many Veterans remember it very differently than others in the general population.

The Philippines were bombed the same day as Pearl Harbor was. However, heavy fog in Formosa delayed their attack launch time till 8 hours after Pearl Harbor. 37 B-17s at Clark Field at that time. Were put up in the air after the initial PH attack. But MacArthur ordered them back down since we were not officially "At War" with Japan yet. They had all been landed and lined up on the airfield when the Japanese finally attack Clark Field. After the initial attack only 10 B-17s were left.

After the 1st Week of the war command moved his Battery G to Bataan to defend against the over the mountain attacks being launched by the Japanese.

Only the lead enemy a/c had a bomb sight during that time. So they always fired at the lead plane. He was the person in charge of the fire director. They had 21 second fuses. Due to the terrain and target they enemy planes would fly right over their battery. This was a perfect setup and they shot many down. He mentioned that they fluttered down very pretty in many pieces.

Since the battery was doing so good at shooting down their level bombers the Japanese sent in dive bombers to attack their battery on the ridge.

This, however, allowed the only two P-40s were left to climb as high as possible then dive down onto them. The P-40s would lead them over their position and they would shoot down the pursuing zeros!

After one attack a bomb tipped over a banyan tree. The largest snake he had ever seen crawled out. They thought it was a python but it was cobra! A gun sergeant emptied a full 45 clip at it and missed it from less than 30 feet! Then another person used a 30cal and got it in one shot. They stretched it out and found it was 1/10 of an inch short of 13 feet!

There was a huge bulge in the cobra so they cut it open and found that the night before it had swallowed a whole wild pig the night before!

They were real short of rations so . . .

While on Bataan or Corregidore no unit could not get any rice from the fields of northern Philippines. There was a rule (law) that stated you could not move from 1 province to another -- and MacArthur never overruled it after war broke out. So when Manila was an declared open city on the 21st most of the Filipinos moved to Bataan but the rice needed to support the population and the troops were left behind.

The water that separates Bataan from Corregidor is only two miles. In tropics when water is stirred up the the water glows due to the phosphorescent effect. A boat running at night would leave a very bright glowing trail behind it making it very easy to spot. He could see the PT boats at night this way as MacArthur left the Philippines.

In tropics you always shake out your shoes before putting on your shoes. One time he forgot and got stung by a scorpion. So he went down to put mud on the scorpion bite. On the way back up ran into a Jap and killed him with a bayonet and his 45. He was grazed by the enemies bayonet.

On the night Bataan fell they were sent back to Corregidor since they needed a new fire director due to casualties the exiting batteries had endured.

He had dengue fever that week and had passed out for a while so he was not awake on the trip over. When they had left Corregidor months before was covered with flowers and vegetation -- when he got back there was none but shellholes. He spend some time in MacArthur tunnel getting over this attack.

After reporting for duty he was told to go to a communications shack. Just after arriving the group in the shack heard a pattern of bombs coming toward them and someone said this is it. After a while you can tell how close bombs are to you and know when to ignore them or worry about them. A bomb then hit in the middle of them and all others died but him. The shack was 4" sides filled with sand but just sheet metal on top and a concrete floor. Shell created an 18" deep hole under the concrete.

So after this he was sent up to help the Marines defending against the expected landing on Corregidor.

He crawled up there and got between two marines - but only after he got there did he find out they were dead and had been for a few days. The Japanese landed and he fired but ran quickly out of all ammunition. Since he was between the dead marines he could not be seen so the only way out was to get up and run over live enemies at night! He did so and got back to MacArthur tunnel.

He was there and watched the US flag being lowered.

Japanese shock troops. These were enemy Marines which all were Orphans who had been raised by the Military and trained only to kill. Every time they did something very good they were rewarded. He asked about them since they were being fed raw meat. An officer, who spoke excellent English, told him that they were being rewarded by being fed raw meat — but were still being guarded by other Japanese.

After the fall groups of 100 US and Philippine solders were marched in columns of 4 in the enemy's victory march in Manila. He watched as soldiers killed people giving water to troops as they passed. Including women. They were then sent to Billibet prison then up North and to other camps in the Rice area. They did not march but were sent up there in a train in a "40 and 8"— car built to hold 40 men or 8 horses — but the Japanese put 100 in each car. Many died on the trip. But they were so tightly packed in that they still stood up.

On 1 July were shipped out in a "Hell ship" called the "Canadian Inventor". It took them two months to get the

1000 miles to Japan. Once there he was sent to work in an abandoned coal mine. Everyone had to shovel a ton of coal a day. A Korean overseer would be beaten if the quota was not met. Sometimes the overseer would work to ensure that it would be met to avoid getting beaten. One day an unplanned inspection caught the overseer working: the Japanese then tortured him then killed him.

On Aug 9 after work he saw the plane in a hole in the clouds over Nagasaki and saw a large orange glow go up in the sky right after their shift. The wind rushed out -- knocking down some of the workers since they were so weak - then it rushed back toward Nagasaki.

A few days later a reporter from the Chicago daily news walked into their camp, told them what had happened in Nagasaki and that the war was over.

He was awarded a two Purple Hearts for the bayonette and shrapnel wounds. He never spent lots of time in front line action but only occasional duty "plug the line" then others would come and he would go back to his AA battery.

Treasurers report

Joe Conroy read the Treasurer Report since our new treasurer has a new job and is in intense training.

Ended year \$9.99 cents above start of the year. You can get copies anytime from the treasurer anytime you want.

\$2,300 dollars net in our account at start of year 2003.

Membership Prices

Board meeting agreed to raise the membership to \$10 starting next year (2004) due to rising costs of everything of running the organization.

Memorial Recognition Change

Another change is that instead of sending \$25 to a deceased member from the funds we will now send a certificate and a letter from our Chaplain in their honor to their survivors.

Door Prizes

12 flowers to various attending women drawn by random.

Raffle oney in allotments of \$ 25,15, 10 dollars.

A Self Published book concerning WWII pilot Cohen who lives in southern Oregon.