

The 8th Air Force Historical Society, Oregon Chapter

Saturday, May 8, 2010

Veterans

Speaker Lt. Col. Lingle

Transcribed and Edited by Joan E. Hamilton

[Notes: Descriptions for clarification in brackets are not on the audio tape. *Information and corrections from Tom Philo. **Indication of the 8th Air Force Historical Society Archives Web page(s) with information about the specific Veteran. 8th AFHS Web site: <http://www.8thafhsoregon.com/archive/Oregon-Chapter/Table-of-contents.pdf>]

[Time Elapsed 12 minutes]

Contents

65 th Anniversary of V-E Day (1945-2010).....	3
Roland Stewart	3
466 th Bomb Group, 787 th Bomb Squadron	3
Bob Schuberg	3
306 th BG, 368 th BS	3
Lt. Col. R.F. Brooks.....	4
95 th Bomb Group.....	4
Urban Kluthe	5
57 th Materiel Squadron.....	5
Capt. Walter Groce	6
56 th Fighter Group, 63 rd Fighter Squadron	6
Clint Gruber.....	6
93 rd BG, 329 th BS	6
Major Stanley Richardson.....	6

WWII: 55 th Fighter Group and 479 th Fighter Group	6
Korean War: 8th Fighter Group, K-13, Suwon, Korea	6
Joe Steere.....	7
Cold War: 100 th Bomb Wing, SAC	7
Vietnam.....	7
Glenn Kenagy	7
467 th BG(H), 789 BS	7
Jim Miller.....	7
379 th Bomb Group (Heavy)	8
Lawrence Fick.....	8
458 th BG(H), 852 Squadron	8
Vaughn Erickson.....	9
398 th Bomb Group.....	9
Allen Chapin.....	9
381 st Bomb Group.....	9
Sgt. Warren Caldwell	10
306 th Bomb Group, 423 rd Squadron	10
Speech of Lt. Col. Thomas Lingle	11
To be transcribed possibly in the future	11

65th Anniversary of V-E Day (1945-2010)

Roland Stewart

http://www.8thafhsoregon.com/archive/Oregon-Chapter/Roland-Stewart.PDF**

466th Bomb Group, 787th Bomb Squadron

Right Waist Gunner

My name is Roland Stewart, I flew on a B-24 out of Norwich, Attlebridge, a little village out there. We went on a couple of interesting raids. One of them they're writing a book about was on February 3rd. It was suppose to have been a mission to bomb civilians [according to] the person that got in contact with me. We were briefed for that mission and then we were scrubbed and went to Magdeburg [Germany]. But there was nothing about bombing civilians. I wanted to go on record and let you know that. We never were briefed to bomb civilians.

I was a right waist gunner. I started as a ball turret gunner, but they took them out. I survived thirty-five missions in [inaudible] and I was just outside of Boston when V-E Day came and I had the biggest welcoming party in Boston I've ever seen. That was a great thing to remember.

Bob Schuberg

306th BG, 368th BS

Tail gunner

I'm Bob Schuberg. I was in the 306th Bomb Group, 368th Squadron. I flew as a tail gunner and I was there from late '44 through the end of the war and completed nineteen missions.

Joe Conroy and I were both in the same squadron at the same time and we found out, after we met each other here in this organization, that we'd actually flown on two flights the same. He was the ball-turret gunner and I was the tail gunner.

Lt. Col. R.F. Brooks

95th Bomb Group

Group Communications Officer

I'm Lt. Col. R.F. Brooks, 95th Bomb Group stationed in Horham, England. It was a B-17 group. I was the group communications officer. My greatest effort in that regard was getting to go on two shuttle missions wherein we bombed in Germany, landed in Russia, refueled and got a new set of bombs aboard, and must've bombed then in Ploesti Oil Fields on our way to land in Italy. Then from Italy, we had to find our way back to England. The first time, took us nine days to get out of Italy because of the weather in England and our group [inaudible] thought it would be great if we could slide up and visit Rome. So we spent a day visiting Rome. We went and landed at the nearest air base and commandeered a four-by-four or six-by-six truck anyway to get on up to Rome. From Italy, we had to get back to England for the first time because Germany was still occupying France. We bombed the harbor of Marseilles, France and got back to England.

On the second shuttle mission, I flew as tail gunner. I never even charged my guns because there weren't any German airplanes to shoot down on that one because the Germans were out of France by that time. We had [inaudible] from Italy back to England. Therefore, we didn't get credit for a bombing run on that one, but of course shortly, I was given credit for five missions. So I was a recipient of the air medal. As soon as Germany surrendered, "Hurray, hurray for the 8th of May." We technical officers were sent back to the States. The way I got back to the states was to ride in the belly of a B-24 from England to Iceland, stayed overnight in Iceland, and then flew on the next day over the southern tip of Greenland and back to the States that way.

That was the end of it except that, by the time that they got us straightened out to go for training to go to the Pacific, the Japanese had surrendered. So I never got to the Pacific.

Urban Kluthe
57th Materiel Squadron

Aircraft Mechanic

[Reviewed and edited by *Tom Philo]

[*Background about being at the Portland Air Base where the Oregon Air Guard is now and his unit] and we started this air base out here. We were the 57th Materiel Squadron at that time. We had P-43s to start with. I helped paint eighty of them I painted 101 airplanes altogether out here at the air base. That was in '41.

In '42, we started training for combat to go to war. I went on the base of North Africa at Casablanca in November. From there, we had to wait for our airplanes until about May. We got AT--the forerunner of the P-51--37 I think it was. [*A-36 "Apache" was the initial U.S. Army run of what became the P-51. North American built 500 of them and they all went to the MTO.] We went into combat from Tunisia, Tunis and we led the raid of *Pantelleria in July and they surrendered without any troops landing. [*Pantelleria Island, which lies between Sicily and Tunisia, 130 miles or so west of Malta.] From then, July 10th, we made the invasion of Sicily. I landed at Gela. Our LST didn't quite make it to the shore. We hit a sandbar, so a few of the guys went off the ramp and went in over their heads. So they got back on the ship and we went up the beach and landed. That was *the first one. That was in Sicily. Then we went to the invasion of Salerno. We were at a pretty hot spot in Salerno. We had artillery firing on the *Calabria Hills. Then after Salerno, we went on up through Naples to Rome and above Rome a ways and then when the invasion of Southern France was occurring, [inaudible] was on the ship and we went in on D-Day on Southern France near Cannes. Lots of [inaudible] in there on the LST. Then from there we went on up into the *Rhône Valley for about six weeks. Then we went back to Italy for the winter. In the spring, we went up on into Nancy, France and then on into Germany just above Mannheim. There we were until the war ended. *After the war ended, I went down to *Rödelheim to work on an airplane there and worked there until we started for home. It took me from May until August to get home *and then I got discharged in September. I was an aircraft mechanic.

Capt. Walter Groce
56th Fighter Group, 63rd Fighter Squadron

Pilot

I'm Walter. I'm called Wally Groce. I was with the 56th Fighter Group, 63rd Squadron. I flew about 320 hours combat. I had 3 ½ victories. The half was a [German] jet [Me-262] which I blew part of the wing off. So I'm sure I shot it down.

Clint Gruber
Internet Web site: <http://www.merkki.com/gruberclint.htm>

93rd BG, 329th BS

Co-pilot

I'm Clint Gruber. I flew co-pilot on a B-24, 93rd Bomb Group, shot down on my 9th mission on December 1, 1943. I spent the rest of the war at Stalag Luft I, a year and a half. Today is a wonderful day to remember, when the war was over and we were free. Although, we were there for another eight days until the top brass got everything ironed out with the Russians so they could fly us out of there. Actually, we flew out of Stalag Luft I on a B-17. Thank goodness crew of a B-17 [inaudible] on Mother's Day, May 13, 1945. That was a wonderful day to remember.

Major Stanley Richardson
WWII: 55th Fighter Group and 479th Fighter Group
P-38 and P-51 Instructor and Combat Pilot
Korean War: 8th Fighter Group, K-13, Suwon, Korea
F-80 *Shooting Star* and F-86 *Sabre* Pilot and Instructor

Fighter Pilot

My name is Stan Richardson. I'm a fighter pilot and I flew in WWII with the 55th Fighter Group. I flew 126 sorties in P-38s and another 24 in P-51 *Mustangs*.

After discharge from the service, I was recalled to active duty and went to Korea and flew jet fighters, F-80 *Shooting Star* and F-86 *Sabre*, about 800 combat hours.

My civilian job was an airline captain and later chief pilot for a major corporation and I wasn't smart enough to do anything else and flew airplanes all my life with about 30,000 total flying hours.

Joe Steere

Cold War: 100th Bomb Wing, SAC

Vietnam

My name is *Joe Steere. I was with the 100th Bomb Wing in Strategic Air Command based out of Pease [AFB], New Hampshire. That was during the Cold War. Our main mission at that time was to support the bombers that would launch out of the Midwest headed towards Russia. We would meet them up over Canada for aerial refueling and all our training was geared towards that mission. After three years in SAC, I got out of there and joined the Reserves and was called up again in 1968 for eighteen months where I navigated C-124s primarily over to the Vietnam area as well as the NATO mission over in the Mediterranean. At that time, they pulled the C-141s out of the Mediterranean and pulled them over to the Pacific for the Vietnam support. We filled the Mediterranean gap in [*C-124's] "Old Shaky". That was about it.

Glenn Kenagy

467th BG(H), 789 BS

Tail Gunner

[*Information from Tom Philo]

[Inaudible]...*Glenn Kenagy of the 467th BG(H), 789 BS flew 35 missions in three months in April, May, and July of 1944 as a tail gunner.

Jim Miller

Internet: <http://ww2f.com/western-europe-1943-1945/23157-death-march-across-germany.html>

379th Bomb Group (Heavy)

B-17 Tail Gunner

Hi, I'm *Jim Miller. I flew tail gunner on a B-17 out of Kimbolton, 379th Bomb Group. I was shot down on my 18th mission and I spent about a year in prison camp, made that famous death march [**"Death March" for eighty days [*west] across the coldest winter in about fifty years in Germany. Made it through fine. [Applause]

Lawrence Fick

****<http://www.8thafhsoregon.com/archive/Oregon-Chapter/Lawrence-Fick/index.aspx>**

458th BG(H), 852 Squadron

Lead Navigator (B-24s)

I'm Larry Fick. I was with the 458th Bomb Group. We flew out of Norwich. Norwich Air Base was so that we could catch a bus north and go right into town. It was a former RAF base. We had paved streets, no mud, no Quonset huts. I was a squadron navigator and a lead crew navigator. As a lead crew, we had to do a lot of extra flying. Every time we had to lead a mission, we had to fly the day before. Had a lot of short trips. On V-E Day, we were still practicing. On the night of V-E Day, we were up on a night training mission and the whole island was on fire. All the lights come back on and I think they fired all the flares they had. So we was flying around up there listening to the commotion down in London on BBC and burning up gasoline.

On the 29th mission, I decided I'd like to fly across coming home instead of going in a tub. So I was able to get our crew off the flying list. Then when they finally gave us permission to go home, we had twenty brass, had one corporal, and there was twenty [inaudible] majors. We made it across through fog and so forth. We went to the Azores which was kind of hard to find in the fog, but it was real pretty when we finally got there and we come home Newfoundland and home. [Flew twenty-nine missions]

Vaughn Erickson

398th Bomb Group

Ball Turret and Tail Gunner

I'm Vaughn Erickson. I was with the 398th Bomb Group. We did our training in Rapid City, South Dakota and received all brand-new, silver B-17s. We flew the bunch over to England by way of Iceland, probably flew over the volcano. We landed in England May 1, 1944. On May 7th, [inaudible] Day, we made an all-out effort to Berlin. Must've been a thousand plane raid. Later, we was over to Kiel, upper Germany, and had one engine on fire and one knocked out with the oil spewing all over. We made it back to England on two engines with P-51 escort.

Made it to D-Day. Flew to Munich four times. We made our 25th mission to Merseburg which was a nice place. I got hit in the leg by a piece of shrapnel over Munich, I believe it was. Outside of that, our whole crew came back together and got our thirty missions in. I flew twenty-nine missions in the ball turret, one mission in the tail, and you can have that tail. That's about all.

Allen Chapin

****<http://www.8thafhsoregon.com/archive/Oregon-Chapter/index.aspx>**

381st Bomb Group

Hi, my name is Allen Chapin. I was with the 381st Bomb Group in Ridgewell, England. We went over in May 1943. Those were the days without any fighter escort. I was a co-pilot on a B-17 and we flew twelve and a half missions. We got shot down on the first Schweinfurt raid. Everybody got out and there was one person, me, and the ball turret gunner were still here. I was in Stalag Luft III where the "great escape" was until we got liberated by good, old George Patton. Then, I got recalled back in 1948. So I stayed until '66 and retired as an LC but I was still flying.

Sgt. Warren Caldwell

306th Bomb Group, 423rd Squadron

Flight Engineer and Top Turret Gunner

I'm always in the rear. I was in the 306th Bomb Group, Thurleigh, England, 423rd Squadron. There was three or four, Joe Conroy was in that, but he was in a different squadron. The first mission I went on to Danzig, Poland October 9, 1943. After that, I don't know how many missions because I lost my pilot on the Schweinfurt raid and had to get another pilot. Finally got one who was from the Canadian air force who transferred over and he was Tommy Thompson. He was a good pilot. I'll have to say he was better than the first one I had.

Then I was taken off of flying because I had my two brothers shot down over there and they were Prisoners of War for fourteen months. Unbeknownst at the time, my dad called me and said my mother 'd had a heart attack. So I said, "I'm not going to put her in any more trouble."

So I spent the war on the ground changing engines in the B-17. Then I come back across the ocean in a ship. It took me four boats to get back. I got shipwrecked out in the middle about 300 miles from New Jersey. A tanker collided, New York. I think they was all drunk and they run right into us. Can you imagine two ships running together in a wide-open ocean? Put us out in row boats. There we were out there at night. It was midnight and the wind was a getting up and this guy was a saying, "Man the oars."

The engine wouldn't start on the boat. They probably never had it started. Then we had to get up. We got to rowing and you know, we'd go up way over the waves and then we'd fan the air. We was getting farther and farther away. That tanker was still behind us, but we was getting farther and farther away from it. Couldn't see it. Finally I said, "Does somebody got a flashlight. Stand up and see if we can't get them over here. Tell them we can't get over to them."

Finally, somebody had a flashlight and stood up and give them SOS and they finally come over and got us. Then we stayed on that overnight and they come out the next day to get us. Got off of that boat on this other little old thing. It had a steam engine on it. They shut it down just as we got on it and said, "The engine is going to blow up on this one."

So we sat there again. Then here come another boat out. That was another big boat and we had to climb up rope ladders on that. That was four boats we had getting back across the ocean in. I was kind of teed off a little bit. That's about all. [Applause]

[Time Elapsed 37:31]

Speech of Lt. Col. Thomas Lingle

To be transcribed possibly in the future

Lt. Col. Tom Lingle, Professor of Military Science, University of Oregon Army ROTC

[Speech started at Time Elapsed 38 minutes]