



THE BANDON LIGHT

Sponsored by Bain Insurance Agency

A PUBLICATION OF THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

One POW's Story: As remembered by Carol Tucker Acklin

Mrs. Dorothy Tucker of Bandon, OR, received word this morning that her husband, Sgt. Stanley Tucker of the US Army Air Corps, was listed as a prisoner of war of the Nazis. She awaits further information from the War Department. So read the newspaper article in the Western World of May 1943. Stan was the youngest brother of my father, Howard Tucker, and one of my favorite uncles.

There was heavy flak as the flight of B-17s reached their target over Belgium, and they all knew the plane was mortally wounded when the shell hit and the B-17 began to slide out of the sky. Stan Tucker, a top turret gunner on his 18th trip over German-held territory, fought to get free of his harness and get to the hatch. He followed the pilot and two others out of the plane. Although Stan was the last man out of the plane, his parachute didn't open and he passed the

three other crew members before the reserve chute opened. Looking down, he saw a welcoming committee of German soldiers as all four of the men landed in the middle of a German-held airfield, and were immediately taken prison. The Germans later announced the name, rank, serial number and next of kin of those they captured. A ham radio operator in Maryland picked up the transmission and sent a telegram to Mrs. Tucker in Bandon with the news.

Stan, a Bandon native and Bandon High School graduate, Class of 1930, had enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 and was sent to England. He reached the rank of Master Sergeant in one year, flying first as a waist gunner then a top turret gunner on a B-17 they named Chuck Wagon. In that year, he was credited with 3 "kills" of German fighter planes.

As a prisoner, Stan was the oldest man in the

American section of Stalag 17-B, a German prisoner of war camp near Krems, Austria. His age earned him the nickname "Old Man." He spent 24 months there and was released when the Allies reached the camp in 1945. But those 24 months were difficult months indeed. There were limited rations consisting mostly of a thin, cabbage soup augmented now and then by some kind of meat, which the men guessed included rats, and sometimes chunks of heavy brown bread fortified with sawdust.

The Red Cross Relief packages were highly prized and there would be trading for days while the goods lasted. Those packages, given to each man, contained high-protein food, medical supplies, vitamins, and most anticipated of all: cigarettes and chocolate. The cigarettes could be used for barter with the German guards. The Americans shared

some of their prized goods from the Red Cross with prisoners from other countries, who were in adjacent compounds. The Germans had little food for any of the prisoners, but were especially hard on the Russians. Mail from home did come through and prisoners were able to send heavily censored letters home. Mail delivery days were really anticipated, although not a schedule the men could depend on.

Stan Tucker after liberation, fed, clean, and rested.

Probably because of his age, Stan was chosen to drive a truck to the rail station to pick up those packages and he became friends with the German soldier regularly assigned to guard him throughout the trip. Stan traded cigarettes for a fine German watch worn by the guard and wore it for



Stan Tucker, enlistment photo, Army Air Corps



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A publication of the
Bandon Historical Society

Bandon Historical Society Museum

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The Board meets the 4th Tuesday of each month, 4:00 pm at the Museum. All members and guests are welcome to attend.

Newsletter Layout

Jim Proehl

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If you are interested in Bandon's history and would like to help preserve our past for future generations, call us—we need you.

The Museum is OPEN Monday through Saturday 10-4 and 7 days a week June through September. Volunteers are waiting to help you and answer your questions about Bandon's history.

Enjoy Bandon's rich, wonderful history! Located on the corner of:

270 Fillmore Ave. & Hwy 101



From the Desk of the Director

This special edition of *The Bandon Light* is to honor our local veterans and to help celebrate Veterans Day.

My dad (Bob Proeck, 1920-2013) was in the Marines in World War II as a gunner in the First Marine division at Iwo Jima and Bougainville in the South Pacific.

He used to tell me that being a machine-gunner made it sound as though he was really in the action. Dad told me he sometimes felt like he was in the most danger falling asleep under a coconut tree. Those coconuts could do lots of damage!

But he did see some action. He brought home a rifle taken, on the battlefield, from a dead Japanese soldier. We have that rifle, and the authorization paper to bring the rifle back to the States, on display in the museum.



My uncles Jim, Bob and Charlie, my brother, brother-in-law, cousins, and my significant other are all Veterans.

Recently I learned I had two great uncles who fought in the Civil War and died in Andersonville prison.

I would like to thank all the Veterans for their service.
Gayle Nix, Executive Director

**Join Us As We Honor Veterans
With a Display of Military Vehicles
Saturday, November 7, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Museum Parking Lot**



A Letter from Don Goddard, May 9, 1945, Germany

Nancy Murphy, museum board member, shared this letter her father Don Goddard (1923--2019) wrote to his parents from Germany in 1945.

May 9, 1945
Germany

Dearest Mom & Dad:

I'm sorry as the dickens that I've been so bad about writing lately, but we've been pretty busy. Things have been happening so fast lately my head is in a whirl.

Well, we finally beat the krauts. It took a long long time, but we made it. It seems so wonderful that the war is over that I can't hardly express my feelings. It seems like someone has taken a large weight from my mind. We can now go to sleep at night, knowing that we will wake up in the morning. We can drive along a road without continuously looking along the sides for a good hole to dive in, in case a shell hits near us, or a

German plane comes in to bomb and strafe. We can have lights at night without having to worry about the blackouts. It sure is a wonderful feeling to know that I've come thru almost 2 years (20 months) of combat without getting hardly a scratch.

I guess you read in the papers that our division took Munich and that's where we are now, acting as occupation troops. It seems a very nice life after combat. We have nice steam heated rooms with electric lights and a radio. We eat in a mess hall, and we have movies every night. We're starting to organize base ball teams, etc. The other day they took us on a tour thru Munich and it was very interesting. I saw Hitler's beer hall, one of his homes (bombed to bits) Gestapo Headquarters (also ruined by bombs) in fact the whole city is almost completely ruined. By the way, I took lots of pictures in there and as soon as I get them developed I'll send them to you.

You'll probably be wondering how soon I'll be home. I hate to say this, but I think that it will be quite a while. I've been overseas almost as long as any of them but there are lots of fellows who have been in the army much longer than I, and they will get to go home first. I'm not kicking as it's no more than fair and besides it's much nicer to stay here as occupation troops, than go to the Pacific and fight the Japs. I'm positive I'll be home within 6 months tho, probably a great deal sooner.

I received two swell packages from you last night. One with the swell Bible and the other with candy, hair oil, and this swell paper. Everything arrived in perfect shape and thanks a million.

The weather has been perfect lately. Hardly any wind and lots of sunshine. In fact it's getting almost too warm. I guess it's just because I'm not used to the heat.

Well folks I have about 6 more letters to write so I guess I'd better close for now. 'Bye for now.

All my love,
Don

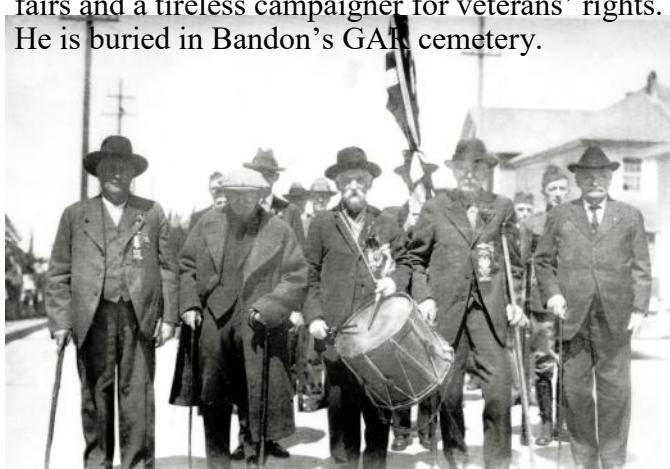
Bandon's Veterans Memorial was dedicated in 2019 in City Park on the site of the quarters of the World War 2 beach patrol. It currently has 35 columns with the names of 14 veterans, with ties to Bandon, in each. Contact the VFW at 541-347-9277 for information about how to add a local veterans to the wall.



Local Veterans—Service Stories from the Museum Archives

Drummer Boy in the Civil War

CT Blumenrother (1846-1937) enlisted at age 14 as a drummer in the Union Army. At the Battle of Chancellorsville, he was left for dead on the battlefield, captured by the Confederates, rejoined the union in a prisoner swap, and saw action in several more battles. In Bandon he was active in civil affairs and a tireless campaigner for veterans' rights. He is buried in Bandon's GAR cemetery.



Clayton B. Zeek, Charles Rodgers, C.T. Blumenrother, John W. Felter, and James Langlois, Bandon's last five Civil War Veterans, marched in a parade in 1927.

Honored with a Korean Doll

Lieutenant Pete Goodbrod (1929-2019) was on his way to Korea in 1953 when the cease-fire was signed. The mission changed from fighting to rebuilding.

When Lt. Goodbrod's stay ended, the local population presented him with a ceremonially costumed doll.

A doll may seem like an odd gift to give to a young man in his twenties.

But Goodbrod had learned enough about

the culture of the country he was serving in to be honored by the sincerity of the gesture. The doll is now part of the museum's military collection.

This Special Edition of the *Bandon Light* is sponsored by Bain Insurance Agency and Joseph Bain, USN Electricians Mate Four with three Vietnam Battle Stars.



"Patton and I Won the War!"

Charlie Crew (1922-2017) graduated from Langlois High School, enlisted in 1942, and spent the majority of the war behind the controls of a tank. Charlie served under General George Patton in some of the toughest battles of the war including the Battle of the Bulge.

Charlie returned home to his high school sweetheart Velma and worked for 32 years in the Moore Mill Truck shop.

Charlie liked to tell people, "Patton and I won the war!"

Bandon Veterans: Do We have your story? Do we have your service photo?

The museum works to preserve the history of any veteran who considers Bandon "home." We use a form to collect service data and are always eager to scan a service photo to add to our files. Family members are encouraged to share the history of local veterans who have passed away. Contact Museum board member Rick Hinojosa, our Veterans specialist.

The Lighthouse Keeper's Son

Walter Hartman (1893-1945) son of lighthouse keeper Adam Hartman, served in France during World War 1. Records indicated he was injured after the armistice, in a sledding accident. In the photo below he sits between his sister Florence and Maude Lowe.



Class of—A Selection of Bandon High Graduates Who Served

Class of '15
Raymond Geisendorfer
World War 1



Class of '42
Edgar Lowe Capps
World War 2



Class of '64
Tom Goss
Vietnam



Class of '84
Mark Handsaker
Desert Storm



Class of '41
Louis Felsheim
World War 2



Class of '28
Master Sergeant Chet Campbell (left)
World War 2



Class of '40
Eugene Stearns
World War 2



Class of '66
Donnie Goddard
Vietnam



Class of '51
William Domenighini
Jet Fighter Pilot



Class of '57
Wayne Campbell
Aboard USS Isherwood



Class of '86
Jess Crabtree
USS Higgins



What Did Your Dad Do in the War?

By Jim Proehl, Museum Board member

"What did your dad do in the war?"

That was a question kids of my generation asked each other all the time. My dad served the whole of World War 2, but he was always a little apologetic about his war-time service.

When World War 2 broke out, he had finished two years of college and was teaching in a little town in South Dakota. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He was aboard a troopship headed for the South Pacific when he contracted a case of pneumonia.

When he recovered, Uncle Sam decided that rather than try to reconnect him with his old unit, they'd send Corporal Proehl to fill a vacancy as the company clerk of an air base in India.

Because it was India, my dad wasn't allowed to shine his own shoes or clean his own quarters. He had servants.

When the fathers were telling war stories, my dad didn't say much. But then neither did my uncle, John Heenan, who landed at Normandy on D-Day. We were told **not** to ask Uncle Jack about the war.

When the war ended, Dad returned to South Dakota, took advantage of the GI Bill to return to college, and became part of the first generation of teachers with four-year degrees. He met my mom in college and they found teaching positions in Vernonia, Oregon.

My dad advanced from teacher to superintendent. The four-year degree helped, but what made him so successful as a school administrator was his ability to procure supplies and keep the books, skills he developed in the military.

When I became a teacher, my dream was to teach on the Oregon coast. My school-superintendent-dad knew where the job openings were. He found me the job in Bandon.

I never think of my dad as a veteran—he didn't belong to a veteran's organization or have a military funeral—but he was. He served in World War 2 and it changed the course of his life—and mine.

New Members

New Members:

Mary Gumila/Paul Teschner,
Gordan Casper, Patricia Cagley
Joanne Bailey

New Life Members:

Rick and Ellen Howard



What My Dad Did in the War

By Rick Hinojosa, Museum Board member

My dad, Gil Hinojosa served with two different divisions during World War 2.

He enlisted on 23 July, 1941, and trained at Camp Elliott as a heavy machine crewman. Company H,

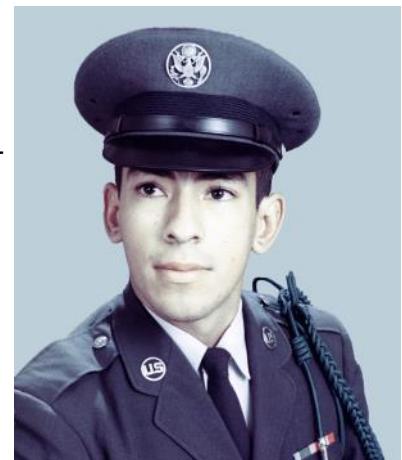


Gil Hinojosa—World War 2

Second Marines, boarded the *USS President Hayes* and arrived at Guadalcanal on 7 August, 1942. My dad participated in the Battle of the Solomon Islands and finally departed Guadalcanal on 31 January, 1943, again in the *President Hayes*, arriving at Wellington, New Zealand on 6 February, 1943.

Dad departed New Zealand on the hospital ship *Lurline* on 17 May, 1943 sailing to San Diego,

back in the states, arriving on 30 May, 1943. He was assigned to Casual Company for R and R then re-



Rick Hinojosa—Vietnam

Memorial Donations

A memorial donation has been made in memory of:
Clayton Duval, Janet Reiman McPherson, Jill Chappell Sumerlin, Dixie Van Leuven, Patricia Spencer, Johnny Van Leuven, Barbara Murray, Daniel Undell, Tom Edson

Memorial donations have been made by:

Judith Simons, Marilyn Bamford, Jane Chappell Germann, Careen Pierce, Sandra Philpott Iseke, Ardisann Szala, Larry and Margaret Chalfan, Jeff and Deanna Moore, Judy Knox

Banknotes in the Museum's Collection Tell a WW2 Story

An interesting item in the museum's military collection are these Hawaii overprint notes. They are unique pieces for several reasons. To start with, they're Silver Certificates and no longer being minted. Next, on the backside is stamped HAWAII. These banknotes were issued during WW2 as an emergency issue after the attack on Pearl Harbor.



The intent was to easily distinguish the currency should it be captured by the Japanese. This currency was in use from July 1942 until September 1944 at which point they were recalled. The collected money was



turned over to local crematorium and sugar mill furnaces to be destroyed.

These survived and were donated to the Bandon Museum by Julita Fong of Bandon. Also displayed in this grouping is what was called a "Short Snorter" one dollar banknote. During WW2 the notes were signed by flight crews to wish good luck to soldier crossing the Atlantic. Friends would use local currency and sign each other's notes creating a "keepsake of your Buddy's signature."

All of these pieces of money are valuable to collectors depending on the condition. This grouping was appraised to be worth over \$500. The \$5.00 Hawaii note is the rarest of all these notes.

Look in grandma's jewelry box and you might find a piece of this keepsake history.

Rick Hinojosa

"One POW's Story" Continued from Page 1

many years after the war.

The prisoners were quite adept at "liberating" the Germans from their supplies. One night, it was fence posts, and later a stack of lumber for a new building disappeared into the barracks' heating stoves. Although saws were forbidden, almost anything could be obtained with enough cigarettes and chocolates. A few men who had been barbers before the war traded for scissors and gave haircuts for chocolate or food. Even basic radios were constructed from bartered parts and the men followed the course of the war when they could receive a broadcast.

There were lighter moments. Groups of men would put on "shows" to entertain the others. The camp contained actors, dancers, artists, singers, musicians, and comedians. Sports were a big diversion as well. There were dirt basketball courts, baseball teams and other types of diversions. These activities occupied a lot of idle hours---when the men weren't called out for roll call, sometimes 2-3 times a day.

Keeping clean was really difficult: There were washrooms, make-shift showers, and latrines, but the water was turned on for only an hour or two, three times a day. The Germans used running water as a punishment and sometimes would not turn it on at all. The prisoners were plagued by lice and fleas and would be given a delousing about every 3 months, in which they and their clothing were sprayed with a solution that would kill (most) of the lice and fleas, but it didn't take long to be again infected.

The prisoners knew the war was winding down from the bits of news they heard on those make-shift

radios, but also from the bombers they could see flying overhead. The town of Krems was bombed at least once and sent the men into the trenches they had had to dig for protection. There was real concern that an errant bomb would hit the camp.

I have since learned that the Germans decided to clear the camp as the Allies advanced. Over some weeks those prisoners who could walk were marched about 200 miles farther into Austria. I never heard Stan mention a word of this march which makes me believe he was injured or too ill to make the march and was left in the camp, as were most of the disabled. Those who remained in the camp could hear the artillery coming closer and closer, and awoke one morning to find the Germans gone from the camp. The Americans arrived soon after with desperately needed medical supplies, food and other needs. They were liberated in May of 1945 and were home within weeks.

I learned these stories from many hours listening to Stan talk at our dinner table in the years after the war. I was often sent from the table, but I never went so far I couldn't hear and I absorbed so much of the story, I continued to read about World War II for years afterward. While I was never allowed to see it as a child, Stan had a diary-type book that he had obtained in the camp and had covered with leather from his flying jacket when he returned home. He had recorded much of what he saw and experienced, and while I know he shared some of the worst stories with my Dad, Howard, it was long into the night after I had gone to sleep.

JOIN THE BANDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

YES! Please accept my membership in the Bandon Historical Society

Already a member? Please consider a donation to help support your museum.

(please check one)

\$15 Individual NAME: _____

\$25 Family ADDRESS: _____

\$35 Business CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

\$250 Life PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

I'm a Member and would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of \$ _____

Please make check payable to BHS and mail to:

Bandon Historical Society, PO Box 737, Bandon OR 97411

For more information on benefits of memberships go to

<http://www.bandonhistoricalmuseum.org/membership.html>

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E B A N D O N H I S T O R I C A L S O C I E T Y

