

Oregon Spirit of '45

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Press Release

Flyovers Honor WWII Air Power & Doolittle Raiders on National Spirit of '45 Day, Willamette National Cemetery, Sunday, Aug 13, 2017, 11 AM

Oregon Spirit of '45 hosts General Doolittle's granddaughter, Jonna, as we mark the 75th Anniversary of the Doolittle Raid to honor the US Army Air Corps of the "Greatest Generation"

PORTLAND: This year's Oregon Spirit of '45 hosts Jonna Doolittle Hoppes in the amphitheater at Willamette National Cemetery on Sunday, Aug 13, 11 AM. This event marks the 75th Anniversary of the Doolittle Raid and honors Air Power of the US Army Air Corps of the "Greatest Generation." Flyovers and citizens will honor, be grateful for and remember the incredible contributions of the World War II Generation on their Congressionally-endorsed and state-legislated Spirit of '45 Day, the 2nd Sunday of every August.

JOIN US TO KEEP THE SPIRIT OF 45 ALIVE and salute 16.1 million Americans who served and saved our country and the 400,000+ who made the ultimate sacrifice, 1941-1945. Oregon Air Guard F-15s (as approved) plans to prompt the tribute; West Coast Ravens will fly a "missing man" formation as TAPS is played. WWII 'hero' life-size posters and 20' banners will surround the amphitheater so as to 'REMEMBER AND BE INSPIRED' by this brave and courageous generation.

The Doolittle Raiders, most famous for flying 16 B-25 Mitchell bombers over Tokyo on April 18, 1942, made the 1st American attack on the Japanese mainland just four months after Pearl Harbor. The mission served notice that, indeed, 'a sleeping giant had been awakened.' While all 80 men believed it was a one-way mission, only seven lost their lives that day. Most made it through WWII and the last surviving Raider, Dick Cole age 101, resides in Texas. While most people are familiar with the 'Raid', many are unaware of the Oregon connection. The crews that flew on the Raid were part of the 17th Bombardment Group based in Pendleton, giving Oregon Aviation a unique connection to this important event; five raiders were Oregonians.

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Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, granddaughter of Commander Doolittle, will share stories about her WWII 'daredevil' pilot, combat leader and military strategist grandfather who achieved numerous aviation firsts, of the scientist driven to expand the horizons of aviation and a general who asked only of his men what he himself was willing to give. Her stories are firsthand of his insatiable thirst for knowledge and self-discipline, his sense of humor and his charm, his keen observations and his honesty and fairness. Doolittle was eventually promoted to Lieutenant General and commanded the 12th Air Force over North Africa, the 15th Air Force over the Mediterranean, and the 8th Air Force in Europe with its 42,000-combat aircraft. In 1985, Ronald Reagan promoted Doolittle to a full four-star general.

Ben Berry, son of Tuskegee Airman Benny Lee 'Flaps' Berry, will tell the humble account of his father a member of the first African-American pilots in the US Army Air Corps. Flaps flew a B-25 bomber in WWII, part of the 332nd Fighter Group and the 477th Bombardment Group. Flaps graduated with a degree in aeronautical engineering, the 1st African American to do so at USC and had a distinguished career working for the Apollo, Space Shuttle and Space Station programs. Flaps was an International Consulting Engineer and worked in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia; he authored three books and two screenplays including Tuskegee Airmen: To the Moon, Mars and Beyond.

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden will be represented and Cameron Smith, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs director will lay the wreath with our WWII Veterans. The Civil Air Patrol, Columbia Composite Squadron will serve as honor guard. The ceremony will include presentation of the colors, patriotic music, the traditional military honors (21-gun salute) with taps to recognize the contributions made by the 'Greatest Generation.' The ceremony will be held in the Assembly Area near the flagpole; all military branches will be honored for the 16.1 million men and women who served including 152,000 Oregonians, of which about 4,000 made the ultimate sacrifice.

HELP US BUILD THE WWII WALL OF HONOR. We enlist all families, friends and communities to submit their WWII Veteran's military photo to our website and add to the wall of men and women 'WWII heroes'; all service branches from any state welcome. Your WWII hero's service branch, hometown and other optional data can be uploaded to www.orspiritof45.org. In 2020, during the WWII 75th Anniversary Spirit of '45 Commemorative Week of Aug 9-15, the nation will honor the achievements and virtues of men and women of this incredible generation by displaying their photos collected by all states ... stretching from The Nation's Capital steps to the Lincoln Memorial and back to the reflecting pool of the National World War II Memorial.

The Oregon Spirit of '45, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to commemorating the achievements and virtues of the World War II generation, on the 2nd Sunday of every August, so as to inspire future generations.

KEEP THE SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE! is a non-profit, non-partisan initiative to preserve the legacy of the men and women of the Greatest Generation so that their example of courage, self-sacrifice, "can-do" attitude and commitment to community can help inspire a renewal of national unity in America at a time when our country once again must come together to meet historic challenges. Its goal is to establish an annual day of remembrance and national renewal to remind America of the values and accomplishments of the generation who endured the hard times of the Great Depression, fought to defeat the greatest tyranny in history, and then went on to rebuild their shattered world in an unprecedented effort to help assure a better future for both friend and former foe alike.