

Russ Sichley, 94, takes World War II Honor Flight

By LISA K. ANDERSON
The Outlook

On his way to Washington, D.C., Russ Sichley experienced “one of the sweetest, most wonderful things.” Two little girls at the Dallas/Forth Worth International Airport stopped and saluted at the 94-year-old World War II veteran.

“I told their folks ‘I sure know you’re raising these kids right.’” Sichley said. “So many people were screaming and hollering and calling us the greatest generation on earth. The whole thing was just awesome.”

Sichley, a resident of Gresham’s Village Retirement Center, recently returned from an Honor Flight with 49 other World War II veterans from Oregon through Honor Flight of Eastern Oregon.

Honor Flight Network is a nonprofit organization that has flown more than 100,000 veterans to Washington, D.C., since the program’s inception in May 2005. Its network includes 119 regional hubs across the country. Veterans are flown at no charge to visit memorials dedicated to their service.

Sichley served as a Navy coxswain during World War II on a destroyer in 10 South Pacific military engagements. During his service, from May 1943 through January 1946, Sichley earned three medals.

“I’m not a war hero,” Sichley said. “I had a job to do just like millions of other men and women. I did my job, but I’m not the kind who wants relics or ballyhoo.”

The oldest of his four brothers, Sichley remembers praying that if any of them had to be taken, it be him.

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— Russ Sichley, World War II Navy veteran

A ONCE-IN-A-MILLION MOMENT



A resident of Gresham’s Village Retirement Center, Russ Sichley recently took an Honor Flight with fellow veterans in Oregon. The 94-year-old served as a Navy coxswain during World War II.

“It didn’t work out that way,” he said.

His 20-year-old brother, Roy Ellis Sichley, died in the Battle of the Bulge on Dec. 26, 1944. The faith that pulled him through the loss of his brother continues to inspire Sichley.

“I can’t preach or teach or give Bible studies, but I can help people,” Sichley said.

He and his wife Mary have spent more than 24,000 hours volunteering for Portland Adventist Community Services since 1962 and 8,000 hours at Adventist Medical Center since 1970.

Sichley said there were four

sets of heros during World War II, those who gave their lives, the men and women who offered “productivity and patriotism” back home, the women who acted just as strong as men and those who returned home disabled or without body parts.

During his long weekend stay the third weekend of September, Sichley visited 20 Washington, D.C., memorials, along with statues.

A book written by Bill Sholin honors Sichley and his comrades aboard the USS Lang- DD399.

“No American in U.S. history

has ever lived through a continuously recurring nightmare — in defense of his family and country — like these Navy fighting-men have,” the dedication page reads.

Sichley called the Honor Flight a “once in a million opportunity” that “boggled his mind.” He’s still pinching himself.

“I could hardly believe this was happening,” Sichley said.

In May, The Outlook wrote about a trio of East County veterans who took the Honor Flight, Leland “Lee” Johnson, Vernon Keiper and Richard Leibham.

OUTLOOK PHOTO: LISA K. ANDERSON

NEWSBRIEFS

Bicycle tourism workshops Nov. 13-14

The Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce will partner with Travel Oregon to host Bicycle Tourism Studio Workshops on Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 13-14.

The workshops will explore ways to improve bicycle travel in East Multnomah County and how local economy and businesses may benefit from visiting bicyclists, said Heidi Beierle, the project’s coordinator.

The bike tourism project is funded by the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center with \$163,000 in grant funds.

Participants who attend the workshop will have the opportunity to discuss the pros and cons to increasing bicycle tourism in Gresham, Fairview and Wood Village.

For more information, please contact Heidi Beierle, Bicycle Tourism Initiative Project Coordinator at 503.665.1131, 541.514.4409, or heidib@greshamchamber.org.

Learn about prohibition at Troutdale at talk

“Booze, Bootleggers and Bad Deeds: Mayor Clara Larson and Prohibition in Troutdale,” is the topic of a presentation historian and author Sharon Nesbit will give at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 29, at McMenamins Edgefield as part of Oregon Encyclopedia History Night.

The presentation held inside Edgefield’s Power Station Theater is free, but those who attend may bring a canned good to donate to SnowCap Community Chairies.

All ages are welcome.

Nesbit is author of “It Could Have Been Carpdale: Centennial History of Troutdale, Oregon.”

Mcmenamins Edgefield is at 2126 S.W. Halsey St. in Troutdale. For more information, call 503-669-8610.

City awarded for clean-water compliance

The city of Gresham is among the recipients of the Peak Performance awards, which is recognition given by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies.

The award is given for outstanding environmental com-

pliance.

This year’s recipients were Gresham (Gold award); Vancouver, Wash. (two Platinum awards); Milwaukee, Wis. (two Platinum awards); Wilmington, Del. (Gold award); and New Orleans, La. (one Gold award and one Silver award).

NACWA is a nationally recognized leader in environmental policy and its Peak Performance awards recognize facilities for outstanding compliance with their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit limits.

The permit was launched in 1972 and has been responsible for major improvements to U.S. water quality.

Sandy center hosts Doll and Bear Show

The Sandy Community Action Center will host its second Doll and Bear Show and sale Tuesday, Nov. 5, through Friday, Nov. 22.

All proceeds from the sale will benefit the food pantry at the Sandy Community Action Center, a hunger relief agency serving individuals in the Oregon Trail School District.

The show features more than 100 dolls and bears restored by volunteers. Dolls and bears are donated in “well loved” condition. Each toy is then completely cleaned, dressed and staged in The Shoppe of Hidden Treasures and the Second Time Around Thrift Store.

The event is open to shoppers of all ages from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at 38982 Pioneer Blvd., Sandy.

For more information, call 503-668-4746.

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