

HONOR,

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munications in the 73rd Wing on a B-29 bomber flying on 35 missions during his tour of duty.

“There’s some nightmares in those missions,” Bietshek said, not elaborating. “The winds over Japan were 100 miles per hour. If you tried to bomb into the wind and you ran out of gas, running with the wind, you were going too fast for the bombardier to hit the target. We lost more planes to running out of gas than we did getting shot

down.”

Bowerly had just finished dental school and was on a ship bound for Pearl Harbor when a senior officer let him know he qualified for discharge because of his degree.

He spent three months in Hawaii as a dental corpsman.

“All they had was a suitcase that had all the dental equipment in it, including the chair,” Bowerly said.

Bowerly returned to the Keizer area and set up his own practice, but Uncle Sam came calling again a few years later.

“They said I never completed the original tour and they

sent me to the Marine base in Ft. Pendleton, Calif. I spent the next 18 months there taking care of the boys coming and going during the Korean conflict,” Bowerly said.

He attained the rank of captain before returning home and resuming his dental practice.

Morgan had turned 18 in August 1943 and got his draft notice the following month along with eight other players on the Enumclaw High School football team in Washington. The school’s head football coach and principal went to the draft board in person and requested a deferment until the

end of the football season and it was granted.

“At the time, I don’t think anyone realized the head coach and principal had that kind of power,” Morgan joked.

Morgan ended up a signalman aboard a troop ship built in Astoria. His role involved helping coordinate ship movements using flags while posted in the ship’s crow’s nest. Radios were too likely to give away location. Morgan traveled with the boat through getting supplies in California, picking up troops in Honolulu and then went straight to the front lines at Iwo Jima.

“We sat off the coast for nine days watching the fighting and I saw the flag go up on Mt. Suribachi through a pair of binoculars,” Morgan said. The raising of that particular flag became an iconic image in American war history and a sculpture in its honor was one of the sites the trio visited on their Honor Flight trip.

In addition to the veterans themselves, each former serviceman took along a guardian. Judy Luse served as guardian to Bowerly, her father. Her husband Walt served as guardian to a Roseburg veteran.

“The guys were opening up

about things that they’d bottled up for 70 years. One of them teared up as he told me a story, and the guy I was with landed in Nagasaki two months after they dropped the bomb,” Walt said.

“What they did doesn’t happen anymore,” added Judy. “As a country, they came together around a big goal, went and did what they had to do and then came home and got back to work.”

For more information about Honor Flight of Oregon, including how to register for a flight, visit www.honorflight-oregon.org.

THANKS,

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Kathy also thanked MHS staff and students who designed T-shirts that were sold on Austin’s behalf and various companies that have stepped up. She also thanked personnel from Keizer Fire District for their fast response.

“We wish to thank the Keizer, Salem and surrounding area for those of you who endured the long wait and who dug deep and gave generously,” Kathy said. “We wish

to thank all those who have been sending up prayers on behalf of Austin Verboort and our family. We have been in awe at the outpouring of support and feeling totally embraced and loved by our community during such a difficult time in our lives.

“We could not be doing this without the emotional, spiritual, financial and physical help from all of you,” she added. “Austin was born and raised in Keizer and I feel proud to be a part of this community and am touched deeply to be the recipients of such selfless generosity.”

Hayley Cole, one of the Dutch Bros. employees, loved seeing so many people supporting the family on June 3.

“It was wonderful,” Cole said.

Kathy has been by her son’s side on a regular basis and has seen the improvements.

“He is quickly progressing,” she said. “He’s saying my name. He said ‘mom’ on Tuesday (June 23) and he said, ‘I love you’ today. He amazes us with his tenacious spirit. He gives his all every day. He’s a fighter.”

Each day Kathy is stunned by Keizerites.

“We’ve been in awe of the community support,” Kathy said. “We’ve been embraced by the community. People have been digging deep. We’ve been amazed by the outpouring. People we don’t even know are reaching out. Austin has a long journey ahead of him, but it’s great to know we have such amazing support.”

Kathy also gave thanks to a higher authority.

“It’s totally by the grace of God that Austin’s with us today,” she said. “His Jeep collapsed around him. I give all glory to God and His amazing grace. He’s touching so many

lives through Austin. I am totally trusting in God’s plan for Austin and know our God is a God of healing and miracles. We are witnessing a miracle

each and every day with Austin. I could not be doing this without my faith and the faith of those surrounding us and lifting us up in prayer.”

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