

World War II veteran shares his story



Navy flier Bob Beck survived the War in the Pacific.

'War was on, it wasn't something we talked about. It was just something we did.'

Robert Beck
93-year-old WWII veteran

By KATHERYN HOUGHTON
EO Media Group

PACIFIC COUNTY, Wash. — Robert Beck never heard the explosion as he watched the flames roll off the ship and reflect on the ocean. ¶ A Japanese attacker pilot flew overhead. As Avenger radioman, Beck belonged on a plane. But he was stuck on a carrier ship trying to stay out of the crew's way as they countered the attack. ¶ "War was on, it wasn't something we talked about," Beck, 93, said. "It was just something we did."

War's logic

Beck was a year into business school in Olympia when the United States declared war on Germany. Being a soldier wasn't a job title, it was a certainty. Out of Beck's class of 30 men, he said 29 either enlisted or were drafted.

When Beck turned 19, his father said it was time to enlist. His father had been on a ship in France when World War I ended.

"He said I was going no matter what and I didn't want to end up like those poor guys in the trenches," Beck said. "We thought I should sign my name to the Navy, like he did."

Beck boarded a train for Farragut, Idaho, for basic training as a part of the 38th company. Every few months he moved to a different base.

His training stopped at Pearl Harbor as crews assembled for the front lines.

"There was a lot of waiting around, just knowing we were preparing for an invasion," he said. "We watched as ships were built, and knew where we were going."

The men focused on playing the card game "Hearts" instead of trying to predict what they

would encounter overseas.

In July 1944 Beck was assigned to the carrier U.S.S. Manila Bay and the convoy headed to invade Japanese forces perched in the Philippines.

Philippines Campaign

Beck watched soldiers unload on the shores from the sky. The battle for the Philippines began in October.

"I was right above Gen. MacArthur as he walked into the battle," Beck said. "I was, of course, too high up to tell who was who." The movement looked like a wave.

Flashes of light sparked from ships as gunners fired toward enemy bases. Beck peered out a circular window about the size of his head scanned the dark forests for enemy locations.

Planes dropped fliers over the land. Some were in Japanese and declared the U.S. and Filipinos had joined forces. Another had drawings of troops running onto shores and read, "The Yanks have landed on your Island."

See VETERAN, Page 7A

Royal honor

College names art gallery after Royal Nebeker

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

When Clatsop Community College's art faculty opens an exhibit on campus Thursday honoring the late Royal Nebeker, they will do so in the Royal Nebeker Art Gallery.



Royal Nebeker

The college's board voted unanimously Tuesday to name the campus gallery inside the art center after Nebeker, a teacher for more than 30 years in the art program and among the most celebrated artists from Astoria.

"We feel like it's important to us, it's important to so many people in the community to have Royal's name on the gallery," said Kristin Shauck, head of the art program, to the board Tuesday before the vote.

Shauck spoke on behalf of the audience gathered in support Tuesday, including art faculty, local artists and

See ROYAL, Page 11A

Former fire chief just 'didn't do the job'

Community praises former Cannon Beach Chief Mike Balzer

By DANI PALMER
EO Media Group

CANNON BEACH — Tempers flared Monday as community members criticized the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors' handling of former Fire Chief Mike Balzer's termination. The manner of releasing the information was "in poor taste" and Sharon Clyde, the board president, should never have locked the former chief out of his own office, they said.

Board members countered that residents were misinformed, and more information regarding the mid-October dismissal was released.

See FIRE CHIEF, Page 11A



Bob Beck/Courtesy Photo

VC-80 Squadron veteran Bob Beck is in front row, third from the far right. Beck was attached to the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Manila Bay.

Researchers urge cooperation during LNG sitings



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Trang Tran, of Oregon State University's School of Public Policy, talks about the findings of their study during a presentation at the Astoria Public Library.

Trust in public process crucial to community mobilization

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

While reviewing and siting liquefied natural gas projects, local officials and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission should work to cooperate better with communities where energy companies wish to break ground, according to the recommendations of two graduate students from Oregon State University's School of Public Policy.

Decision-makers, they said, should

communicate earlier and more regularly with citizens, and work to educate them on the rules of public participation in the LNG siting process.

"It is important for the community members to ensure that they have a say in what type of development is invited into their community, and to perceive that the siting process is fair," said Trang Tran, who presented findings with fellow researcher, Brittany Gaustad, at the Astoria Public Library Tuesday evening.

With funding from the Oregon Sea Grant, Tran and Gaustad studied the Oregon LNG project proposed for Warrenton and Jordan Cove LNG project proposed for Coos Bay, both of which are wading through the FERC approval process.

See LNG, Page 11A

