

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

COMPILED BY BOB DUKE
From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

10 years ago this week — 2010

And there goes the Scottish knight, flying off his horse, a whirl of green knightly raiment and falling lance shards — struck down in a joust. He lands ignobly on the ground. Hard. The French knight has already dismounted and is banging his sword against his shield, bellowing for hand-to-hand combat. It's a rough world out there in the Middle Ages. "World Tournament of Champions: Knights of the Realm" put on two shows in one day at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds & Expo Center Saturday. It was the first run of what both fair manager Gary Friedman and Greg Hopla (the knights' choreographer, organizer and general boss) hope will turn into a regular event in the area over the next few years. "Kids love it," Hopla said, resting on a bleacher bench in between shows, an 18-foot-tall castle looming in the background.

A sheriff involved in investigating the wreckage of a World War II dive bomber found in the Oregon woods said Friday at least three U.S. Navy planes of that type apparently went down in the area from 1945 to 1948. No human remains have yet been found by a Navy team and law enforcement officers at the crash site near the Oregon Coast, not far from a Navy air station operation during the war. Tillamook County Sheriff Todd Anderson said he knows of reports of two Curtiss SB2C Helldivers going down in the Tillamook-Astoria area in 1945, and a third in 1948. "We've got all kinds of clues and bits and pieces," Anderson said. Investigators are especially interested in the reported 1948 crash. "That's the one we're looking at now, but we're not eliminating others," Anderson said.

The director of the Seaside Aquarium has some words of reassurance for Oregon beach walkers. If you encounter an elephant seal breathing hard, spotted with sores and missing patches of hair, don't worry, it's just molting. Keith Chandler says it's the time of year it happens. He says the seals' hair falls off in big patches. They also get big open sores and like to stay out of the water to keep saltwater away from the sore. Chandler says coming up onto the beach raises the seals body temperature, speeding up the molting process. This week, aquarium staffers have gotten worried calls about a young male elephant seal in Hammond, on Oregon's North Coast. They checked him and say he's fine — though he doesn't look too good.

50 years ago — 1970

A Department of Defense transportation division team will visit the Port of Astoria sometime next week to study the feasibility of using port facilities for unloading and rehabilitating damaged military vehicles from Vietnam, Port Manager C.E. Hodges announced this morning. While no money figures were available, Hodges said, "This could be a very big deal for Astoria. It will be a big job and may mean steering up an organization to process the vehicles." Hodges said that if Port of Astoria facilities are used the vehicles would be unloaded from ships and repaired and rehabilitated here, which would mean increased work for longshoremen and the need for mechanics and other vehicle repair specialists.

Clatsop County commissioners today envision a "freeze" on large-scale housing development along the North Coast area but they do not quarrel with the reason behind such a ban. Verne Stratton, commission chairman, and commissioner Hiram Johnson were among those attending Friday's Environmental Quality Control Commission meeting in Portland during which major housing developments in the Gearhart area came under sharp scrutiny. The EQC presented a water quality control staff report that, in effect, will deny state authorization of water and sewerage plans to high-density developments anywhere in Oregon where water pollution is a threat. The report stated: "The staff of the Department Environmental Quality and State Board of Health have been concerned for some time regarding the potential contamination and pollution of the ground water, the public waters and the public beach area in the Clatsop Plains, Gearhart and Seaside areas."

SEASIDE — Some 75 speakers on Monday attacked the Oregon Highway Commission's proposal to ban vehicular traffic on Clatsop County beaches during a two-phase hearing before State Highway Division officials. An audience of some 600 turned out for the testimony. The main points of attack: the state's vehicle-ban zones were impractical and unnecessary and coastal officials and residents hadn't been consulted in drawing the proposed zones.

The crab market is slow this year and prices are below expectations, according to Clatsop County packers. One packer said their sales, purchases and cannery operations were approximately 50% of what they were last year.

75 years ago — 1945

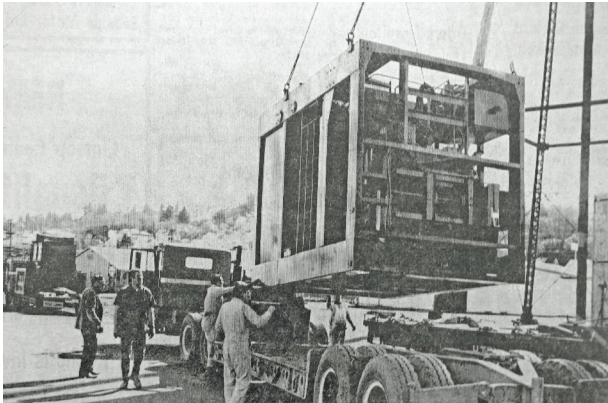
Astoria firemen — headquarters, Uniontown and Uppertown crews, all of them — were on the move Sunday afternoon at about 5 o'clock when an April Fools'



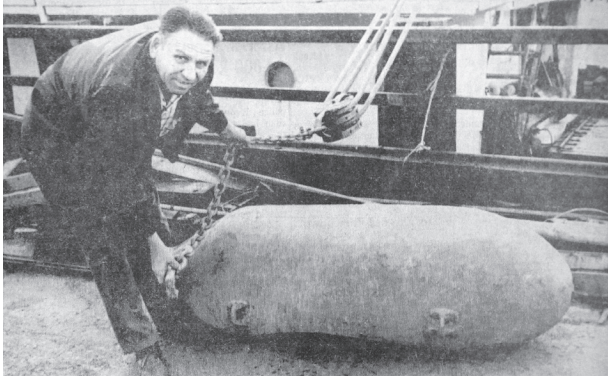
With the king and queen looking on, the Scottish knight Matt Alexander, cloaked in green, attempts to fend off a pair of attackers, Greg Hopla, middle, and his son Dakota, in a final battle to the death during the Knights of the Realm show at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds in 2010.



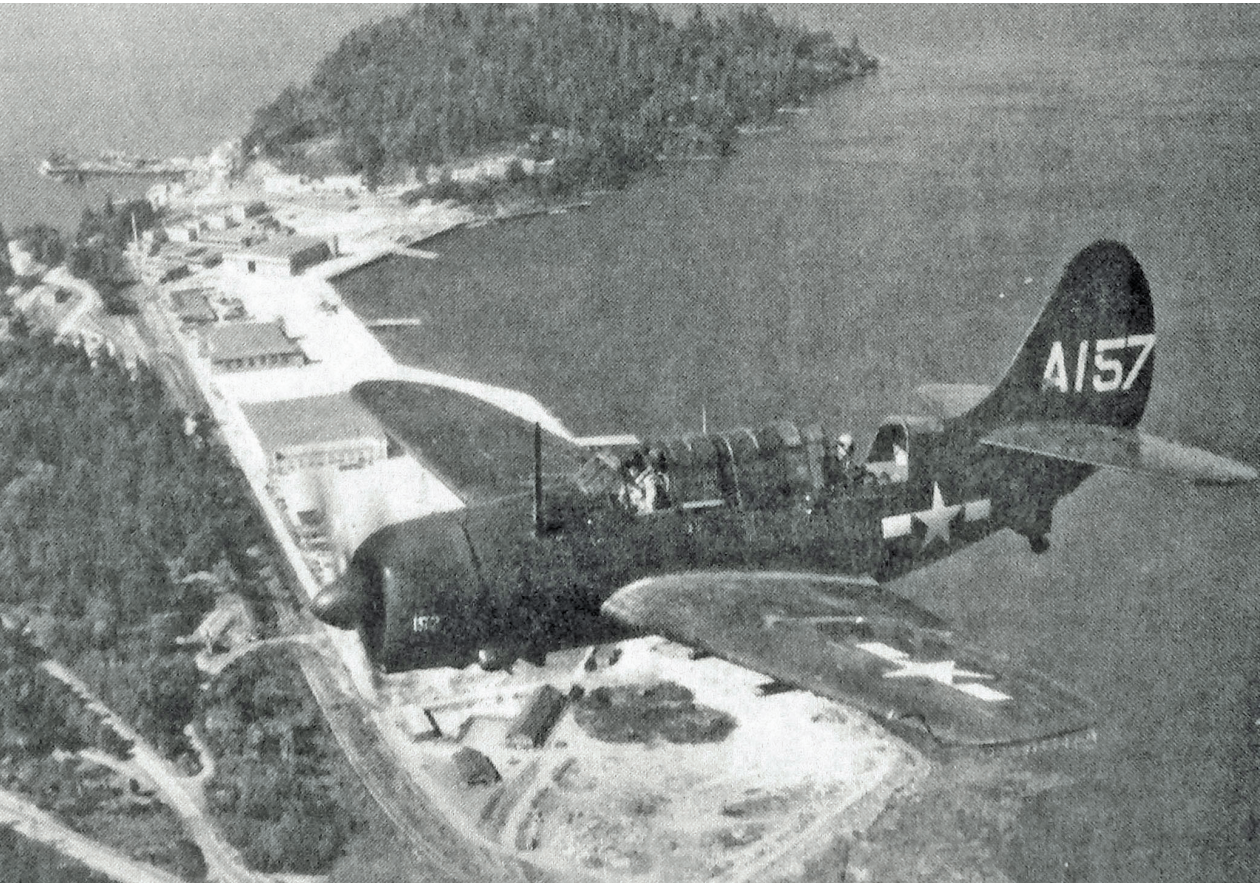
The French knight, Luke Thomas, pierces a small ring in a jousting competition requiring pinpoint accuracy in 2010.



The unloading of a \$250,000 Naselle asphalt plant begins in 1970.



Astoria fisherman George Moskovita shows the 2,000 pound, 6-foot bomb which ruined his net when he and crew pulled it aboard his fishing vessel, Kathy Jo, while fishing off the Washington coast in 1970.



A Helldiver flies over Tongue Point on Aug. 23, 1954.

Day prankster set off the automatic alarm box at the corner of 10th and Commercial streets. No sign of a blaze or the perpetrators of the prank was in evidence when the firemen, with all the city's fire fighting equipment, clanged to a stop at the downtown corner after their special holiday run.

There will be no formal observance of Army day in Astoria tomorrow although official and veterans' organizations will see to it that flags are flying and that the significance of the day is emphasized in the schools. Plans to stage a parade and formal observance could not be carried out. The troops at the three forts of the harbor defenses are the only Army contingents in this area now and they are so busily occupied that not enough of their numbers and equipment could be spared to come to Astoria to put on an impressive parade.

Arrests by city police during the month of March totaled 81 with drunkenness in first place with 23 counts, according to a report on file in Police Chief John Acton's office today. Twelve arrests were made for violation of the basic rule of the road, seven for gambling and four for disorderly conduct. Minor traffic offenses numbered 27.

ITALY, 15TH AAF — Major. Ralph F. Johnson, 25, son of Mr. and Mrs. K.F. Johnson, route 1, Astoria, a pilot and squadron commander in a 15th AAF P-51 Mustang fighter group, was credited with the destruction of a train of German ammunition cars which he was participating in a recent low-level strafing mission over rail lines between Landshut and Landau, Germany. Attacking a string of cars in a low-level pass, Johnson's shots hit one ammunition car and started a string of explosions that resembled the explosions of a string of mammoth fire crackers. Describing the scene he set off, Johnson said, "Rocket explosions filled the air with smoke trailers and huge balls of fire. With each explosion the tracks and train bed just vanished. As I broke away to avoid flying debris, the explosions were continuing down the train." The U.S. Navy's second most lethal carrier fighter pilot, 27-year-old Lt. Cecil E. Harris of Cresbard, South Dakota, who has 24 Japanese planes in his little black book, was married this week in Seaside to Miss Eva Gabriel. Harris is now with a new Navy air group under formation at the naval air station airport in Astoria.