

# MILITARY HERITAGE CHRONICLES — The Final Mission



By CAL APPLEBEE  
Special to the Siuslaw News

When I started writing the monthly Military Heritage Chronicles six years ago, there were multiple goals behind it: we had recently begun what would become a seven-year effort to build the Oregon Coast Military Museum, and it would both bring public awareness and support of our effort, but it would also allow us to immediately fulfill our mission to honor our veterans while educating the public.

And on a personal note, it afforded me the opportunity to combine and enjoy two passions of mine: writing and military heritage.

In those years, I have penned (actually, I use a

mechanical pencil) 60-some articles on a variety of topics covering military heritage.

During this mission we have traveled around Oregon and visited sights where military history has touched our state, such as Ft. Stevens on the north coast, shelled by the Japanese during World War II; Camp Adair in the valley — at one time a massive training base also during WWII; as well as several communities along the coast that served, or still serve, as U.S. Coast Guard Stations, including Siuslaw River Station right here in Florence.

Along the journey we have also met some pretty amazing Americans, such as Bill Carroll — former Florence resident who has since passed on — who kept his promise to his grandfather and brought home a Japanese rifle, now on display at the museum; we learned about central Oregonian Rex Barber, who is credited with downing Japanese Admiral Yamamoto’s Betty Bomber over the Solomon Islands in 1943; and two of my favorites from our cast of characters — Fred and Margaret Thorngate, both now

gone but who were avid supporters of both the museum as well as patriotism here in Florence.

In addition to those stories, we have journeyed through time to the 1940s for WWII; the 1950s for the Korean War and the Cold War; the 1960s for the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs; and the 1970s to cover Vietnam. Along the way we explored an assortment of military customs, traditions and icons, such as service ribbons, Gold Star Flags and even jeeps and jerry cans.

Now the dream has been realized. Thanks to the support and efforts of untold numbers of supporters and volunteers, the Oregon Coast Military Museum is built and open for business. And while the museum will continue to evolve and improve over time, the original purpose for my mission through the Chronicles is now complete.

I have met some amazing folks along the journey, heard some fantastic stories and learned quite a few things myself. And I am certain I have benefited from the experience more than those who

have read my monthly escapades, but I thank you for having joined me along the way, and for the kind words you’ve shared. It has truly been a privilege for me to have made this journey.

I want to thank the Siuslaw News and especially former editor Theresa Baer for not just listening to my hair-brained idea to do the series, but then for allowing me the opportunity.

And I really want to thank our veterans and active service members for your service to our country. I wish the board, volunteers and supporters of the museum all the continued success in your endeavors. I know you will continue well into the future as not just a tribute to our veterans, but also as an asset to our community.

Now, for me, it’s back to the shop and back to work on the current jeep project. Maybe I’ll start writing a series about the nearly 90 cars I’ve owned over time... Hmm.

Learn more about military heritage by visiting the website for the Oregon Coast Military Museum at [www.ocmhm.com](http://www.ocmhm.com).

## Local chorus seeks singers, musicians

The Community Chorus of Florence Oregon (CCFO) will begin recruiting singers and instrumentalists next month for its fall session. Registration for the Dec. 13 concert will begin on Monday, Aug. 24, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., at Cross Roads Church on 10th and Maple streets. It will be immediately followed by the first rehearsal from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The December concert will include a 40-minute sacred work, “Appalachian Winter,” by Joseph Martin and includes recent and centuries old folk music from Appalachia.

Other sacred and secular pieces will be performed, such as, “Oh, Shenandoah,” “I Wonder as I Wander,” “Down in the Valley to Pray,” “In the Bleak Mid-Winter” and a few Moravian folk tunes as well.

Interim director Dr. Paul Guthmuller will again wield the baton for the chorus.

Folk instrumentalists are being sought for many of the pieces. Instruments of interest include, flute, violin, cello, mandolin, guitar, piano, percussion and dulcimer.

Interested musicians can contact Laura Merz at 541-902-8567.

Voices in all sections — soprano, alto, tenor and bass — are invited to join the Chorus. Registration fee is \$60.

Singers of high-school age and older are welcome.

Membership scholarships are available with additional information provided upon registration or by calling membership chairwoman Beth Johnston at 541-991-3585.

Registration forms for returning chorus members and those wishing to join can be found on the CCFO website at [www.communitychorusflorenceor.org](http://www.communitychorusflorenceor.org).

## Johnson art showcases fractionalist technique

The Florence Events Center is offering the public a unique glimpse of fractionalist art by artist Morgan Johnson during the month of August.

This style, developed by Johnson, is a mixture of both cubism and pointillist color theory, and evolved from his experience of media’s use of digital representation.

With the event of computer and television pixilation, the use of colored dots on black and dark background, the artist notes that our everyday lives are presented with “fractured” images, both in printed and moving media. This breaking of line and form into contrasting blocks of color invite a reinterpretation of what defines an image.



COURTESY PHOTO

“Running the Gate” by Morgan Johnson

Johnson attended the Lycee du Universite au Dijon in Dijon, France, receiving a certificate of Foreign Studies in Culture. He then attended the University of California, San Diego, where he received his bachelor’s degree in psychology.

His work includes use of oil, watercolor and other media, palette knife, collage and encaustic painting. His works in impressionism, divisionism, and fractalist painting have been the object of his awards and shows.

“Most works are inspired by the natural world, and man’s manipulation of it, and they attempt to capture the poetic moments of life,” said Johnson, who has completed several murals. Two are located at the UCSD campus in La Jolla, with one a competition design winner for Discovery Hall, Revelle College.

The artist’s books include *Condemned to a Life of Painting Pretty Pictures*; *Trees of Other Colors*,

*Selected Poems*; *Circle of the White Buffalo*; *Future Present*; and *Memories of Aunt Aura*.

His work has appeared in the last four decades in many

juried shows across the nation.

Johnson’s website, [www.morganjart.com](http://www.morganjart.com), offers information on additional artwork and accomplishments.

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