

MILITARY HERITAGE CHRONICLES

Winged cloak and dagger



By CAL APPLEBEE
Special to the Siuslaw News

think in terms of people. However, there have been numerous technological elements over the years that figure prominently in the Cold War as well, and one of those is the iconic spy plane built by Lockheed's legendary Skunk Works: the SR-71 Blackbird.

Work on the series began in the late 1950s with a primary goal of developing an aircraft which could fly faster and higher than the U-2 spy plane then in use, thus keeping it out of harm's way.

Several initial variants were designed and produced which culminated in the SR-71 which first flew in December of 1964.

It reached that target of higher and faster: it flew at speeds in excess of Mach 3 while reaching altitudes of 80,000 feet.

Although this resulted in the plane being able to simply fly higher and faster than any threats, some stealth features were a bonus from its design as well.

The service life of the SR-71 ran from 1967 until its final retirement in 1991, although re-activation was considered during the early and mid '90s due to unease in the Middle East and North Korea.

During its time in service, while none were lost by being shot down, 12 Blackbirds were

lost in accidents, resulting in the death of only one test crew member.

One of the factors contributing to its retirement was the increasing use of satellites to conduct strategic reconnaissance. Another was the introduction UAVs — Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

While both alternatives still require significant dedication of man-power to launch and monitor, they don't put the flight crew in harm's way as with the SR-71, which still required one pilot and one systems specialist. Col. Jay Murphy, USAF (Ret) is one of those pilots who flew the

Blackbird and knows firsthand those dangers — not just hostile threats but also technical failures, such as the loss of both engines while on a Korean reconnaissance mission flying Mach 3 at 74,000 feet.

As a tribute to some of the sophisticated technological systems developed for the aircraft, he was able to get an engine re-started and land in South Korea and survive the harrowing experience.

Now retired and living with his wife Dayle here in Florence, Col. Murphy would go on after his retirement from the Air Force to become the Program Manager at Lockheed

for the Blackbird.

He will be the Oregon Coast Military Museum's speaker at this month's Military Heritage Day at the Florence Municipal Airport on April 22.

He will share with us some of the sophisticated systems of the aircraft, nuances of flying one and experiences while piloting it on missions.

To RSVP for this limited-seating event, visit the museum's new website www.oregoncoastmilitarymuseum.com.

The museum, 2145 Kingwood St., is open Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

When one thinks of Cold War elements like cloak and dagger or spy-vs-spy, we often

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PeaceHealth presents Palliative Care Program

On Thursday, April 20, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., the PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center Palliative Care program will present the 2017 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon, hosted at Best Western Plus Hood River Inn.

Stephen Kerner, DO, and Donna Becker, Medical Social Worker, will be discussing the new palliative care program in Florence and the successes and challenges they have encountered in the community thus far

while implementing the plan.

Palliative care programs serve patients who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and desire alleviation of symptoms — whether social, physical, emotional or spiritual.

Patients can receive palliative care at any time and at any stage of illness, whether terminal or chronic.

Though both palliative care and hospice care programs focus on pain and symptom

management, palliative care programs also include treatment options.

Also this month, the Palliative Care program is hosting a series of classes designed to train prospective volunteers to work directly with palliative care patients in the community.

The trainings will be held at Lane Community College and include an overview of palliative care, the role of the palliative care team and the volunteer, and communication and spirituality.

Patient support volunteer classes will be limited to 18 members, and are held every Monday through May 1, from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

Anyone interested in becoming a palliative care volunteer, or for more information, contact Donna Becker at dbecker@peacehealth.org or call her at 541-902-6734.



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