

Siuslaw News Community Voices

MILITARY CHRONICLES — 21-Gun Salute or 3-Rifle Volley



By CAL APPLEBEE
Special to the Siuslaw News

In a prior edition, we talked about the military tradition of posting of colors by an Honor

Guard or Color Guard, and promised to come back to explore the 21-Gun Salute vs. Three Rifle Volley traditions.

Though often confused by observers, particularly in the movies but also publicly-viewed ceremonies, there is a distinction. Adding to that confusion may be well publicized public figure funerals, such as President Ronald Reagan, who received both, for different reasons and by different people, using different weapons, during different times at the same ceremony.

Are we confused yet?

And just like with the Honor Guard and posting of colors, the traditions date way back in histo-

ry.

The naval tradition of the original gun salute dates back to the British Navy in the 14th Century, where it was intended as either a greeting, or to honor the dead, by showing their weapons were no longer hostile, according to some sources; or, to show shore batteries and forts that the ships were no longer a threat, according to other sources.

I guess that pretty much means the same thing in warfare.

Some variations evolved that included a combination of guns firing from both ship and from shore, as a salute from a ship often resulted in the expending most of their powder which ren-

dered them powerless. But I guess that may have been part of the point?

In 1842, the United States established the Presidential Salute at 21 guns, and in 1890 it was established as the National Salute.

Today it is fired in honor of the President as a 21-gun Salute, while gun salutes of less numbers are rendered to civilian leaders and lower-ranking military leaders based on their rank.

That criteria can be found in U.S. Army Regulations, or in the U.S. Navy Regulations.

It is interesting to note the distinction between the term “guns” vs. “volley.”

The three-rifle volley consists of no less than three and no more than seven rifles, each firing three volleys in honor of the fallen.

Even though seven rifles fired in three volleys equals 21, it does not equate to a 21 Gun Salute.

Dating way back to the Roman era, the “three-rifle” volley was originally intended to signal the end of battle for that day so the fallen could be cleared from the battle field.

Today, the three-rifle volley is performed by an Honor Guard during military and some law enforcement funerals. Every honorably discharged veteran is entitled to this tradition, and a

part of that ceremony may also include placing three spent cartridges into the folds of the flag presented to the family, signifying Duty, Honor and Sacrifice.

Regardless of when and where either of these traditions emanate from, the important thing to remember is that they honor those who have served and sacrificed for our nation.

They earned it; they deserve it.

You can learn more about military heritage by visiting the Oregon Coast Military Museum (OCMM) website at www.oregoncoastmilitarymuseum.com or visit the museum, 2145 Kingwood St., Thursday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

NATURAL PERSPECTIVE — Under the mistletoe



By EMILY J. UHRIG, PhD
Special to the Siuslaw News

The holidays are here and folks are busily renewing seasonal traditions, often involving various sorts of greenery to brighten winter days. The Christmas tree is arguably the star of the show, but boughs of holly, poinsettias and mistletoe are also classic holiday symbols.

During the rest of the year, these plants are mostly overlooked despite their interesting lives. Mistletoe, for example, is much more than an excuse for a holiday kiss.

Somewhat incongruous with

its reputation for holiday romance, mistletoe is actually a parasite that makes its living off other plants. The root of a germinating mistletoe seed penetrates the bark of its host tree, tapping into the tree’s systems for transporting water and nutrients.

The mistletoe is then able to survive on resources commandeered from the host. In some circumstances, parts of the host tree may die from being deprived of sufficient resources.

Worldwide, many plants, frequently occurring in tropical

locations, are considered mistletoes.

Diverse in appearance, they often bear showy flowers and little or no resemblance to Christmas mistletoe. Oregon is home to a number of native mistletoes that can be categorized as either “true” or dwarf species. True mistletoes, those of holiday fame, frequently parasitize oak trees and are easily seen this time of year as clumps of leafy evergreen foliage in otherwise bare trees.

Dwarf mistletoes — smaller, less conspicuous and lacking leaves — generally parasitize conifers like fir and pine. Such

economically valuable timber can be damaged considerably by dwarf mistletoe infection as it reduces the trees’ growth and increases their susceptibility to disease.

Despite adverse effects on host trees, mistletoes are important ecosystem components that interact with many wildlife species. One outcome of mistletoe infection, for instance, is formation of so-called witches’ brooms, abnormally dense clumps of small branches originating from the infection site on the host tree.

These brooms make excellent homes for small mammals and birds. Indeed, threatened species

like the marbled murrelet and spotted owl often nest in the protection of mistletoe brooms.

Thus, challenges arise regarding how to mitigate potential mistletoe damage to timber harvests while maintaining important habitat.

Its long history as a holiday icon notwithstanding, the biology of mistletoe is rather underappreciated and perhaps not even fully understood in some respects.

So, if you bring a piece of this parasitic plant into your home for the holidays, remember that it’s more than just for kissing under.

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Blanket Drive for the homeless

Share the Warmth

This winter, The Siuslaw News is having a **blanket drive** to help the homeless in our community. Please help us by donating new or gently used and clean blankets to the homeless. You may **drop off** your donated items at The Siuslaw News **148 Maple St.** in Historic Old Town Florence. **Donations accepted until December 29th**

Need more info? Call us at 541-997-3441 or visit our website, thesiuslawnews.com

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

**Richard Huff
Senior**

WRESTLING

Siuslaw H.S. Wrestling Highlight: Siuslaw Viking senior grappler Richard Huff is this week’s Athlete of the Week. The 126 pounder finished 3rd place in this past weekend’s North Bend Classic, winning 5 of his 6 matches over the weekend and is now 12-3. Huff is the number 2 seed in his weight class.

Honorable Mention Madison Reynolds BASKETBALL

Honorable mention goes to junior Viking Basketball player Madison Reynolds. Madison was named to the All-Tournament Team this past weekend for her rebounding skills with 29 total rebounds in three tournament games at the Les Schwab Eagle Booster Classic.

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