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Offbeat Oregon History

Six Central Oregon picnickers were only victims of balloon bombs

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

One sunny Saturday morning, a few months before the Second World War came to an end, the Rev. Archie Mitchell and his wife Elyse filled their car up with children and headed into the woods for a picnic lunch.

Archie was the pastor of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in the town of Bly, a tiny town about halfway between Klamath Falls and Lakeview. The kids were the children of friends and fellow church members. The Mitchells' own child was on the way; Elyse was five months pregnant. It was May 5, 1945. The war was still

going on, and Americans were still dying on battlefields; but everyone knew the end was coming soon. The Germans were on the brink of capitulation (they would surrender two days later), and the Japanese were holding out from sheer stubbornness.

The early years of the war had been fearful times for Oregonians who lived along the coast, where the Japanese submarine I-25 had busied itself reminding West Coast residents that should the war in the Pacific go poorly, they'd be on the front lines. But that had been 1942. By now, even the Coast Guard beach patrols had been discontinued in most places. The Japanese were in no position to consider invading Oregon, and everyone knew it. They were too busy trying to slow the torrent of B-29s that was daily pouring megatons of high explosives into their cities.

As for the Mitchells, living as they

did deep in the barely-populated heart of Lake County 200 highway miles from the nearest beach, it likely never entered their mind that they might be faced with enemy action. It certainly wasn't in their thoughts on that sunny spring morning as Archie drove them up into the hills to their picnic spot.

They were nearly there when Elyse started feeling carsick. So she opted to hike through the woods to their picnic spot while Archie drove the car there, following the meandering roadway. The children — 12-year-old Sherman Shoemaker and Jay Clifford; 13-year-old Eddie Engen and Dick Patzke; and 11-year-old Joan Patzke — accompanied Elyse.

"As I got out of my car to bring the lunch, the others were not far away and called to me they had found something that looked like a balloon," Mitchell later told a UPI reporter.

It was 11-year-old Joan who'd spotted it, that strange-looking white thing lying on the ground nearby. The six of them gathered around it, tugging at it,

trying to figure out what it was.

And then, of course — just as the suspicious Archie was shouting to them not to touch it — the peaceful spring morning was transformed into a grisly scene from a battlefield.

Archie ran to the scene. Everyone was dead. Everyone had, it appeared, died instantly.

As he frantically searched through the mutilated little bodies looking for some faint sign of life, a pair of Forest Service rangers arrived; they'd been close enough to hear the explosion and had raced to the scene. They covered the bodies and took Mitchell back to Bly, leaving his car behind.

And they confirmed Archie's suspicions: his family and friends' children had been killed by a balloon bomb.

Archie had heard rumors about balloon bombs. He said those rumors had been in his mind when he shouted to his wife not to touch this one. The rumors were that the Japanese had started launching balloons made of paper from Japan, with bombs dangling beneath,

to ride the high-elevation air currents across the Pacific Ocean. When they arrived over the U.S., they were supposed to release their bombs and self-destruct. Several of them had been found, and several others had been spotted self-destructing.

But there had been nothing but rumors, because the U.S. government was keen to keep the success of the balloon bombing operation from the Japanese. The enemy, they knew, didn't really know if the balloons were working. So they kept all mention of the program out of the newspapers.

By the time of the Bly explosion, that silence had worked. The Japanese, after months of monitoring West Coast newspapers without hearing anything, had given up the program.

But that silence had been a costly one for the children of Bly.

The newspapers had to report something, so they simply announced that the deaths had been due to an unknown

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Nuts: An important component of an anti-diabetes diet

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Complications from diabetes result from constant elevations in blood glucose, which damage the blood vessels and other tissues. Excess glucose in the bloodstream results in the formation of Advanced Glycation End Products (AGEs)—products formed when sugars react with and consequently damage proteins or



fats in the body's tissues, especially the blood vessels. AGEs are produced at an accelerated rate in diabetes and contribute to complications such as impaired wound healing, diabetic nephropathy and atherosclerosis. In addition to the AGE produced in the body due to excess glucose, some can also come from the diet. Fried foods, meats and dry cooked starchy foods (roasted/fried potatoes, bread, crackers, cookies, muffins and other baked goods, cold cereals, etc.) are high in AGEs.

In designing a diet for type 2 diabetics, we aim to limit after-meal increases in blood glucose and to avoid dangerous AGEs by choosing major calorie sources

with a low glycemic load (GL)—foods that provoke relatively small increases in blood glucose. An important point here is to choose high nutrient, low GL foods, not just any low GL food—this is where some conventional diabetes diets fall short. Meat is a low GL food, but higher meat consumption is associated with reduced lifespan and increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes; the diabetes risk is likely due to weight gain and AGE content. A diabetic diet emphasizing meat sacrifices long-term health for short-term glycemic control. Whole grain intake is indeed associated with reduced risk of diabetes, probably due to fiber content. A low-fat vegan diet emphasizing these foods in place of refined carbohydrates has shown some success with improving glycemic control. However, these diets tend to increase triglyceride levels (a risk factor for heart disease), and cooked grains and starches are not ideal calorie sources for diabetics because they still have a significant GL, as you can see below:

- White potato: 29
- White rice: 23
- Whole grain (brown rice): 18
- Beans (black or kidney beans): 7
- Legumes (lentils): 5
- Nuts (cashews): 3
- Beans and nuts (and seeds)

are high in nutrients and low in GL and are far more appropriate than grains and meat as major calorie sources for diabetics.

Beans and legumes are higher in fiber and resistant starch than whole grains with a lower GL. (To read more about why beans are superior to other carbohydrate sources for diabetics, read my book *The End of Diabetes*.)

Regular consumption of nuts and seeds has well documented cardiovascular benefits, including cholesterol lowering, antioxidant activity, improved endothelial function and reduced risk of sudden cardiac death and coronary heart disease.

In addition to reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, nuts have a number of properties that make them a favorable food for diabetics. Nuts are a high-nutrient source of plant protein, fiber, antioxidants, phytosterols and minerals. Nuts provoke a minimal glycemic response, which helps to prevent post-meal hyperglycemia, hyperinsulinemia and AGE production. They also help to reduce the GL of an entire meal—almonds have been found to decrease glycemic and insulin response of a carbohydrate-rich meal while reducing oxidative stress. Nuts aid in weight maintenance—important since excess weight is the primary risk factor for diabetes. Despite their calorie density,

greater nut consumption is associated with lower body weight, potentially due to appetite-suppression from healthy fats. Nuts have anti-inflammatory effects that may help to prevent insulin resistance.

In a recent study HbA1C, an indicator of long term glycemic control, was measured in diabetics consuming either 2.5 ounces/day of mostly raw mixed nuts or an equivalent number of calories in a muffin—a cooked starchy food (the muffin had the same amount of fiber and calories as the nuts). HbA1C levels were lower in the nut group, suggesting long term protection from hyperglycemia when replacing carbohydrate foods with nuts.

This new data cements the results of previous observational studies that have found inverse relationships between nut consumption and diabetes. For example, the Nurses' Health Study found a 27 percent reduced risk of diabetes in nurses who ate five or more servings of nuts per week. Among nurses who already had diabetes, this same quantity reduced the risk of heart disease by 47 percent.

Nuts are an important part of a diabetes-reversal diet, along with green vegetables, beans and low-sugar fruits. In a recent study on type 2 diabetics following this diet, we found that 90

percent of participants were able to come off all diabetic medications, and the mean HbA1c after one year was 5.8 percent, which is in the non-diabetic (normal) range. Nuts, seeds, beans and vegetables not only keep glucose levels in check but promote long-term health as well.

In a study on type 2 diabetics following the diet-style I outline in "The End of Diabetes," we found that 90 percent of participants were able to come off all diabetic medications, and the mean HbA1c after one year was 5.8 percent, which is in the non-diabetic (normal) range. All people with type 2 (and also type 1) diabetes should read this book. In the case of a type two diabetic, they could resolve their diabetes completely and in the case of a type one, they could reduce their insulin needs by more than 50 percent, which could prevent much suffering and a premature death.

Dr. Fuhrman is a #1 New York Times best-selling author and a family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com. Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to newsquestions@drfuhrman.com. The full reference list for this article can be found at DrFuhrman.com.

Cottage Grove Sentinel

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(USP 133880)
Subscription Mail Rates in Lane and Portions of Douglas Counties:
Ten Weeks\$9.10
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e-Edition year.....\$36.00

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Periodicals postage paid at Cottage Grove, Oregon.
Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 35, Cottage Grove, OR 97424.

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary. If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words.

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