Robert Patrick Bishop Biography

Pre-WSC Years

Robert "Bob" Patrick Bishop was born on May 5, 1923, to Andrew and Bertha Standahl Bishop in Tensed, Idaho. Andrew was a timber laborer, while Bertha was a public school teacher.[1] Today, Tensed, located in Benewah County in north central Idaho, is home to roughly 123 people. The town got its name because its founders wanted to honor Belgian Catholic priest Pierre Jean de Smet, but Desmet was already in use. The founding members decided the solution would be to spell Desmet backward. Alas, the official entry of the name spelled Temsed with an "n" instead of an "m," and no one bothered to correct the error.[2] The city is among the Coeur d'Alene Reservation groups and is mainly accessed through U.S. Route 95.

Inhabited by the Coeur d'Alene people for generations, during the 1920s, north central Idaho was home to a burgeoning lumber empire. The Potlatch Lumber Company was incorporated in 1903, with Charles Weyerhauser named as its first president. In 1904, the building of the world's most prominent white pine mill began in Potlatch, and with it began the emergence of a company town. The mill began operating in the fall of 1906 under the general managership of William Deary. While the Bishops didn't live in the company town that would one day be incorporated as Potlatch, Andrew's living was tied to the lumber business, and he worked for the subsidiary W.L. Boutilier Logging Company in Emida, Idaho.[3]

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[1] 1930 United States Federal Census for Robert P Bishop, *Ancestry.com,* https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/10092124:6224 (Accessed July 10, 2023).

[2] Brian Holmes, "Get to know Idaho: The mysterious town of Tensed," *ktvb.com,* 08/14/2020, https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/local/208/get-to-know-idaho-the-mysterious-town-of-tensed/277-a1f63b3f-b9d4-4d75-8567-91ee1b30532b (Accessed July 10, 2023).

[3] "Potlatch Lumber Company," University of Idaho Special Collections and Archives, https://www.lib.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Manuscripts/mg135.htm (Accessed July 10, 2023); U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942 for Andrew Bishop, *Ancestry.com,* https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/10284602:1002 (Accessed July 10, 2023).

Bishop attended Tekoa High School in Tekoa, Washington, a thirteen-mile commute, where he graduated at age 17 in 1940.[4]

WSC Experience

Bishop attended Washington State College (WSC) from September 1940 to February 1943 as a speech major.[5] He was a member of the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity.[6] Bishop also belonged to the Intercollegiate Knights (IK), a national service organization founded in 1919 by a group of male students from the University of Washington. The first national convention of the organization was held at WSC in 1924. The IK chapter at WSU, known as the Cougar Guard, existed from 1922 through 1985. The name comes from one of the first duties of the IKs, which was to guard the cougar mascot and other trophies gained by the college. A second duty was to ring the victory bell after each Cougar victory. The victory bell was finally fixed atop College Hall in the 1930s; after being moved to several locations and rung by the IKs until the 1970s, safety concerns stopped the practice. In 1998 the bell was removed and placed in front of the Alumni Centre, where it is again rung after Cougar victories.[7]

Bishop's draft card shows he was 5'11" tall and weighed 145 pounds. He had brown hair and blue eyes.[8]

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[4] C. James Quann, *WSU Military Veterans: Heroes and Legends* (Spokane: Tornado Creek Publications, 2005).

[5] Quann, *WSU Military Veterans,*

[6] Bishop in the U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-2016, *ancestry.com,* https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1436783443:1265 (Accessed June 20, 2023).

[7] "Guide to the Intercollegiate Knights – Pullman Chapter – Papers 1941-1985 Archives 322, Washington State Universities Libraries Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), 2016, http://ntserver1.wsulibs.wsu.edu/masc/finders/ua322.htm.

[8] Robert Patrick Bishop in the U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947, *ancestry.com,* https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/36785291:2238 (Accessed June 20, 2023).

\Wartime Service and Death

Bishop joined the United States Army Air Corps and was inducted at Salt Lake City on February 28, 1943. He did his basic training at Fresno Army Air Base, which had served as a relocation station for Japanese Americans earlier in the war. According to his father, Bishop attended the Eastern Oregon College of Education in La Grande, Oregon, after his basic training graduation. He received three months of schooling with a "college training detachment there."[9] Bishop traveled back to California for further training in Santa Ana, where he was classified to receive further training as a bombardier. He also received training as a gunner in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Bishop entered bombardier school in December 1943 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant at Carlsbad, New Mexico, on April 1, 1944.[10] He was sent to Muroc Army Air Base, a small enclave within present-day Edwards Air Force Base in California. Throughout the war years, B-24s "thundered through the Muroc skies and P-38s strafed the targets on the range" as bomber crews and fighter pilots prepared to do battle overseas.[11]

Bishop was a bombardier on a B-24 Liberator. The B-24 was employed in operations in every combat theater during World War II. It had great range, and the airplane was suited for long, over-water missions in the Pacific Theater. More than 18,000 Liberators were produced during the war.[12] Bishop's B-24 crashed in the Southern California desert on a routine training flight five miles north of Boron, California, on July 2, 1944.[13] He died instantly.

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[9] Letter from Andrew Bishop to Mrs. T.S. Meade, Secretary to Dr. Holland, Washington State College, August 23, 1948,

[10] "Crash is Fatal to Tensed Man," *The Spokesman-Review,* July 4, 1944.

[11] "Edwards' History," *Edwards Air Force Base, Edwards.af.mil,* https://www.edwards.af.mil/About/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/393907/edwards-history/#:~ (accessed June 23, 2024).

[12] "Consolidated B-24D Liberator," National Museum of the United States Air Force, *nationalmuseum.af.mil,* https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196286/consolidated-b-24d-liberator/ (accessed June 23, 2024).

[13] "Crash is Fatal to Tensed Man," *The Spokesman-Review,* July 4, 1944.

Postwar Legacy

Bishop was buried in Forest Cemetery in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Members of the Air Corps from Geiger Field in Spokane served as pallbearers and conducted "graveside services with a firing squad."[14] He is memorialized in a monument to Coeur d'Alene community members who gave their lives during World War II and the WSU Veterans Memorial.

[14] "Lt. Robert P. Bishop," *Spokane Chronicle,* July 6, 1944.