Malin airport to be renamed in honor of pilot

Ehle Reber, World War II B-17 pilot, shot down by German fighter

By Lee Juillerat
Herald-News Columnist

MALIN — Malin’s own Ehle Reber is getting recognition. Ehle Reber, who was raised in Malin, died Jan. 13, 1943, during World War II when the B-17 bomber he was piloting was shot down by German fighter planes over German-occupied France.

Reber was one of three finalists when officials were naming the then-new air base in Klamath Falls in the 1960s. Those honors went to L.D. David Kingrey, a U.S. Army Air Corps pilot who received the Medal of Honor when his plane was shot down falling in 1944 over Ploesti, Romania. A street at Kingrey was named in his honor.

Honor Reber

Last week, at the urging of Malin City Council member Stan Parson and Ryan Bab硶chek, president of the Malin Historical Society and an officer at Kingsley Field, the Council voted to rename the Malin Municipal Airport as Ehle Reber Municipal Airport.

“He was the guy every- body wanted to be,” said Bab nhuem, noting there are still people who remember Reber.

Born in 1900

Reber, who was born in 1900 in nearby Stier, “still, moved with his family to Malin in about 1921, where his father, John, started and managed the Malin Cheese and Produce Company. In the 1940s on the West, John Reber was a county commissioner.

According to Bab nhuem, as a youth, Reber competed with his older brother, Clayton, to see who could finish their morning milk deliveries the fastest. Later, at Malin High, he served as student body president and vice president, was editor of the school newspaper, starred in the senior class play, and most notably, was a four-sport, all-star athlete.

On the map

“It was Ehle who would put this tiny school on the statewide map,” Bab nhuem said of Reber. He was the team’s star quarterback, the basketball team’s point guard and the only small-school player on the Junior Legion baseball team.

“The was excellence in track and field that made people around the state stand up and take notice,” Bab nhuem said. Reber set a state record in the long jump that stood for nearly half a century. After graduating from Malin High in 1927, he attended the University of Oregon, where he competed in track for four years under legendary coach Bill Hayward, serving as team captain his senior year.

Joining the Air Corps

Reber joined the Army Air Corps after graduating from Oregon in 1941. After flight school, he earned his wings in 1942 and was assigned as a B-17 bomber pilot of the Jerry Jinx. He and his crew flew many missions deep over German-occupied Europe during as early as when the Flying Fortresses were unaccompanied by Allied fighter planes.

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On the 10th, 1949, over the New York Times Magazine, Bab nhuem and his crew were featured. Days later, however, while returning to England from a raid over France, German fighter planes shot out two of the Jinx’s four engines, causing the plane to crash.

Recalling the crash of the Jerry Jinx

The “Jerry Jinx” was featured on the cover of The New York Times Magazine, a week before its total mission in 1943.

The Jerry Jinx was shot down on Oct. 10, 1949, over the North Sea near England.

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