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## Oregonian receives Austrian military honor

By Paul Haist

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Fred Rosenbaum, a retired Oregon Air National Guard brigadier general and leading Oregon businessman, accepted the Republic of Austria's Grand Decoration of Honor in Silver March 30 in a ceremony in his honor at the Museum of Military History in Vienna, Austria.

The decoration, presented by Gen. Roland Ertl, Austria's chief of defense staff and that nation's highest ranking military official, was in recognition of Rosenbaum's significant contribution to the Austrian military and to closer ties between Austria and the United States.

In presenting the decoration, Ertl also made note of Rosenbaum's historic ties to Austria.

Rosenbaum, who was born in Vienna, was evacuated from Austria at the outset of the Holocaust on a Kindertransport to England. His parents followed later and the family eventually immigrated to the United States where Rosenbaum subsequently enlisted in the Army and fought in the South Pacific during World War II.

About 12 years ago, the Pentagon asked the Oregon Guard to serve as a liaison agency to the Austrian army in an exchange-training program under NATO auspices. Rosenbaum was one of three senior officers assigned the task of working with the Austrians.

He said the primary focus of the relationship was to exchange training information. Austrian soldiers came here for aircraft training. U.S. troops traveled to Austria for mountain training. Rosenbaum also provided consultative services on the role of the military in a democracy.

In recounting Rosenbaum's personal history and his role working with the Austrian military, Gen. Ertl said that Rosenbaum impressed his Austrian hosts "not only with his dedication in the negotiations, but also with his comprehensive education, his clear principles, his humanist attitude and his profound confidence in God, something that he shares with friends across the borders of religious denominations."

Ertl made reference to "the shadows of the past," a euphemism for Austria's participation in the Third Reich.

"I am convinced," said the Austrian general, "that world history would be different if Austria and its armed forces had offered resistance in 1938."

On March 9, 1938, Austria was annexed by Nazi Germany in what is known as the Anschluss or connection, a move widely welcomed in Austria at the time.

Ertl added, "We have been given the opportunity to overcome the past, and to have a nightmare of human aberration be followed by a better world in which this celebration is possible."

Ertl pinned Austria's Grand Decoration of Honor around Rosenbaum's neck.

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