

PRESS RELEASE

May 5, 2010

Crestview Public Library

WWII Movie Poster Exhibit at Crestview Library through June

In 1949, actor Dean Jagger toiled south on S.R. 85 on a bicycle, rounded Blueberry Curve just north of Crestview, and then paused by a white board fence to gaze fondly at what in the film was a former American air base in England, but was really the site of Crestview Nursery today.

It was the opening scene of the 20th Century-Fox film "Twelve O' Clock High" shot extensively in Okaloosa County. (Our northwest Florida pine trees can even be spotted in a couple scenes!) Many air base scenes were shot at Duke Field.

On Feb. 14, 1950, the film had its regional screening at the Fox Theatre, now being renovated on Main Street in downtown Crestview. A second screening happened shortly after the first: As each reel unspooled, said local historian and News Bulletin photographer Ann Spann, a courier trotted it down Main Street to the Eglin Theatre, where the next screening commenced.

Crestview resident J.T. Garrett got to see filming up close and personal. At age 22 and fresh from serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he was star Gregory Peck's stand-in. "It was a once in a lifetime experience," Garrett told Spann in a July 2008 interview with the News Bulletin.

For most Americans, World War II lasted from December 1941 until September 1945, a bit less than four years. Beginning with "Twelve O' Clock High," the first major post-war film about the war, the conflict transferred from the battlefield to the movie screen, where it has been waged ever since.

Just in time for these VE Day celebrations, an exhibition of original film posters from World War II films went on display at the Crestview Public Library. The exhibition is culled from the private collections of News Bulletin Arts & Entertainment editor Brian Hughes and Dallas film poster collector Clyde Ponder, who say their loan and exhibit of the materials is a tribute to the men and women who helped liberate occupied Europe.

"This isn't just an exhibit of posters from some of our favorite films," said Hughes. "It's also a salute to people like our respective dads, who as U.S. soldiers helped bring the war to a victorious conclusion, and Clyde's mom, a German whose family actively resisted the Nazis."

The poster exhibition, which includes one-sheets from Ponder's favorite World War II film, "Where Eagles Dare," and Hughes' favorite, "Kelly's Heroes," is free and is open during regular library hours through June. The library is located at 1445 Commerce Drive behind the Post Office in north Crestview. Call the library at 682-4432 for further information.

Sandra Dreaden
Reference Librarian
Robert L. F. Sikes Public Library
1445 Commerce Drive
Crestview, FL 32539
850.682.4432
sdreaden@okaloosa.lib.fl.us
www.cityofcrestview.org/library.htm