



Contributed photo

William E. Morse of Portland, the stepfather of Leonard Morse of La Grande, served in the U.S. Army during World War I. He departed from Newport News, Virginia on a troop ship to Europe in October 1918 arriving in Brest, France. He was a private in Battery D, 48th Artillery.



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Donald "Biden" Tippett, served in the U.S. Navy in World War II aboard the USS Gallatin. The USS Gallatin launched in October 1944. Tippett is a resident at Alpine House in Joseph.



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Gladys Huffman, 98, served in the World War II Royal Air Force. She was born and raised in England. She holds photos of herself, with her two brothers Victor Favager and Reginald Favager, who also served in the Royal Air Force.

# Honoring our VETERANS

The Observer staff

*The Observer staff wanted to use today's newspaper issue to honor the veterans in our region who served our country. We would like to wish all those who have served a happy Veterans Day and thank you for your service.*



Right: Ray Milligan, 99, and his wife Bea, 97, hold photos of themselves when they were younger with Ray in his Navy uniform. Ray is holding a photo of the ship he served on the USS Stormes. Ray and Bea have been married for more than 75 years.

## MCDOWELL

*Continued from Page 1A*  
when he got to the end of boot camp, literally two days before graduating, his commanding officers had him take a series of tests and speak to a psychologist. McDowell didn't know it at the time, but his superiors were evaluating him for work in the intelligence office for the Department of Defense.

He said they explained the assignment as "working with snipers and reconnaissance Marines and special forces (and) going to headquarters and analyzing (data). They said I wouldn't be in the field all the time."

After receiving clearance, McDowell went into more training — and loved it. He said he was even good at it.

"My (training) was different," he said. "I had a (college) degree and I learned (the aspects of the) Intelligence really well."

It took nearly a year of training, which included assignments in the Pentagon. Then he was sent to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he was responsible for learning about weather, terrain and the enemy.

"You have to make sure the corroborating forces have everything they need to know (for a mission)," McDowell said. "You fuse all the intelligence together. You have to make sure the guys who kick the door down have everything they need to know (to complete their mission successfully)."

That can be anything from what kind of vehicles to use and what gear is needed to what the building looks like and if the weather will have any impact on the mission.

Regarding the enemy, McDowell said he had to study their doctrine, their strategies and the equipment they had. He had to know about the entire network plus the important individuals.

"It's a sophisticated asymmetric warfare," he said. "You're coordinating with all the different departments. I was part of a task force and our group had access to every intelligence agency there was."



Contributed photo

Brian McDowell worked for the Department of Defense for 15 years as a Marine. He now works at Eastern Oregon University.

McDowell served for 15 years at the Department of Defense field. He still is called to help sometimes, but mostly in an advisory role.

He said the most challenging part during his service was the shift in national strategy.

"We went from winning wars to managing the risks," he said. "In my opinion, if we're going to employ military forces, then the objective should be about winning the war — only to the point that you need to, not excessively. There's always going to be some politics involved, but I saw a major shift."

He said it wasn't under a specific administration — he saw it under multiple presidents — it was more of a broader United States political shift.

"It was people in the military thinking more politically than they have historically," he said. "It wasn't just one party or president. It was the posture in the national command structure that just started creeping in."

On the other side, though, the best part was knowing he was making a difference. He was slaying dragons.

"Some of the decisions I have been able to make have been nationally impactful," he said.

"It was also quiet. I love that no one knows who Brian McDowell is. Some people in Washington, D.C., do, but you do meaning-

ful work and you don't have the external visibility."

He said he didn't need the recognition.

"It's the part of the knight that attracts people — you're saving the ladies, saving the castle and helping people. It's the act itself — the chivalry. It was about doing what it takes to be that person. That's the reward."

McDowell said he has zero regrets about his service.

"It was a fantastic career. I wouldn't have picked it for myself. There wasn't a better place to have been, though. I loved it. I still do."

Now, McDowell works at Eastern Oregon University for Business Oregon, a state program designed to help businesses in Oregon and boost the infrastructure of cities. He moved to Union from Portland more than a year ago.

McDowell majored in finance and law, he said. He owned a financial advising business to provide small business consulting in Portland.

As the saying goes, "Once a Marine, always a Marine," and McDowell is no exception.

Although his recent bid for Union City Council was not successful, he will continue to do meaningful work for his community and for Oregon.

There are more dragons to slay, after all.



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