

## OREGON IN BRIEF

From wire reports

### Union Pacific train with liquefied gas derailed in Portland

PORTLAND — Union Pacific says two locomotives and three tank cars containing liquefied petroleum gas derailed in Portland, striking and cracking a support beam to an overpass providing access to a major industrial area.

The company says there are no injuries and none of the tanks leaked in the derailment that happened at about 9:20 a.m. Saturday. Crews are working to get the locomotives and tank cars back on the tracks.

Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesman Dylan Rivera said North Going Street is closed until city engineers determine how much damage the overpass sustained. It's not clear when the road might reopen.

The road provides access to Swan Island, a major industrial area of the city with many workers.

Rivera says a small private road is being used to access Swan Island.

### Temporary fix made at hatchery to prevent salmon die-off

TRAIL — Workers at Cole Rivers Hatchery in western Oregon have put in new plastic water piping as a temporary fix to prevent another massive die-off of Rogue River spring chinook salmon eggs.

The (Medford) Mail Tribune reported in a story on Friday that the work is intended to prevent a repeat of a fungal outbreak in December that killed 1.2 million spring chinook eggs and young fish called fry.

The work is a stop-gap effort until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fixes the water system and worn-out elements at the 46-year-old facility.

Officials say the die-off in December was caused by rusting metal pipes and bacteria in sediment that accumulated for years in the piping.

### Two dead after vehicles collide in northwestern Oregon

MOLALLA — Officials in northwestern Oregon say the driver of a Mini Cooper and her male passenger died when the vehicle collided with a Dodge Ram pickup.

The Clackamas County Sheriff's Office said the collision occurred at about 4:30 p.m. Friday near Molalla.

Authorities say the woman died at the scene and the man was flown to an area hospital where he died.

Police say the driver of the truck appeared to be uninjured.

Police say the initial investigation indicates the driver of the Mini Cooper was at fault for the crash.

Names haven't been released.

### Lawsuit: Target lied about child porn on customer's phone

PORTLAND — The family of a deceased Oregon man has filed a \$1 million lawsuit against Target contending a worker made up a false story about child pornography on the man's mobile phone that led to his arrest and eventual death due to a heart attack caused by stress.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reported that the family of 43-year-old Jeffrey Buckmeyer filed the lawsuit last week in Multnomah County Circuit Court.

Authorities seized Buckmeyer's electronic devices after Buckmeyer visited a Target store in Portland in July 2018 for help with his phone, and an employee reported seeing naked girls about 10 years old.

But authorities returned the phone and other electronic devices several months later after finding no such images. Buckmeyer died a few months after that in April.

Target spokeswoman Danielle Schumann declined to comment.

### Man arrested after dump truck drops gravel on interstate

PORTLAND — A 50-year-old man police say used a dump truck to drop loads of gravel on Interstate 5 in Portland and attempted to elude police in the vehicle has been taken into custody.

KOIN-TV reported that Craig Ferrero was arrested Friday on suspicion of criminal mischief, reckless driving, reckless endangering and unlawful use of a vehicle.

Dozens of police officers pursued the dump truck that left the freeway. It finally stopped on Southwest Barbur Boulevard after spike strips shredded its tires.

It's not clear from online records if Ferrero has an attorney.

### Lawsuit over shooting death of Finicum dismissed

PORTLAND — A federal lawsuit related to the shooting of rancher Robert LaVoy Finicum has been dismissed.

Oregon Public Broadcasting reports the civil suit was filed in U.S. District Court of Oregon by Ryan Payne, Shawna Cox and others who were associated with the Bundy family's 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

They claimed that FBI agents, Oregon State Police and other officials violated their civil rights by using excessive force and "ambushing" them on the day Finicum was shot and killed.

Chief District Court Judge Michael Mosman dismissed all counts in the lawsuit Friday, saying "It's time to put a fork in this case."

The lawsuit was filed in January 2018.

### Judge halts 50% pay hike for blueberry pickers for now

OLYMPIA, Washington — A federal judge has blocked the government from imposing a 50% wage hike for blueberry pickers.

The Olympian reports U.S. District Court Judge Salvador Mendoza Jr. temporarily stopped the Department of Labor from implementing a July order raising wages for pickers.

Zirkle Fruit southeast of Seattle sued to prevent the government from starting the new wage structure.

The government notified Zirkle of the new pay rate on July 24, a day after the increase actually took effect.

Zirkle said it was blindsided by the mid-harvest pay hike. The blueberry harvest began in June and continues through September.

### Two killed in small plane crash near Hood River

HOOD RIVER — A pilot and passenger were killed in a small plane crash near Hood River.

Hood River County Deputy Joel Ives told the Oregonian/OregonLive that the crash happened at about 10:10 a.m. Friday in a field between a runway and a hangar at Hood River Airport.

He says witnesses heard the engine sputter before the plane headed toward the ground.

The identities of the two people have not yet been released by authorities. It's not immediately clear what caused the crash.



Edgar Weinberger/US Army via National Archives

Pendleton-based Army paratroopers get ready to jump over a forest fire in summer 1945. In the final years of WWII, Japan launched thousands of bomb-carrying hydrogen balloons to drift across the Pacific on the jet stream in an attempt to start forest fires. Most probably fell harmlessly into the ocean, but hundreds reached North

# TRIPLE NICKLES

## Honored for their work during WWII

By Tom Banse

Oregon Public Broadcasting

PENDLETON — It's a story that seemingly has it all: a classified mission, dashing young men in uniform, leaps out of flying airplanes, stray bombs, plus some wildfires and a side of racial prejudice. The little-known slice of Pacific Northwest history featuring an all-black Army battalion is less likely to be overlooked now that the state of Oregon and people in Pendleton have put up a historical marker.

Eastern Washington University sociologist Bob Bartlett had a big hand in reviving regional interest in the veterans of Operation Firefly, which he only heard about five years ago.

"I see this picture of these paratroopers, these all-black paratroopers, boarding a plane. I said, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa,'" Bartlett recalled in an interview. "It says 1945. I'm thinking, 'I don't know.' I read the story. Immediately I was drawn in. Wait a minute. How did I not know this story?"

Bartlett has been hooked ever since on the history of the Triple Nickles. That's the nickname of the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, the nation's first black paratroopers. The U.S. military was segregated back then. Bartlett's own father and uncle served in other segregated Army units in World War II, which seeded his interest in military history.

Bartlett said the Triple Nickles thought they were destined for Japan when they stopped at Pendleton Army Airfield in the spring of 1945. But no, they were about to be converted into smokejumpers for Operation Firefly. Professional smokejumping started in 1939 in Washington's Methow Valley.

"They had two missions: to find Japanese balloon bombs and to dismantle or destroy them, and to fight forest fires," Bartlett said. "At the time, the military thought those two things were connected."

In the final years of WWII, Japan launched thousands of bomb-carrying hydrogen balloons to drift across the Pacific on the jet stream and start forest fires. Most probably fell harmlessly into the ocean, but hundreds reached North America.

"They dropped all over including Spokane and Boise, and Mexico and Alaska," Bartlett explained. "As far away as Michigan and Iowa."

The partial success of the enemy's incendiary balloon barrage was kept hush-hush on the homefront to prevent panic.

Bartlett said he is motivated to make sure the soldiers' story doesn't get lost to the winds of time. That's how his path crossed with the Oregon agency in charge of historical markers. The Oregon Travel Information Council wants to "fill in gaps" in whose history is recognized, heritage manager Annie von Domitz said.

It took several years of planning and fundraising before a diverse crowd could gather in the late summer heat for a dedication on Pendleton's Main Street. Bartlett, who hails from Spokane, got the honor of cutting the



National Archives/Eastern Washington University

A trooper in full gear waits for the order to board ship at Pendleton Army Airfield in summer 1945.



Tom Banse/Northwest News Network

Eastern Washington University senior lecturer Bob Bartlett, kneeling lower right, poses alongside other history buffs beside the new historical marker for the Triple Nickles in Pendleton on Aug. 30.

ribbon for Oregon's newest historical marker.

"Are the scissors sharp?" he asked as he hefted the oversized ceremonial shears. A sizable audience of onlookers and history buffs let out a big cheer when three vigorous snips severed the red ribbon.

The interpretive panel succinctly describes Operation Firefly, the Triple Nickles and the Japanese balloon bomb barrage. The marker also is forthright in acknowledging the discrimination that 300 or so black soldiers experienced in Pendleton during that era.

Reached by phone in Florida, 96-year-old retired Sgt. J.J. Corbett said the reception the elite troops got varied from friendly to racist.

"We met people who said they had never seen colored folks," Corbett recalled.

Corbett distinctly remembers being taken aback by the signs on some business doors.

"During that time, we saw signs (that said), 'No dogs and Indians are allowed,'" he said.

The African-American soldiers learned the prohibition applied to them, too.

"The reception was cold. We could not eat in any one of the restaurants," retired Lt. Col. Bradley Biggs said in a 1990 oral history recording preserved at Howard University. "We found it difficult to buy

a drink or a meal. Only two bars would serve us anything. ... Hotels in town would not serve us."

The townspeople, he said, "were living in the Northwest but with a Southern attitude."

Very few members of the Triple Nickles are still alive today, and none of them could make it to the late August dedication.

"I wished I could be out there," Corbett said in an interview from his home in Bartow, Florida, ahead of the event. "I regret that I didn't go back to Pendleton ever."

Corbett said it took him a long while to realize his battalion had done things that were worth recognizing.

Pendletonian Brooke Armstrong, executive director of Pendleton Underground tours, contributed to placement of the historical marker. She said that while her city is different now, the discrimination that happened in the past "needs to be addressed."

"I love how things are turning around," Armstrong said. "Maybe not everywhere in the world, but if we can make some impact on it, I'm all for it."

Event organizer Kristin Dollarhide of Travel Pendleton said the marker dedication showed "it's never too late" to make amends, even almost 75 years later.