

John P. Atkinson

July 1925 - Feb. 2015

John P. Atkinson, 89, passed Monday, Feb. 2 at Grande Ronde Hospital in La Grande. A celebration of life with military honors will be held at a later date.

John was born July 11, 1925 in Webb City, Mo., to Daniel and Gertrude Atkinson. John joined five children in an extended family that ultimately numbered four siblings and 18 half siblings. 12 of the 22 children survived to adulthood. Growing up in extreme poverty, the family moved often, searching for work in Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma. John attended school in Goodman, Mo. and May, Mo. In 1942 he moved to Vale, Ore., and graduated from Vale High School (early) in 1944. At VHS, John was active in boxing, football, and drama.

John joined the Army Air Corps in Feb. 1944. Upon completion of basic and advanced trainings, John joined the 8th Air Force, 487th Squadron of the Army Air Corps (now the U.S. Air Force), in Lavenham, England. The 487th Bombardment Group was affectionately known as "The Gentlemen From Hell." John was the Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 Flying Fortress crew piloted by 1/Lt. Paul T. Kohr.

On Dec. 24, 1944 the Kohr Crew joined 2034 B-17s and B-24s, and 936 Fighters in the greatest single force of airplanes ever dispatched in U.S. military history on a bombing raid over Germany. On March 17, 1945, the Kohr Crew was on their 30th bombing mission. Their target was an oil refinery near Ruland, Germany.

After dropping their bombs, the plane was hit by flack, causing an engine fire. This was the third time they had been hit, but the previous two times they were able to return to friendly airfields for emergency landings. With this hit there was too much fire on board to attempt continued flight. Lt. Kohr ordered the crew to bail out. All crew members survived the jump but were immediately captured.

As POWs they were continually moving, sometimes by ground transportation, but mostly in forced marches. The Third Infantry Division of the U.S. Seventh Army eventually liberated them. John lost over 40 pounds during his time as a POW.

John returned to the U.S. for medical attention, recuperated, and was assigned to a reserve unit. He then began working for the telephone company as a lineman and engineer. He met LaVelle Graven during this time and they were married on Aug. 17, 1946. John and LaVelle had three children, Ted, Rhonda, and John Laine. They divorced in 1973.

John began his 38-year career with the Oregon Department of Transportation in 1947, between active duty assignments. He worked in Bates, Hereford, Fossil, Baker City (twice), and La Grande. He retired as a Maintenance Supervisor in Baker City in Dec. 1985.

John was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and served until Dec. 1952. His



commanding officer encouraged him to attend Officer Candidate Training but John opted for civilian life. He had nine years of service at the time of his discharge. John's service medals included a Purple Heart, Three Bronze Stars, Air Medal

with four Oak Clusters, WWII Victory Medal, French Government Liberation Commendation, and European Campaign Medal.

Due to injuries suffered during his POW time, John was later granted a service-related disability. These injuries impacted him throughout his life. In 2009, John was inducted into the Oregon Military Hall of Fame. Former Governor Vic Atiyeh presented John with his Memorial Plaque recognizing his service and sacrifices as a former POW.

John married Helen Cox on June 5, 1975. They divorced in 1981. John then married Colleen Compton on July 2, 1982. They spent 32 1/2 years together before Colleen's death on Jan. 8, 2015. The past two years John and Colleen were cared for by Colleen's daughter-in-law, Anita Compton. John's family is extremely grateful for Anita's care and compassion in making their final years together comfortable in their home.

John always looked forward to fall hunting season to arrive. John joined his sons, grandsons and son-in-law for sharing good times and retelling past great hunting events. John loved to golf and was a long-time player at the Baker City Quail Ridge Golf course.

He participated in many local and regional golf tournaments. He also loved to interact with children, and especially enjoyed entertaining and teasing his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

John was preceded in death by his beloved wife Colleen; parents Daniel and Gertrude Atkinson; brothers Clinton and James Atkinson; sister Martha (Atkinson) Nutting; and 15 half siblings.

He is survived by his children, Ted (Patty) Atkinson, Rhonda (Herb) Hickman, and John Laine (Vicki) Atkinson; seven grandchildren and half-sisters, Elvetta (Ray) Griffin, Carolyn Atkinson, and Ethelene Atkinson. Also surviving are stepchildren Jo Compton (Dee Wilson), Brian (Pam) Compton, Jeff (Anita) Compton, Matt Compton, Tom (Kandy) Compton, and Chris (Tracy) Compton; and many step-grandchildren.

John was an enrolled member of the Northern Cherokee Nation, White River Band. One of his great-grandfathers served with Confederate General Stand Waite (Cherokee Regiments) during the Civil War. John was also a member of the VFW, Baker City Chapter.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests donations to the Air Force Aide Society, Alzheimer's research, or the Baker City VFW Chapter in John's honor. Online condolences can be made to the family at www.lovelandfuneralchapel.com.

Betty Jean Lovett

May 1932 - Feb. 2015

Betty Jean Lovett, 82, longtime Halfway resident, died and was reunited with the love of her life, Karl on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 2015 at Settler's Park in Baker City after a short valiant fight with pancreatic cancer. Although there will not be a formal service, she will be interred at a later date with her husband Karl at Pine Haven Cemetery in Halfway.

Betty was born on May 23, 1932 in Mattoon, Ill. to Bert and Reatha (Hyland) Ritchey. Betty grew up in Arizona, attended school, and graduated from Flagstaff High School on May 24, 1951. In school she enjoyed and studied home economics, science, and arts. After school, she claimed to have "traveled everywhere." And she did, from Arizona to Washington to Idaho, Texas, Nevada, Kansas, and on and on.

Betty met and married who she referred to as "the true love of her life," Karl Lovett, in Mexico followed shortly after by a wedding in 1971 in Weiser, Idaho. Betty and Karl had quite a love for each other. Karl wrote her hundreds of love letters and she kept each and every one.

During her life Betty worked as a waitress/hostess and as a cook. She also supervised an animal shelter in Bend and also one in Montana. Betty enjoyed working with her husband Karl and at one point, they worked together in a hospital lab.

Karl was diagnosed with diabetes; it was then that Betty became "nurse Betty." She meticulously monitored his insulin by keeping well-kept journals of his levels, his intake, and times that each task or aid was rendered.

Each year, Betty entered her arts and crafts in the Labor Day Fair Exhibition booth. She loved each and every ribbon she received. She enjoyed spending time with the preschool and all the "little kids." The children as well as many in the community lovingly referred to her as "Grandma Betty."

Every year, Betty had a Christmas list of gifts to share with so many, each gift wrapped, each gift given with love. There was one particular year that she was deemed the "Christmas elf." Betty also enjoyed going to Bingo at the VFW Hall in Halfway and the



New Bridge Grange.

Betty's hair was kept in the long braids and at 82, she barely

had a gray hair on her head. It took just about seven years to grow her hair down to her hips. Then she would cut the braids off, and start over.

Betty was a fixture of Halfway. She would be seen daily with her shopping basket on her stroll to town. Betty always had such a cute smile and genuinely cared about those around her.

A favorite poem of Betty's was entitled "Love and Friendship"

You're the one I most admire, with great intentions and loving desires.

Passion and trust and knowing that you care, brings a lifetime of happiness for us to share...

Being so gentle, understanding, and kind, brings comfort, faith, and a joy that shines.

Tears and laughter are feelings that are rare, but a true heart shall never despair.

Love is unique in its very own way, taking risks, and challenges -- day by day.

But when a heart is made of gold, there is so much to share. Like joy, laughter, and a friendship that's there...

So I give you my heart as a token of love, from one friend to another, and the heavens above.

So take my heart and cherish it too, cause there is no us without you!

Betty was preceded in death by her parents; husband Karl; brother Bert, Jr.; Charles; James; sister Charlot; and her most recent four-legged companions "Rowdy & Flicka."

Betty is survived by her sisters Helen and husband Jack McCrain; Edith Cunningham and Patricia and husband Bob Keel; brother Robert and wife Emma Ritchey; and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Memorial contributions toward a cemetery marker can be made in memory of Betty to Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, Ore. 97834. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.

Barbara "Bobbi" Williams

1920 - Feb. 2015

Our beautiful, ageless mother closed her eyes on Earth and opened them in Heaven. On Feb. 13, 2015, Barbara "Bobbi" Williams, 95, passed away peacefully at Bee Hive Home in Baker City, with her family at her side. Her loving husband of 62 years, Charlie, preceded her in 2003. She is survived by her five children: triplets, Terry (Lori) of West Linn, Larry (Sue) of Newberg and Marylee (Dick) of San Jose, Calif., and her twins, Ron (Elodie) of Monmouth, and Don (Valerie) of Baker City. She also leaves behind her much-loved 10 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. She was truly the matriarch and cornerstone of our family.

Barbara Williams (née Nunn) was born in Kent, Ore., the ninth of 11 children and, as a teenager, moved to California where she met and married Vallejo High School's football and track star, Charlie Williams. Her long and happy life included the birth of triplets in 1943 (the first ever born in Vallejo!) and the birth of



twins, five years later. They bought a farm in the Napa Valley, Calif., and raised their children in a wholesome country environment and taught them to love the Lord with all their hearts. After Charlie's death, Bobbi sold the farm and moved to Oregon to be near her boys and their families.

Bobbi's faith was an important part of her life and she loved serving the Savior. In 1953, she began a Bible class in her home which grew over the years into a large church, now serving the Napa Valley. For years she led children's Bible clubs, costumed myriads of Christmas pageants, emceed women's retreats and sang in the church choir. Her many talents included cooking, playing the autoharp, decorating elaborate cakes, creating beautiful machine embroidery, dancing the country two-step, and beating everyone in UNO and SCRABBLE! In her later years, she especially enjoyed playing her harmonica, often accompanied by her son, Don on the guitar, at Bee Hive, and jam sessions sponsored by Marilyn's Music.

Bobbi will be buried next to her only love, Charlie, at a graveside ceremony in Napa's Tulocay Cemetery. We will miss her greatly, but will see her again and love her always.

Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.

Thelma J. Gibbs

June 1931 - Feb. 2015

Thelma J. Gibbs 83, a Haines resident and former Baker City resident died Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015 at her home in Haines. The family will have a gathering at a later date.

Mrs. Gibbs was born June 26, 1931 in Baker City, a daughter of Thomas Andrew and Elizabeth White (Hastie) McMurdo. She received her education in Baker City.

She married Curtis Gibbs on Oct. 27, 1969 in Emmett, Idaho. With her husband they owned and operated Gibbs Wood Products in Baker City, specializing in making survey stakes and other wood products. They worked together for 49 years before the business closed.

Mrs. Gibbs loved to garden, do yard work and can. She was the last one of her family who was living.

Mrs. Gibbs is survived by her son Mike Morrow, Haines; daughter, Elizabeth Neill, son and daughter-in-law, James and Tonia Ryan; daughter and son-in-law, Laura and David Fuzi, all of Baker City; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, along with numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents; one sister; three brothers; her husband; and a grandson.

Those wishing to make memorial contributions in her memory may direct them to Heart n Home Hospice. This may be done through the Coles Tribute Center, 1950 Place St., Baker City, Ore. 97814.

Funeral Notice

Norman DuBosch, 82, of Baker City, died on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015 at Saint Alphonsus Hospital in Baker City with his family at his side. A Celebration of Norm's Life and potluck (bring your favorite dish) will be held on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2015 at 4 p.m. at the VFW Hall Post #3048 - 2005 Valley Avenue (Across from the Eltrym Theater) in Baker City. Arrangements are under the direction of Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com.



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