

Hero: Korean War veteran will lead Pendleton's Fourth of July parade

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ics appears on his Bronze Star citation. Sergeant Richard D. Allstott, it reads, "is cited for heroism in action against an armed enemy near Tumyong-dong, Korea, on 12 June 1952. Sergeant Allstott had set up his machine gun on hill 191 in support of his unit which was entrenched (sic) on the hill. Exceptionally heavy mortar and artillery fire rained on the entire area and communist aggressors launched three successive counter attacks on the positions. Sergeant Allstott stalwartly remained at his post and poured deadly accurate fire at the foe."

When injured American soldiers were trapped by heavy fire, the citation continues, "Sergeant Allstott provided immediate protective fire for them, and as a result of his quick thinking these casualties were successfully evacuated. When it became necessary for the unit to move into a new position, Sergeant Allstott boldly moved his machine gun to a new location and again laid down a curtain of cover fire for his comrades."

It is pretty heady stuff, but Allstott, 90, just waves it off and refuses to elaborate.

A photo from that time shows Allstott as a robust 21-year-old dressed in Army fatigues, his hand resting on his gun. Now 90, the veteran agreed to talk a little about his time in the military. He sat on the couch in the living room of his Pendleton home with



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Richard and Dorothy Allstott married shortly after Richard returned from fighting in Korea.

his cane handy and his wife, Dorothy, nearby. Tangney listened from a chair.

Allstott described growing up on a wheat farm between Heppner and Condon as the second oldest of six children. At age 14, his older brother left to fight in World War II. Richard got a special license to take over driving the 25 miles to Heppner for school. After graduation, he worked at McNary Dam and was preparing to travel to India to work on a construction crew there when he got his draft notice.

"I got a letter from Uncle Sam that said he needed me worse," Allstott said, grinning. "I went to work for him."

He enlisted in the Army and spent several months

stateside before heading to Japan and then Korea. Allstott and his fellow soldiers climbed off their ship onto a landing craft and went ashore. He remembers the bitter cold that assaulted them as they rode in trucks for several hours until stopping around midnight.

"We pawed out space in the snow and put our sleeping bags in the holes," he said. "Not too many of us undressed."

This was no Shangri-La. The temperature dipped as low as minus 40 degrees. Allstott took to wearing three pairs of socks. The outer pair, he said, froze to his boots.

As Allstott spoke, Tangney went back in time, too, remembering not only the bitter cold, but the sorrow

of losing his brother there during the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge. The battle was one of the major engagements in the hills of North Korea, near the pre-war boundary between North and South Korea.

It was on Heartbreak Ridge where Allstott was injured trying to evacuate an injured comrade. The soldier was a big man who had gotten his legs blown off. Allstott and another soldier named Joe laid the man on a stretcher and carried him up a hill to a trench. About then an enemy grenade landed in the trench.

"It rolled right under the stretcher and exploded," Allstott said. "Joe and I both got blown out of the trench about 40 feet. The guy on the stretcher was killed."



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Richard Allstott was awarded the Bronze Star for heroism during the Korean War when the machine gunner remained at his post during heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire.

The concussion affected Allstott's eardrums and he headed home with profound hearing loss.

Back in Oregon, Alstott shook off the war. He married Dorothy, started a family and worked on a ranch. Later, they moved to Pendleton where he worked for the county road department. Over the years, he never talked much about his war experiences, Dorothy said.

Tangney knew about them, though. He said he didn't have to push hard to get Allstott selected as grand marshal for Pendleton's Fourth of July parade even though there were several other good nominees.

"He won on the first ballot with 85 percent of the vote," Tangney said of the local VFW committee that selected Allstott.

This isn't Allstott's first VFW honor. Active in the

local post, he won the statewide "Mr. VFW" award in 1970. At a recent state convention, he received a lifetime achievement award.

Allstott is a patriotic man. He flies a flag year-round in his yard, near the porch swing where he likes to sit every day. He said he feels no ill will against his country for his hearing loss, which eventually required cochlear implants.

"I felt that I was pretty lucky to get by like I did," he said. "Uncle Sam treated me pretty good."

The parade, kicking off at 10 a.m. on July 4, starts at the Pendleton City Hall, follows Dorion Avenue to Main Street, turns onto Court Avenue and ends at the Pendleton Convention Center.

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Newspapers: Purchase of Observer, Herald becomes final

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The two new acquisitions join the *East Oregonian*, *Hermiston Herald*, *Wallowa County Chieftain* and *Blue Mountain Eagle* as the EO Media Group's properties in Eastern Oregon.

"The joining together of these outstanding news and advertising operations, with four of them located along the I-84 corridor, will mean greater resources and opportunities for both local and regional news reporting. And that's a good thing for readers in all markets," EO Media Group Regional Publisher Chris Rush said.

Western Communications, which also owns the *Bend Bulletin*, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in January. The company first sought to restructure, then decided to liquidate its assets. This was the second bankruptcy for Western Communications in the past 10 years. It emerged from another bankruptcy in 2012.

The Observer and *Baker City Herald* Publisher Karline Brogoitti said to finally reach this milestone was something she couldn't fathom a year ago.

"When things were their toughest or looked incredibly bleak, the thing that kept me, and everyone else, going was that commitment to what we do," she said. "The pride and passion that these staffs have for their papers, their communities, their readers and their advertisers is something that I continue to be amazed



La Grande Observer Photo/Ronald Bond

The EO Media Group's purchase of *The Observer* and *Baker City Herald* from Western Communications was authorized Thursday. The sale becomes final July 1.

at. It's that unyielding passion that got us through some incredibly stressful days."

Brogoitti said she believes there are brighter days ahead with new ownership in place and a renewed sense of optimism in both locations.

"Now, we get to reap the benefits of that hard work," she said. "The EO Media Group saw a smart and profitable investment and a dedicated, loyal staff."

According to court documents, the EO Media Group bought the two community newspapers from Western Communications for \$775,000.

Rush said EO Media Group is only buying the newspapers and business equipment, not the real estate in La Grande. The *Herald* is in a leased space in downtown Baker City.

The Observer will likely be relocating from their current home on Fifth Street to new office space in La Grande sometime this summer.

Rush, who will add La Grande and Baker City to his role as regional publisher of the Eastern Oregon group, said for the near term there are no significant operational changes planned.

"The EO Media Group is hiring all current employees in both the La Grande and Baker City operations," he said. "Readers and advertisers will have the same printing, publishing and delivery schedule for both newspapers."

Brogoitti will remain in charge of day-to-day operations in both locations as the publisher.

The papers officially become part of the EO Media Group July 1.

Demonstrators: Urge Republican senators to stay away for rural Oregon

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just saying that to get the senators to come back."

The disbelief highlighted a tension that's also occurring within the Senate. Though the chamber's leaders have given assurances they will not seek to pass HB 2020 this year, Republicans have so far been unwilling to take them at their word. And while the ongoing boycott initially started as a way to block the bill's passage, GOP senators have since floated other concessions they'd like to see.

Still, at the same time as demonstrators were cheering lawmakers' absence, there were signs it might not last much longer. Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, told OPB on Thursday afternoon that he'd returned to Oregon from Idaho, where he'd stayed since June 20.

Bentz said negotiations were still fluid, but that he'd heard Oregon state troopers had been told to stand down from orders to find Republicans and bring them to the Capitol. He said lawmakers might be making an announcement Friday morning.

"I wouldn't recommend it, how's that?" Bentz said, when asked about his time away. "When it comes to political tools in the toolbox, you don't want to use that one very often and the challenge is quite different than anything I've experienced."

The situation left lawmakers and Capitol staff uncertain Thursday. If Republicans returned, they planned to attend marathon floor sessions over the weekend as the Legislature hammered out remaining policy and budget bills. If Republicans held out until after adjournment at midnight on Sunday, they wondered when Gov. Kate Brown would call a special session, as she has vowed to do.

In a release Thursday, Senate Minority Leader Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass, didn't address ongoing negotiations.

"The amount of support for the Senate Republicans is unprecedented,"

Baertschiger said of demonstration. "The people have rallied in solidarity to have their voice heard at the Capitol. We encourage the press to go out and talk with the people."

While those in Thursday's crowd were united in their support for Republicans and dismay for the particulars of climate legislation, there was also clear confusion about some of the bills they'd come to oppose. In particular, loggers voiced strong fears about House Bill 2007, a bill aimed at addressing older diesel engines in the state.

Loggers with whom OPB spoke almost uniformly believed their machines would be outlawed under the bill, since it sets a phase-out period where the state will not issue titles or registrations for vehicles that have diesel engines of a certain age. But, as it stands currently, logging trucks and off-road vehicles are exempt from that regulation, and only owners who live in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties are subject to regulation.

Cunningham, whose husband works for a Philomath logging company, cited HB 2007 as a central reason she traveled to the Capitol.

"This bill would absolutely impact and affect his livelihood in the most negative way," Cunningham said. "It would put a lot of guys out of business because most of their equipment is really old."

Loggers at the rally also voiced concerns about House Bill 2020, which is expected to raise fuel prices and would allow companies to offset their pollution by ensuring that some forested areas are not logged. A late amendment to the bill attempted to ensure that loggers and mills did not lose business due to those offset provisions, but the impact of that amendment's language has been debated.

"They'll end up selling carbon credits instead of a timber sale, which puts me out of work," Poetter said. "If this bill goes through,

our jobs are gone."

The rally spurred heightened police presence in the Capitol, with state troopers patrolling every floor of the building. And with no legislation being taken up, it tipped the statehouse's typical aesthetic of drab businesswear toward fluorescent shirts and camouflage hats.

Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis, R-Albany, has a background in farming and trucking, and was a member of the committee that crafted HB 2020. After addressing demonstrators on Thursday, Boshart Davis acknowledged that there was some misinformation in the crowd. She attributed that up to an opaque legislative process, where changes to bills can be difficult to track.

House Bill 2007 "has definitely been a source of misinformation and truly the focus of these industries' concern is definitely House Bill 2020," Boshart Davis said. She said rising fuel and natural gas costs under the cap-and-trade program proposed by the bill would hurt the entire state.

"A lot of people talk about the rural-urban divide," she said. "Definitely that is a concern, but really truly this is going to be costly for all Oregonians when you talk about energy prices going up."

An analysis of the cap-and-trade proposal commissioned by the Legislature has suggested the bill could lead to an increase in jobs and the state's gross domestic product.

Boshart Davis, a key opponent of HB 2020, said she wasn't sure whether Democratic assurances to kill the bill were trustworthy. But she was non-committal when asked if Republican senators should remain scarce until the session adjourns.

"I'm concerned about what a special session looks like, so all of that has to be weighed," she said. "But them staying away has made this possible."

OPB reporter Lauren Dake contributed to this report.

Homes: City considers urban renewal

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more focused on paying for projects that will improve the health or safety of a homeowner.

Additionally, previous city programs like Restore Pendleton would make a financial effort to fix up a home, only to see it fall back into disrepair.

To avoid duplication or previous pitfalls, the advisory committee is considering a five-year forgivable loan program that can

be applied toward external renovations.

Under the program, homeowners would be able to give their houses a facelift on the commission's dime, as long as they can pass a series of inspections.

With each passed inspection, the homeowner would get 20% of their loan forgiven. If the owner passes all inspections after five years, they owe nothing.

Denight said the pro-

gram could also be available to renters, but they likely wouldn't be able to access a fully forgivable loan.

If the commission moved forward with the loan idea, it wouldn't lack the funds to sponsor it.

If they relied on tax revenue alone, the urban renewal district could spend another \$5.9 million on projects. But if they decided to access their full line of credit, that number expands to \$33.5 million.