

# American Legion salutes Hermiston veteran

### Mike McMichael receives 75-year membership patch

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A 95-year-old Hermiston man was recently honored by fellow members of American Legion Post No. 37 — C.J. “Mike” McMichael received a special patch in recognition of his 75 years of continuous membership with the veterans organization.

Post Commander Aaron Wetterling said when it came time to present the distinguished award during the post’s regular Oct. 4 meeting, several of McMichael’s comrades quickly assisted the U.S. Army veteran to his feet.

“Every member rose in unison and upon the completion of the presentation of the patch they all rendered him a proper salute,” Wetterling said. “He later described the emotional event to his family through misty eyes.”

Despite suffering several strokes, Wetterling said McMichael still attends the monthly meetings. While he doesn’t recall when, McMichael served for a year as the local post commander.

Also, earlier this year, McMichael was honored with a “Quilt of Valor” made by the Stanfield Community Quilters. Considered a “civilian award,” the beautiful quilts are presented to



Aaron Wetterling/Contributed Photo

**American Legion Post No. 37 Commander Aaron Wetterling, right, presents C.J. “Mike” McMichael with a 75-year patch commemorating his longtime membership with the nonprofit veterans organization. About 30 fellow Legionnaires were present during an Oct. 4, 2021, award ceremony in Hermiston.**

veterans for their bravery in service to their country.

In visiting with McMichael later, Wetterling learned that the U.S. Army veteran became involved with the American Legion in 1946 in Curtis, Nebraska. McMichael, Wetterling said, joined at the urging of his brother-in-law, who

he believes might have belonged to the “Forty and Eight,” an organization that previously was closely affiliated with the American Legion.

Signing on the dotted line Aug. 17, 1944, the Nebraska farm boy served during World War II — entering the European Theater

of Operations in January 1945. He was a combat engineer and served with C Company, 12th Combat Engineers. McMichael spent five months overseas working with a crew repairing and constructing roads and bridges, Wetterling said.

Returning to the states, he began additional training for



Aaron Wetterling/Contributed Photo

**C.J. “Mike” McMichael poses for a photo showing off the 75-year patch on his American Legion cap. American Legion Post No. 37 Commander Aaron Wetterling presented the special award to the Hermiston veteran Oct. 4, 2021, at Agape House, Hermiston.**

the Pacific Theater, which came to a halt when Japan surrendered, Wetterling said. McMichael received an honorary discharge in June 1946 in Atterbury, Indiana.

Working on a road crew for 50 cents an hour, McMichael moved to Eastern Oregon. In 1947, he landed a job as a munitions handler for \$1.06 an hour at the Umatilla Army Depot.

“I thought I was rolling in money,” McMichael said to Wetterling.

Following a brief transfer as a munitions inspector in Sidney, Nebraska, he resumed farming with his father. With a tight budget

and growing family, McMichael and his wife, Betty, returned to Hermiston. He was rehired at the Army Depot, where he remained until retiring in 1974.

American Legion Post No. 37 meets the first Monday of each month, 7 p.m. at Agape House, 500 W. Harper Road, Hermiston. For more information, contact Wetterling at 541-720-1815 or aarmar@charter.net.

Contact community writer Tammy Malgesini at [tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com](mailto:tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4532.

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Mark Smalley/Contributed Photo

**The Arc Umatilla County installed new officers and directors during its general membership meeting Oct. 12, 2021, at The Arc Building in Hermiston. Pictured in front, T.J. Smith, Kristi Smalley; middle, Kirsten Kinsel, Joyce Beemer, Debbie Herrera; back, Anna Dickman and Tasha Bleyenberg. Not pictured, Shalena Myers, Janna Smith and Thessa Sowers.**

### The Arc installs new board members

HERMISTON — Anna Dickman was recently installed as the new president of The Arc Umatilla County.

The installation of officers and directors was conducted Oct. 12 by Mark Smalley during a general membership meeting at The Arc Building in Hermiston. Other officers installed for the coming year include Debbie Herrera, vice president; Joyce Beemer, secretary; and Kristi Smalley, treasurer. In addition, T.J. Smith and Tasha Bleyenberg were installed as directors. Also joining the board as directors but not present at the meeting are Shalena Myers, Janna Smith and Thessa Sowers. The immediate past president is Jan Schroth.

A nonprofit organization serv-

ing Umatilla County for more than 50 years, The Arc advocates for the rights and full participation of all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With a network of members and affiliated chapters, they strive to improve systems of support and services, connecting families, inspiring communities and influencing public policy.

The Arc is currently offering Zumba each Wednesday, 6-7 p.m. at 215 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Donations are accepted.

Also, The Arc is excited to resume fundraising events. A potato feed, with spuds and all the fixings, is Saturday, Nov. 6, 5-6 p.m., also at The Arc Building. Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$3 for children 4-10, and free for kids up to age 3. People are encouraged to purchase an extra ticket as a donation for a person with a disability.

For information about upcoming activities and events hosted by The Arc, call 541-567-7615 or search The Arc’s Facebook page.

### Special trivia night highlights the world of J.R.R. Tolkien

PENDLETON — A night of riddles in the dark makes up a special trivia night in Pendleton. Bring your own Samwise Gamgee and journey into J.R.R. Tolkien’s world for a chance to win a precious prize.

Lord of the Rings Trivia Night is Thursday, Oct. 28, 5 p.m. at the Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave. All ages are welcome.

For more information, call 541-966-0380 or search Facebook. —EO Media Group

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## First Place Awards

News Photo - “Embracing Disaster” by Ben Lonergan

Feature Story Personality - “Finding peace: Pendleton man coming to grips with trauma of Las Vegas shooting” by Kathy Aney

## Second Place Awards

Business or Economic Story - “A reopening plan 173 years in the making” by Antonio Sierra

Feature Photo - “Comet NEOWISE” by Ben Lonergan

Sports Photo - “Pickup Men” by Ben Lonergan

Local Column - Kathy Aney

Special Section - “Sidelined”

## Third Place Awards

General Excellence

Headline Writing - Andrew Cutler

Page One Design - Andy Nicolais

Feature Story - “At the brink: Local COVID-19 survivor remembers how close virus came to killing him” by Antonio Sierra

Spot News - “Community mourns: Colleagues mourn Pendleton city councilor” by Antonio Sierra, Kathy Aney

Photo Essay - “Banjo Man” by Ben Lonergan

Enterprise Reporting - “Stuck in the middle: Police officers of color describe experiences in law enforcement” by Jade McDowell

Education Coverage - “Dashed dreams: \$3.6 million in Oregon Promise Grants revoked” by Kathy Aney

Lifestyle Coverage - “A spike in calls” by Kathy Aney



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