

Baker City Herald

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In SPORTS, 8A

Baker rolls past Cascade in playoff

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Dick Sheehy of Baker City.

Sports, 6A

REDMOND — It didn't end the way they hoped. But the Powder Valley Badgers left the Class 1A state tournament with one of the best finishes in program history.

For the second year in a row, though, St. Paul got the best of Powder Valley in a matchup of 1A volleyball powerhouses.

Sports, 6A

Ethan Stephens caught the winning touchdown pass in the final minutes after Powder Valley made a crucial stop on defense, and the Badgers won a wild shootout on the road in the first round of the 1A state playoffs Friday, edging Lowell, 68-62, to reach the quarterfinals for the first time since 2016.

Sports, 9A

EUGENE (AP) — Top-ranked Oregon did something that few teams have done in the last two decades — beat the U.S. women's national team.

Sabrina Ionescu scored 25 of her 30 points in the second half to lead the Ducks to the stunning 93-86 victory Saturday in an exhibition game. It was only the second loss ever by the U.S. to a college program and their first defeat in any game since 2014.

WEATHER

Today

51 / 25



Mostly sunny

Tuesday

53 / 26



Mostly cloudy

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

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A Soldier Remembers John Holcomb, Baker's Only Medal of Honor Recipient

A Hero's Final Act



John Noble Holcomb — at right, Holcomb's Medal of Honor, America's highest military honor.



By Jayson Jacoby
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Jimmy Robbins was convinced he would die on that December day in a grassy clearing in Vietnam as the bullets whizzed and the mortar rounds showered the hot tropical air with a deadly hail of steel.

Yet half a century later, Robbins can tell his terrible tale.

And although he will never know for certain, it might be that Robbins, 71, owes all the years that came after at least in part to his buddy from Baker County, a man who didn't survive that day.

A man who even today Robbins can't talk about without an occasional hitch interrupting his syrupy smooth Southern accent.

His name is John Noble Holcomb. He grew up in Richland.

Holcomb died on Dec. 3, 1968, in the same small jungle clearing near Quan Loi where Robbins, then 20, was all but certain he would draw

his final breath.

Sgt. Holcomb's exploits, which included manning a machine gun after the regular gunner was hurt, crawling through a fire ignited by artillery and moving several members of his squad even after he had been wounded, led to his posthumous awarding of the Medal of Honor.

Holcomb, who was 22 when he died, is one of 13 Oregonians to receive this highest U.S. military decoration — and the only one from Baker County.

That accolade, Robbins said, was "well-deserved."

Indeed, when he recently read for the first time the citation that accompanied the Medal of Honor, describing Holcomb's heroism during the firefight in which 23 American soldiers were killed and 53 wounded, Robbins said "it brought tears to my eyes again."

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Story Behind The Story

The Herald learned about Jimmy Robbins by way of an email from Dr. Mark Randall, a general surgeon in Winfield, Alabama. When he treats a veteran he always thanks them for their service and, if they're willing, listens to their stories about their time in uniform.

During a conversation with Robbins earlier this year, Randall learned about Robbins' experience on Dec. 3, 1968, near Quan Loi, Vietnam. Robbins told Randall that he had researched John Noble Holcomb and learned that Holcomb, from Baker County, had been posthumously honored with the Medal of Honor.

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Council to talk train horns

By Jayson Jacoby
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The Baker City Council on Tuesday will hear a presentation from a group of residents who want to stop freight trains from blowing their whistles, except in emergencies, while rolling through town.

The group — Neighbors for a Safer, Quieter and Healthier Baker City — has been meeting for several months and has circulated an online petition to gauge local support for a "quiet zone" designation. More than 230 people have signed the petition.

The Council, which meets at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 1655 First St., will discuss whether to file a notice of intent to apply for a quiet zone designation with the Federal Railroad Administration.

There is no cost to file a notice of intent, nor does doing so require the city to apply for a quiet zone.

Federal rules require train engineers to sound the horn for 15 to 20 seconds before the train enters a public crossing, of which there are five in Baker City. Because locomotives can travel at 50 mph through town, sometimes they sound their horn with only brief intervals as they pass through town. About 24 trains per day come through Baker City.

To qualify for a quiet zone, a city must make sure railroad crossings are as safe, if not safer, than before. Generally that involves installing more restrictive gates to prevent vehicles from reaching the tracks.

See Council / Page 5A

William Burr Clark Of Baker County Graduated From West Point In 1942 And Was Killed In Action in 1944

Uniform sparks memories of pilot

By Lisa Britton
For the Baker City Herald

While sorting donated uniforms at Baker Heritage Museum, a shiny crest caught the eye of Phyllis Badgley.

It was from West Point, the U.S. Military Academy in New York state.

"There are not many young men who went to West Point," Badgley said.

The hat and accompanying documents belonged to William Burr Clark — he went by Burr — who grew up on Sutton Creek outside of Baker City.

He graduated from Baker High School in 1935, and from West Point in 1942.

"That was the year I graduated from Baker High," Badgley said.

She grew up in Baker City as well. Her connection to Clark was through the Comstock family. Clark was a family friend, and Badgley was a cousin to the Comstocks.

Her memory sparked when she saw Burr's uniform at the museum.



Lisa Britton/For the Baker City Herald

See Uniform / Page 5A William Burr Clark graduated from Baker High School in 1935 and from West Point in 1942.



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