



Lisa Britton/Baker City Herald

The Avenue of Flags at Mount Hope Cemetery, with the Elkhorn Mountains in the background, Monday, May 31.

MEMORIAL DAY

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Even after he was himself wounded, Holcomb, the Medal of Honor citation goes on, "crawled through a grass fire and exploding mortar and rocket rounds to move the members of his squad, every one of whom had been wounded, to more secure positions."

"We never want to forget that he had that love, the sacrifice he made for his friends," Cole said of Holcomb.

Cole asked the audience to remember another terrible day and another selfless act of heroism, one that happened on June 23, 1944, in the skies over the Nazi-controlled Europe.

He talked about David Richard Kingsley, 25, who was a bombardier on a B-17 bomber that was part of a raid on the oil fields at Ploesti, Romania.

After enemy fighters damaged the bomber and injured several crew members, the pilot ordered the crew to bail out.

The B-17's tail gunner, among those wounded, had lost his parachute, Cole said.

Kingsley, from Portland, took off his own parachute and buckled it to the tail gunner.

Then, Cole said, Kingsley "rode that airplane" to the crash landing that killed him.

Cole talked of Robert D. Maxwell, the



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Seven new flags, each honoring a local veteran, were placed at Mount Hope Cemetery during the Memorial Day ceremony on Monday, May 31.

nation's oldest Medal of Honor recipient, who died in May 2019 in Bend.

Maxwell survived despite throwing himself atop a German grenade in France on Sept. 7, 1944, to protect nearby soldiers.

That trio — Holcomb, Kingsley and Maxwell — and more than 1.3 million others who died while serving the United States "did their duty for God and for country," Cole said.

"Memorial Day is not the day we honor the living, it's the day that we honor the dead," he said.

After Cole's address, Jerry Hunter,

local commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, read the names of seven Baker County veterans, each of whom had a flag planted in his memory.

The seven are Dennis L. Fuller, Lloyd R. Cook, George D. Braughton, Clifford D. Jacobson, Kenneth D. Schaefer, Gene E. North and Michael Jacobson.

Doug Riggs, chairman of the Avenue of Flags committee, thanked all those who helped place the large flags along the avenue leading to the veterans section at Mount Hope, but also the hundreds of smaller flags set next to veterans' graves.

ACCIDENT

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"We are very thankful for all the responders yesterday," Melissa Reed wrote in a message to the Baker City Herald on Monday morning, May 31. "They did an amazing job."

The accident happened on a forest road near Silver Creek, about five miles northwest of Sumpter, according to a press release from the

Baker County Sheriff's Office.

Robert Reed, 64, was driving a Polaris ATV, with his wife and their grandson, who's 3 1/2, as passengers.

While Robert Reed was turning the vehicle around, the child grabbed the throttle and the vehicle went off the road down the embankment, rolling about three times, according to the press release. All three people were thrown from the four-wheeler.

The grandson was wearing a helmet, according to the press release.

The incident was reported to Baker County Dispatch at 10:54 a.m. Search and rescue members had to set up ropes due to the steepness of the terrain. Medics treated Betty Reed and loaded her onto a backboard. Team members carried her up the slope to the road, and she was driven to a site where the helicopter

could pick her up.

The Sheriff's Office was assisted by the Powder River Rural Fire Protection District, Baker City Fire and Rescue, Sumpter Fire Department, Baker County Search and Rescue and Life Flight.

"This rescue was a prime example of collaboration among the first responders in rural Baker County," according to the press release.

Halfway man who failed to attend 2020 court hearing arrested with stolen car near Walla Walla

By Jedediah Maynes
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

COLLEGE PLACE, Washington — A wanted man from Baker County who was reportedly driving a car stolen in Missoula, Montana, was arrested Thursday, May 28, in College Place after a brief pursuit by local police.

Jonathon Russell Romine, 40, of Halfway, had a warrant for his arrest out of Baker County, according to a release from the College Place Police Department.

Romine failed to appear in Baker County Circuit Court on Oct. 12, 2020, on multiple charges, including unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and unlawful possession of methamphetamine, stemming from his April 2020 arrest.

Romine had his first appearance in Walla Walla County Superior Court on

Friday, May 29 and was booked into the Walla Walla County Jail with a \$20,000 bond.

Prosecutors filed charges on two counts — stolen vehicle possession and third-degree driving with a suspended license — out of several charges presented by police, according to court documents.

According to the release, police interaction with Romine began when dispatchers were notified of a vehicle driving erratically on U.S. Highway 12 around 4:30 p.m. Thursday.

College Place officers spotted the vehicle, a Subaru Legacy, heading south on Northeast Myra Road and followed it.

The driver allegedly ran a stop sign while police were trying to catch up. The driver then stopped the car on

Northeast Cargill Avenue.

Romine left the vehicle and ran away when officers got out to talk to him. The man eventually stopped in the backyard of a house in the 100 block of Northeast Rose Street, and he was arrested "without further issue," according to the release.

Officers entered the license plate numbers in their database, but they didn't match the vehicle description. They learned the car was listed as stolen out of Missoula the night before, the release noted.

Walla Walla County Prosecuting Attorney Jim Nagle said he expected arraignment on the local charges to happen June 14.

Romine has multiple pending charges in Baker County, including stolen vehicle possession, plus

charges on another case involving illicit guns and drugs and illegal burning.

Romine was convicted in 2018 of starting a fire that burned 800 acres and was accused of illegal burning again in September 2020, when open burning was prohibited in Baker County.

Romine was serving a three-year probation term that started in 2020 for starting a fire on Sept. 20, 2018, that spread from property where he lived, about five miles east of Halfway, onto adjacent land, burning an estimated 800 acres.

The property where the fire started, along Highway 86, is owned by David R. Romine of Clarkston, Washington, according to Baker County Assessor's Office records.

When Romine was arrested in April 2020 he

LOCAL BRIEFING

Betty Combs celebrating 90th birthday with open house Saturday, June 5

Betty Combs will celebrate her 90th birthday on Saturday, June 5, and friends are invited to an open house that day from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St.

No gifts, please. Your attendance will be most important to her.



Combs

Baker School District reports three COVID-19 cases at Early Learning Center

The Baker School District reported on Saturday, May 29 that three people at the Baker Early Learning Center had tested positive for COVID-19 over the past week.

The Early Learning Center, in the North Baker School building at 2725 Seventh St., has kindergarten classes.

"As we near the end of the school year, I am grateful for staff and parents who continue to go above and beyond in following pandemic health and safety protocols to help keep our students well and in school," Mark Witty, district superintendent, said in a press release.

COVID

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Although the county's rate is well below the threshold of 30 during a two-week period needed for the county to remain at the lowest risk level under state guidelines, county officials are concerned about the test positivity rate.

That's the second criteria the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reviews in setting risk levels.

To remain at the lowest risk level — which has the least stringent restrictions on businesses and activities — the county also needs to have a test positivity rate below 5%.

That rate for May 23-29 was 3.9%, and for the pre-

vious week it was 1.5%.

However, the number of tests being conducted in the county has dropped by about 40% over the past month or so, even a handful of new cases could potentially push the county's positivity rate above 5%.

That has prompted the Baker County Health Department to schedule a free COVID-19 testing clinic on Thursday, June 3 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot across from the Health Department, 2200 Fourth St.

The county plans to have testing clinics each Thursday during June.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown says she hopes to cancel restrictions statewide by the end of June.

HEAT

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The torrid temperatures, running about 20 degrees above average for the first week of June, are a product of a ridge of high pressure that will settle over the region for much of this week, according to the National Weather Service.

The heat wave won't persist, however.

A pair of cold fronts, one late Thursday or early Friday, the other arriving Saturday, will spawn northwest winds that will replace the heat with air cooled by its passage over the chilly waters of the North Pacific.

Although skies will remain generally clear, with little chance of precipitation, temperatures will dip to the mid 80s on Friday, June 4, to the mid 70s on Saturday, and to around 70, a few degrees below average, on Monday, June 7.

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