

Veteran recalls service aboard USS Hancock



Contributed photos
Bob Lesley and his wife, Mary Lee, at Magone Lake last summer.

Bob Lesley experienced kamikaze attacks

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Robert “Bob” Lesley, 90, of John Day experienced battles of World War II aboard the U.S.S. Hancock aircraft carrier about 70 years ago. After decades of silence, he has finally decided to publicly share his story.

He joined the U.S. Navy at 18 years of age in May 1944. After gunnery school, Lesley became a Third Class Aviation Boatswain Mate on the Hancock, his home port at Ulithi, in the Caroline Islands of the western Pacific Ocean.

On the Hancock, Lesley took on many responsibilities. He was a gunner; a firefighter when the need arose; and his most important job was director, seeing the pilots to safe take offs and landings.

Airmen left on maneuvers from the Hancock near Okinawa, and some didn’t return as there were many kamikaze suicide attacks.

“During the first strike to Japan, while on the Hancock, I recovered a young pilot who made ace (shot down five Japanese planes in one trip),” Lesley said. “He said he’d still be out there if he had more ammo.”

Lesley said the Hancock carried 100 planes with roughly 2,000-plus men on board.

He said a kamikaze struck the deck, at the fantails of

the carrier, setting 15 empty planes on fire. He was among the shipmates extinguishing the fire.

Lesley received commendation for his service and was honorably discharged on May 26, 1946. He said the Navy wanted him to continue, but he returned home to Oregon and later married his sweetheart, Mary Lee, on Jan. 20, 1949.

They celebrated their 68th anniversary this year.

Bob and Mary Lee were both born and raised on ranches near Monument.

After the war, Bob drove heavy equipment and logging trucks to support his family, as he and his wife raised their two sons and daughter in Bend.

Both the Lesleys’ sons and their son-in-law are veterans of the Vietnam War.



Navy veteran Bob Lesley, left, and his friends and fellow officers aboard the USS Hancock aircraft carrier in 1945, near Okinawa during World War II.

EAGLE ON VACATION IN ITALY



The Grant Union Junior-Senior High School Art Club took the Eagle on vacation to Pisa, Italy, during spring break. The group visited other locations such as the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, Pompeii, Sienna, Florence, Monaco and Nice.

OBITUARIES

Kenneth Lawrence Harvey

Kenneth Lawrence Harvey, 50, died March 27 at his Seneca home. A funeral service will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 2, at Seneca School. Interment will be at the Keller Cemetery on the Jack Southworth Ranch, followed by a potluck at Seneca City Hall.

Arrangements are under the care of Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845.

For condolences, visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com.

Lola O’Rorke-Kastl

Lola O’Rorke-Kastl, 84, of Prairie City, died March 26 in Yakima, Washington. A graveside service will be at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 2, at Canyon City Cemetery, with Darrell Johnson officiating. A reception will follow at the Prairie City Senior Center.

Memorial contributions may be made to Blue Mountain Care Center in Prairie City through Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day OR 97845.

For condolences visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com.

Dollina Humphreys

Jan. 13, 1927 — March 21, 2016

Dollina Mary Ann Humphreys, 89, of Canyon City, died March 21 at Blue Mountain Care Center in Prairie City. A funeral service was held March 28 at Driskill Memorial Chapel in John Day.

Humphreys was born Jan. 13, 1927, in Dayville, to Horace and Mary (MacKay) Stewart. She was raised on the Stewart Ranch, now the Long Box Ranch. She graduated from Dayville High School in 1945.

In 1960, she married Rhys Humphreys in Dayville. They moved to the Humphreys Ranch where they raised sheep.

From 1952-1965, she worked at the John Day Medical Center and, from 1972-1990, was deputy clerk for Dayville School. She also was a dispatcher for the People Mover.

She enjoyed crocheting, cross stitch, sewing and quilting. She made many quilts that she gave to family and friends. She was always proud of her Scottish heritage and was fond of bagpipe music. She was a member of the Eastern Star and the Presbyterian Church, and was a Rebekah.

She was the treasurer for the Presbyterian Church for a time and was honored to play the piano during services there.

Survivors include stepdaughters, Greta (Bob) Wright of Oregon City and Leta Kersey of Canyon City; stepson, Gale (Pat) Humphreys of Troutdale; nieces, Cathy (Chris) Struck of Redmond and Jeanie Pauley of Vaughn, Washington; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Rhys Humphreys, in 1983; brother, Dalton Stewart; sister-in-law, Becky Stewart; stepson, Dale Humphreys; and grandson, Ronnie Kersey.

Memorial contributions may be made to Blue Mountain Care Center through Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd. John Day, OR 97845.

For condolences, visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com.



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Thank You

We would like to extend a heartfelt “Thank You” to everyone who helped us during this trying time.

There are far too many to list, but know that we appreciate every one of you. All the cards, flowers, phone calls, visits, food; it all means so much.

We would like to ask that anyone who has a good memory or story of Wade please write it down and give it to us or our family so we can share them with his sister, Keelyn, when she is older.

Thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely, Kyle, Regina & Keelyn Dunbar and Wade’s grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.



Our Sincerest Thanks

The family of Reba Berry would like to express their thanks to the Blue Mountain Hospital and the Blue Mountain Care Center for their care of Reba and their kindness during our loss.

To our family and friends, thank you so much for the cards, flowers and food. You were a true blessing. Your kindness and support will never be forgotten.

Sincerely, the Berry family & the Dickens family.



ANNIVERSARY

JERRY AND MARCIA FRANKLIN

Jerry and Marcia Franklin of Prairie City will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on April 2.

The Franklins were married on April 2, 1966, in Henderson, Nevada.

The couple, who have lived in Prairie City since the mid-1970s, have three children, Traci, Chris and Ira, and six grandchildren.



LAST WEEK’S TEMPS

JOHN DAY	HI/LO
TUESDAY	47/32
WEDNESDAY	55/33
THURSDAY	52/38
FRIDAY	43/31
SATURDAY	51/26
SUNDAY	52/34
MONDAY	44/32

RIVER FLOWS ON MARCH 28

	DISCHARGE	LAST YEAR	AVG.	% OF AVG.
JD RIVER NEAR JOHN DAY	283	245	300	94
MIDDLE FORK @ RITTER	586	393	600	98
NORTH FORK @ MONUMENT	2670	1790	2980	90
JD RIVER @ SERVICE CREEK	4340	2450	4430	98
JD RIVER @ McDONALD FERRY	4950	3020	4820	103
CANYON CREEK @ THISELLS RANCH BRIDGE	76	NEW	82	93
CANYON CREEK @ ADAMS DRIVE BRIDGE	139	116	146	95

Ski Report: Anthony Lakes: Base 85 inches; trace of new snow.

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 30-APRIL 5

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Chance of showers	Mostly sunny	Chance of showers	Cloudy
59	63	71	67	65	56	56
27	39	42	39	38	25	25

FORECAST AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122 ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM; NOAA WEATHER RADIO: 162.500 MHz