

FALLEN

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The tradition of handing out poppies to honor those who died originated with the opening lines of Lt. Col. John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Field."

Grant County has a large number of residents who have served in the military. Bob Van Voorhis, an active supporter of local veterans in the John Day area, estimates about 1,000 veterans live in the county, which has 7,185 residents.

Memorial Day is a time to recognize publicly the sacrifice of those who served, but their stories should be remembered year-round.

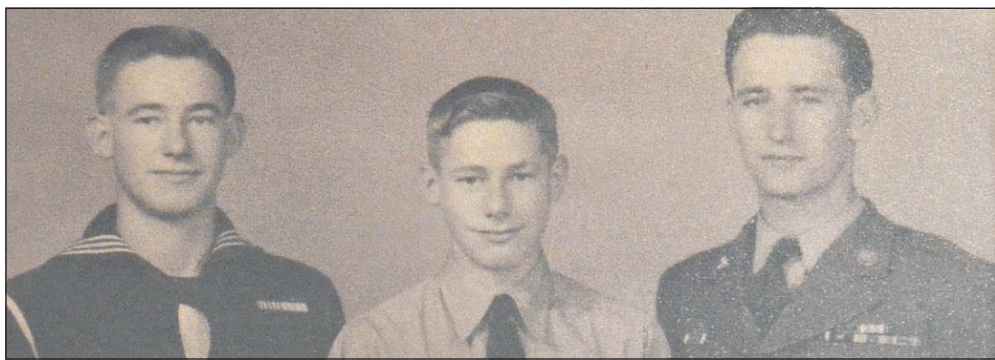
Lelus "Pete" Baucum didn't receive his high school diploma from Grant Union High School until he retired from teaching at the same school 42 years later in 1984. He was drafted into the Army during World War II and headed off to basic training in Fort Lewis, Washington, before the school year ended.

Cpl. Baucum served 2 1/2 years as a squad leader with the Army's 246th Combat Engineers and saw action during the D-Day invasion, landing in the third wave at deadly Utah Beach on the Normandy coast.

After that, the Allied forces struggled through dense hedgerows and fierce German resistance as their foothold in France slowly expanded. Combat engineers were demolition specialists who cleared



The Eagle/Richard Hanners
Ed Negus, the commander of American Legion Post 106 in Prairie City, stands next to a uniform complete with medals worn by Vernon D. Reynolds, a cattle rancher and fire chief from Prairie City who fought in both World War II and the Korean War.



Contributed photo
Members of the Baucum family who served include, left to right, Bill Baucum, Coast Guard; Jerry Baucum, Merchant Marines; and Lelus 'Pete' Baucum, Army.

roads for other troops.

Baucum was in a foxhole somewhere in France on July 30, 1944, when he wrote to the John Day Valley Ranger.

"The country we are getting into now reminds me much of the Hood River Valley there in Oregon," he wrote. "There are a lot of oak

trees and apple orchards. The fields are beginning to get bigger, and the hedges seem smaller as we drive further inland."

Baucum described sleeping in foxholes as German 88 shells and other bombs dropped nearby.

"I've had cold sweat run down my face a number of times since I've been over here and believe me, that sweat wasn't caused by the heat," he wrote.

But morale was high, he wrote — except sometimes when they didn't receive their mail. After eating so many "dog biscuits" in their K rations, the troops "all began to bark like dogs," he wrote. But the food was getting better, he noted.

"Eugene Davis of Prairie City is in my company," Baucum wrote. "We've been together ever since we came into the Army. He drove the Prairie creamery truck before he was inducted."

Baucum was injured twice after his company reached Germany. The first time, Oct. 7, 1944, a paperback novel in one of his pockets prevented serious injury, his daughter Patty McArthur told the Eagle.

"He didn't realize he'd been injured," she said.

Then, five days later, Baucum's Jeep ran over a land mine. Severely injured and unable to walk, Baucum

Memorial Day remembrances

Memorial Day begins with recognition at cemeteries in Grant County. Members of American Legion El-Lis Tracy Post 77 will set about 500 flags at headstones of deceased veterans in Rest Lawn Cemetery in John Day, Canyon City Cemetery and St. Andrews Catholic Cemetery in Canyon City on Friday, May 25. No service is planned for John Day or Canyon City on Memorial Day.

Members of American Legion Post 106 Auxiliary in Prairie City will place about 150 flags and crosses with poppies attached at headstones of deceased veterans in the Prairie City Cemetery the same day. The post has more than 100 casket flags that will be flown along the roadway running through the middle of the cemetery.

The post in Prairie City also will hold a Memorial Day service at the Prairie City Cemetery on Monday, May 28, starting at 11 a.m. A short service will follow a gun salute and taps played by Ed Heiple, with Tom McAuslan reading from "In Flanders Field" by Lt. Col. John McCrae. A second service will take place on the Bridge Street bridge, where a wreath will be cast into the John Day River in memory of those lost at sea.

US deaths in foreign wars

1917-1918 World War I	1955-1975 Vietnam War
Total: 116,516	Total: 58,209
Grant County: 5	Grant County: 4
1941-1945 World War II	2001-present
Total: 405,842	Afghanistan War
Grant County: 20	Total: 2,216
1950-1953 Korean War	2003-2012 Iraq War
Total: 36,516	Total: 4,497
Grant County: 6	



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

A plaque at the Seventh Street Sports Complex in John Day recognizes locals who died in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War.

pulled himself into a thatch of red willows where he hid for about a day until he was rescued. Years later, he recalled the red willows with fondness.

Baucum spent 18 months in Portland hospitals for surgery and rehabilitation. He met a nurse there, Ella Eichler, and they were married Dec. 2, 1945. With her support, he graduated from Oregon State University in 1951 and spent much of his teaching career at Grant Union.

Baucum was awarded two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts for his service in the European Theater, including the capture of German troops. But he suffered from shrapnel in his legs for the rest of his life — all the while running a ranch, teaching high school and raising four children, McArthur said.

"The shrapnel worked its way up to the surface of his skin, like black pepper on the back of his legs," she said. "But he was a warrior — he handled the pain with nothing more than an occasional aspirin the rest of his life. I don't know how he did it."

Vernon D. Reynolds served in both World War II

and the Korean War. Ed Negus, the current commander of American Legion Post 106 in Prairie City, considered Reynolds "like a second dad."

Reynolds grew up in the Prairie City area, living for a time at the Blue Mountain Hot Springs. He enlisted in the Army and served with Company E 17th Regiment 7th Infantry. He received a Purple Heart after he was shot by Japanese soldiers on Okinawa.

Reynolds re-enlisted for the Korean War. After he returned, he ran a cattle ranch near Prairie City and served for many years as the Prairie City fire chief. Negus recalled the day years later when he and Chip Wood boarded a bus in Prairie City bound for Portland and the Vietnam War.

"Three or four fire trucks showed up at the bus stop, lights flashing," Negus recalled. "The people in the bus didn't know what was going on."

Reynolds had organized the tribute for two local men headed off to war. Reynolds died in the 1980s, and his uniform, medals and other memorabilia are kept in the Post 106 hall on Front Street.

140th Anniversary of Kam Wah Chung & Co.

ENJOY a Chinese dinner, \$20 per person. By reservation only at 541-575-2800. Deadline June 4, 2018.

WATCH traditional Chinese dance performances by Portland Lee Association Dragon & Lion Dance team during the dinner and at the 62 Days parade.

Information: 541-575-2800 | oregonstateparks.org | Friendskamwahchung@yahoo.com

CENTRAL OREGON MOBILE VET CENTER

WHEN/WHERE
 May 23rd in John Day-Elks Lodge
 May 24th in Burns - Hines Thriftway
 May 25th in Christmas Valley-Community Clinic

WHO ARE WE?
 CENTRAL OREGON VET CENTER
 1645 NE FORBES RD, SUITE 105
 BEND, OR 97702
 541-749-2112

WWW.VETCENTER.VA.GOV

Mission Statement:
 To welcome home and honor those who served, those still serving, and their families by reaching out to them, engaging their communities, and providing them with quality readjustment counseling and timely referral.

READJUSTMENT COUNSELING
 Civilians...they just don't get it!
 Come down and let's talk...Veteran to Veteran.

BENEFITS
 Find out about what is available that you may have earned.

For more information contact
Grant County Veterans 541 620-8057

A TRIBUTE TO OUR SOLDIERS ON MEMORIAL DAY

We honor the memories of the brave soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Their courage and selflessness will always be remembered with gratitude. We will never forget that freedom is not free.

Bank of Eastern Oregon
 John Day 541-575-1862
 Prairie City 541-820-3321

We will be closed Monday, May 28 in honor of Memorial Day