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Heppner man witnessed Pearl Harbor attack



George Jefferies

Do you remember Pearl Harbor? George Jefferies does. He was there.

Jefferies, who lives at the St. Patrick Senior Center in Heppner, was 22 and stationed with the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor the day it was bombed by the Japanese 50 years ago, on Dec. 7, 1941.

Jefferies was a machinist mate on the Navy ship Avoset, a plane tender that carried aviation fuel. He had been stationed at Pearl Harbor for about a year. In peacetime the Avoset had around 54 sailors on board, but the crew had been built up prior to the attack. "They did suspect something, but it wasn't enough," he said.

The Avoset, a wooden-deck ship that had served as a mine sweeper in World War II, was tied up to a dock near battleship row, just ahead of the California, one of the first hit. At 7:55 a.m. when the strike began, Jefferies was below deck on his bunk. He had been on shore leave the night before, Saturday night. He heard the sirens and someone came below to tell the men that this time it was not a drill.

"When I got up and came out, I looked to my right," said Jefferies. "There was an explosion. He (a Japanese pilot) had just dropped a bomb on the plane ramp. He just swooped up and flew right over."

"I saw all of them go down. The California (about a city block away from the Avoset) was one of the first. When she capsized the oil spill went under the dock where we were. We cast off and went out in the bay." "The Nevada (the last ship in the row) got underway and started out into the bay and then the Japs really went after her. We went along the side and tried to put out the fire. The Nevada was ordered to

go aground so they would not sink in the harbor. We went around and helped whoever needed help.

We weren't very powerful, but we did get credit for shooting down one plane."

"I wasn't scared," added Jefferies. "I don't know why, I just wasn't. When we went topside to see all those battle wagons, it wasn't that it scared me. It almost made me sick...of course it changed everybody's life."

Jefferies had five brothers who all went into the service after Pearl Harbor. "We all got out of it without a scratch," he added. His brother, LeRoy, was on his way to The Philippines, however, and stopped at Pearl Harbor to visit George just one week before the attack on Pearl Harbor. "He left on Monday. The following Sunday they bombed."

Jefferies was born in Nebraska. In 1937 his family moved to Payette, Idaho. Ironically, a man he knew from Payette was on the Arizona during the attack.

After Jefferies left Payette, he went to Chico, CA where he joined the Navy, which eventually took him all over the world. In May of 1942 he went back to San Francisco for a ship overhaul. Then he spent a year in the Aleutian Islands. From there he transferred to Miami to change ships. He put a ship in commission at Orange, Texas, the USS Traw, and was with the Traw until the end of the war in 1945. On the Traw he was stationed on the East Coast on escort duty, which took him several times to France. He then went back to the Pacific through the Panama Canal.

While the war was a time of separation, it was also a time of reunions. While anchored at the Mariana Islands, east of The Philippines, he was able to see his youngest brother, Vernon. "We anchored there. The next morning some men were sent out to repair the radar on the ship. One of them was my brother, so we got to spend the day together."

Nominees sought for chamber awards

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce is seeking nominees for man and woman of the year, citizen-educator and outstanding business to be honored at the Town and Country banquet January 8.

All clubs, organizations and individuals are invited to nominate persons and businesses deserving of the awards. Nomination forms are available at the chamber office (Heppner T.V.) or the office

of Kuhn & Spicer., Forms will be mailed if requested. Deadline for nominations is December 31.

Selection of recipients is based upon community service beyond the normal responsibilities of their own occupation. Candidates nominated in the past not previously selected may be re-nominated.

For more information contact chamber manager Claudia Hughes, 676-9663 or Bill Kuhn 676-9141.

Soroptimist to offer scholarships

Soroptimist International of Heppner announces its annual Training Awards Program (TAP) scholarship in the amount of \$150 to a south Morrow County woman who is entering a vocational or technical training program or completing an undergraduate degree.

Selection consideration will be given to applicants who must enter or return to the job market who need additional skills, training and education to upgrade their employment status, and demonstrate motivation, financial need and capability of performing the work for which they are training. Special consideration will be given to women who are heads of households and can clearly show that specific educa-

tional training for entry or re-entry into the labor market and advancement is a need.

In addition to the local scholarship the application of that recipient will be forwarded for further competition. Two \$3000 awards will be given in each of the 27 Soroptimist regions.

The Soroptimists are also offering a Youth Citizenship Award which is open to high school seniors. Emphasis will be made on the student's involvement in family, school and community activities.

Applications for either scholarship are available from Heppner High School counselor Morse Smith by calling 676-9138 days. The applications are due back to Smith no later than December 20.

Hope Lutheran presents live manger



Rev. Stan Hoobing and members of the Hope Lutheran Church recreated the nativity scene for the Heppner community Sunday Dec. 7.

Left to right are: Kelli and Beth Rafferty, Scott Van Winkle, Stan Hoobing, Becky Evans, Jessica VanWinkle and Andrea Miles. Kneeling are Jayme Hanson and Jessica VanWinkle.

Bank of Eastern Oregon announces dividend payment

G.H. Pierson, president of the Bank of Eastern Oregon has announced a 1991 dividend payment to stockholders of record as of December 1, 1991. The dividend represents a \$7 per share payment for a total payment of \$204,400.00.

The dividend is the 40th dividend paid by the bank and Pier-

son stated that it continues the unwritten policy of rewarding the shareholders for their loyalty and faith in the bank.

The Bank of Eastern Oregon presently has 29,200 shares of stock held by 184 investors.

Arlington, Ione and Heppner are home to the three branches of the bank.

Lexington Grange schedules meeting

The Lexington Grange will meet for their regular meeting Monday, December 16 in the grange hall. A potluck dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the program to follow at 7:30. The program will be the Sunday School children from the First Christian Church in Heppner.

Heppner man arrested for burglary

Rick Walker, Heppner, has been indicted for burglary I, aggravated theft, two counts of theft and forgery I, according to Morrow County District Attorney Jeff Wallace.

Wallace said that Walker was arraigned on Thursday, Dec. 5, and plead not guilty to all counts before Judge Richard Courson,

circuit court judge pro-tem. Walker was released on his own recognizance. A trial has been set for Feb. 21.

Wallace said that the burglary and theft charges are related to a break-in at the home of Howard and Jo Pettyjohn, Heppner, sometime between Nov. 11 and 13. Over \$10,000 of items were stolen from the Pettyjohn home.

Former Heppner man sentenced for assault of police officer

A John Day man was sentenced Friday, December 6 following his conviction for assaulting a policeman in Heppner, according to Morrow County District Attorney Jeff Wallace.

Wesley Rex Bolin, 31, was convicted of attempted assault in the third degree, resisting arrest in the fourth degree, and assaulting a public safety officer by Circuit Judge Pro Tem Ralph Currin following his trial on October 4. He was also acquitted on several other assault-related charges arising from the same incident.

According to Wallace, the charges arose from an incident in March, 1991, in Heppner. A Morrow County deputy was dispatched to a domestic violence incident at an apartment on Rock St late that evening. When he arrived and attempted to take Bolin in custody, a struggle ensued, with Bolin attempting to take the deputy's night stick and strike

him with it. Because backup was not immediately available, the two struggled in Bolin's apartment for some time before other officers arrived and he was able to be subdued.

Judge Currin ordered Bolin to serve 180 days in jail, with all but seven days suspended. Bolin was also placed on two years' probation and was imposed a \$1,500 fine, an \$80 victim-witness assessment and ordered Bolin to reimburse the state \$240 for court-appointed attorney's fees.

Bolin, who moved from Heppner to John Day following the incident, is currently on probation in Wheeler, Grant and Benton Counties as well.

"I expect that authorities in those counties will be taking action to revoke Mr. Bolin's probation as a result of these convictions," said Wallace, "as he has a record of assaultive-type behavior."

Livestock Growers meeting slated

The Morrow County Livestock Growers annual meeting will be held December 13 at the Heppner Elks Club. The meeting will get underway with the afternoon program at 1:30 p.m., the business meeting following at 4:45, social hour at 6 and dinner at 7 p.m. The social hour will be hosted by the Farm Credit Service.

Speakers include Doug Breese of the Oregon Farm Bureau, who will speak on public lands issues

at 1:30 p.m. Sharen Beck, Oregon Cattleman's Association Private Lands chairman, will speak on private lands issues at 2:30 and Wayne Evans, Oregon Beef Council chairman will speak at 4:15. Lynn Lundquist will update the group on OCA's annual meetings and will be the banquet speaker. Bob VanSchojack, MCLG president will preside over the business meeting.

Reservations should be made by calling the Extension office 676-9642.

Announcing . . .

Bank of Eastern Oregon
HOME LOAN PROGRAM

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