

# WWII veteran to receive missing medals

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

A World War II veteran is going to get the medals he was promised 70 years ago.

After William Jones, 92, of Hermiston, appeared in our sister paper, the *East Oregonian* last week, his niece Emily Mellick said she was contacted by Rep. Greg Walden's office who told her he would make sure Jones got any medals and ribbons he had earned. Sen. Ron Wyden's office also reached out with an offer of help.

"I was shocked," Mellick said.

Starting in 1943 at age 19, Jones served as an Army Air Force ordnance worker at an airbase in southern Italy, loading bombs onto B-24 planes. He returned to the United States in 1945 in preparation for a new assignment in the Pacific, but before the Army could ship him out again the war ended.

When Jones moved in with Mellick last year, she said she had enjoyed learning about his service and was surprised to learn that some of the medals listed in his honorable discharge papers had never been sent to him. She decided to work on getting them for him, even after being told initially that there would be a \$250 fee.

"He deserves it because he served our country and he earned them," she said.

Mellick said Walden's office sent her the proper



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

World War II veteran William Jones, at left, sits with his niece Emily Mellick at her home recently in Hermiston. The offices of U.S. Rep. Greg Walden and Sen. Ron Wyden have said they will help Jones get the medals he was awarded during his time in the service.

paperwork needed to get the medals free of charge and she helped Jones fill it out.

"I just faxed it over today, so we should hear back in a couple of

weeks," she said. "He is so excited."

The medals listed on his discharge papers include a service medal, a good conduct medal and a distinguished service

citation. Mellick said there are two ribbons not listed on there that he also earned but never received.

She said she wasn't sure what she would do

when the medals finally came, or how long it would take for them to arrive, but she did want to have some sort of party to celebrate. Friends and relatives have taken an

interest, she said.

"A lot of people have stopped by and said 'You're doing a good job helping your uncle; keep up the good work,'" she said.

## Death row inmate dies at TRCI in Umatilla

Oregon's oldest death row inmate died this week at Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla.

According to a release from the Oregon Department of Corrections, Mark Allen Pinnell, 67, died of natural causes at about 10:55 a.m. on Monday, December 14, 2 in the Two Rivers Correctional Institution infirmary.



**Mark Allen Pinnell**

Pinnell has been in Oregon Department of Corrections custody since March 4, 1986, after conviction on a robbery charge in Clackamas County. He was later charged with six counts of aggravated murder and two counts of murder out of Washington County in the death of John

Wallace Ruffner in Tualatin in 1985, convicted and sentenced to death. An accomplice in that case, Donald Cornell, was acquitted of the aggravated murder charges and convicted of felony murder. He was released on parole in September 2011 after serving nearly 26 years in prison and has since been released from parole.

Pinnell has been on death row since March 13, 1992. ODC officials said he was being temporarily housed at the Umatilla facility for health reasons.

Earlier this year, Pinnell sought clemency to be released to hospice care due to severe chronic pulmo-

nary disease.

Pinnell, who was Oregon's oldest death row inmate at the time, first sought clemency from former Gov. John Kitzhaber, who denied his request shortly before leaving office. He sought clemency from Gov. Kate Brown in August, and asked for an urgent review of his case in October due to failing health. Brown denied the request.

## Irrigon High School seeks student sponsors

Irrigon High School is looking for community organizations, clubs and businesses interested in sponsoring an Irrigon sophomore so they can attend the Hugh O'Brian Youth

Leadership Conference.

The conference, which is in May 2016 at Willamette University in Salem, provides an opportunity for each Oregon high school to send three soph-

omores to gain leadership training.

The cost is \$250 per student. For more information about sponsoring a student, call Mike Royer at 541-922-5551.

## Area law enforcement receives new officers

Starting in October, new law enforcement officers have joined area agencies after graduating from Oregon's Public Safety Academy.

Parole and probation officer Danny Mardore joined Umatilla County Community Justice, according to an announcement from

the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. He graduated on Oct. 30.

Oregon State Police in Hermiston also received a new recruit following an Oct. 2 graduation.

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