

The Ley Station

The Ley Station, Yreka's Fire Station, was built to honor Major Horace V. Ley, a former city attorney and fire chief. Major Ley fought in the Great World War (WWI) and reportedly charged into machine gun fire to lead others in battle. He was a hero of the 115th Engineers, a banker, attorney, and local Fire Chief. The story of his ultimate fight with cancer was lost in April of 1930 as reported by the *Modesto News Herald* on April 28, 1930. However, true to his heroic deeds Major Ley left his home in Yreka to find care in a sanitarium just outside of San Francisco in the town of San Anselmo. He had five weeks of treatment and then the Major "knew". He asked his wife who stood by his side to bring him back home. He reportedly said, "I want to die at home. In the Siskiyou. By Mt. Shasta."

By the time arrangements were made to bring him home he was riddled with pain and only semi-conscious. He was carried onboard a private airplane at the Oakland Airport. The trip home was a true battle. There were fierce winds and heavy rains that impeded the flight. They landed at Redding and were 100 miles short of their goal. The pilot grimly told his passengers they "would make it" – the rest of the journey was apparently terrifying flying through the very stormy weather and through the mountain pass in a small aircraft. Finally they made it to Yreka and the Major was "home". The newspaper report does not indicate exactly what time they arrived in Yreka that day, but that evening at 10 o'clock Major Ley died. But he made it home!

It is an amazing story of dedication and bravery by all the persons involved, Major Ley, his wife, and the pilot! The story may appear a bit grim to some, but to this author it is a peek into the past and why Ley was chosen to have a new beautiful Fire Station named in his honor. For those of you with a copy of your book, *Yreka, Images of America* by Arcadia Publishing, you can compare the image above with an early view of the Fire Station as seen on page 101.

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