



Wenatchee Valley 3617 Post & Auxiliary News

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Commander's Letter

It is my most sincere wish that this newsletter finds everyone healthy and supported during the current health and economic crisis we find our community, nation, and entire world in during this year of 2020. As you well know, our "normal" lives were abruptly altered this past spring when COVID-19 and Coronavirus became part of our lexicon. I don't know if any one of us fully appreciated the immense freedom we've always enjoyed as a citizen of this great country to go wherever we want, visit with whoever we choose, and purchase any product we wish. This becomes abundantly clear when we're now asked to stay home, isolate from others not living with us, and oh by the way, there wasn't a store in the valley that has on their shelves, a decent and continuous supply of toilet paper, sanitizing products, paper towels or water. We've all had to change something in response to this global pandemic.

Another painful aspect of these times is that the activities, projects, and outreach our Post & Auxiliary has excelled at over the years has all but ground to a halt. We've missed our Friday Coffee Breaks, monthly meetings, fundraising, and visiting with our community. But there were a few sparks of light in the otherwise dark landscape...

We were excited to receive several entries into our Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth scholarship programs this fall, even though the majority of students were being taught at home. I'm pleased to announce that **Emily Pugh**, a freshman at Ephrata High School, was selected as the Voice of Democracy Patriotic Audio Essay winner for our Post. Emily will be presented with VOD Plaque and \$250 for her presentation on, "Is this the country the founders envisioned?". Our Patriot's Pen winner is **Rachel Carter**, an 8th grader at Valley Academy of Learning in Wenatchee. Her essay on "What is patriotism to me?" was also selected as the best essay in District 7. In addition to receiving cash awards and plaques from the Post and District, Rachel's essay will be elevated to the Department of Washington for their judging panel that meets later this month.

This next Saturday, **December 19th at 9am**, we will hold our annual **Wreaths Across America** event at Evergreen Cemetery in East Wenatchee. We recognize that due to our current COVID restrictions, our ceremony will need to be modified. Instead of everyone gathering around the flagpole, the Wreaths Across America Ceremony will be published in this newsletter for you to read. Also, there will not be a presentation of colors by the honor guard. Instead, participants will be asked to sufficiently space at the start of rows where boxes of wreaths will be positioned. *Please stay in your family group to minimize contact with others.* After welcoming remarks, we will have the Pledge of Allegiance fol-

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lowed by a prayer by Chaplain Simonson. We will then place the wreaths on graves. After our wreath laying at Evergreen, a few wreaths will be taken to Stemilt Hill and Sunset Cemeteries for placement on veteran graves there. **EVERYONE PLEASE WEAR A MASK.**

We've also been busy identifying potential projects to help local veterans and their families with makeovers and renovations. Home Depot Foundation and team members of the Wenatchee Home Depot Store have partnered with us once again to make a difference in someone's life. This new project is to construct a large wheelchair ramp at a residence in East Wenatchee. The architect's plans are complete and the **grant from Home Depot has been awarded**. We're going to ask local contractors if they can join us on this project that should take less than 2 days to complete. We will announce a project date and location once the materials are procured and professional volunteers identified. [Check our Facebook page](#) and post website for all project announcements (web addresses can be found on the Mailer Cover page).

The names Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, and Facetime were unknown to a majority of us a year ago. I hope most of you have tried at least one of these video conferencing applications (apps) during the past months to stay in contact with your family and friends. They are really nice tools that allow you to see and hear the people that are important to you. We have started a **Zoom Friday Morning Coffee Breaks** to take the place of our good old Friday gathering BC (Before Coronavirus). With some success (1 out of 3 weeks), we've had a meetup on Zoom to enjoy some conversation from the comfort of our own home, drinking our own coffee, and eating our own pastries. I really want to encourage you to join us at our next gatherings on **December 18 and January 1 from 9am-10:30am**. These upcoming and future Zoom Coffee Breaks will also be listed on our website and Facebook. Just follow the link in the announcement to join our Zoom meeting. If we get a large enough number of participants for the coffee breaks, we'll open up several different "Coffee Table" Zoom links so you can join the conversations at different "Tables" like; "Stan's Table of Tall Tales", "Jude's Table of Cute Pups", or "Schwab & Dent's Table of Old Cars". Drop in for some conversation, drop out and join another "Table". It's that easy!

Once you become familiar with Zoom, don't limit its use to just the VFW Coffee Break. We hope to expand to using it for meetings, special events, and our chair yoga classes. Please know that we are here to help you get setup for these events and provide some instruction on how to use Zoom. If you're the intuitive type, you can always go to the Zoom website for tutorials and instructions on the app.

In closing, I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season. These next few months are looking to be the most challenging during this pandemic as infection rates continue to rise in our community. It will also take everyone making informed decisions for themselves and their families on how to best get through this. Please put the **Chelan-Douglas Health District** on your list of informed sources when it comes to understanding what is actually going on in our community as it pertains to COVID-19. Please follow the science on this issue, your life may depend on it! Chelan-Douglas Health District (<https://cdhd.wa.gov>) or on Facebook.

- Commander Brad Pieratt

Welcome New Members!

Jeff Martinez
(Air Force, GWOT)

Montie Black
(Army, Vietnam)

Terry Henke
(Army, Vietnam)

Jack Lyon (Navy, Vietnam)



Auxiliary President's Letter

I hope this finds everyone well and healthy. This has been a very trying year for everyone. The limitations from the stay-at-home orders has made for interesting times. Fortunately, we have been able to still provide some assistance to those in need and remember our Veterans.

Since there were no ceremonies on **Veterans Day**, which we all missed, we were able to, with the help of our Post, to put flags at the veteran graves at Evergreen Cemetery. We had about fifteen people turn out including Police Chief Johnson and Sheriff Burnett and their families. The Wenatchee World was there to interview those in attendance and had a nice article in the paper.

When the devastating fires hit the Colville tribe in the fall, our Auxiliary member Leona Wolk coordinated efforts to get relief to the area. She went to the area while the fires were still going and caravanned with others to get emergency supplies to those in need. In the following weeks, we donated funds from the Auxiliary and had donations from others to buy tents, lanterns, blankets, food, and water to be delivered to the Colville tribe members. Auxiliary members made numerous trips to Okanogan during this time delivering food and supplies.

Our Auxiliary has adopted a Veteran and his 3-year-old son. The Veteran works with the homeless through an outreach program. Unfortunately he has been unable to do his job because of the stay-at-home orders. We are hoping to make it a good Christmas for him and his son. We will be collecting clothing, toys, and \$\$s to make this a good Christmas for them. If anyone would like to donate, they can contact me directly.

A special Thank You goes out to **Dee Johnson** for her efforts with **Operation Homefront** through the Dollar Tree Stores. She picked up the donated items and delivered everything to East Wenatchee schools. The schools will see that needy children get the toys.

Our hospital chairs, Bicky LaRoque and Carol Trunzo, are keeping in touch with those in area nursing homes. They have coordinated our sending cards and making small gifts for those who cannot have contact with family members at this time. We must make sure those in nursing homes and their caregivers are not forgotten during these trying times.

The Auxiliary will be having a **virtual meeting on Wednesday, Dec 16th at 6:00pm**. The login information will be sent in an email as soon as everything is set. If you do not receive emails from Bicky and would like to attend the meeting just give me a text or call and I will get you on her email list.

Have a good Christmas and Happy New Year. Enjoy your families, whether it be in person, by phone, or online. We must adapt so hopefully 2021 will be a great year for all. Stay safe!!

~ Shirley Lance,
Auxiliary President
(425) 223-2172
slanc0382@netzero.com

Welcome New Auxiliary Members!

Rachel Tamngin

Sean Tamngin

Iran Tamngin

Shane Tamngin

National Wreaths Across America Day Ceremony—19 Dec 2020

This year, across the country at more than 2,200 participating locations like this one, there are millions of Americans gathering together safely as one nation to Remember, Honor, and Teach. We are all proud to be Americans that live in a free society made up of many people,



from many walks of life. The freedoms we enjoy today have not come without a price. Lying here before us and in cemeteries through this nation are men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in freedom and without fear. We can worship as we see fit. We can raise our children to believe as we do. We are free to vote for the leaders of our choosing. And, we have the right to succeed and we have the right to fail at whatever endeavor we wish to pursue.

The United States of America was founded on the ideals of Freedom, Justice, and Equality. Our Nation stands as a shining beacon of liberty and freedom to the world. We thank those who gave their lives to keep us free and we shall not forget you. *We shall remember.*

Today, more than ever, we reflect on our nation's veterans and active duty service members who have had and continue to fight to protect the innocent and oppressed. This nation has always been the first to stand up for the freedom of people around the world. Many of you have answered that call and served your country well. We are here to say "Thank you" and *we are honored to know you.*

There are many men and women serving today in all branches of the military, here at home and in places far away that most of us have never heard of. These men and women are part of the best-trained, best-equipped force in the world. *We honor them and their families for the sacrifices they make each day* to keep our country safe from terrorism, hatred, and injustice.

Quoting our 40th United States President Ronald Regan, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

Today, we show a united front of gratitude and respect across the United States of America as we REMEMBER the Fallen, HONOR those who serve and their families, and TEACH the next generation the value of freedom.

Remember, we are not here today to "decorate graves." We are here to remember not their *deaths*, but their *lives*. Each wreath is a gift of appreciation from a grateful America.

These live balsam fir wreaths symbolize our honor to those who have served and are serving in the armed forces of our great nation, and to their families who endure sacrifices everyday on our behalf. To our children, we want you to understand that the freedoms you enjoy today have not been free, but have come with a cost that someday you may have to pay yourself.

As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred, and injustice. Thanks to our Veterans, we have the freedom to do just that.



**TAPS - Remembering
those we've recently lost**

Charles & Bonnie Sanders

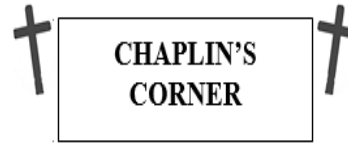
Robert Derry

Wayne Mummert

Robert Jaspers

Larry Ward

Earl Slorey



**CHAPLIN'S
CORNER**

As we each deal with the changes around us, let us continue to look to our hope and faith in God as a source of peace and comfort. I would like to share with you this prayer for health and healing:

Lord, your Word speaks promises of healing and restoration and I thank you for the miracles you still perform today. Today I claim those promises over our Post Members and their families. I believe in the healing power of faith and prayer, and I ask you to begin your mighty work in our lives. Please reach down and surround us with supernatural peace and strength, and give us the faith to believe that all things are possible for you. Please also protect us from discouragement and continue to give us courage. Amen.

Adapted from Max Lucado: How Should I Pray to God for Healing?

- Sarah Simonson, Chaplain

FOUND

MILITARY SERVICE RING

Military Service Ring found outside a local business on Veteran's Day

Please contact us with a full description of the ring including color, branch, symbols, and possible loss location to claim the ring. Send inquiries to:

Commander@vfwpost3617.org

Going Digital: Website, Email, and Zoom

As one of the younger, more tech-adept members of our Post, who works in the digital realm for clients on a regular basis, I felt it was my duty to help our Post and Auxiliary move into the 21st century just a little bit more this year.

Over the course of the past 12 months, I've **rebuilt our website** to be easier on the human eyes as well as the search engines. If you haven't seen it yet, please visit <https://vfwpost3617.org> and take a look around. While some things from the past are still missing, such as information about our Veterans Memorial which I will be adding in this winter, I have added some new features to the website that I hope you'll check out. We now have a **Members Only area**, which requires access to view. Items such as the previous meeting's minutes will be posted in this account-required section of the website. If you are interested in accessing the Members Only part of our website, you will need to sign up for an account. Visit <https://vfwpost3617.org/members-area/register/> to create your account (which will then be reviewed for approval).

Aside from the Members area, I have tried to post more timely stories and relevant information on our site. A lot of the messages will also be shared on Facebook, so if you use that social media platform, be sure to follow us there: <https://www.facebook.com/vfwpost3617>. And if you ever have something to share on our social media or website, please get in touch with details. We have many ways to show off our #PostPride!

Another way I'm bringing us into the Digital Age is to offer an alternative to the Print newsletters and classic postal mailings. We now have an **email list** you can sign up for if you'd like to receive digital communications from the Post. By signing up for the email list, you will receive information from us much faster and you will help us save money (from printing and mailing costs). We promise not to spam you—only pertinent messages will ever come from us. To sign up for our digital mailing list, visit <https://vfwpost3617.org/news/newsletter/> and enter your name and email address in the form. You will receive a message to confirm your subscription—*please follow the directions in that email, or you will not be added the list correctly.*


Even before the pandemic made it into our lives, the Commander and I had been talking about ways to make sure our members can stay in touch and be involved without necessarily having to come to the physical location. Once the first stay-at-home orders were put in place, we knew it was time to move forward with a digital meeting platform. We now have an **official Zoom account for our Post** that will be used for a number of virtual events, as Commander Pieratt already mentioned in his letter. See right for the information to join our informal Casual Coffee Chats on Friday mornings. And when we host our Post meetings, the Zoom login information will be shared via email (which is why it's a good idea to get signed up now).

As always, if you ever have any questions about our website, social media presence, or related, just reach out to me via email at webmaster@vfwpost3617.org or send a text to 509-433-7879.

Connie Hill,
Adjutant / Webmaster / Newsletter Editor



INSTRUCTIONS

Go to  zoom.us/join

Meeting ID

Passcode

Collecting Flags for Proper Disposal

Among the many small improvements we've made at our Post Home during this forced closure is our new Flag Depository box out front.

We often hear community members lamenting that they don't know where to take their old, faded, tattered, worn-out US flags for a proper disposal. We've always been a place to drop these off, but only during open hours. Since we're not open regular hours at the moment due to the public health advisory, it made sense to offer an outdoor, all-hours-access safe place to drop off old flags.

Thanks to Commander Pieratt's ingenuity, and spotting a good deal, we now have a durable, weather-resistant Flag Depository box next to the door at our Post Home. Anyone can come and drop off their worn-out flags any time of day without worry.

Deposited flags are regularly removed from the Depository and taken to the VA Hospital in Spokane. We are hoping to partner with a local organization for hosting proper Flag Retirement ceremonies in the future.



Riverway Recognized for Patriotism

Riverway Contractors put on a display of US Flags utilizing some of their equipment on a highly visible hillside near Hwy 28 for the Independence Day weekend.

It certainly inspired some patriotic feelings in members of our community. Because of that, we felt it appropriate to recognize them for it.

On July 15, Commander Pieratt presented Dan and Dave Smith with our Patriotic Citizen Award. Dick Winn, Commander of American Legion Post 10 Wenatchee, also presented them with a Citation of Appreciation. And Quartermaster Schwab, friend of the Smith brothers, presented them with VFW Post 3617 challenge coins.

More photos can be seen at <https://ncwveterans.info/news/riverway-flies-flags-over-rock-island-for-4th-of-july/>

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