



# Wenatchee Valley 3617 Post & Auxiliary News

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## Commander's Letter

Welcome everyone to the summer installment of our VFW Newsletter. We've had an extremely busy past few months as you'll see, and I'm looking forward to a couple months where we can get some small projects done around the Post and get some vacation time in at the beach. Hope everyone is doing well and staying cool in this heat. Enjoy your summer!

*Commander Brad Pieratt*

**WHS JUNIOR ROTC DINING OUT** On May 20th, the Wenatchee High School Air Force Junior ROTC (AFJROTC) Program held their very first Dining Out ceremony to recognize the cadets and their accomplishments during this inaugural year. Retired Air Force Colonel and VFW member Ben Aikens is the commander for this program.

Available to Wenatchee School District students in grades 9-12, the AFJROTC program provides high school students with a new opportunity to earn core and elective credits. The program is designed to educate and train cadets in citizenship, promote community service, and instill personal responsibility, character, and self-discipline. The program achieves this through classroom education in air and space fundamentals and hands-on learning opportunities in a number of fun and challenging extra-curricular activities. AFJROTC is not a USAF accessions program and cadets are never under any obligation to join the military.



Colonel Aikens (L) and Commander Pieratt (R)  
at the Dining Out on 20 May 2023.

The formal Dining Out was held at the Wenatchee Convention Center and attended by cadets and their parents, community leaders, and guests. After a wonderful dinner, we heard from the guest speaker, Retired US Army Brigadier General Richard Black, as he praised the cadet's hard work this school year and to prepare wisely for their future after school. Then, annual

*(Continued on page 2)*

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awards and promotions were given out to the cadets for their accomplishments during the past school year. The program closed out with a 15-minute slideshow of all the different activities the cadets were exposed to.

It was a great evening to spend time with the cadets and their families, and meet the other instructors for the program at WHS. This was a very successful year for the first class of JROTC cadets as evidenced by an expected enrollment of almost twice the number of students entering the program next year.

**MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES** This year's Memorial Day ceremonies around the valley were carried off flawlessly by volunteers from 9 different organizations at 4 different locations throughout the day. This year, we started at the Wenatchee Cemetery at 9am with the presentation of colors, wreath laying in honor of all who served and sacrificed in service to our country, taps and a rifle volley from the Honor Guard. Wenatchee Mayor Frank Kuntz was the guest speaker for this event.

At 10am, a smaller event took place mid-span of the Old Wenatchee Black Bridge. This ceremony was to honor all those that served and were lost at sea. A ceremonial wreath was tossed into the Columbia River by Mayors Kuntz and Jerrilea Crawford.

At 11am, the exact ceremony that took place at the Wenatchee Cemetery was repeated at Evergreen Memorial Park on 10th Street NE in East Wenatchee with Mayor Jerrilea Crawford as the guest speaker.

The day's ceremonies concluded at Pybus Public Market at 12 noon with the raising of the colors followed by a rifle volley and the playing of Taps. I had the honor of giving a short patriotic speech to conclude the official events of the day.

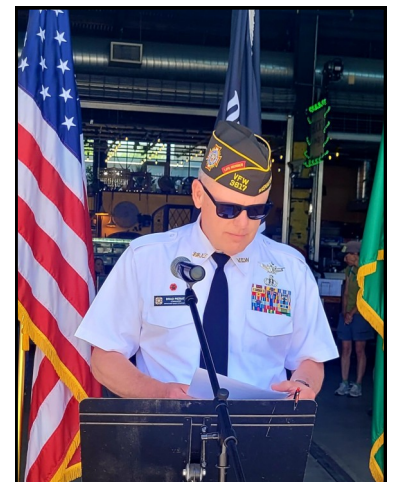
Afterwards, the auxiliaries of the American Legion and VFW hosted a free luncheon for participants at American Legion Post 10 in Wenatchee.



*VFW member John Wolff laying wreath at Evergreen (photo: Wenatchee World)*



*WHS JROTC Cadets, Mayors Kuntz and Crawford, and Cmdr Pieratt at Black Bridge*



*(Right) Commander Pieratt speaking at Pybus ceremony*



## Auxiliary President's Letter

Hope everyone is having a great start to July. Summer is here and the heat is on. The view out my window is sun, sun, sun and dry hillsides. Be sure and be safe. Hydration is key to this hot dry weather for yourself and your lawn. Enjoy your summer to the fullest.

The Auxiliary has been busy already with start of summer. We helped the Post with the Poppy drive, attended many of the Memorial Day programs, and helped with the Memorial Day Veterans luncheon at the American Legion. We enjoyed the event for Operation Catching Freedom. We were able to have an information table where we had recruitment information and Patriotic coloring books for the children. It was a fun event with really good food and music. Our doughnut-themed basket for their raffle was a big hit. For Flag Day, Post and Auxiliary members put flags on the fence around the Post. This has become an annual event and many Post neighbors comment and ask why the flags. Great way to remind everyone about Flag Day. *[more on page 4]*

Coming up have we lots of things on our plate. We made about 100 Fourth of July themed craft items and delivered them to our Veterans in local nursing homes. We have once again joined **Operation Homefront to collect school supplies** from the Dollar Stores in our area. We will collect items from July 01 through mid-August. If you go to a Dollar Store be sure and buy an item for the collection tub. We use some of the items for Veteran's children and grandchildren at different events, but most of the donated school supplies will be gifted to the elementary schools in our area.

At the end of August we will be giving out coffee, iced tea, lemonade, and cookies at the **Nason Creek rest area** on Highway 2. There will be a sign up sheet at the Post with time slots. This is a fun project and you get to meet different people from all over. We always do better when we have a Veteran with us, so consider volunteering.

As in past years we will be putting together a **gift basket for the SOAR Auction event**. SOAR raises money for the Thomas A Biddle Foundation which gives support and financial assistance to families touched by Veteran's Suicide. Post members Dennis and Nancy Brouwers are the force behind this worthy cause.

Our big project for the summer is the Veteran's Picnic in September where we will be hosting our **Family Freedom Festival**. This year Dee Johnson has volunteered to lead us in the endeavor. We will have information on all of the programs offered by the VFW Auxiliary as well as give out school supplies to the children attending the picnic. There will be many activities for children young and old!

If any of these projects sound interesting please let us know. As always you can call Shirley if you have any questions or want more information. Enjoy your summer!

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

## Flag Day

On June 14 we celebrated Flag Day at our VFW Post with a small team of post and auxiliary members, plus a few community volunteers, who decorated the entire fence line around our post property with stick flags.

Flag Day commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States on June 14, 1777, by resolution of the Second Continental Congress. The Flag Resolution, passed on June 14, 1777, stated: "Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."



## Changing of the Colors

Thanks go out to our dedicated crew of volunteers who manages raising and lowering of the US Flag at the Pangborn traffic circle when dictated by the Governor or the President. This particular flag is quite large, 20 foot by 30 foot, and deals with a lot of weather at that location. In fact, every few months, our group needs to replace it because the large flag is showing wear and tear from the persistent wind.

Below are some photos of the recent flag replacement at the Pangborn traffic circle, completed just in time for it to fly proud on Independence Day. We appreciate the heavy lifting!



### Connect with God Daily

*"...being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully..."*

- Colossians 1:11

Taking time daily to connect with God is one of the best ways to keep your relationship with him healthy and thriving. I pray you are encouraged to do so and that you see the blessings of peace that come with it.

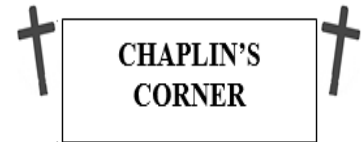
Be strengthened with His glorious power, so that you will have all the patience and endurance you need with joy. Be blessed with three-fold staying power in time of distress: strength, power, might from Him, by His glory and for His glory. Deeply know your God so that you will be strong and do great exploits.

Be blessed with inexpressible joy imparted by the Holy Spirit, not depending on circumstances. Positively invest in this season of preparation for whatever God is preparing, enduring with joy, not knowing what God is up to.

Pay the price to do the daily spiritual disciplines required. Be blessed with great forward-looking vision to withstand present pressure of birthing pains for the joy set before you.

*Excerpts from: <https://thefathersbusiness.com/devotion/colossians-19-13-2/>.*

God Bless, Chaplain Sarahbeth Simonson



## Veterans Coffee at Bonaventure

We're still meeting on the first Monday of each month at 10am in the upstairs Hospitality Suite on the 3rd floor. We're working hard with the Bonaventure Activities Director to get all the veteran residents notified on the day of our gathering to increase the participation of the residents and it's been improving by 2-3 new faces every time we meet. The coffee is open to all our members and auxiliary to attend.



Next coffee will be on **August 7 at 10am.**

## Douglas County Fair Veterans Booth

On **Friday, August 26**, our Douglas County VSO and Post Chaplain, Sarah Simonson, will be at the fairgrounds in Waterville to meet with Veterans attending the Fair. She's invited a few of our Post and Auxiliary members to join her for outreach and possible membership recruiting. Plans aren't finalized, but it will most likely be in a pop-up shelter, hopefully on some pavement. That Friday night is Rodeo Night so get your tickets to attend and drop by the booth to say hello!

## Operation Catching Freedom's Annual Fundraiser

On June 10th, Operation CATCHING FREEDOM held their annual fundraiser at Union Hill Cider Company in East Wenatchee. *"The mission of this veteran run nonprofit is to unite military veterans and first responders with member fishermen for a no-cost fishing adventure here in the Pacific Northwest. Rivers and lakes provide an atmosphere of peace and calm, opening opportunities to develop friendships that will last beyond the boat."*



Monies received at this annual event come from silent auctions of donated goods and services that helps fund this program to get vets and first responders paired up with fishing guides for 5 annual fishing events plus individual fishing trips throughout the year.

Hosted by Union Hill, the annual event featured a catered BBQ dinner, live music, lots of cider tasting, and a chance to bid on some great stuff!

### **Operation Catching Freedom thanks the VFW! (from Tony Warren, OCF)**

Good time was had by all at our first fundraiser at Union Hill Cider Company on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. The venue was spectacular and the weather cooperated nicely. Two bands, *Black Market Blues Band* and *Older and Wiser*, kept the evening lively – great entertainment! *R Shack BBQ* provided a delicious meal for the approximately 250 people who attended.

Thank you to the Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 3617 who generously donated a very popular "Donut Everything" gift basket and a signed Wenatchee Wild jersey for the silent auction. In addition, they handed out small American flags, coloring books and crayons to families with children.

We want to thank the community for coming out and supporting us. The **donations raised over \$15,000** and will help us continue to support our military active duty and veterans as well as first responders through our fishing events.



## Planning Ahead—Upcoming Dates to Note



This year's American Legion & VFW Picnic will be on **Saturday, September 9th** at Walla Walla Point Park at Picnic Shelter 1. Set up starts at 8am with food starting at 1100. This year we'll have a 50/50 Drawing and a Raffle for some great prizes in addition to great food and games.

**Put it on your calendar now!**

Aug 19	Department School of Instruction in Spokane (contact Commander Pieratt if you're interested in attending)
Sept 16	District 7 Meeting Lunch at noon, meetings at 1pm; at our Post home
Sept 18	USAF Anniversary
Sept 18	POW/MIA Remembrance Day
Sept 24	Gold Star Mother's Day

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## From the Editor

As a reminder, any member of the Post or Auxiliary may submit stories, photos, article ideas, etc to be included both on the website and in our newsletter. If you have any questions, stories, photos, or article ideas, email [webmaster@vfwpost3617.org](mailto:webmaster@vfwpost3617.org) and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

Additionally, please consider signing up to receive our newsletter digitally—it will save us some postage if you prefer to get these newsletters in your email inbox. Visit <https://vfwpost3617.org/news/newsletter/> and complete the short form below the archive list. Be sure to check the box for "Digital Only Please!"

- Connie Hill, Adjutant / Newsletter / Webmaster

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## Zoom Information

### Upcoming Meetings:

19 July & 16 August @ 7pm

Meeting ID: 815 7531 2989

Passcode: 996024

Join a zoom meeting one of 3 ways:

1. Use the Zoom app, tap Join
2. Visit <https://zoom.us/join/>
3. Dial +1 253 215 8782

then enter the Meeting ID and Passcode when prompted.

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