



Wenatchee Valley 3617 Post & Auxiliary News

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Commander's Letter

Greetings and welcome to our first newsletter of 2025! I trust everyone had a happy holiday season and your new year is everything you were hoping for. January was pretty slow around the Post, especially since we cancelled the January meeting due to our officers attending the VFW Department of Washington Mid-Winter Conference at about the same time. As our daylight increases and hopefully the weather warms a bit, Spring should be right around the corner, at least according to the expanding gardening section at Costco. We'll be finalizing our adoption of the Army National Guard helicopter unit at Pangborn this month and look forward to meeting with them, visiting their facilities and planning unit functions for this Summer. Please continue to be vigilant when our weather requires us to walk carefully on slippery sidewalks and driving on snowy roads. Also, don't forget your buddy checks on our friends that may be living alone.

Remember, *We Are Still Serving!*

- Commander Brad Pieratt

2024 PATRIOT AWARD

The 2024 Patriot Award was presented to **Chapel of the Valley** manager Becky Cummins for their unwavering support and financial assistance to the mission of our Post. They sponsored our Washington Fallen Heroes entry to the Wenatchee Apple Blossom Parade, events we held at the Pybus Public Market, and the Annual Veteran's Picnic. The Patriot Award is an award presented by the commander to a business or program that most significantly supports the mission of our Post throughout the year. Thank you and congratulations to all the people at Chapel of the Valley.



Commander Pieratt presenting the 2024 Patriot Award to Becky Cummins

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YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS WINNERS

Congratulations go to Mr. **Kanyon Darnell** from Malaga, our Post winner for the 2024 Voice of Democracy Competition. Kanyon is a Senior at the River Academy in Wenatchee. Kanyon's speech was judged with other winners in VFW District 7, where he placed 3rd. This year's theme was "Is America Today Our Forefather's Vision?". See Auxiliary President's letter for the Youth Essay winners.



Kanyon Darnell accepting the VoD plaque from Commander Pieratt

VETERANS DAY BUDDY POPPIES

On November 9th, the Post & Auxiliary collected **over \$3,300** during our Buddy Poppy Drive at four different retail locations in the valley. Thanks to all the volunteers that made this happen! Buddy Poppies are our main source of Veteran Relief funds that give us the capability to help military veterans and their families. Thank you also to those of you that donated to the fund.

VETERANS DAY PARADE & BBQ

There was a good turnout of supporters at the 2024 Wenatchee Veteran's Parade due to a respite from the normal wind, rain, and snow. We had our 1957 Shore Patrol Jeep in the mix of military vehicles and handed out stick flags along the route thanks to Comrade Jim Reece.

After the parade, a free BBQ was hosted by the Wenatchee Valley Fire Department. Along with the free lunch, there was music, resources for veterans, face painting for those interested in bringing their family, and artwork on display from our community's children thanking veterans for their service and camaraderie of fellow veterans. Over 300 meals were served to our veteran community. Thanks WVFD and all the other volunteers who made the lunch a fun event!

From the Editor

As a reminder, there's only so much space in our newsletters. Because of this, some stories submitted by our members only get a short space in print. Fear not! I am adding them to our Website so you can see more pictures and read more details, and we can show the world what we've been up to. Please be sure to visit <https://vfwpost3617.org> to see. If you want to **submit something to be included on the website/newsletter**, please send an email to webmaster@vfwpost3617.org with any photos and all story details—I can put it all together to be published. Please also contact me with any mailing list updates including **change of address** or switching to **digital-only delivery**.

- Connie Hill, Adjutant / Newsletter / Webmaster



Auxiliary President's Letter

Well winter is here. The cold has settled in and snow is on the way. Please be safe and drive carefully. Enjoy the beauty from inside with a nice hot cup of your favorite beverage, such as hot coffee on Friday mornings at the Post. During the nice weather in January, I was able to attend the mid-winter convention in Pasco. I attended a class on Malta. The Department of Washington's focus right now is on media websites and Facebook. They are requesting more input from auxiliaries. We will do our part by sending information to the Department Historian on some of our projects. Of course, I also attended the Joint Opening and the Auxiliary business sessions.

Our Christmas party for the WA Army National Guard troops stationed at Pangborn was very successful. [Editor's note: see article page 5] The military members were able to take home toys from Operation Homefront and diapers from Operation Bottom Cover. Both of these projects were very successful and we had a lot of items to give away. A special Thank You to everyone who helped with the Christmas party.

The Auxiliary held the Youth Essay contest in October. The theme was "How should our veterans be treated?" and the winners were **Rosemary Hughes**, 5th grade, and **Lena Kelly** 4th grade. They both attend Kenroy Elementary. We were able to attend a recognition program at their school and give them recognition and prizes. Each winner received prize money of \$25.00, a certificate and a goody bag. The next youth program is the Art contests Illustrating America for elementary students, Patriotic Art and Three-Dimensional Art for High School students. Entry forms for the art contests are available online or at the Post.

In February we will be wrapping up our **food drive for Hope Market at Serve Wenatchee**. Your donation of nonperishable food can be dropped off at the Post. There is a box for donations in the large meeting room. Friday coffee and our February meeting are good times to bring in your donations. Also in February we will be working with Lee School for **Valentines for Veterans**. The students will be making Valentines, and the Auxiliary will collect them and send them to Veterans in VA Hospitals and Nursing Homes. The Auxiliary also made some of our own Valentines to take to our Veteran's in local retirement homes.

Be sure to **put March 29th on your calendar**. We are looking forward to honoring our Vietnam War Veterans with a joint program for the public [Editor's note: more details page 7]. We hope everyone will plan to attend.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the February meeting. Remember dinner is at 6:00pm and the meeting starts at 7:00. If you have any questions or just want to talk please give me a call.

~ Shirley Lance, Auxiliary President
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Light in the Darkness

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. - John 1:5 (NLT)



At night, the deep darkness allows you to see so many stars shining so brightly. Many say you can't truly appreciate the light until you've been in the darkness. In the same way, life often involves walking through darkness to better see the light of God.

May you find deep comfort in knowing that even in the darkest seasons, you are never alone, for God is with you in every shadow. Though darkness may surround you, remember that it is not dark to God; to Him, the night shines as bright as the day. When the weight of darkness feels heavy, may the light of Christ illuminate your path, for the darkness cannot overcome His light (John 1:5). Be blessed to trust that His light will come, and when it does, it will be all the more beautiful because of the darkness that preceded it.

Be blessed with unwavering trust in God's presence, even when life feels overwhelming and unclear. May your heart be anchored in the truth that He is the light that shines in the darkness, guiding you with His love.

Excerpt from Sylvia Gunter's [Strength To Equal Your Days: A Year of Prayers and Blessings](#).

- Chaplain Sarahbeth Simonson

Visiting with Bonaventure Veterans

We're pleased to announce the monthly gathering with veterans at Bonaventure is back for 2025. Our next coffee with the veterans is Monday, 17 Feb at 10am. The new Activities Director at Bonaventure has pledged her support to organize these gatherings on a monthly basis. Future dates for the coffee gathering will be posted on our website.

<https://vfwpost3617.org/events/>



Upcoming District Meetings

The VFW District 7 Meeting will take place at our Post on **Saturday, February 15th**. District 7 Auxiliary will be meeting also. Luncheon will be served at 12 noon with both meetings scheduled to start at 1pm. All members are welcome to attend if interested in District happenings.

Our New Adopted Unit: ANG Charlie Co 1-112th S&S

Our VFW Post has officially adopted the Army National Guard (ANG) unit recently assigned to Pangborn Airport. **ANG Charlie Company 1-112th Security & Support** is an aviation unit that flies UH-72 Lakota helicopters in support of DEA, Border Patrol, & fire suppression missions. There are about 15 full-time members assigned to the airport, with up to 80 members reporting for monthly drill training. Additionally, there is a yearly 2-week training session that takes place in the summer.

On Dec 7th, we hosted their unit Holiday Party at the Wenatchee Veteran's Hall. We provided a classic turkey and ham dinner with all the fixings. They had about 75 members attending including a few of their family members. A special thanks to our members that really stepped up and did all the cooking and logistics to make this an outstanding event.



Post and Auxiliary member volunteers at the ANG Holiday Party

A huge diaper giveaway for families with little ones was provided by the Auxiliary's Operation BOTTOM COVER. Comrade Tony Warren with Operation CATCHING FREEDOM and Justin Wisemore, with Veteran Fishing Adventures, gave away several free fishing trips to those in attendance. It was a great evening to spend with our new military members. We'll have many more events scheduled with the Guard throughout the year.

Quilt of Valor Presentation—Dr. Jurges

Just last week, the VFW was invited to attend a Quilt of Valor presentation to **Dr. Erich Jurges**, a Navy veteran and owner of Sagebrush Dental. Dr. Jurges grew up in Bremerton, WA and then went on to earn a degree in Systems Engineering from the United States Naval Academy. Dr. Jurges served our country as a Navy deep sea diver and bomb tech, including two combat tours in Iraq. While in the Navy, he earned a Bronze Star with Valor for his actions in Iraq. Following nine years of service as a Naval Officer, he entered the University of Washington School of Dentistry on the GI Bill. Commander Pieratt and Comrade Tony Warren presented him with our VFW Post challenge coin and thanked him for his service and sacrifice to our country, as well as his continued service to our local veterans with dental needs.



Commander Pieratt, Dr. Jurges (wrapped in quilt), and Comrade Warren

Wreaths Across America



*Commander Pieratt saluting wreath
in front of a Civil Air Patrol cadet*

On a very cold December 14th morning at the Wenatchee City Cemetery, officers and members our Post & Auxiliary, along with members of American Legion Post 10 and the Wenatchee Veterans Hall, performed a solemn ceremony to mark National Wreaths Across America Day. Each December, the mission to **Remember, Honor and Teach** about the lives and sacrifices of our veterans is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies with Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 3,700 additional locations in all 50 States, at sea, and abroad. This happens at the exact same time as the ceremony held at Arlington (which takes place at 12 noon EST). Wreaths were laid in honor of each branch of the military and in remembrance of their veterans. Additional wreaths were also laid at Evergreen, Valley View (Sunset), and Stemilt Hill Cemeteries.

Post Christmas Party

This year's VFW Christmas Party was held in the afternoon of December 14th, sponsored by the excellent chefs of our own Auxiliary. We had about 35 people attend this annual gathering with a great variety of potluck side dishes and desserts to accompany the delicious ham prepared by the ladies. We also had an optional \$20 gift exchange that folks could join if they wished. Thanks to everyone that helped make this a special day.

Military & Veterans Night at the Wenatchee Wild

November 8th was the Annual Veterans and Military Appreciation Night with the Wenatchee Wild at the Town Toyota Center (TTC). The team donated free tickets to veterans, first responders, and their families to watch a match between our Wild and the Red Deer Rebels from the Canadian Hockey League. We had about a dozen members in attendance and overall, there was a large crowd of veterans in attendance that night.

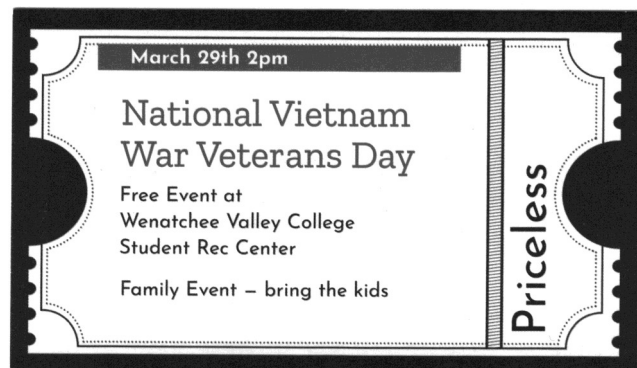
We brought our U.S. Navy Shore Patrol Jeep, Annabelle, and parked it right on the concourse inside the TTC. The jeep was a natural attractor to most of the military veterans in attendance that night. We made contact with 3 of them that were interested in joining our VFW mission to support all veterans and their families in our valley.



*Commander Pieratt with Comrades Dent &
Schwab with Annabelle in the TTC concourse*

Vietnam War Veterans Day

A celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War will take place on **March 29, 2025 at Wenatchee Valley College** (in the Student Rec Center at 2pm). Sponsored by all the veteran organizations in our area, the celebration will honor every Vietnam veteran from Chelan and Douglas counties that were killed



during the conflict. Additionally, a special thank you to the military nurses that cared for our wounded will take place. The Apollo Club and Wenatchee Orchestra will also perform. Color and Honor Guards from Wenatchee Valley VFW and the American Legion will be presenting colors and providing a rifle salute during the program. Wenatchee and East Wenatchee Mayors will be presenting a 50th Anniversary pin to those qualifying veterans in attendance.

Planning Ahead—Upcoming Dates to Note

Feb 15, Apr 19	District 7 Meeting @ 1pm (potluck lunch w/ Aux at noon)
Feb 17	Coffee with Vets at Bonaventure @ 10am
Mar 6	VFW Breakfast, Country Inn @ 9am
Mar 29	National Vietnam War Veterans Day (see above)
May 2	Classy Chassis Parade
May 3	Apple Blossom Grand Parade
May 26	Memorial Day
Jun 17-21, 2025	VFW Dept of Washington Convention, Yakima

Zoom Information

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.

Upcoming business meetings:

19 Feb & 19 March at 7pm

Meeting ID: **815 7531 2989**

Passcode: **996024**

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