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## Commander's Letter

Greetings everyone! The end of summer is in sight as we make our way into August. The past few months have kept us busy with conventions, celebrations, and community projects throughout the valley. We're getting ready right now for our final festivity of the summer, the annual Wenatchee Valley Veteran's Picnic at Walla Walla Point Park on August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Not every great accomplishment occurred away from our Post home. Junior-Vice Commander Jim Reece has been spending a lot of time fixing up and completing some much needed projects around the Post that we've been wanting to do for years. New stonework and flower beds in the upper parking area, fence repairs, and improvements made to the lower lawn area have capped off a very busy season for Jim. Additionally, updates are being made to some of our tech systems (*Editor's note: more information coming later this fall*). We'll soon also have a large screen TV installed in the South Meeting Hall that we may be able to utilize for training and weekly SITREP briefings during our coffee break on Friday mornings.

A big thank you to everyone that keeps our Post at the forefront of assisting veterans and their families in the valley. #StillServing

-- Commander Brad Pieratt



## From the Editor

I do my best to post photos and stories to our website which have been submitted by our members. Due to space limitations, some items may not get as much attention in the newsletter itself. Be sure to visit <https://vfwpost3617.org> to stay up to date on all our recent activities. And if you have something you'd like to share, email [vfw3617adj@gmail.com](mailto:vfw3617adj@gmail.com) with details (names, date, location, etc) and any photos. I'll put it together for publishing on the website and/or in the newsletter.

Also, please let me know of any mailing address updates, including if you'd prefer to only get this newsletter electronically to save us on postage.

-- Connie Hill, Newsletter / Webmaster



## Auxiliary President's Letter

Summer is here! Sun Joyful Sun! Hopefully everyone enjoyed the beautiful weather for the Fourth of July. The heat has been steady and with it the threat of fires. Please be safe and if you are outside on high smoke days protect yourself with a mask. Take care and enjoy the times you can be outside.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July was a fun day at Walla Walla park. It was nice to see the Jeep displayed with all of the other classic cars. It is such a good conversation starter and so many of our Post members enjoy talking about the jeep and their different military experiences. What a great way to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup>! We ended the week with Military night at the Applesox game.

On Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> the Post and Auxiliary hosted this year's Illustrating America and Patriotic Art winners. Everyone who entered the contest went home with cash prizes and a goody bag. A special shout out to **Lily Smith** whose entry placed **2<sup>nd</sup> at the State Convention!** The art was great this year and the kids and their parents were a fun addition to Friday coffee.

**Operation Homefront** is under way. The first week of July we started collecting the school items donated to the Dollar Tree stores. So far over 900 items have been collected. We will take a large box to the Army National Guard Aviation unit at Pangborn to give to their members with school-aged children. We will have some at the Veterans picnic for families in attendance. The balance of the items will be divided and taken to the elementary schools in East Wenatchee and Wenatchee.

Speaking of the Veterans Picnic... This event takes lots of work and planning, yet everyone enjoys it. The Auxiliary will have our **Family Freedom Festival** at the same time. We will use this as an opportunity to show our different programs and what we do for Veterans. There will be coloring books and pages, information about the flag, games (and school supplies) for the children who attend. We hope to see everyone at the picnic.

Once again the Auxiliary is putting a basket together to donate to the **SOAR auction** to support the Thomas A Biddle Foundation which helps families touched by Military Suicide. This is a worthy cause we help every year. This year our theme is Craft Beer. We are hoping to spotlight the many craft beers from the Wenatchee Valley. If you have a favorite you would like to donate we would love it. We will be putting the basket together after the **meeting on August 19**.

This year we are trying something new as a fundraiser: hosting a day at **Mill Bay Casino on September 19<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00am until 2:00pm**. Participants will receive \$10.00 in play and a \$15.00 meal voucher. The Auxiliary will receive \$10.00 for each participant during this time. If you would like to attend and help the Auxiliary please contact a member. We must turn in a list of participants to Mill Bay prior to the event day.



~ Shirley Lance, Auxiliary President

## Chaplain's Message

*Finding Peace in the Chaos*



With recent reports of conflict escalating in Iran and the broader Middle East, many of us feel a familiar knot of anxiety tightening in our chests. When we see headlines about missile strikes and rising geopolitical tensions, it is natural to ask: What can I actually do?

The images flooding our screens often trigger a dual response in our hearts: paralyzing fear or polarized anger. As followers of Jesus, we are citizens of heaven living in a fallen world. We are not immune to the sorrow of violence, but we are called to a distinct response.

### **Prioritize prayer over panic**

a) Pray instead of posting on social media or sending an urgent email to friends and family. God is aware of the urgency, and He is the only one who can answer and help calm your spirit.

b) Psalm 55:17 Morning, noon, and night I cry out in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice.

### **Guard the unity of the Spirit**

a) When we discuss world events it is tempting to retreat into opposing camps by reducing complex human crises into policy debates. As Christians, it is not our job to divide. We don't have to concede to or accept a harmful viewpoint, but we can converse about God's will for peace in a thoughtful and compassionate way.

b) Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

c) Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.

### **Weep with those who weep**

a) The Christian response to war is not apathy; it is empathy. We serve a God who weeps over death and destruction.

b) Romans 12:15 Be happy with those who are happy and weep with those who weep.

c) Hebrews 13:3 Remember those who are in prison as if you were bound with them, and those who are mistreated as if you were suffering with them.

Taking these steps can help lead us to a place of peace within ourselves and with those immediately around us. God is in the midst of those who gather in His name. He knows each of our hearts and knows the best path forward. Keep your eyes on Him and your heart in line with His will, and He will bring the peace.

*Excerpts from How Should Christians Respond to World Conflict? Finding Peace in Chaos | K-LOVE*  
<https://www.klove.com/resources/faith/how-should-christians-respond-to-world-conflict-finding-peace-in-chaos-13618>

-- Chaplain Sarah Simonson

## What IS this TogetherWeServed thing Jim keeps talking about?



Have you thought about recording and sharing your military history? Have you ever wanted to reconnect with the people you served alongside? Thanks to the website network of **TogetherWeServed**, established in 2003 by founder Brian Foster, you can do that. There is a separate website for each branch, and these sites are for all those who served in the U.S. Military. It is a place where you can reconnect with your former brothers- and sisters-in-arms and preserve a record of your military service that will live on for future generations.

Check it out at <https://togetherweserved.com>

Comrade Jim Reece is dedicated to helping Veterans record their military story through this platform. As the Chair of our Military History Committee, he's happy to help you set up a profile for yourself or a loved one. As he puts it: "I was with Uncle Sam from Feb 1970 to... Jul 2004. This is my way of paying it back."



Read Jim's story about getting started with this noble project:

<https://vfwpost3617.org/from-our-members/what-is-togetherweserved-jim-reece/>

## Civil Air Patrol annual awards

As we do each year, our Post is proud to present two VFW awards to students in our local Civil Air Patrol unit, recognizing their hard work and progress throughout the year.

This year on June 2, we were pleased and honored to present the following awards during the end-of-year meeting for the Pangborn Composite Squadron:



VFW Cadet NCO Citation (with Medal)  
to **C/CMSgt Cambree Tussey**



VFW Cadet Officer Citation (with Medal)  
to **C/1st Lt Dawson Brender**

## VFW National Commander Visits Wenatchee

VFW National Commander-in-Chief Carol Whitmore chose the Department of Washington Convention here in Wenatchee as her last official event during her year at the helm. On June 17<sup>th</sup>, she joined WA Department Commander Drew James and our Post Commander Brad Pieratt for a Lakota UH-72 flight thanks to our National Guard unit. Upon their safe landing, the unit gathered to observe 6 of their soldiers joining the VFW, with the oath lead by Commander Pieratt. Commander Whitmore distributed their VFW pins and welcomed them into our organization. During the rest of her visit, Commander Whitmore got to enjoy fresh Starbucks and attend the department business meetings and Convention awards banquet.



*Cmdr James (in blue) and C-in-C Whitmore (center) chat with ANG (and new VFW) members.*

Full story with more photos on our website:

<https://vfwpost3617.org/adopted-unit/national-commander-visits-wenatchee/>

## Convention brings VFW Posts & Auxiliary to the Heart of Washington

Wenatchee was host to the Department of Washington Annual Convention, 18-20 June 2026. This is an event where VFW Post and Auxiliary members from across the state of Washington gather to give and receive training, to provide state-level committee updates, to conduct year-end business, and to honor exceptional members, Posts, and Districts from across the state for their hard work all year.



*Department and National officers at the joint opening session.*



*Char Lauer receiving her award.*

After the trainings and business were conducted, everyone enjoyed a lovely buffet and awards banquet Friday evening. Being right here in town, it was easy for many of our members to be in attendance. Which was pretty awesome since our beloved **Char Lauer** was presented with the **Lifetime Achievement Award** that night.

Please see our website for more details and photos for both:

<https://vfwpost3617.org/events/washington-department-convention-2026-wenatchee/>

<https://vfwpost3617.org/auxiliary/lifetime-achievement-award-charleen-lauer/>

## Reconnecting with our Community

Thanks to the enthusiasm and support from Ashley, the Activity Director at Bonaventure, we are excited to announce that we are resuming our monthly visits with veterans, widows, and wives at local senior living facilities. We had a great turnout on 9 July, with 10 of our Post and Auxiliary members and 8 residents showing up to enjoy coffee, sweet treats, and friendly conversation. They liked it so much, we're planning to return on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month.



I chatted with Ed and Pam Reinfeld who have spearheaded this endeavor to get their thoughts on why this is important to do. Ed explained that “we are veterans, we are a family, and we stick together.” Going to the senior living facilities and having coffee and conversation with the veteran residents “helps them know that they are remembered” even if they don’t always feel that way.



Pam also recalled that during the first event, there were 2 residents, both veterans, who showed up and made an instant connection. Only after the fact did Ashley inform us that those two people had both been living at Bonaventure for over 8 years and until that day hadn’t met each other before – now they always get together! Our event helped kindle a new friendship between these residents in a way that no other activity at the facility would have done.

Full story on our website:

<https://vfwpost3617.org/events/still-serving-community-senior-living-visits/>

## Youth Art Contest winners announced!

Illustrating America is the Auxiliary’s annual patriotic art contest for elementary and middle/junior high school students which encourages students’ artistic abilities and rewards their hard work. Students in high school can enter the Young American Patriotic Art Contest for even bigger prizes. On Friday, July 24, at our weekly community coffee event, this year’s winners received their awards. Pictured here is Lily Smith’s art which won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in her category at the Post level and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place at State.

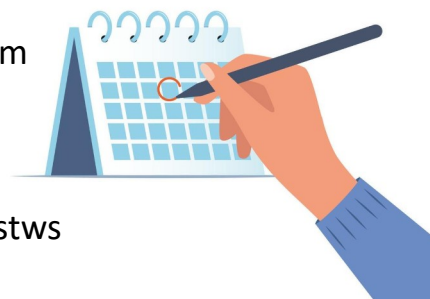


See all the winners on our website at:

Pg 6 <https://vfwpost3617.org/auxiliary/meet-the-2026-youth-art-contest-winners/>

## Planning Ahead – Upcoming Dates to Note

- Aug 7 Purple Heart Day; ceremony at Convention Center, 5pm
- Aug 19 Potluck, 6pm; Meetings 7pm
- Aug 19-20 WDVA Serving Those Who Served Conference  
Wenatchee Convention Center <https://dva.wa.gov/stws>
- Aug 22 Department School of Instruction
- Aug 29 **Wenatchee Valley Veterans Picnic**, 11am – 3pm,  
Walla Walla Point Park Shelter 1
- Sept 1 Coffee at Bonaventure, 9am
- Sept 3 Breakfast at Country Inn, 9am
- Sept 7 *Labor Day*
- Sept 11 *Patriot Day*, National Day of Service & Remembrance  
**Cashmere 9/11 memorial** event, 11am
- Sept 16 Potluck, 6pm; Meetings 7pm
- Sept 18 *Air Force Birthday*  
*POW/MIA Day* - <https://vfwpost3617.org/patriotism/national-pow-mia-day/>
- Sept 19 Wenatchee Valley **Veterans Stand Down**, 9am – 2pm, at the 5<sup>th</sup> St Armory  
Mill Bay fundraiser for Auxiliary, 10am - 2pm
- Sept 27 Gold Star Mother's/Family Day



## Zoom Meeting 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 & Passcode when prompted.

Meeting ID: **815 7531 2989**

Passcode: **996024**

### Take the survey

Please scan this QR code or visit <https://tally.so/r/J9Zyjd> to share your thoughts on the local veteran services.



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