

The American Legion

Renton-Pickering Post # 79



The North Bend-Snoqualmie Legionnaire

P.O. Box 359 38625 SE River Street, Snoqualmie, WA 98065

April 2024 Issue



WEBSITE: <https://www.waalpost79.org/>

WHATS HAPPENING - APRIL 2024

April 9th (Wed) National Former POW Recognition Day

April 10th (Wed) Tahoma National Cemetery Duty Day for Honor Guard

April 11th (Thurs) Post 79 Monthly Meeting 7:00 pm at the Snoqualmie Eagles with Nominations for 2024-2025 Officers for Elections at the May 9th Post Meeting



FROM THE POST COMMANDER



Vietnam, 50th Anniversary

50 years ago, we bugged out of Saigon, Vietnam. I remember watching the scenes of our helicopters picking up people from the roof of our embassy. It was a hard moment for me, as I am sure it was for others as well. I was bitter with mixed emotions.

Like many of us who served in-country, we felt betrayed by our country and at the same time relieved that we were getting out of there. Vietnam was hard on us all; we, who were on the front lines, and those back home who were watching the conflict on the news at night not knowing if we were ok.

I always felt like we were fighting two fronts, the war over there and the one here. First was an enemy, who by day worked in the rice paddies near a firebase or floated up and down the Ma Cong Delta in their Dory boats, and then at night wore their black pajamas and tried to kill us.

Then back home, we were called baby killers. They had no real idea of what was taking place, they only knew of what was reported and slanted by the media. This was a conflict fought by politicians. Over 58,000 American lives were lost in Nam and more lives were affected due to the use of Agent Orange, of which I was one.

What did we learn from this conflict, I am not sure we did learn anything. Yes, war is hard on us all, we all sacrifice something, our innocence, our humanity, and our morals. War takes, it never gives back good.

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As time goes on, conflicts abound the world over, I hope we have grown in how we each deal with this and not hate a race of people due to the few who want to control its people.

Remember, our flag has three colors!

The **Red** of our flag was made redder by his or her sacrifice.

The **White** was made purer by the motives that compelled them.

And the **Blue** is glorified by the service they had given to defend our American Ideals.



The nation of Israel has a saying, "*Never Again*" meaning, Never Again anywhere to anyone. So much truth in these words.

And you have the great words of the United States Marine Corps, "*Adapt and Overcome*". I like to look at this as saying. We need to adapt to what's going on around us and overcome any obstacle in our way.

Remember, the next time you see a veteran and a family member of a serviceman or woman, thank them for we knew hell and separation from our families.

Michael Pollina, Commander, American Legion Post 79 Department of Washington

NATIONAL FORMER POW RECOGNITION DAY

April 9th National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day on April 9th honors the courageous men and women who have endured brutal treatment at the hands of their captors. As a result, they've also suffered separation from family and displayed incredible endurance and faith during their captivity.

Since World War I, more than 142,000 Americans, including 85 women, have been captured and interned as POWs. Not included in this figure are nearly 93,000 Americans who were lost or never recovered. Only one fifth of America's former POWs since World War I are still living (about 22,641) More than 90% of living former POWs were captured and interned during World War II. About 15,367 former POWs are in receipt of compensation for service-connected injuries, diseases, or illnesses.

Scholarship named for North Bend veteran Joe Crecca To promote continuing education after graduation from high school, the Bloomfield High School Class of 1958, Bloomfield, N.J., will award the first annual Joseph Crecca Scholarship Award to a deserving student beginning with the class of 2012. The award will be presented at the Class of 1958 annual luncheon. Joe Crecca, a Member of American Legion Post 79, served as fighter pilot during the Vietnam war. On his last mission, en route to the target, he was shot down, captured and held as a prisoner of war at the "Hanoi Hilton" in North Vietnam for over six years. While flying his 87th combat mission, Lt Crecca's F-4 was hit and he was forced to eject over North Vietnam. He was immediately taken as a Prisoner of War and spent the next 2,280 days in captivity before being released during Operation Homecoming on February 18, 1973. Crecca was repatriated in 1973, at which time he held the rank of Major. He went on to serve as a pilot in the USAF until July 1978. He lives with his wife Joan in North Bend and recently transferred to American Legion Post 79. Read more here:

<https://www.valleyrecord.com/news/scholarship-named-for-north-bend-veteran-joe-crecca/>

(Continued from Page 2) **Read more about Joe Crecca here:**

<http://veterantributes.org/TributeDetail.php?recordID=84>



FROM THE ADJUTANT'S DESK

March saw a flurry of activity as the Post building was swarmed with volunteers to clean, prime and paint the new colors on the walls in the meeting hall and dining room. After several coats of primer and paint, the white, red and blue combination looks terrific! Unfortunately, our plans to sand the floors turned out to be "a bridge too far" since the effort would far outstrip our volunteer hours and sander rental budget. We're going to paint the floors instead.

Meanwhile, the results from the March Executive Committee Meeting had a \$1250 donation from the Poppy Fund approved for a veteran in need, and a solid update from Rachel Johnston (Community Outreach Coordinator) on her efforts to identify and sign-up volunteers for Post projects and the upcoming Memorial Day Weekend Poppy Sales. We're hoping to staff tables outside QFC, Safeway and Twedes for Poppy Sales. In other business, Post membership voted to increase annual Legion dues to \$50 in response to National raising its dues amount by \$5 per year.

In financial news, the Post started February with \$37K in the bank and finished the month with a balance of \$32K...so our monthly run-rate appears to be about \$5K to keep the Post up and operating. Speaking of finances, our long-running engagement with the State Dept. of Commerce to obtain reimbursement for our 2023 re-roofing project finally came to an end with a check for \$43K hitting our account to cover our out-of-pocket roofing costs. Thank-you to Senator Mark Mullett for putting our Post in for that appropriation last year and to an anonymous donor for fronting the money to enable the work to be done quickly!!! Finally, your Adjutant is working diligently on numerous State/County/Tribal grants in an effort to obtain future funding for our Post and Legion operations. One grant was denied, two county grants are currently being reviewed, and the Snoqualmie Tribal Grant will be completed before the March 31st deadline. I'll see you all at the April 11 Post Meeting!

George Townsend, 1st Vice Cdr/Adjutant

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR



RACHEL

Greetings! We are making great progress in renovating our Post building. We need more volunteers to help us! We need help with light cleaning, food preparation and help with our upcoming Poppy distribution, which occurs during Memorial Day weekend (May 25-26th, Saturday and Sunday, respectively). If you would like to become a volunteer, please email me:

Info@CovenantEagleEnterprises.com

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Remember, we host a "**Coffee with Comrades**" event at the South Fork Restaurant in North Bend every Saturday at 9 a.m. If you are a veteran, come join us! If you know a veteran, ask them to join us! Veterans and spouses will enjoy a complimentary cup of coffee as they socialize in a relaxed environment.

Post 79 will soon offer opportunities to rent our hall for meetings and events! We will keep you posted. Our members attend networking and civic events within the community at large every week. We are truly the **American Legion Post 79 Reimagined!**

Thank you, Rachel Y. Johnston
Community Relations Coordinator

TAHOMA NATIONAL CEMETERY HONOR GUARD

13 MAR 2023 Tahoma National Cemetery: Eastside Veterans Honor Guard provided Full Military Honors today to four Veterans, one each US Army, US Air Force, US Navy and US Marine Corps. One served in Korea and two in Vietnam. Today was a stressful day with one member out of town and two calling in sick leaving just two Riflemen. A Navy Petty Officer and a Marine Sgt volunteered to be the 3rd rifle at their services.



This underscores the predicament our Combined Honor Guard from American Legion Post 79 and Renton VFW Post 2995 is in with no new volunteers joining which jeopardizes the future of all our Honor Guards at Tahoma National Cemetery. If any veteran is retired or semiretired please consider joining - you do not have to be a Legion or VFW Member.

Tahoma National Cemetery was established November 11, 1993, and opened for interments on October 1, 1997. The cemetery was dedicated on September 26, 1997. A small expansion project was completed in March 2006. Tahoma National Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 40,000 service members, veterans and family members. Post 79 Members have been volunteers at the Cemetery since its opening in 1997 and the tradition continues.



NO "B.S." WAR STORIES

Once again we have some "NO B.S" stories for your reading pleasure and starting with this one from our famous story teller George!

Iceberg - 20....Canadian Navy - Zero While onboard the USS Pharris (FF-1094) in April, 1978, we were transiting the North Atlantic headed westward for home after a 6-month deployment with the NATO Standing Naval Force in Europe. Crossing the ocean with us was a Canadian Navy Destroyer, the HMCS Iroquois. The officers and crew of both ships had become close friends during our mutual NATO deployment, so it wasn't unusual for the two ships to swap jokes over the tactical radios or to compete against each other in bizarre readiness drills on short notice. One such drill called for each ship's Supply Officer to serve a fried egg to the ship's Weapons Officer on the flight deck...with the ship completing the evolution first winning bragging rights over the other ship.



So it wasn't any surprise that one sunny afternoon, off the coast of Greenland, the Canadian ship called out a rather large iceberg about 15 miles ahead of our little convoy, and challenged the Pharris to a shooting contest. Our skipper eagerly took the challenge, calling the ship to Battle Stations and manning up our one 5-inch bow gun. We established a fire-control radar lock on the iceberg and opened fire at about 10 miles range, shooting 20 shots in rapid succession (our gun fired 1 shot every 5 seconds). When the gun fell silent and the smoke cleared, we had counted 20 clear hits on the side of the iceberg...barely making a dent in its size. We reported to the Iroquois "US Navy - 20, Iceberg - Zero". Now it was the Canadian's turn. Their gun began firing as our ship anxiously watched the iceberg through our binoculars. For a moment, we thought they were firing blanks, as we didn't see any hits or explosions on the iceberg...and after 20 shots, still no impacts on ice. After a rather long pause, the radio crackled "Iceberg - 20, Canadian Navy - Zero". I'm pretty sure the skipper of the Iroquois had a rather short and terse conversation with his Gunnery Officer after that event. And, no, we didn't shoot up any more icebergs for the duration of the passage.

George Townsend, US Navy Reserve (Retired)

And once again we have a juicy one from the "Groundpounder" Art in Vietnam—The Case of the Missing Wheelchair!

Back in 1968 I was invited by a Senior NCO at Camp Enari to take a trip with him to his parent Intel Unit in Saigon. After touring the National Intelligence Center and the Central PW Interrogation Facility we ended up at the Hospital with several other NCO's who had an apartment in the City. Apparently a young Vietnamese girl lived nearby who was crippled. I was induced to take a seat in a wheelchair and be moved out of the hospital and onto the Jeep and the unfortunate girl ended up with a new wheelchair compliments of the US Army! Winning the hearts and minds of the people!



What Goes Around Comes Around. Sometimes "appropriating" military gear goes both ways like when several of us Interrogators from Camp Enari took a ride to Pleiku and decided to stop and drink beer at the Club at the Special Forces Camp. We parked the Jeep in the parking lot outside the gate and locked the steering wheel with a chain. Lo and behold when we came out later the Jeep was nowhere in sight. The Indigeonous Gate Guard said "*no know nothing*" We were picked up by another Jeep from the Detachment and returned to Camp Enari. No investigation was ever conducted that we knew about but I later found out from an Engineer that one of their equipment low boys went missing the same way. Another guy told me that the Special Forces motor pool was full of all kinds of military vehicles that were definitely not part of their inventory and had been repainted some other color. It seemed like this was a regular practice with "*no questions asked.*"



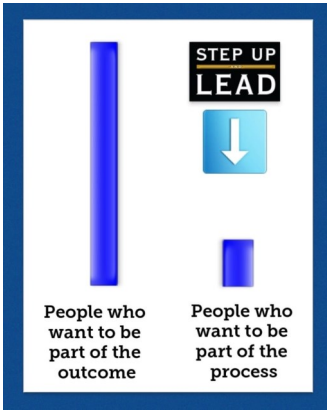
OUR POST HALL PROJECT CONTINUES

March saw a flurry of activity as the Post building was swarmed with volunteers to clean, prime and paint the new colors on the walls in the meeting hall and dining room. After several coats of primer and paint, the white, red and blue combination looks terrific! After some trial and error it was decided that the floors would be repainted gray in color instead of refinishing. As they say "one picture is worth a thousand words" and here are a few showing the work in progress. We look forward to a Grand Opening and Open House on Memorial Day.



NOTICE FROM DISTRICT 11

"Business as usual" is not going to get the Department's charter reinstated. It's time for some clear steps to enhance the morale of our members, expand local participation in Legion programs, and grow our membership across the board. Don't shy away from asking candidates the tough questions that matter. Do the candidates have any visions or plans for the future? What are the prevailing issues they see within your District that need immediate attention? How do these candidates plan to address these challenges in the coming year? District 11 Officers. The District Conference is April 14th - District 11 @ Bothell 127 1100 social / noon meal / 1300 meeting. Also, each District is tasked with electing 2 people to serve on the Constitution Convention Committee for Washington. Candidates for District Officers should be announced prior to the District Conference.



Post 79 By Laws Article IV – Election of Officers

Section 1: Officers of Post #79 will be nominated at the regular meeting in April. At this meeting the Nominating Committee will present recommendations as the initial nominations. Nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

Any Member in good standing can be nominated or nominate himself for any Officers Position. If you are an Officer you will automatically be considered to have been nominated in your Position unless you nominate yourself for another Position. If you nominate someone be sure to have their permission. If more than one member is nominated for a Position that will be decided by a vote taken at the May Meeting.

Please forward all nominations to the Adjutant George Townsend gntownsend@yahoo.com prior to or at the April Meeting.



THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

It was on April 12, 1961, Fort Sumpter was fired on, an event that marked the beginning of the US Civil War. April is typically considered the beginning of Spring, and with that change, it is a good time to step out of winter. Our post is beginning a new phase, and there has been a lot of change, with more to come. There's new paint, the floors are being worked on, and the post is taking its new shape. It is a great time to join with other members of the post and connect (or re-connect) with fellow brothers and sisters. Joining in can open paths away from a sense of isolation; and even if that is not an issue, it provides a path towards making a difference in the community, even if that community is our little band of brothers and sisters in our post. As always, remember that I and the leadership are an email, text, or phone call away. Feel free to contact me anytime that works for you.

For God and Country, Jim, Post 79 Chaplain
jim.besso@outlook.com



POST 79 ELECTED OFFICERS 2023-2024

POST COMMANDER
Michael Pollina
michaelpollinz@gmail.com
214.796.7072



POST ADJUTANT
1st VICE COMMANDER
George Townsend
arttownsend@yahoo.com
206.913.9199



2nd VICE COMMANDER
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206.914.1863



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SERVICE OFFICER
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425.246.3782



HISTORIAN
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425.466.1879



SGT AT ARMS
Art Farash
artfarash@gmail.com
425.295.5309



APPOINTED OFFICERS

Armorer: George Townsend Honor Guard: Art Farash Newsletter: Art Farash



Coffee with Comrades



All Veterans Welcome

EVERY SATURDAY 9:00 AM

SOUTH FORK RESTAURANT

Enjoy the fellowship of other Veterans and

a cup of coffee.

14303 436th Ave SE, North Bend

Near Exit 32

Drop in for a visit.



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FLINTOFT'S

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Family owned and operated since 1938
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SNOQUALMIE VALLEY

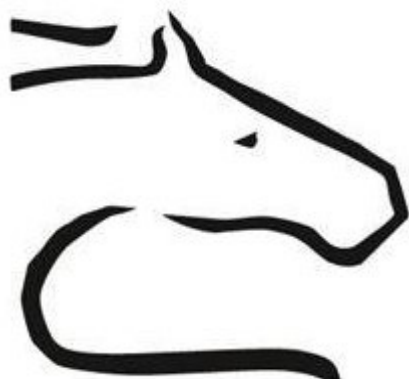
Chamber of Commerce

We Help Your Business Succeed!



POST 79 IS A PROUD MEMBER

**MT SI BARBER SHOP
FREDDY RUIZ MEMBER
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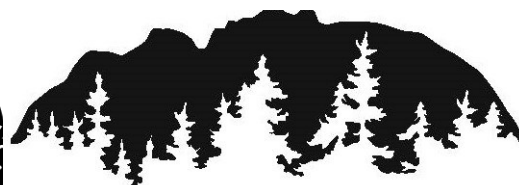
NWNHC

Family Fund

**POST 79 PROUDLY
SUPPORTS VETERANS
REHAB PROGRAMS**



**SOUTH FORK RESTAU-
RANT ON CEDAR FALLS
ROAD - MEMBER OWNED
BUSINESS - HOSTING
OUR SATURDAY
VETERANS MEETUPS**



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**KEVIN WATSON
(425) 615-5922**

WFTC23@outlook.com

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The North Bend - Snoqualmie Legionnaire is the Monthly E-Newsletter of American Legion Post 79, the Department of Washington. Its purpose is to keep Members and well as the Local Community informed about our activities and events over the past month and information about upcoming events. Nothing is copywrited and can be forwarded and shared with others. We are on social media at #<https://www.facebook.com/groups/legionpost79>. Comments and articles with photos may be sent to the Editor at artfarash@gmail.com Thank you for reading and sharing.