

**The American Legion
Renton-Pickering Post # 79**



The North Bend-Snoqualmie Legionnaire
P.O. Box 359 38625 SE River Street, Snoqualmie, WA 98065

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2025 ISSUE

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT <https://www.waalpost79.org/>

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FEBRUARY—MARCH

- FEB 9 (SUN) SUPER BOWL PARTY @ POST 3:30—6:30 PM**
 - FEB 12 (WED) TAHOMA NATIONAL CEMETERY DUTY DAY**
 - FEB 13 (THURS) REGULAR POST MEETING @ 7:00 PM WITH FAREWELL RECEPTION AND CHANGE OF COMMAND FOR COMMANDER POLLINA.**
 - FEB 20 (THURS) POKER NIGHT @ 7:00 PM AT THE POST HALL**
 - MAR 12 (WED) TAHOMA NATIONAL CEMETERY DUTY DAY**
 - MAR 13 (THURS) POST MEETING @ 7:00 PM**
 - MAR 20 (THURS) POKER NIGHT @ 7:00 PM IN THE POST HALL.**
- Slideshow: Ghosts of Abu Ghraib by Art Farash.**

FROM THE DESK OF THE COMMANDER

We are already in the first month of 2025. Our Post has accomplished many things, just to mention a few.

1. A new roof on the Post.
2. Repainted the inside of the Post.
3. New Commercial Freezer.
4. New dishwasher, Beverage Cooler, Upright Beverage Dispenser, Kitchen items, Popcorn Machine, New Table, New Chairs, TV, Internet, etc.
5. Tree removal and cleanup of our grounds.

Our Post has participated in local events like Snoqualmie Days, and the North Bend Parade, we hosted a fundraiser for the Post and raised nearly \$4,000. We have been Awarded Grants of KC \$5000, Snoqualmie Tribe \$35,000, , Vets Engage \$10,000, State \$67,000 Memorial Day \$5400. (\$127,400)

Community Sponsorship

1. Area little league
2. Mt Si Senior High School SA contest Scholarship. (\$1000)
3. Fisher House
4. Sno-Valley Chamber of Commerce
5. NWNHC Family Fund

Our Honor Guard Has Honored our veterans at Tahoma National Cemetery with over 216 hours of service in the last 4 years, for Veterans who have gone on to their post-everlasting.

Our membership has increased through the retention of new members, and we have increased our visibility with our local, County, and State representatives, the Snoqualmie Tribe and Casino.

All these items were accomplished through the efforts of our general membership and executive community officers. We have much to be proud of, but we should never become lax in our future responsibilities to our veterans and community.

It is with a heavy heart, that I inform the members of Post 79 that I will not be seeking re-election as Commander of Post 79 because my family and I are moving out of Washington and heading back to Texas to be with our family in Late Feb 2025. The good news is, the members will be in the capable hands of our 1st Vice Cdr. Chad Magendanz, moving up into the position of Commander.

I will look back with fondness on the friendships I have made while serving with the members of Post 79 and hope to continue serving the American Legion when I return to Texas in February.

It has been with extraordinary pride that I have served you all.

Michael Pollina , Post 79 Commander (USN Veteran)

ADJUTANT'S REPORT

American Legion Post 79, based in Snoqualmie, WA. serves the Snoqualmie Valley and the communities of Snoqualmie, North Bend and Fall City. Our post building is over 100 years old and has been reoccupied earlier in 2024 by our Legion members after having been used as a homeless shelter for Reclaim (formerly Snoqualmie Valley Shelter Services). Our Post is the American Legion home for 77 veteran members, and our goal is to increase the use of our facility and finances in support of local veterans and their needs across a wide range of topics and services.

Through the generous grant from King County, and from financial aid from our membership and other donors, American Legion Post 79 has been able to provide veteran and community services through the following actions in 2024:

- **Direct Veteran Services** - Our Post has a Service Officer who assisted more than 24 veterans in the enrollment and claims process with the Veteran's Administration. These claims included requests for VA medical coverage, disability verification and payments, mental health counseling and PTSD diagnosis and treatment. Additional funding was provided to veterans in need through our Legion Poppy Fund, where our members raise private funds each Memorial Day weekend and those funds are used exclusively for veterans and their families in their time of need for items to include rent, utility payments and temporary family assistance when a veteran dies suddenly or unexpectedly. Fund donations have also been made to Fisher House on the JBLM base to support lodging for veteran's families undergoing treatment at Madigan Army Hospital. Each year our Post provides food and lodging to combat veterans participating in the Warrior Expeditions cross-country bicycling program. These veterans pedal 3,200 miles from Washington DC to Forks, WA. spreading public relations and awareness of veteran's issues along the way...we hosted all 7 participants as they passed through North Bend and Snoqualmie in August, 2024.
- **Building Maintenance** - Given our Post building exceeds 100 years in age, we've invested in substantial repairs and maintenance since regaining use of our building after 4 years of shelter use by Reclaim. The Washington State Legislature earmarked a generous grant which we used in 2024 to re-roof our building, with expenses exceeding \$50,000. Part of the King County grant went to paint and supplies to prepare the building's interior for use

once again as a Legion Post. Further funds were expended to replace/repair damage to our Snoqualmie Veteran's Memorial caused by the several severe windstorms experienced through the year. We'll also be expending over \$1600 in early 2025 to remove a tree within the Memorial which is damaging the remembrance bricks on the Memorial as well as threatening to damage our building when the next severe weather event strikes. We also have maintenance needs for our HVAC system and kitchen plumbing installation. It is also noteworthy that our building's exterior siding is in severe need of total replacement with a preliminary estimate exceeding \$70,000 which we currently cannot finance.

- **Post Honor Guard Services** - Our Post members have formed and support an Honor Guard, consisting of a commander, a chaplain, 3 riflemen and a flag detail. These volunteers provide military burial honors at Tahoma National Cemetery every month and on other occasions as needed. We've provided honors at over 55 veteran's burial services at Tahoma and other cemeteries during 2024. In addition, our Honor Guard is the lead participant in North Bend's annual festival parade and Snoqualmie's Railroad Days parade (our Honor Guard was awarded "Best in Show" at the 2024 Railroad Days parade). Further, every Memorial Day our combined Post and Honor Guard performs remembrance services at the Preston, Fall City and North Bend cemeteries.
- **Community Involvement** - Post 79 is sponsor to a local Scouting Troop and their associated Cub Scout Pack. Our post also sponsors the local Little League Baseball effort with a \$1000 donation in 2024 and another in 2025. We're annual participants in hosting a Legion booth at Snoqualmie's Railroad Days, and we partner with Snoqualmie's antique railroad association to provide free train rides for veterans and their families. Our Post also provides a college scholarship to the winning Mt. Si High School student in our annual citizenship essay contest. In 2024, we also instituted a "Coffee with a Vet" program every Saturday morning at the South Fork Cafe outside of North Bend where we greet veterans seeking information on VA assistance or looking for friends and comrades. American Legion Post 79 is also a member of the Snoqualmie Valley Chamber of Commerce, where we engage with local merchants, employers and organizations to drive awareness of veteran's issues, needs and capabilities.

Respectfully submitted, George Townsend, Post 79 Adjutant

OUR HONOR GUARD

The Eastside Veterans Honor Guard comprised of Post 79 Members and Members from VFW Post 2995 in Redmond provided Military Honors for 58 Veterans at Tahoma National Cemetery. Some Members have been volunteering for over 15 years and have donated a total of over 2066 hours as follows:

- Brent Wilde (VFW 2995) 888 hrs**
- Art Farash (AL 79) 877 hrs**
- Jeff Starkey (VFW 2995) 540 hrs**
- Michael Pollina (AL 79) 254 hrs**
- George Townsend (AL 79) 76 hrs**
- Alan Brown (AL 79) 30 hrs**



The Eastside Veterans, as well as the other Honor Guards, expect to be losing several members in 2025 with ages in the 80's up to 90 and filling these vacancies with new volunteers will be a challenge which at some point may jeopardize the providing of Military Honors with Veterans Rifle Teams. There may be further constraints of the support provided by the National Guard and Active Military. Presently Tahoma National Cemetery is one of the only National Cemeteries doing this.

THE SNOQUALMIE VALLEY VETERANS MEMORIAL

In January the 15 year old sycamore tree at the Memorial had to be removed because it has overgrown the space it was in. A tree service removed the tree and leveled the spot. The memorial bricks will be replaced but we are looking for ideas on what to do with the empty spot. Suggestions have been made to build up the center with bricks or building stones and plant a flower bed or some shrub. We will be soliciting your ideas for landscaping this cherished spot.



THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Brothers and Sisters, The month of February heralds a very important day in American Military History. In the frigid, foreboding waters of the North Atlantic, a converted troop transport, the USAT Dorchester, lumbered through the darkness. It was **February 3, 1943**, and the aging vessel, packed with over 900 soldiers, was vulnerable. Nazi U-boats prowled the icy depths, and the threat of a torpedo attack hung heavy in the air,

casting a pall over the men huddled within the ship's cramped quarters. The Dorchester, a small and slow-moving target, was a world away from the major naval battles raging elsewhere, yet its journey carried the same weight of wartime peril.

The Dorchester was torpedoed by a German submarine. As the ship rapidly sank into the dark waters, panic ensued, but four chaplains – a Methodist minister, a Dutch Reformed preacher, a Jewish rabbi, and a Catholic priest – displayed remarkable courage. They calmly organized the distribution of life jackets, and when the supply ran out, each chaplain gave his own life jacket to a soldier. Four chaplains, linked arm in arm, were last seen praying on the deck as the Dorchester slipped beneath the waves.

Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 4) The sacrifice of these four men – Rev. George L. Fox, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Rev. Clark V. Poling, and Father John P. Washington – Serves as a reminder of the importance of faith, brotherhood, and sacrifice.

Their story, more than 70 years, reminds us that we CAN have a lasting impact, even though we are but a few men and women in a relatively small community. I encourage us all to lean in with each other, and remember that by serving each other, we can impact a much wider community.

For His honor and glory, Jim - Post 79 Chaplain.

TET 1968 - A DAY IN HISTORY



Everyone knows about "**Chinese New Year**" at the Snoqualmie Casino but how many know about the TET Offensive? The **Tet Offensive** was a series of surprise attacks launched by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces on **January 30, 1968**. The offensive took place during the Vietnamese Lunar New Year, or Tet holiday. The offensive was a military victory for the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. The offensive was a political defeat for the United States, as it weakened public support for the war and was a major escalation in the Vietnam War and one of its largest military campaigns and resulted in heavy losses for the U.S. and South Vietnamese militaries

(Art Farash, 4th Infantry Division 1967-98, Vietnam)

FAREWELL COMMANDER MICHAEL



Has anyone noticed that the Lonestar State has now stolen yet another commander from Post 79? Yes, it's with a heavy heart that we must say goodbye to Michael and Mona as they start another chapter of their life in Texas. I invite everyone to join us for their send-off on Februar13th during our regular membership meeting. Local elected officials have been invited and my spouse has even agreed to bake a cake. Feel free to invite family and friends.

I've had the honor of serving under four commanders since joining Post 79, and I can say without reservation that Michael Pollina is leaving the biggest shoes to fill. His engagement at the city, county, district and department levels has been unprecedented, and he's the first of us to have received The Martin Luther King, Jr. Medal of Distinguished Service from King County.

Please join us on Thursday, February 13th for this important changing of the guard!–

Chad Magendanz | First Vice Commander/Closing the Skills Gap | 425.246.8782

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POST 79 IS A PROUD MEMBER



"Words cannot express enough how blessed we are for having this experience..."

Military Mom



SOUTH FORK RESTAURANT
ON CEDAR FALLS ROAD -
MEMBER OWNED BUSINESS - HOSTING OUR SATURDAY VETERANS COFFEE WITH COMRADES

POST 79 THANKS ITS LOCAL SUPPORTERS AND IS PROUD TO HAVE THESE MEMBER OWNED BUSINESSES AS PART OF OUR LEGION FAMILY

Since 2010 active-duty military families have found renewed relationships, healing, and peace while creating lifetime memories. Show their appreciation for everyone in the military family who serve.

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.