

## Honoring past, present and future Veterans

By Emily Hanson  
 Staff Writer

TONASKET - The United States Armed Forces Legacy project designed to honor past, present and future Veterans of the U.S. military has approximately two years until it's finished. "It's for Veteran's from all over, not just locals," Roger Castelda, a member of the USAFL board, said. "It's a legacy because it's for the past, present and future veteran's." The project was started in the winter of 2004-05 on property Castelda said the City of Tonasket gave the USAFL a 99 year lease for one dollar. He said the USAFL has raised \$87,000 in donations and in-kind, which means work is done without charge. "The public is welcome to look at our financial statements," George Frank, another member of the USAFL board, said. "The soil conservation district of Okanogan is going to clean the creek up, plant native shrubs and trees and help us develop a park." The park will be along the edge of Bonaparte Creek, where tables and benches will be placed for people to have picnics. Castelda said there will also be a footbridge from Shannon's Place for people to cross over rather than walking along the highway. The project, when finished, will consist of eight concrete slabs to place plaques honoring past, present and future Veteran's of the U.S. military. There will also be a building on the left side for events. This building will have a library inside with information about all the wars the United States has been in. Castelda said there will also be an administrative section of the building to help veteran's with their benefits and other things of that nature. The inside of the slabs will have plaques honoring veterans placed on them. The plaques are being sold for \$100 each and Castelda said the USAFL has already sold 200. The plaques that have been sold are for veterans from nine different states. The back of the slabs will feature murals about each war the United States has been involved in, starting with the American Revolution. Castelda said these murals will be painted by Tonasket High School students. Toward the center of the site, five pillars stand. These pillars represent the five branches of the United States military: the Air Force, the Army, the Marine's, the National Guard and the Navy. When the project is finished, an elevated star with each point connected to one of the pillars will have an American flag in the center of it. Between each point of the star, the flags of the military branches will fly. Castelda said there will also be spotlight lighting up the pillars from near the highway. He said community members and people outside of the community have helped with the project a lot. "We've gotten a lot of help from a lot local businesses and people," Castelda said. "We're always seeking money and assistance and grants. We appreciate all the donations and everything everyone's done to date."



*Photos by Emily Hanson*

**A plaque for the U.S. Armed Forces Legacy project in Tonasket next to Shannon's Place.** The plaques are sold for \$100 each and can be bought to represent a member of the United States military



**The five pillars of the U.S. Armed Forces Legacy project in Tonasket, near the southern city limits.** The pillars represent each branch of the U.S. military: the Air Force, the Army, the Marine's, the National Guard, and the Navy.