



# OKANOGAN VALLEY GAZETTE-TRIBUNE

PO Box 250 Oroville, WA 98844 • Tel.: (509) 476-3602 • Fax: (509) 476-3054

Thursday, June 17, 2010

## Flagpole dedicated at U.S. Armed Forces Legacy Project *Volunteers continue to add to tribute*

**Gary DeVon**

Northern Okanogan Valley Editor

Thursday, June 17, 2010



A new 50-foot flagpole was dedicated as part of the U.S. Armed Services Legacy memorial at Tonasket last Monday, June 14. Several veterans, dignitaries and others participated in the flag raising ceremony. Photo by Gary DeVon

TONASKET - The spectacular 50-foot tall flagpole was dedicated at the U.S. Armed Forces Legacy Project in Tonasket with veterans, dignitaries and well-wishers in attendance last Monday morning.

After "Reveille" was played, Ralph Longanecker introduced some of the guests who were in attendance, including state Representatives Joel Kretz and Shelley Short, Okanogan County Commissioner Mary Lou Peterson and Tonasket Mayor Patrick Plumb.

Several veterans spoke at the ceremony including Legacy Project President Dale White, who credited the many volunteers who had worked on creation of the veterans' memorial, as well as the flagpole, which was welded by Tom Bretz.

"He volunteered all his efforts," said White.

Members of the Legacy group then sanded the 50-foot pole and it was painted. It has a gold-colored ball on top and the pole was designed to allow the flag to clear the basalt columns that surrounds it when the flag is flown at half-mast.

"The flag pole being alongside of Highway 97 will be the first thing people see as they approach Tonasket... I think we all should be proud of the beautiful flag pole," said Longanecker.

White made the presentation of the flag and Sgt. First Class Terry Hill with the Army Recruiting Office in Okanogan had the honor of running the colors up the flagpole. Dick Myers led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance and Lee Orr sang the Star Spangled Banner. The closing prayer was by Walt Kelly and taps were played to honor "those who gave all."

The new flagpole sits in the center of the U.S. Armed Services Legacy Project which features concrete walls between more basalt columns. These walls will contain marble plaques with the names of anyone who served in the Armed Services.

"All you have to do to get a name on the wall is pay the \$100 and provide the service record... the memorial is open to all branches of the service," said Hugh Maycumber.

Maycumber and other volunteers like George Frank and Roger Castelda were credited as just a few of the veterans who are helping to shape the project.

"I thank all of you for being here to day, I am grateful to all our friends and to my fellow veterans. It shows what a great tribute you are... all of you veterans... keeping us free. Each of you can be proud of what you've done here," said Commissioner Peterson.

"It has hit me lately the level of service and of sacrifice. We have young people leaving home every day to serve their country," said Rep. Kretz.

Rep. Short said, "It is great to be here today. I remember being here at the ground breaking. This memorial gives the ability for everyone to come see a first hand the people that have served... not all of you can travel to Washington, DC or go where there are the other memorials. This helps us remember... this helps our kids Remember."



Many people gathered to listen to speeches and celebrate the raising of the American Flag on the 50-foot flagpole at the U.S. Armed Forces

Mayor Plumb said he remembered with Frank and Castelda first came before the council to ask that the city take over the piece of ground where the memorial is located so that it could be built.

"It is such a tribute to our veterans. It is a tribute to each and every one that served our nation. We

Legacy Project. Photo by Gary DeVon need to keep supporting the memorial," he said.

Project President White recognized the three color guards on hand at the ceremony, they were from the Tonasket and Oroville American Legion Post, as well as the Colville Confederated Tribe. Following the ceremony the new flagpole was blessed with burning sage by two of the Tribal members from the color guard.