

## Local communities commemorate veterans who have passed

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
Thursday, 30 May 2013 19:38 -

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**The Wauneta American Legion, VFW, Sons of the American Legion and auxiliary groups organized a military salute and Memorial Day program at three area cemeteries, including Wauneta's Riverside Cemetery. (Christi Christner | The Wauneta Breeze)**

**By Christi Christner**

**The Wauneta Breeze**

This year Wauneta, Palisade, and Hamlet held services to commemorate Memorial Day at local cemeteries.

Each service was a reminder of all the brave men and women who gave everything to protect our country.

Alan Baxter, commander of the Palisade American Legion and quartermaster of the Palisade VFW, spoke at both Palisade and Hamlet's services. He said that freedom does not come free. Something will always be lost in the fight for liberty and freedom.

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Many veteran organizations helped make these ceremonies possible including the Palisade American Legion, Palisade VFW, Palisade AMVETS, Wauneta American Legion and Sons of the American Legion, Wauneta VFW and Auxiliary groups.

The Palisade American Legion and VFW along with the AMVETS put on both ceremonies in Palisade and Hamlet.

### **Palisade American Legion**

The Palisade American Legion is a very active group in the Palisade community. The American Legion has been around since 1919. Palisade started their American Legion in 1922. Today there are 50 members.

The commander is Alan Baxter, vice-commander is Jerry Post and Viron Baxter, chaplain.

Throughout the year the Palisade Legion holds fish fries during Lent. At the beginning of pheasant and deer season they put on a feed for the community. Each year they send a boy to Boys State. This year Landon Jutten was selected to attend.

### **Palisade VFW**

The Palisade VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) has been around since 1977 serving their

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community on many occasions. The VFW in Palisade has approximately 150 members. Billy Smith serves as the quartermaster, Alan Baxter as commander and Jerry Post as vice commander.

Throughout the year the VFW provides different writing competitions for students at Wauneta-Palisade Schools. This year they held the Voice of Democracy, a writing competition, with the topic, "Is the Constitution Still Relevant Today?" The first, second and third place winners received an amount of money as their prize.

The Palisade VFW holds a dinner every year during Pioneer Days in Palisade. They also help with funeral details for veterans.

### Palisade AMVETS

AMVETS (American Veterans) is an organization that was chartered in 1947. There has been an AMVETS post in Palisade since 1997. Locally, there are 67 members involved with AMVETS.

They provide bingo during Pioneer Days and serve pie and ice cream during the VFW's dinner.

The AMVETS offer five different \$200 scholarships state-wide. They also put on several writing competitions for Wauneta-Palisade schools. The Ted Leszkiewicz AMVETS Against Drugs and Alcohol Abuse (AADAA) program is a poem or poster competition for K-12. For 6-12 grades there is also an essay competition. First, second and third place winners will receive a prize that altogether add up to \$800.

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### **Palisade American Legion Auxiliary**

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 318 in Palisade has 73 members. Throughout the year they have bake sales or garage sales. On Memorial Day they provide a lunch of chicken and noodle soup. JoAnn Ward serves as the president of the group with Shirley Ferguson as vice president, Josie Lytle as secretary and Helen Miller as the treasurer. During the Memorial Day service they lay out wreaths on the graves.

For the Wauneta Memorial service the Wauneta VFW, Wauneta American Legion, Sons of the American Legion and auxiliary groups helped put it on.

### **Wauneta American Legion**

Wauneta's American Legion Post 304 has 32 members. They have a Memorial Day dinner that they put on yearly.

The group also send a girl to Girls State. This year Cassidy Rathe has been selected to go. The Auxiliary pays the entry fee and provides transportation there and back.

### **Wauneta VFW**

The Wauneta VFW has played an important role in Wauneta's community. There are 32

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members. Out of these 32, 20 of them are life members.

The VFW collaborates with the woman's auxiliary to give a \$400 scholarship. Each organization gives \$200 to help out a senior entering college. They have either a hamburger or sloppy-joe feed throughout the school year to raise money for this scholarship.

The VFW also helps fund the special olympics and the fire department.

Loyd Christner is the commander with Dennis Pfeiffer as vice commander. Dennis Pfeiffer is also the adjutant of the VFW. The quarter master is John Monasmith.

### **Wauneta American Legion Auxiliary**

The American Legion Auxiliary Post 304 has thirty two members. These women, daughters, sisters, or granddaughters of men who have served our country arrange the Memorial Day lunch which was served from noon to one on Monday.

### **History of Memorial Day**

On May 5, 1862, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, issued a proclamation that called for "Decoration Day" to be made known nationwide. The last Monday in May was chosen because it was not the anniversary of any battle.

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General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery on the first Decoration Day. Five thousand people decorated the grave of 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers. By 1890 all Northern states made Decoration Day an official holiday. After WWI all Southern states made it official but also continued to honor their dead on separate days.

Memorial Day's name was originally called Decoration Day because people would decorate the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers. The name was changed after World War I when it became a time to honor all U.S. military persons who had died in all wars.

Memorial Day is a day to remember the valiant men and women who have given their lives to protect our country and its freedom.