

Keeping the Flag Flying

Firefighting is not only about suppressing flames...

On August 26, 2015, a fire raged through the dense forest on Turk Road in Fruitland, WA. An assorted team of structural fire fighters named "the Billy Goats" raced to protect the homes on the rugged narrow mountainous roads. The Billy Goats, were comprised of Pullman Fire Department, Kennewick Fire Department, Walla Walla County Fire Department #4 and Benton County Fire Department #1 and #4. While protecting Greg and Mary Howard's home, they saw a large American flag beginning to catch fire. Quick action saved the home, but the flag was damaged beyond repair. Taking possession of the tattered flag, former Marine now Spokane Bureau of Land Management employee, Anthony Matthews, took lead of proper flag retirement and securing a new flag. Anthony was able to obtain a replacement flag from a friend and former Navy corpsman Cader Brown of Post Falls, ID. On September 2nd, the Billy Goats drove back up the rugged roads to Greg Howard's home. A small ceremony was performed before the flag was raised and hung. At the ceremony, Greg shared the significance of this flag. Greg having served in the Navy and his two brother's (one Naval Corpsman and Marine) was able to relate to the professionalism and dedication of the firefighters.

With replacement of the flag, may it be a symbol to continue to bring hope for brighter days.









