

Keeping the mission alive: After community outpouring, set-to-close Combat Cafe reopening

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UMATILLA — Last week, owners of [Combat Cafe announced](#) they would be closing their doors after incurring months of high food costs and overhead expenses.

However, the response and support from the community was so overwhelming over the weekend that Beth and Bruce Chambers have decided to push forward to keep their mission alive.

“We had the best weekend we’ve had in a long time,” Beth said. “We had so many people come out to support us and tell us that they wished we weren’t closing. They told us they would keep coming if we stayed open and would tell their friends. I think this community really believes in what we do and it showed. We had to do multiple food runs because we were running out of food.”

Community stepping up

Many also gave monetary donations to help keep the café afloat. A GoFundMe account, gofund.me/9a19fc85, was set up and shared on social media that has raised around \$800 along with many positive affirmations and pledges to support local restaurants.

Organizations like the NAM Knights and Joe Ziler with Kevco Builders and the Founder of the MIKE Endowment have helped out as well. Ziler reached out after seeing the café’s story on Facebook and has paid for their next month’s rent.



“So many people have been generous in helping us out,” Beth said. “We had one gentleman that came in for a coffee, tipped all the waitresses \$20 each, then handed us \$100 to stay open. All that for a coffee. It really shows that there are good people out there willing to support our mission.”

'We are ecstatic our Mission will continue'

Beth and Bruce opened Combat Cafe to be much more than a breakfast and lunch establishment. The café has become a [place of solidarity](#) for veterans and civilians alike. The military-themed diner has offered a safe place for veterans to discuss their worst nightmares of war, unite families in patriotism and [share with future generations](#) all that has come before — all over a good meal.

“We are ecstatic our Mission will continue,” Bruce said. “I am speechless, thankful, but most of all humbled by this uprising of community support. Just because you might not live in our area, or even if you're not a veteran doesn't mean you can't be part of our community. It's freedom for all and all are invited. We have one of the best support systems in the world, maybe even the universe.”

The café will reopen on Wednesday with its regular hours, 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., and an updated menu. The café will also be holding a fundraiser in the near future as they continue to battle the rising costs of our economy.

“We are not the only business struggling in this hard economy but we are the only ones brave enough to talk about it,” Beth said. “No one wants to admit that the dream you have worked overly hard for is not profitable but we are working with some great leaders to turn things around.”