



VFW Post 8870

Edmonds, WA
www.vfw8870.org
Jim Traner, Editor

Duane Pounds,
Commander

Volume 2, Issue 2
February 1, 2008

John Broderick

The charter was draped in black for John Broderick at the January meeting. The Women's Auxiliary attended the service. John, a long-term member of Post 8870, was assisted by the Post in returning from Texas last year after falling and seriously injuring himself. The following letter was written and signed by his family to the Post:

"Dear Mr. Pounds,

On behalf of my family, I'd like to thank you and Julie for your loving care and concern. We were all tremendously touched and are eternally grateful for the lovely ceremony at Friday's meeting. We will never forget what you, Julie and the VFW members have done to enrich our lives and honor our Dad/husband."

New Members

The Post has three new members, Mike Reagan, Jonathan Coffey, and Mans Masga. Johathan and Mans are currently active duty Marines and veterans of the Global War on Terror (Iraq). Mike was/is a Marine Vietnam Vet who served in I Corp. Welcome aboard from all of us.

Getting There Quickly

Commander Pounds attended the midwinter meeting in Yakima, but only after a friendly state patrol officer advised him to keep it at the posted limit. He got off without a fine but its up to the Post to rectify this injustice at the next meeting.

Winning Essays

I've decided to publish a sample of the essays submitted to our Post and selected by Dexter and Rock as "award winning". A number of students participated in the essay contest and we thank them all for their participation. Space doesn't permit re-printing them all but hopefully this sample will give you an idea of the quality of the essays received.

An Indirect Respect

Stefan Marmion

When one hears the word veteran, one immediately thinks of proud old, soldier, clad in his uniform ornamented with dozens of hard-earned ribbons and medals. A man of much wisdom and commanding a great deal respect. He has stories to tell, stories of violent, frightening times and stories of incredible, golden victory. One thinks of a man who has done so much, sacrificed so much, for the country that he loves. A country of justice and freedom, freedom that he himself has helped preserves. It doesn't matter if you're liberal or conservative, a democrat or a republican. Everyone and everyone loves a veteran.

The being said, it's not everyone that seems to appreciate everything that veterans have done. Sure, everybody says that they love a veteran. But how many people nowadays will say that they love what veterans fought for? America's veterans fought for one thing: to protect America and uphold its ideals as an example for the rest of the world. To make sure that their children and their children's children will be able to wake up every day in a free and safe country. But people today don't respect that. They barely even realize that if these men hadn't fought so gallantly to maintain the comfortable American lifestyle, they wouldn't have their comfortable American lifestyle.

The problem with the modern teenager is that he feels no need to love his country. He won't pay his respects to a pass-



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ing soldier. He won't say the pledge of allegiance. He won't even put his hand over his heart during the national anthem because his friends aren't doing it. Instead, he'll talk amongst his classmates about how horrible our nation is. He'll go to great lengths to find reasons to hate his country. He'll point blame to whoever is in power to vindicate his hatred. He'll even burn the American Flag and say he's expressing free speech. But they won't even realize that America gives them the right to do this. They are allowed to hate and protest and burn our beautiful symbol. All because our veterans fought to protect their freedom to do so.

It reminds me of a shirt I once saw. It read, "America's Military: Protecting protesters since the 60's". It makes me think. Our country provides so much, gives us so many amazing things, and to disrespect it like so many of my peers do is disgusting. Men and woman have given their lives for hundreds of years, and if you don't put your hand over your heart during the national anthem you may as well be slapping those heroes in the face, because apparently everything that they fought and died for isn't important to you.

So, yeah, everyone loves a veteran, because everyone loves a hero. Everyone loves the good guy, but what happens when the good guy's gone? What is left to remember him by? What he protected and loved, of course. The best way to honor America's veteran is to honor America, in all its splendor and glory. Even if you don't agree with everything that's happening in our country, you ought to get behind it anyway, because when does the team need its fans, if not when it's going through hard times?

Have You Visited VFW Post 8870's Website?

Ever had one of those projects that seems to be put off from day to day, week to week, or month to month? Well, the Post's website is one of those projects to me. Now I suspect that not many of you guys visit it (www.vfw8870.org), but we do have the random person "swing by" and take a look. The latest was a soldier stationed in Iraq. He had come home (Bellingham) and decided to look up Sgt. Major Strickland's grave. You may recall that Sgt. Major Strickland was born in Bellingham, raised in Edmonds, and was stationed in the Pentagon at 9/11 where he died in the attack there. The trooper wanted to visit his grave site but was unable to locate it. After he returned to Iraq, he ran our Post down via the internet to ask the question of its location. Quartermaster Liz contacted me and I contacted Gary Haakenson, our mayor. Gary informed me that Sgt. Major Strickland was buried in Arlington National Cemetery. So even though the old website did provide basic information, it seemed a bit drab and boring to me. I have to admit I have a very talented lady, Tomo, who transforms my written version of the newsletter into an electronic version so I can email it to everyone. With her vastly superior web skills, the Post now has a pretty spiffy new website. The biggest addition is a copy of all of our prior newsletters (sans minutes which are confidential to Post members and the names of student winners and their schools for privacy concerns). So if you missed an issue, visit the website to retrieve it. And an aside, if there is anything you guys and gals would like added, let me know and I'll see what I can do. And please, I would really appreciate it if you have any articles, bios, etc., particularly of our departed brothers, let me know and I will add them to the newsletter.



VFW Post 8870 Edmonds, WA

Page 3

Volume 2, Issue 2

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MEETING DATES

VFW Post 8870 meets the second Friday of each month (except November which is the third Friday) at the Senior Center located at 220 Railroad Ave. Edmonds, WA 98020. We welcome all veterans of foreign wars to attend our meetings. If you need any additional information, please contact our Quartermaster.

The Last Say

The only means by which an organization sustains itself is by its membership. I took the opportunity to check out the membership of other Posts in Washington state. While I didn't commit the stats to heart, Post 8870 has increased its membership while the majority of other posts have lost members. I guess some folks would say what does it matter? I would respond that I joined this organization to assist other vets and because of something that happened in 1970. I had just enrolled at the U of W in the Business School. I had been married about a year and my wife, although a college graduate, was working for minimum wage for Ma-Bell (a good reason to cheer their break-up). We were pretty much eating Top Roman and that was about it. I got a couple of hundred bucks a month from the VA and that was the difference between Top Roman every meal or Top Roman every other meal. That's when the VA checks quit coming. No amount of letter writing or calling did any good. I was driving up Boren Avenue one afternoon when I notice the VFW logo on a building. I stopped in and chatted with what I guess was the state leader of the VFW. I explained my dire straights and he picked up the phone and called the head of the VA explaining he had a young vet that wasn't receiving his benefits. Within a few days, I had my all my past due checks and I was back to three squares a day of Top Roman. That was the plus side to that day. The downside was as I was walking out, the conversation drifted to Agent Orange. The state commander proceeded to tell me that most Vietnam Vets were using this as an excuse to get benefits. I let that conversation go in one ear and out the other as comments of an ill-informed individual. The fact that my checks were arriving was more important—at that time. Since then, I have had good friends that I served with that have died from exposure of Agent Orange, and the fact that my diet has improved over the Top Roman days, I now view that cavalier attitude with much more disdain. Here's the bottom line, when a vet says he has been exposed to, suffered from, or been subjected to anything—you believe in him. You welcome that vet into this organization and you use this organization to secure whatever benefits that vet has coming to him or her. If an organization takes that approach and publicizes it, membership will grow and vets will continue to protect vets' interests. Remember, we are Vets helping Vets.



Minutes From the December 14, 2007 Meeting (unapproved) from Quartermaster Liz Mather

Prior to the meeting, the post invited members of John Broderick's family into the meeting room to witness the draping of the charter in John's memory. John Casapiedra acted as Officer of the Day, and Chaplain Ed Gray led the post in prayer. The ceremony was concluded with a moment of silence.

The meeting was then opened in proper order with a prayer by Chaplain Ed Grey, hand salute, and the pledge of allegiance. There were 23 members in attendance, and 3 guests. The roll call of officers found the Service Officer absent. Jim Traner read the applications for Mike Reagan and Mans Masga. The minutes of the December meeting were approved as amended. The Quartermaster's report was approved as read.

Guest Mike Reagan, a Marine veteran of Vietnam, recipient of the American Legion 2007 Patriot Award, and the subject of an article published in the American Legion magazine, gave a talk on a project he has undertaken, and which to him, is very important. Upon request, Mike draws portraits from photographs of deceased veterans, mostly from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also from Vietnam, Korea, World War II, and even one from World War I. These portraits are given to the families of veterans at no cost to them. He urged the post to get the word out about his project – he needs only photographs and names and addresses. The project has been given tax free status, and no one profits from donations. All the work is done free, with the costs for materials and mailings offset by fund raisers. A portrait costs about \$50, and 300 were sent out last year. A motion to donate \$500 to defray some of the costs of the project was made, seconded and passed. In addition, Mike's application for membership in Post 8870 was accepted, and he was welcomed into the post.

Of the two active duty Marines that Jim Traner hosted for lunch, Mans Masga completed his application for membership and was accepted by the post. Jim Traner made a motion that the post cover the cost of annual membership for all active duty personnel for the first year. The motion was seconded and passed.

Phil Sacks presented a check for \$262.50 from the Greater Seattle Newcomers Club as a donation to the post relief fund.

Hospital and Community Service Chairman Al Boyett gave his report to the post. Poppy Chairman Phil Sacks reported that he visited Tops Market and set up both Memorial Day and Veterans Day. He will be contacting the new market that is to open at the old Albertson's, and also urged the post to sign up for two shifts if they are able to do so. Voice of Democracy Chairman Dexter Miller reported that 1st place post winner, Stefan Marmion, won 3rd place in the District competition. Stefan volunteered to read his essay at the February post meeting, and also at the Memorial cemetery program in May.

A motion was made to give Commander Pounds \$300 towards the cost of the mid-winter conference in Yakima. The motion was seconded and carried. A motion made to pay for the cost of plaques distributed to members at the last meeting, was seconded and passed.

Phil Sacks will be handing out "Join the Elite" flyers at the Everett Naval Station Commissary and requested volunteers to go with him.

A motion was made to pay for 7 members who have not yet paid their yearly dues. The motion was seconded and passed. A motion was made that in the future, delinquent members be sent a letter from the post requesting their dues payment, and that if there is no response, then their dues will not be paid for them. The motion was seconded and passed.

Historian Leroy Middleton reported that as a result of the December flooding in Chehalis, water came up about a foot in the Veterans Museum building in Chehalis. There was damage to tapes stored in the library. They were sent to the archives in Olympia and preserved on discs. Leroy also read a joke that had appeared in the VFW magazine for those of us who hadn't taken the time to read it.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with a prayer by Chaplain Ed Gray and a flag salute.