

Upcoming Events Calendar 2010-11

Please take time to review the calendar and if there are additions that are necessary, please contact the Quartermaster at quartermaster@vfw8870.org or call Elizabeth Mather at 425-672-0279.

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| February 8th | Board Meeting—Traner’s office—110 James St., Edmonds, WA (0915 hrs.) |
| February 11th | Post Meeting—South Snohomish Senior Center—Lunch 11:30; Meeting 12:30 |
| March 1st | Scout of the Year entries due to Post |
| March 12th | District I meeting at 12:00PM—Alderwood Boys & Girls Club |
| May 14th | District I meeting at 12:00PM—Alderwood Boys & Girls Club |
| May 27th-28th | Memorial Day Buddy Poppy Fund Raiser—See Bob Crawford for details |
| May 31st | Memorial Day Ceremonies—Edmonds Cemetery |
| June 22nd - 25th | State Convention—Yakima |

Post Dues Reminder

It’s time to pay your dues. If you haven’t, please do. If you’re having difficulty coming up with the funds, let us know. We will gladly help out in hardship situations. Also, consider a life membership. We have provided details in this newspaper on how to become a life member. It’s a smart move.

Membership

Just a note about membership. We are down a bit this year (11 members) due to moves and other reasons. Most of you know and associate with other veterans. Feel free to invite a vet to join. Our Quartermaster Liz Mather will be happy to answer any questions they may have. Her number is 425-672-0279.

Up-Coming Meeting

Jack Coleman—Korean Marine Veteran— “Chosen Few”

Post’s Middle Teacher of the Year Honored at Mid-winter Convention



Ms. Ruth Brick was recognized as the Middle School Teacher of the Year at the Department’s Mid-Winter Convention. She was nominated by our Post as its Middle School nominee in the VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Awards program. This program is conducted nation-wide and identifies the nation’s top elementary, middle school, and high school teachers who teach and reinforce citizenship education topics, promote America’s history and traditions, and foster and promote democratic values. Among the candidates nominated by the more than 100 Posts across the state, Ms. Brick was recognized as the Middle School teacher who best demonstrated and exemplified these qualities. She was an honored guest at the Mid-Winter Conference which was held in Yakima on January 22nd. Ms. Brick, who lives in Edmonds, teaches 7th grade English and Social Studies at Brier Terrace Middle School. During her 13 year teaching career, Ruth has earned a reputation as a dedicated and caring professional who possesses the passion to create a classroom environment that stimulates critical thinking and a curiosity and interest in learning. Each year, she has volunteered to coordinate Veteran’s Day assemblies in the schools in which she has taught. Ruth plans, organizes, and conducts interdisciplinary learning activities that promote citizenship topics such as flag etiquette, understanding our founding documents, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

I have taken the liberty to insert her winning essay (which she read at the January Post meeting) in the newsletter. Her essay took 2nd in District although she was clearly a winner in my book.

Katarina Nguyen—Voice of Democracy Winner

“Does my generation have a role in America’s future?”

“Give me liberty or give me death”. In 1775, Patrick Henry’s immortalized statement instigated colonists’ courage to free themselves from the British, just one year prior to the brave leaders in Philadelphia declaring our country’s independence. Here we are, 234 years later; the times have changed, from fashion to technology, even politics, but the honor and bravery of patriots remain unchanged. Now ironically, my history class is currently delving into the world of American history in which we learn the “vital” aspects, analyzing not only the motives and the causes, but also the failures, the effects, and even the outcomes. Wait. I see great leaders and even tragic losers in my textbook, but what about the silent soldiers who have sacrificed their lives for America? What about *them*? Even now, in this era of new music, iPads, and Health Care reform, brave patriots silently bear the uniform of the United States of America, continuing a legacy for us to enjoy the blessings of liberty. Looking past the history text, at home and abroad, brave soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines have fought for and defended our great homeland. But, does my generation have a role in America’s future? Of course we do, as we continue to bear this sacred torch of tradition and continue to fight, to sacrifice, for our country and our freedom.



America is filled with patriots, but what do patriots have to do with *my* future? After all, a soldier defending America doesn’t affect the time Jeopardy airs on television or what grade I receive on my biology test. Actually, we must look past this misconception; on television, we see “the future” in news broadcasts of senate elections, car commercials, the new and improved weight loss pill; yet, soldiers are the future; soldiers serve the children playing in the park, soldiers serve the elderly lady living down the street, soldiers serve you.

My grandpa served in the army before he passed away. Several of my family members have followed his footsteps in defending our liberty and shaping our futures. A purple heart was not earned for *nothing*. 20 years of military service was not given for *nothing*. Their loved ones did not worry night after night in six, twelve, even twenty four month increments for *nothing*. They, among others, fight for you, for me, and for freedom.

If we stripped America of all people except the individuals crucial to her preservation, who would remain? No, it’s neither Lady Gaga nor Bill Gates; it’s the armed forces of the United States of America, the men and women who alone, have earned the right to stand proudly. This includes the 2.3 million brave men and women currently serving in the five branches of the military of the United States for our freedom through unwavering American patriotism.

So it’s up to my generation to carry on the sweet liberty that has been established for us through blood, sweat, and tears on the bloodied battle field. My generation is filled with patriots who follow the footsteps of the great leaders before them, sacrificing, fighting, even dying. Our country has the greatest patriotism in the world; we all have grandpas and grandmas, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters, moms and dads, and friends and family, who have fought to preserve the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I am immensely grateful to be living in this generation, in which my heroes have paved the way for me to be able to live in luxury; I can speak my opinion without censorship, I can go anywhere I wish whenever I wish, and I have the same right to become successful as the next person.

What is our role in our future? Isn’t it clear? We must support our country as our nation’s sentinels of freedom continue to walk their posts in defending our land under the proud and unwavering, red, white, and blue flag. I am America, you are America, our role is in her future; my generation is the future. As soldiers of war, we are the saviors of America; we are the hard workers; we strive for safe communities; we are the next generation of mothers and fathers cradling our babies; we represent hope, growing, advancing; we are the police officers, firefighters, pilots, servicemen and women working in collaboration and unity for America. My generation’s role for the future is the future; we follow those who have come before, fighting in air, land, and sea for you and me, America. Meanwhile, as I read a sentence from my history textbook about America’s success in gaining her independence, I have the urge to pencil in next to the phrase “America’s success”, the words “to be continued”.

Post Officers Attend Mid-Winter Convention in Yakima

Junior Vice Commander Fred Apgar and Commander Jim Traner attended the Mid-Winter Convention held in Yakima. Of course, our Teacher of the Year, Ms. Ruth Brick was recognized at the Banquet as the Middle School Teacher of the Year. With a little wheeling and dealing and the assistance of Dick Whipple, Department Quartermaster, Fred was able to come up with dinner tickets for the 4 unexpected family members who drove over from Edmonds. It was our pleasure to host her brothers, sister-in-law, and niece. The convention itself was actually enjoyable. Department Commander Jerry Hecker kept a tight ship and committee reports were delivered succinctly. What took two days to accomplish last year in Wenatchee was done in one day in Yakima without the loss of any substantive information. We walked away picking up some excellent information on keeping the Post moving in the same direction as Department. However, the best part of the convention was recognizing the Teachers of the Year (elementary, middle school, and high school) and the 17 Voice of Democracy District winners from across the state. I think they were all in the upper 5% of their class in addition to playing 2 or 3 sports, participating in bands, 4-H's, etc.; truly the cream of the crop of our youth. District One's VOD winner came in 2nd in the competition while Ruth Brick was middle school teacher of the year so our District had a good showing that evening. Meanwhile, Fred got his feet wet at these types of affairs.

New Members Welcomed into VFW

The Post welcomed two new members to VFW. I had great photos of them that Fred took on my Blackberry Phone. However, the next day I bought a new phone and erased everything on the old phone before remembering to download the pictures. I could describe the two new members but, better yet, attend the next meeting and say hi to William Fitzgerald and Christopher Steiner who both served in the Navy. Welcome aboard comrades.

Charter Draped for Mario DeMitchell

The Post lost a member and a friend last month, Mario DeMitchell. Mario was a Marine in Korea and was a member of the Chosen Few, those men who were at the Chosen Reservoir. The charter will remain draped for one month in his memory. We give his family our best as we remember him in our prayers.

Post Remembers First Commander

Post member (and former Quartermaster) Mary Justason sent an article she received from the Cannon Courier located in Woodbury, TN dated November 9, 2010. It is article about a Grand Marshall of a Veterans Day parade held there and the individual is Arthur O. Perry, our Post's first commander. A Marine, he served during three wars and was in combat in WWII in the South Pacific (Okinawa, Saipan and Tinian) and in Vietnam. He sounds like a fascinating individual, never meeting him myself. He finished fourth in the tryout for the Pistol Team that participated in the 1960 Olympics. He flew on Air Force One with Lyndon Johnson when a member of his unit received the Congressional Medal of Honor and both were flown home from Vietnam for the ceremony. He retired as a Sergeant Major and moved to Tennessee where he was born. If anyone is interested in contacting him, let the Quartermaster know.

Dean Celli Wins Patriots Pen Award

Dean is the winner of this year's Patriots Pen. His essay on the topic "Does Patriotism Still Matter?" was excellent. Due to lack of space, I am unable to print it. Dean won last year and is already planning to enter the competition next year.

Help Al Boyett With Your Information

Our Surgeon, Al Boyett, spends his days trying to find out what the Post is doing in the community. If you visit a sick veteran, help a vet, fly a flag, give to the USO, etc. let Al know. Send the info to the Quartermaster and she will see Al receives it.

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The Last Word

It's interesting to go to VFW conventions. Not for the speeches nor the parties, but to find out how other Posts are dealing with the same issues that we are. I always figure if I come out of a meeting with 2 or 3 action items, the meeting was a success. Last weekend, I came away with maybe 3 or 4 so it was a heck of a success. Almost every Post is faced with declining membership. However, the fact is that there is a constant stream of young veterans out there who don't know about VFW or don't know how to join it. A young female veteran spoke to us. She had become aware of the VFW only within the last month. As I recall, she is from the Yakima area where I was born and raised. In my childhood, the VFW seemed to be everywhere. Little league teams were sponsored by them, every corner had a vet with Poppies twice a year. Even my best friend's dad was Post Commander. I'm not sure what happened in Yakima, but the same is true in Edmonds. There are a lot of young vets, but how we find them is the trick. The young vet in Yakima said she became aware of VFW from a friend through Twitter. Half the audience thought a bird had told her, not a social network found on the internet. A few hours later, an older veteran complained about the Department sending too much information on the internet and not by mail. I think I know where the problem may lie.