

Calendar 2009-2010

March 1, 2010	Scout of the Year Scholarship applications due
March 6, 2010	District I Conference—Noon- Alderwood Boys & Girls Club
May 1st, 2010	District I Convention—Noon- Alderwood Boys & Girls Club. Loyalty Day.
June 24th-25th	State Convention—Vancouver, WA

Buddy Poppy Reminder

Just a quick note. Bob Crawford is still looking for volunteers to help out on Buddy Poppies. Please see him for the signup sheet or contact our Quartermaster at quartermaster@vfwpost8870.org for additional information.

District I Memorial Service

As many of you know, Ed Gray is the District I chaplain. On March 6th, the District meeting will a joint memorial with the Ladies Auxiliary honoring those VFW members who have passed away over the last year. There will be a draping of charters and Ed and his Auxiliary counterpart will be the keynote speakers for this service. Hopefully, many of us can make this meeting, not only to honor our fallen comrades, but also to support Ed for his service to District. The meeting is held at the Boys and Girls club in Alderwood. Go east on 196th to the Old Spaghetti Factory, take the next right at the stoplight, proceed by the ball fields and turn left into the parking lot. The far door closest to the ball field is the meeting room.

Speaker Bureau

Rock Roth will be sending around a sign-up sheet at the next meeting. This will be for members who wish to participate as speakers at local schools to indicate if they would like to participate and, if so, at what type of function or group size. Particularly around Veterans Day we get a number of requests to participate in various assemblies or classroom discussions. Now and then we also get the occasional request from an individual teacher. Rock would like to have a master list that he will maintain so we can meet these requests in a timely manner. If you are interested, sign up or email our Quartermaster.

Upcoming Speaker

Pearl Harbor survivor and submariner—Erv Schmidt

Buck Weaver—February's Speaker



Buck Weaver was our speaker in the February meeting. Have you ever noticed that pilots talk with their hands? From the picture above, Buck is no exception. Buck took us on a trip with him (a verbal trip), starting in Australia and ending in New Guinea. Buck, a fighter pilot, got to New Guinea and found out his squadron's aircraft ended up in North Africa. Somehow, no one in our group seemed to surprised but, then again, we were all in the service so we know how that works. Buck was thoroughly enjoyable and for those of you who missed the meeting, well, you missed a bit of history relayed by the guy who was there. Like Buck said, it was the first time he had told these stories to a group. For that, we say thanks. Also, we'll see if we can't get a few more of our members to give some talks about their experiences.

Officer Nominations & Elections

There will be nominations for officers at the March meeting. In April, elections will be held and induction of the officers will be in the May meeting. Buck Weaver is heading up a nominating committee and will present that committees slate at the March meeting.

Membership

At the last meeting, all members present were given a membership application, VFW membership brochure, and a self-addressed return envelope to give to any potential members they may meet. If you didn't attend the last meeting and can't make the next meeting, let us know and we would be happy to get the information to you. I have found that a number of veterans are interesting in joining the VFW, they are just waiting to be asked. So don't be bashful in inviting them to one of our meetings. By the way, the best place to keep the application is your car.

History and Background of the Cross of Malta

I "lifted" this from another Post's website. I don't recall the Post, but if they complain, I'll deny it. Anyway, I thought it was interesting and I pass it along to you.

History shows that the Cross of Malta, the emblem of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, is 1,000 years old. Nearly ten centuries ago the Maltese Cross was made the symbol of fighting men who were united by a solemn pledge of comradeship to fight for freedom and to aid the sick and the needy. Those ancient obligations are still symbolized by the Cross of Malta today, for the more than two million former servicemen who are the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The Cross of Malta is the symbol of their battles in time of war and of their campaign to defend the God given rights of human beings in time of peace. The Cross of Malta symbolizes the compassion, or sympathy, of those men and women for the needy. It is the sign of services which our contemporary veterans render to help make living a little better for everyone.

To appreciate fully the original meaning of the Cross of Malta we must look back a thousand years, to the Crusaders serving in the Middle East. There we find the Knights of St. John, the worlds first great brotherhood of warriors pledged to chivalry. The Knights of St. John represented all walks of life. They were noblemen and priests, artisans and laborers. Regardless of those differences, however, they were united by a solemn pledge of unwavering courage and compassion. Together they fought against oppression. They carried their crusades far from home across deserts and seas, into the Holy Land, Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. At the same time they administered to the sick, the needy and to the poor. The Crusaders adopted the Cross of Malta as their insignia because its eight points represented the eight Beatitudes prescribed in the Sermon on the Mount. The Cross of Malta had a religious origin but the Knights of St. John also made it their battle standard for the liberation of all men, women and children who suffered oppression. The ideals for which the original Crusaders fought parallel the principles of democracy today, freedom and justice.

Centuries passed to the year 1899. Again fighting men banded together. Again they pledged themselves to campaign for the rights of mankind and to administer to the sick, the needy and to the poor. That was the birth of a new organization, known today as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Why did the Veterans of Foreign Wars select the Cross of Malta emblem? What has been added to the Cross and what does the symbol mean? Let us look at the VFW ensign closely. We see the eight-pointed Maltese Cross. Upon the Cross is superimposed the Great Seal of the United States, encircled by the name, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Within the circle is the American eagle, the emblem of a proud nation whose warriors of many generations have fought and sacrificed to preserve the free mans way of living. Between the four arms of the Cross, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has added the suns rays to emphasize the vigor and warmth with which the present day brotherhood defends our ideals. Every detail in the VFW emblem has definite meaning. The Cross, the rays and the seal together symbolize the vows, purpose and character of men and women who have traveled far from home to defend humanity. The Veterans of Foreign Wars is the world's oldest and largest overseas war veterans' organization. It is chartered by the Congress of the United States. That charter states specifically that the purpose of this corporation shall be: Fraternal, Patriotic, Historical and Educational to preserve and Strengthen Comradeship among its members, to assist worthy comrades, to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their widows and orphans. To maintain true allegiance to the government of the United States of America and fidelity to its constitution and laws, to foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom, and to preserve and defend the United States from all her enemies whomsoever. Upon joining the Veterans of Foreign Wars, a person vows in the presence of Almighty God and the members of this order to maintain loyalty to the government, to the VFW, and to his fellow comrades. When the Cross of Malta is bestowed upon a new VFW member, he or she is pledged to advance the principles of the organization. Like the original Crusaders 1,000 years ago, the 2.1 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars today fulfill their vows through a wide variety of vigorously executed services. The VFW is also joined by 750,000 members of our Ladies Auxiliary in our efforts. They foster true patriotism, and strengthen the institutions of freedom by word and deed. They improve their cities, towns and neighborhoods through community service. They give aid to worthy comrades and to the widows and orphans. They extend helping hands to the needy and the sick. Like the original Knights of St. John, those who wear the VFW Maltese Cross express their comradeship in terms of service.

These are the reasons why the Veterans of Foreign Wars chose the Cross of Malta as its emblem. The Cross of Malta symbolizes truly the character and objectives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. People qualified through military service to wear the VFW Cross of Malta do so with pride because that emblem represents the highest of ideals. Every member has earned the Cross of Malta proudly - and he or she wears it proudly

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The Last Word

Tax season is upon me (I'm a CPA in my real life). Therefore, this issue and the April issue may be succinct and abbreviated. For this, I apologize. However, I will try to pass along the important issues. Rock's speaker bureau list, for instance, is a great idea and puts VFW and our Post into the schools where we can pass along some first hand history to the students. Membership is also important. Numbers count, not only for the well being of our organization, but for the strength of our voice when being heard in Washington DC which is critical to veterans' issues. It is important for everyone, not just a few, be recruiters. Finally, we have a great group of members and our meetings are well attended. However, you guys who have been reluctant to show up consider dropping by and having lunch with us (\$3) and I promise to have you out of there by 2PM. We try to have interesting speakers and welcome every VFW member whether they are a member of our Post or not.