



**VFW Post 8870 and
Ladies Auxiliary
Edmonds, WA
www.vfw8870.org**



Upcoming Events Calendar

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.

May 7th	Staff Meeting—Traner’s Office 09:00 AM
May 0th	Post Meeting – Edmonds Senior Center—Lunch 11:30 AM—Meeting 12:30 PM
May 18th	District Convention—Alderwood Boys & Girls Club—Lunch 12:00-Meeting 1:00
June 6th—8th	Department Convention—Yakima
July 20th-24th	National Convention—Louisville, KY

Results of Post Elections

A slate of uncontested candidates ran for office this year. Fred Apgar will continue as Post Commander and Chris Edwards will continue as Senior Vice. New to office will be Jim Blossey as Jr. Vice Commander and Dennis Peterson as Quartermaster. Ron Clyborne is Judge Advocate and Rock Roth will continue as Chaplin. Tom Hallums will be our new Three Year Trustee. Al Boyett will continue as Surgeon. Commander Apgar has appointed Dick Simmons as Adjutant, Barry Fitzgerald Guard, Jim Collins Officer of the Day, and Don Whedon will continue as Service Officer. There are 22 separate Committees that have been assigned chairpersons to lead them. If you would like to become more involved with the Post’s activities, feel free to contact the Post QM at quartermaster@vfw8870.org or Commander Fred Apgar at commander@vfw8870.org for more information about the various committee assignments that are available. I know our Operations committee which does the set up and take down each meeting can use help. All you have to do is show up a bit early (11:00AM) and stay a few minutes after the meeting.

Mike Reagan Speaks at 3rd Place Books

On April 10, 2013, VFW Post # 8870 sponsored a public forum regarding the Fallen Heroes Project. The Founder and President of the Fallen Heroes Project, Michael Reagan, was the featured speaker. The event was hosted by Third Place Commons, located in Lake Forest Park. More than 100 people attended the event.

Mike, a portrait artist who lives and works in Edmonds is a combat veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps who served in the Vietnam War. He began drawing portraits of fallen service members when a grieving widow asked him to draw a portrait of her husband who had been killed in Iraq. Mike, of course, agreed to draw the portrait and did so free of charge. Since that first experience nine years ago, Mike and his wife, Cheryl, have dedicated their lives to drawing portraits for all American and Coalition families who have lost a loved one in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. To date, he has drawn over 3,200 portraits, all free of charge. He has brought untold comfort to grieving Gold Star family members. The Fallen Heroes Project was founded to help support what Mike refers to as his calling.

A highlight of the evening was when Mike unveiled, for the first time, a poster that contained the portraits he had recently drawn to honor the memory of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting victims. Following the Newtown tragedy, Mike reached out to the family members of the victims and provided each with a portrait of their loved one.

VFW Post #8870, of which Mike is a member, sponsored the forum to honor Mike in recognition of the great personal sacrifices he and his family have made to provide love, support, comfort, and peace to the families of our Fallen Heroes.

Interested citizens who would like to know more about the Fallen Heroes Project or who would like to make a donation to this wonderful effort can contact Michael at his web site,

www.fallenheroesproject.org

Loyalty Day: What Is Its Meaning?

By Fred M. Apgar

When asked the significance of May 1, many Americans would probably respond by saying that it is May Day. Technically, they would be correct, but May 1 is so much more.

Historically, May Day is related to Celtic and Germanic festivals. Eventually, these pagan religious festivals evolved into secular celebrations that marked the end of another winter and welcomed the arrival of spring and warmer weather. Gradually May Day celebrations complete with May Pole dancing were occurring in many communities all across America.

The spirit of May Day took on an ominous meaning, for many Americans, when Communist Russia celebrated the day to honor the Russian Revolution. In an effort to counteract the Communist May Day celebrations in America, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars sought to challenge what they considered to be the “disruptive forces of Communism”. They sought ways for Americans to demonstrate their loyalty to American ideals. At the urging of the VFW, many communities all across our great nation organized various activities to promote patriotism and Americanism. These were sponsored by schools, churches, labor unions, fraternal organizations, and all levels of government. A resolution was adopted in 1949, proclaiming May 1 as Loyalty Day, but it wouldn't be until 1958 until the proclamation became law. In 1958, President Eisenhower signed Public Law 529 in which May 1st was proclaimed Loyalty Day in the United States.

Loyalty Day was established as a day for reaffirming our loyalty to the United States and the documents upon which our nation was founded and provides us with the opportunity to celebrate the many freedoms secured and preserved for us by the brave patriots who have served in our nation's armed forces and risked their lives in the defense of freedom.

The VFW urges everyone to take time to reflect on the privileges of democracy and liberty that have been afforded us by the institutions of our nation.

Membership

The Post is now two members shy of reaching 100%. Membership costs \$25 which is cheaper than buying a membership to Costco. If you are one of the unpaid, please help us reach our goal. We now take credit cards so if you would like to pay by plastic, send an email to our Quartermaster at quartermaster@vfw8870.com and he can take care of you. Of course, we still take checks and cash. If you can't pay, let us know and we will make arrangements to see that your membership continues. We have great meetings and interesting speakers. Our attendance at the monthly meetings is greater than any other Post in the District. So support the Post even if you can't make the meetings and help us reach our 100% goal.

Why VFW?

We can't obtain 100% membership yet VFW speaks loudly for every veteran in this country whether they are a member or not. By now, I assume that everyone is familiar with sequestration and the impact it is having on both our armed forces and our veterans. Our Commander in Chief and our Washington DC staff is working hard to fight to retain the benefits we earned. I repeat, the benefits we earned. Individually, the veteran is helpless. As a group, we wield political power and Congress only understands and listens to those that can hurt them or help them as the case may be. So if you really don't give a rip about joining an organization for yourself, consider joining for the vet who is on a waiting list for a couple of years at the VA. It's a small contribution of \$25.

Chaplain's Column—Rock Roth

THE FINAL INSPECTION

The Soldier stood and faced God,
Which must always come to pass.
He hoped his shoes were shining,
Just as brightly as his brass.
'Step forward now, Soldier,
How shall I deal with you?
Have you always turned the other cheek?
To My Church have you been true?'
The soldier squared his shoulders and said,
'No, Lord, I guess I have not.
Because those of us who carry guns,
Can't always be a saint
I've had to work most Sundays,
And at times my talk was tough.
And sometimes I've been violent,
Because the world is awfully rough.
But, I never took a penny,
That wasn't mine to keep...
Though I worked a lot of overtime,
When the bills got just too steep.
And I never passed a cry for help,
Though at times I shook with fear..
And sometimes, God, forgive me,
I've wept unmanly tears.
I know I don't deserve a place,
Among the people here.
They never wanted me around,
Except to calm their fears
If you've a place for me here, Lord,
It needn't be so grand.
I never expected or had too much,
But if you don't, I'll understand.

There was a silence all around the throne,
Where the saints had often trod.
As the Soldier waited quietly,
For the judgment of his God.

'Step forward now, you Soldier,
You've borne your burdens well.
Walk peacefully on Heaven's streets,
You've done your time in Hell.'

Author Unknown~

God Bless Our TROOPS!

VFW Night at the Aquasox

I know it is a bit early to think about Aquasox games in August but you need to mark the 17th of August on your calendar so you save the date. It will be VFW night at the Everett Aquasox. A VFW honor guard will present the colors and one of our Comrades will throw out the first pitch. Following the game will be a fireworks show and for those of you who never attended a game, the fireworks are first rate. This is a great time to bring the spouse, the kids, and the grandkids. We will need a count of members by June in order to reserve sufficient tickets. We already have more than 30 attending so it should be fun. We will start passing out signup sheets at the May meeting. Tickets are \$10 and we will seat down the first base line.

Memorial Day Ceremony

Our Post has been advised by the Edmonds Cemetery Board that Korean War veterans will be honored at this year's Memorial Day Ceremony on Monday May 27th. The ceremony will begin at 11:00 AM. Of course, we invite all Post members to participate in the ceremony, but we hope that all Korean War veterans and the family members of deceased Korean War veterans will make a special effort to attend the ceremony. Every Korean War veteran and surviving family members of deceased Korean War veterans will be recognized. We will need volunteers to place flags at the cemetery at 7:00AM in the morning and take them down at 4:00PM in the afternoon. If you can mark your calendars now for either or both shifts, your help would be appreciated.

The Last Word—Commander's Column by Fred Apgar

There is some good news emanating from Washington, D. C. and the Pentagon, which highlights the importance of expressing one's views and involving oneself in the public discourse process. I am referring to a decision by our newly appointed Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, to suspend the establishment of a new medal called the Distinguished Warfare Medal. Last month, just prior to his resignation as Defense Secretary, Leon Panetta announced the establishment of this medal. In making his announcement, Secretary Panetta indicated that the medal would, "Recognize unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) pilots, as well as others who directly impact combat operations, but that do not involve acts of valor or physical risk that combat entails."

Opposition to this announcement was immediate and highly vocal. The primary issue involving the Distinguished Warfare Medal was its placement in the order of precedence among military medals. The newly created medal, which would have been the first combat related award to be created since the Bronze Star in 1944, would outrank the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. Many veterans' groups including the National VFW expressed vehement opposition, feeling that the new medal was both an injustice and insult to those who served in combat, risked their lives, and displayed valor.

Secretary Hagel "heard" the protests, stopped production of the medal, and ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review the issue and submit appropriate recommendations. While the final decision regarding the Distinguished Warfare Medal is yet to be made, we can be pleased that the views of so many veterans and lawmakers had a positive impact on the decision-making process.

One of the lessons we can take from this situation is that we should always remain involved in the "political" process regarding matters that affect us either locally or at the national level. As responsible citizens, we should make the effort to express our views and opinions to those whom we have elected to serve us.

The views expressed in this column are solely those of the Commander and do not represent those of VFW Post #8870, its membership, or VFW.

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