

Upcoming Events Calendar

Please take time to review the calendar and if there are additions that are necessary, please contact the editor at commander@vfwdistrict1.org

March 11th	Staff Meeting—Traner’s Office 0900
March 14th	Post Meeting— Edmonds Senior Center—Lunch at 1130-Meeting at 1230
March 25th	Memorial Service for Snohomish Veterans— Edmonds Memorial Cemetery—10AM

Rock Roth

We recently learned that our comrade, Chaplain, and good friend Rock Roth passed away on February 27th as he was returning from vacation in California. He apparently died of a heart attack. Rock sent me his Chaplain’s Column before he left on vacation so his final column is included in this newsletter. Rock retired from the Navy as a Captain. He flew missions off aircraft carriers during the Vietnam war, served with NATO command in Germany, and was the public relations officer for Naval Base Everett at its inception. When he moved here in the late 80’s, we became acquainted and became good friends. Even though Rock was actively involved in VFW and American Legion, he was more involved with Rotary where he supported various programs at Scriber Lake High School. Scriber Lake’s staff and students, like us, will sorely miss Rock.

Archaeologist Who Combed WWII Battle Scene to Speak at March Meeting

Garth Baldwin will be our speaker and talk about his experience in seeking MIA remains on the island of Tarawa. We hope you can attend the meeting.

Boots to Books and Beyond



Representatives from Edmonds Community College attended our February meeting to discuss the details of a major fund raising program being conducted by the Edmonds CC Foundation. The new fund raising program is called the “Boots to Books and Beyond Campaign”. Pam Wanser, who is the Director of Development for the College Foundation, informed us that, to date, the initiative has raised almost three quarters of the one million dollar goal. The funds will be used to provide financial support to student veterans attending Edmonds Community College and members of their families. In addition, the Campaign will support on-campus resources, services, and other veteran oriented activities. This wonderful Edmonds Community College initiative will ease the transition to civilian and college life for veterans and serve to retention and graduation rates among veterans.

Accompanying Pam was Chris Szarek, who is the Director of the Veterans Resource Center at Edmonds CC. The College has dedicated office space for the Center, which provides counseling, resource, and support services at the College. Edmonds Community College is, perhaps, the most veteran-friendly college in the state, and the Veterans Resource Center and Boots to Books and Beyond Campaign are examples of best practice for other colleges and universities to emulate.

At the conclusion of Pam and Chris’ presentation, Commander Fred Apgar presented them with a check in the amount of \$2000 to support the fund raising campaign.

Post Tours the USS Nimitz



On Saturday, February 8th, over 50 members and guests of the Post had the privilege of touring the USS Nimitz, an aircraft carrier with the designation CVN 68. The trip was arranged by Post Chaplain Rock Roth who is a retired US Navy Captain. For Rock, the tour was one of familiar surroundings and “going home”. During his career as a Naval Aviator, Rock participated in numerous cruises aboard aircraft carriers. During his last deployment, Captain Roth served as the Air Boss on the USS America. The Air Boss is responsible for the conduct of all flight operations on the ship. (This article was written before Rock’s passing).

The USS Nimitz left its home port Naval Station, Everett in late March 2013 on a deployment that covered more than 76,000 nautical miles. Its Air Wing conducted 1,374 combat sorties in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The Nimitz and her crew also participated in maritime security operations. During its deployment, the crew of the Nimitz made port calls in Korea, Thailand, UAE, Bahrain, and Italy. The ship has a crew of almost 3,000 men and women, and during deployments, the Air Wing brings more than 2000 additional personnel aboard. After completing its Western Pacific deployment, the USS Nimitz returned to its home port on December 16, 2013. While crewmembers have the opportunity to reunite with family and friends, the ship is undergoing minor repairs.

Highlights of the tour included stops at the hangar deck, where planes are stored and repaired, the mess hall, crew quarters, and Post Office. In the ship’s island, we climbed numerous stairs to visit the ship’s bridge, the Admiral’s bridge, and the Air Boss’ bridge. The tour ended at the ship’s store, where we could purchase souvenirs of our memorable trip.

The USS Nimitz is the lead ship in the Nimitz class of aircraft carriers and named to honor the memory of five star Admiral Chester W. Nimitz who was the Pacific Fleet Commander during WW II. The USS Nimitz was commissioned on May 3, 1975



Tour Guides of the USS Nimitz

We broke into groups of 20 or so to tour the vessel. My group’s tour guides were great. Pictured are FC3 Trevor Izard, MCSN Lauren Jennings, and ITSN(SW) Jeffrey London. They were like sheep dogs keeping us from getting lost in the maze of the ship. I never knew there could be so many areas to get lost and after going up the stairs, through the hatches, around to the next set of hatches, down the stairs, you were completely turned around. Everyone on the ship was proud of their vessel and proud to be in the Navy. I’ve never kept a close watch on Navy deployments, but I will make sure I keep an eye on the USS Nimitz in the future.

Chaplain's Column—Rock Roth

"Four Chaplains Day" is observed annually on February 3 in America by the unanimous resolution of the U.S. Congress in 1988. It is a day to remember one of the most remarkable and inspiring acts of heroism in the history of warfare. It is a day to honor the heroism of the Four Chaplains, who selflessly gave their lives "that others may live". Most American schools, and, therefore, most Americans, did not observe it. Indeed, most Americans, including children who will not be taught about it in their schools, do not even know that there is a National Four Chaplains Day, or why. This is true even though, as a former soldier who owed his life to them has said, "Their heroism is beyond belief. That is one of the reasons why we must tell the world what these people did."

On February 3, 1943, the *Dorchester*, a converted luxury cruise ship, was transporting Army troops to Greenland. On board were some 900 troops, and four chaplains, of diverse religions and backgrounds, but of a commitment to serve God, country, and all the troops, regardless of their religious beliefs, or non-belief. The four Chaplains were: Rev. George Fox (Methodist); Father John Washington (Roman Catholic); Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode; and Rev. Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed).

At approximately 0055 hours, the *Dorchester* was hit by a torpedo. The blast ripped a hole in the ship from below the waterline to the top deck. *Dorchester* survivors told of the wild pandemonium on board when it was hit and began sinking. There was panic, fear, terror; death was no abstraction but real, immediate, seemingly inescapable.

The four Chaplains acted together to try bring some order to the chaos, to calm the panic of the troops, to alleviate their fear and terror, to pray with and for them, to help save their lives. The Chaplains passed out life jackets, helping those too panicked to put them on correctly, until the awful moment arrived when there were no more life jackets to be given out. It was then that a most remarkable act of heroism, courage, faith, and love took place: Each of the four Chaplains took off his life jacket, and, knowing that act made certain death, put his life jacket on a soldier who didn't have one,

The Chaplains continued to help the troops until the last moment. Then, as the ship sank into the raging sea, the four Chaplains linked hands and arms, and could be seen and heard by the survivors praying together, even singing hymns, joined together in faith, love, and unity, as they sacrificed their lives so "that others may live."

Earlier, in 1944, the Chaplains were awarded Purple Hearts and the Distinguished Service Cross. They did not receive the Medal of Honor because of restrictions which limits that medal to combatants.

At the dedication of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains in 1951, then-President Harry S. Truman said their sacrifice reflected the fact that "the unity of our country is a unity under God. This interfaith shrine will stand through long generations to teach Americans that as men can die heroically as brothers so should they live together in mutual faith and good will."

May the God the Four Chaplains served bless and keep them; and may the nation they so heroically served always remember and honor them. God Bless America! May we always be 'One Nation Under God!'

District I Commander—Social Media and the VFW—Jim Traner

Most of us who returned from overseas had no means of contacting our fellow veterans other than through organizations like the VFW, American Legion, or the Vietnam Veterans of America. Today, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram immediately puts a young veteran into contact with not only other veterans, but with fellow soldiers, shipmates, and Marines whom he or she served with. To some young veterans this is enough, but what is missing is how to give back to the less fortunate among us, how to assist a fellow veteran or his family looking for services, providing a framework for participating in the community, and to meet fellow veterans who served in earlier (or later) conflicts. I have had the pleasure of meeting and becoming good friends to WWII and Korean vets even though I served in Vietnam. I doubt if many of them know what Facebook or Twitter is or even care. I am afraid there is going to be a generation of veterans who become disconnected from the personal contact of their fellow veterans and that is a shame. VFW isn't about sitting around and trading war stories—its about veterans helping veterans. Now to get that point across.

The Last Word—Commander's Column by Fred Apgar

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.

Two years ago, our Post established the Freedom Scholarship, which provides financial assistance to four deserving high school seniors. The Freedom Scholarship Committee recently contacted career counselors in local high schools, to publicize this opportunity to their students. One of the application requirements is an essay in which students are asked to define what freedom means to them and to discuss how our Constitution establishes and maintains a culture of freedom in our country.

With the Freedom Scholarship requirements fresh in my mind, I was struck by a recent announcement that President Obama has delayed one more provision of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). The President has repeatedly and unilaterally suspended portions of the law without the consent of Congress. While we have been constantly reminded that Obamacare is the "law of the land", over 25 changes to the law have been made by Executive Decision, a clear violation of our Constitution. The brilliance of our founding fathers, when they wrote our Constitution, devised a system of checks and balances to prevent any of the branches of our government to abuse its authority.

Regardless of what letter follows the name of our elected officials, Americans who care about our freedom must be ever vigilant for instances of abuse of power or attempts to circumvent provisions of our Constitution. As concerned citizens who have already made a significant contribution to our nation's efforts to defend liberty and freedom, it is our responsibility to express our feelings to and remind our elected officials of their responsibility to defend the Constitution and rule of law and to have as their primary objective, the well-being of their constituents. Regardless of the issue, I urge you to communicate with your elected officials on a regular basis and express your feelings. To contact your Senators and Congressional Representatives, you must visit their web sites:

Senator Patty Murray	www.murray.senate.gov
Senator Marie Cantwell	www.cantwell.senate.gov
Rep. Jim McDermott 7 th District	www.mcdermott.house.gov
Rep. Rick Larson 2 nd District	www.larson.house.gov
Rep. Suzan DelBene 1 st District	www.delbene.house.gov

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