



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



April 2014
Vol. 10 Issue 4

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

April 5th	District Meeting & Memorial Service—12:00PM Alderwood Boys and Girls Club
April 8th	Staff Meeting—Traner's Office 0900
April 11th	Post Meeting—Edmonds Senior Center—Lunch at 1130-Meeting at 1230
April 22nd	Memorial Service for Snohomish Veterans—Edmonds Memorial Cemetery—10AM

Post Honors Memory of Two Members



At the start of our March meeting, our Post charter was draped to honor the memories of Erv Schmidt and James "Rock" Roth. Shortly after celebrating his 98th birthday on February 10, Erv suffered a mini-stroke from which he never fully recovered. Rock died unexpectedly from a heart attack while he and his wife, Marilyn, were returning home from visiting family in Arizona.

Erv became a member of VFW in 1942, while he was still serving in the Navy in the Pacific theater of operations. For many years, he was a fixture at Post meetings and always drew crowds of admirers when serving on Poppy distribution details. Rock has held several elected positions in our Post and provided leadership for several important programs. He was serving as our Post Chaplain and was responsible for coordinating our Student Essay program and Speakers Bureau, and Rock also was responsible for the District 1 Voice of Democracy program.

Post # 8870 extends its sincerest condolences to the family members of Erv and Rock. We appreciate the many fine contributions they made to our Post, and they will be sorely missed.

District 1 Memorial Service and Meeting—April 5th

On April 5th at the Alderwood Boys and Girls Club, there will be a memorial service for all those VFW District 1 Comrades who have passed away this last year. Each of the 8 Posts will have their Comrades remembered and this year, we have too many. Lunch will at noon and the service at 1PM. We will need help setting up so anyone who would like to help, please be there around 10:30AM. There will be a short District meeting following the memorial service.

Erv Schmidt Witnessed the Beginning & End of World War II



Ervin Schmidt was a 25 year old barber from Marshfield, Wisconsin when he enlisted in the United State Navy in August of 1940. After completing basic training, Erv was assigned to the battleship USS California and participated in numerous training cruises in the Pacific Ocean. In December of 1941, the USS California was docked in what has become known as “battleship row” at Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, Hawaii.

When the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, Erv was asleep in his bunk several levels below the main deck when the first of two torpedoes struck the California. After a second torpedo struck, the ship began to list and the Captain issued the order to abandon ship.

Three days after the attack, Erv was reassigned to a heavy cruiser, the USS Chicago and the ship immediately left Pearl Harbor to serve as reinforcement to the Australian and New Zealand forces in the vicinity of the Coral Sea. In the confusion that resulted in the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Erv was listed as Killed in Action, and his family was so notified. Six weeks after his family held a funeral service for him, they learned that Erv had, indeed, survived the attack.

In January 1943, the Chicago engaged the Japanese in the Solomon Islands, and the ship sustained severe battle damage, and, once again, Erv heard the command to abandon ship. Thinking he might be safer under water, Erv volunteered for submarine duty. He was assigned to the USS Saury as a radio and sonar operator, and during his five patrols on the Saury, a total of 9 Japanese ships were sunk.

After some well-deserved shore duty in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Erv returned, once again, to the South Pacific. He was then assigned to another submarine, the USS Torsk, which conducted patrols against enemy shipping, first in Tokyo Bay and then the Sea of Japan. On August 11 and then on August 13, 1945, the Torsk sank two Japanese Naval ships, which were the last two ships sunk by the US Navy in World War II. On August 14, 1945, hostilities in the South Pacific ended. During his 2012 Honor Flight to Washington, D.C., Erv had the opportunity to visit, for the last time, his beloved USS Torsk, which now serves as a memorial in Baltimore Harbor.

Korean War Books Available

For all those veterans who served in Korea, we have a small number of books produced by the Korean government thanking you for service there. It is a very nice hard cover book that not only covers the war, but the re-birth of Korea following the war. If you would like a copy, please drop a note in our website or mail a request to VFW Post 8870, PO Box 701, Edmonds, WA 98020. Better yet, plan on attending the next meeting and we will have a supply on hand for those of you who would like one.

13 Members Needed to Reach 100%

Our Post has 200 members and needs 13 additional members to reach 100%. We have approximately 30 members who have not paid their dues and forfeited their membership. The dues have increased to \$35. That's about a dime a day to belong to an organization that does everything within its power to protect veterans rights and assist individuals in their VA claims. Not a bad deal.

James E. "Rock" Roth, CAPT USN (Ret)



"God first, then family and country." Rock Roth lived his credo with undisguised love and compassion. He died unexpectedly on February 27 while returning from a family trip to Arizona. He was 76.

He was a devout Christian, a loving husband, a model father to his children, stepchildren and large extended family. He was a career Naval aviator and patriot. Capt. Roth was Chaplain of our VFW Post and organized our speakers' bureau for local school appearances and chaired the annual Voice of Democracy and Patriots Pen essay competitions.

Rock Roth joined the U.S. Navy in 1958 at the age of 20. A year later he became a naval aviator and a commissioned officer. During his naval career he served on several ships and duty stations—accumulating over 1,200 aircraft carrier landings, many at night. Among the highlights of his distinguished naval career, Roth was "Air Boss" on USS America (CVA-66) and—here in the Pacific Northwest—he was the

Navy's Homeport Coordinator, overseeing the development of Naval Station Everett. He retired from the Navy in 1989.

Shortly before retiring, he became active in Rotary, primarily because of its commitment to the motto: Service Above Self. He was often heard to say "...not service above God, not service above family, not service above country, but service above self." To many, Rock's dedication to this concept permeated his entire life. He served Rotary in several leadership capacities, including president of the Rotary Club of Edmonds and, most recently, as president of the Rotary Club of Edmonds Daybreakers.

Nearly a decade ago, he became interested in the work of the Everett-based Burned Children Recovery Foundation, working with childhood burn victims and serving on the organization's board of directors. He recently retired as board chairman.

Largely through the work of the Edmonds Daybreakers, he dedicated much of his time and effort to Scriber Lake High School, where he was well known and well accepted by staff and students alike. Everyone at Scriber knew and loved "Rock." He was an active parishioner at St. Barnabas Anglican Church in Shoreline.

A Couple of Thoughts for the Day (Stolen Callously from the 11th Armored Cavalry Website)

I swiped the comments below from my old Regiment's website. The first comment was written some time ago (actually, both comments were) but the truth of the matter is that the Vietnam veteran did move on and, for the most part, we were successful. I have noted in the past that I have never seen anyone wearing a hat saying they were a "Draft Dodger", but I sure see a lot of guys wearing Vietnam Veteran caps. Heck, a few of them may even be worn by veterans of Vietnam.

"One of the greatest ironies of the Vietnam War is that those still suffering most from that conflict are the ones who never served there. While the overwhelming majority of Vietnam Veterans have long since returned to civilian life and got on with their lives and careers, many of the draft dodgers and war evaders still struggle with their consciences. Torn by guilt, they try to explain their evasion by deliberately distorting what the war was all about. Most veterans could care less about their posturing, but there is one fact that cannot be ignored. In trying to make themselves look good, these shirkers must out of necessity make those who did serve look bad."

Military Historian, Col. Harry Summers

And a quote from George Washington

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."

Forensic Archeologist Visits Post



Garth Baldwin was our guest speaker at our March meeting, and he related his efforts to excavate the remains of American Marines who had been killed during the invasion of Tarawa during the WW II Pacific Campaign. Mr. Baldwin had earned a Master's Degree from Western Washington, and during his professional career as an archeologist, he has specialized in the recovery of skeletal remains. He estimates that during his career, he has located and recovered thousands of skeletons.

Mr. Baldwin described the difficulties he and the team of archeologists experienced on the atoll island of Tarawa. It was at Tarawa where the allies fought one of the first major offensives against the Japanese in the Pacific. The atoll is less than half the

size of Central Park, but the Japanese had built an airfield, which was of strategic importance as a refueling location. During the three-day battle, over 1,700 Marines were killed and approximately 6,200 Japanese lost their lives defending the island. More than 500 Americans were buried in hastily built graves.

Mr. Baldwin was recruited for the Tarawa project by History Flight, a non-profit organization founded by Mark Noah. His visit to Tarawa, which is now the independent nation of Kiribati, was part of a follow up to a 2009 expedition that used ground penetrating radar to search for and located the "lost" Marine graves. During his stay at Tarawa, Mr. Baldwin assisted in locating several burial sites and recovered the remains of over 200 American and Japanese soldiers

New Member—Jeffrey T. Spleen by Pete Farmer, Membership Chair



Jeff has been a VFW Life member at large, meaning he wasn't affiliated with a particular Post. He retired as a CWO2 from the US Coast Guard in May 2013. He initially joined August 1983. Jeff had two separate enlistments with a 5-year break to go to school. He received imminent danger pay in 2010 while serving aboard USCG Cutter Marion as part of a task force off Indonesia. Other posts included Seattle, Honolulu, Boston and New York. His specialties were in Finance/Supply & Food Service. Awards include six Good Conduct Medals, two Commendation Medals and Permanent Cutterman Insignia. Originally from Oakland, NJ, Jeff now resides in Mountlake Terrace. He works as a chef and in contracting/supply. Other interests include fishing, woodworking and he is a private pilot.

Filling Some Big Shoes by Jim Traner

We pointed out on the first page that Rock Roth filled many roles for us in VFW. He was in charge of organizing speakers for schools and other public events, went to schools to make sure our Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy information was made available to the teachers and students and then went to the schools to present winners their certificates at school assemblies, in charge of arranging and organizing vehicles for the Fourth of July Parade, as well as being Chaplain. All I know is almost every email I sent to someone in VFW had Rock cc'd on it. We now need our other Post members to step up and take on just a bit of the tasks that Rock performed. After the next meeting, introduce yourself to the Commander and volunteer for a leadership position.

Nominations for Post Officers 2014-15

The first round of nominations were held on the March meeting. They were:

Commander—Jim Blossey Senior Vice— Chris Edwards Junior Vice— Terry Crabtree

Quartermaster— Dennis Peterson Chaplain— open Third Year Trustee—Dan White

Nominations will be held again at the April meeting when they will be closed and the election will be held. Losing Rock as our Chaplain is a major blow to the Post and we need someone to fill the position. If you are interested, please attend the next meeting and, yes, you are allowed to nominate yourself. If you can make the meeting, drop a note to the Adjutant that you wish to be nominated even if you can't be in attendance. That will make it legal. Again, the address is: VFW Post 8870, PO Box 701, Edmonds, WA 98020.

The Last Word—Commander's Column by Fred Apgar

At the end of February, Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, disclosed details regarding his proposed 2015 Defense Department budget. He indicated the changes are “part of an overarching decision to protect big-ticket programs and research projects by saving money on people” and “reductions in troop strength and force structure in every military service – active and reserve – in order to sustain our readiness and technological superiority”. Highlights of the proposed budget include:

Next year's pay raise will be 1% (the same as this year);

One year pay freeze for top military brass;

\$1 billion dollar reduction from the \$1.4 billion dollar commissary subsidy;

Changes to Tricare will increase deductible amounts and co-pays;

Establishment of a new Base Realignment and Closure Commission;

A reduction in Army active duty personnel from about 530,000 to 450,000;

Elimination of the fleet of A-10 Warthogs;

Elimination of the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft;

Half of the Navy's cruiser fleet will be “laid up” and taken out of normal deployments; and

Scaling back of the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship program from 52 to 32 vessels.

Since many of these proposed changes will require Congressional approval, our collective voices are an important element in the DOD budget process. I urge you to express your opinions by contacting your elected representatives by going to their web-sites and sharing your views on this important matter.

Senator Patty Murray

www.murray.senate.gov

Senator Marie Cantwell

www.cantwell.senate.gov

Rep. Jim McDermott 7th District

www.mcdermott.house.gov

Rep. Rick Larson 2nd District

www.larson.house.gov

Rep. Suzan DelBene 1st District

www.delbene.house.gov

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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