



Upcoming Events Calendar

Please take time to review the calendar and if there are additions that are necessary, please contact the editor at editor@vfw8870.org

August 5th	Staff Meeting—American Legion Hall (117 6th Ave. S., Edmonds) 0900
August 8th	Post Meeting—Senior Center—Lunch at 1130-Meeting at 1230
August 16th	School of Instruction—Alderwood Boys and Girls Club (brown bag lunch at 1200, meeting at 1300)
August 16th	VFW Night at the Aquasox Game. 7PM. Tickets available for \$10.
August 23rd	Memorial Service for Snohomish Cty. veterans, Edmonds Cemetery, 1000

VFW National Convention

The National Convention was held in St. Louis this year and unlike previous years, I didn't attend the proceedings. I did, however, watch it live via the VFW website who streamed it (if you don't know what the term mean, ask your grandkids). I guess it could be summed up as being unremarkable. No earthshaking decisions, hotly debated resolutions or by-law changes. Of significance, was the Vice President, the acting director of the VA, and two Senators attempting to schmooze the gathering on what they are doing to fix the problem of veterans' treatment by the VA. Meanwhile, the VFW passed a resolution that said Congress needs to fund the VA adequately and fund it now (meaning before Congress goes on vacation). Other than that, there were a lot of awards and a bunch of faces that are on the stage each year congratulating themselves on a job well done. I believe the videos are still available so if you go to VFW.org you can watch the proceedings for yourself.

4th of July Parade

Edmonds is a town that loves its veterans. I know that most of you reading this have never walked in a parade (notice I did not say march) so you have no idea of the reception we receive leading the Fourth of July parade every year. This year, thanks to Chris Edwards, we had 5 Humvees, and thanks to the Military Vehicle Collectors, we had 5 WWII vintage jeeps. With that many rides, anyone who wished to ride could do so although a bunch of us walked the mile long route. With approximately 10,000 folks lining the parade route, it is truly one of the best small town parades in the country. Two of our members, Jim Blosssey, Commander, and Mike Denton, were MC's of the parade and made sure to announce our arrival to the crowd as we passed by. We always have a combined parade with VFW Post 1040 from Lynnwood, American Legion Post 66, and this year we welcomed student veterans from Edmonds Community College. Next year we are anticipating opening up the parade to other Posts and veterans organizations who may not have a parade in their community. Hopefully, a few more of our Post members will chose to join us. Following the parade next year, we will be having our annual BBQ at the American Legion Hall on 6th Ave. S.

Passing's

Ray Sittauer

Ray, a life member of VFW and our Post, passed away and the Charter will be covered in his memory. Ray was a Purple Heart recipient and a Navy veteran of WWII. His grandson, Eric Gouge, served in Iraq.

Julie Pounds

Julie, a charter member of the Post's Auxiliary, passed away after a long illness. Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband, Duane, and the rest of her family.

How VFW is Organized

Most of our members know what Post they belong to (test question—which Post do you belong to?) and what District they belong to (another test Question— What District does our Post belong to?) Beyond that, unless you've been a Post Commander, the hierarchy becomes a bit foggy. Our Department (states are called Departments), is comprised of 16 Districts. Each District has a Commander and the 16 Commanders are Department's Council of Administration. Perhaps the most important role of the Council is the responsibility of approving the budget for Department. The Departments are grouped by Conferences and, not surprisingly, we are in the Western Conference. There are 17 Departments making up the Western Conference. What is a bit unusual is the fact that Latin America & the Caribbean, Kansas, North Dakota, and South Dakota are in the Western Conference. Finally, the four Conferences, Big 10, Eastern, Southern and ours comprise the National organization. By the way, the answers to the test questions are Post 8870 and District One.

Post 8870, City of Edmonds Partner in Design Competition for Future Veterans Plaza

The article below was published on July 25th in the local newspapers. As you know, we dedicated the Plaza on Memorial Day this year. The hard part is coming up, design, fund raising, and completion. Everyone in the Post will have to help with one or more aspects of the project.

Edmonds Post 8870 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) of America is partnering with the City of Edmonds to hold an open design competition for the future Edmonds Veterans Plaza in downtown Edmonds.

The VFW Plaza Committee decided to conduct an open design competition to promote local participation and pride in the new memorial, which will be located next to the Public Safety Complex at 250 5th Ave. N. in downtown Edmonds.

“Edmonds is one of the few cities of its size without a tribute or memorial to veterans,” said Ron Clyborne, VFW member and Veterans Plaza committee member. “The plaza is meant to reflect the bravery, sacrifice and strength of the service members who will be recognized and remembered in this special spot in Edmonds.”

The City of Edmonds dedicated the future Edmonds Veterans Plaza on Memorial Day, May 26, 2014. Edmonds City Councilmember Strom Peterson, a member of the volunteer committee, spoke at the dedication and worked with the committee to establish the open design process.

“The citizens of Edmonds are grateful for all who have served our country,” Peterson said. “A great way for our local community to feel a part of this special tribute is to create an open and collaborative process with the public in the design of the Edmonds Veterans Plaza.”

The design competition will be open to individuals and groups, students and professionals. You can [download the guidelines here](#) or can request a copy by sending an email to edmondsveteransplaza@gmail.com. Preliminary designs will be reviewed and selected by the VFW committee and then go through a formal design and approval process with the City of Edmonds.

Veterans Plaza committee members include: Ron Clyborne (VFW), Jim Traner (VFW, Past Post and District Commander), James Blossley (VFW Commander), Jim Collins (VFW & Legion), Jack Hall (Edmonds Museum), Strom Peterson (Edmonds City Council), and Maria Montalvo (Corvias Foundation).

New Member Profile—Lyle Branchflower

Lyle Branchflower enlisted in the Navy during the summer of 1961 and reported to duty as a Naval Aviation Cadet for Pre-Flight in Pensacola, Florida the following September. During that first week of active duty he learned two things right off. First, do not smile when the drill instructor asks you if your mother sent you here to screw up the whole damned Navy, and second, he knew he was getting out as soon as his 6 year military obligation ended.

Actual flight training began in T-34's at Saufley Field Florida in January 1962. From there he went to Meridian, Mississippi to begin jet training. During that time, the Navy was transitioning older fighter squadrons into Phantom II (F4H later designated F4B) squadrons. That meant they needed to fill the training pipe line with Radar Intercept Officers immediately. Lyle was in the first class sent to Brunswick, Georgia for Radar Intercept Officer Training. The urgency of the training was ramped up a notch with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Lyle received his wings and commission and went to Miramar Naval Air Station (California) for further training in the Replacement Air Group (RAG) and then to VF-142 for deployment on the U.S.S. *Constellation* to the Western Pacific.

Enroute from San Diego to Yokosuka in May 1964, the *Constellation* received new orders. Go to Point Yankee (coordinates in the northern portion of the South China Sea). Remain on station. During the next couple of months the *Constellation* went from Point Yankee to the Philippines and back and forth and back. The Air Group trained and made occasional sorties over Viet Nam.

On August 4th, the ship's Claxton horn sounded and the loudspeaker came on, "GENERAL QUARTERS. GENERAL QUARTERS. THIS IS NOT A DRILL. GENERAL QUARTERS." The U.S.S. *Maddox* and the U.S.S. *Turner Joy* were under attack. Fighters were launched into the night skies. Lyle was in the aircraft that was vectored to the *Maddox* and *Turner Joy*. They were flying at 50 feet. Lyle had three radar contacts. High anxiety voiced from Combat Information Centers on the destroyers. Inky black night. No visual contact of a PT boat. Lyle was unwilling to launch a missile without a visual even though there were three radar contacts and only two U.S. ships in the area.

President Johnson and Congress acted. A retaliatory strike was planned. Aircraft were launched on a raid against PT boat bases and supply depots in Hai Phong Harbor in North Viet Nam. War had begun. Everett Alvarez began his 8 ½ year stay in the Hanoi Hilton.

The next several months merged into one continuous day and night of Combat Air Patrol (CAP), occasional photo escort missions into North Viet Nam and Laos, and bombing escort missions. They didn't lose another aircraft for the duration of the cruise.

In February 1965, Lyle returned to Miramar Naval Air Station and began training for a new deployment to the Western Pacific in 1966. His active duty obligation was due to end in July of 1966, but he applied for an "early out" in order to go back to school in January 1966. His request was forwarded up the chain of command with a recommendation of "disapprove." In Pearl Harbor, aboard the U.S.S. *Ranger* Lyle's request came back approved. Had the approval arrived a day later, the *Ranger* would have passed the International Date Line and the admiral would have put an operational hold on him.

Lyle joined a reserve squadron at Willow Grove Naval Air Station outside of Philadelphia. Invariably, a paper or a test was due after serving his reserve weekends, so as soon as his reserve requirements were over, he separated from the Navy. A squadron mate chided him for foregoing the "easy money" reserve pay. Two weeks later, the squadron was called to active duty.

Lyle tells his friends who served as grunts that they just don't understand how difficult service as a naval officer was. He would tell them that even though the stewards made the beds daily, they only put on fresh sheets once a week. Baked Alaska was only served on Thursdays in the ward room. And movies in the ready room could be interrupted by flight operations.

Lyle is pleased to join the VFW.

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Commanders Column By Jim Blossey

As we enter a new VFW year, we continue to face many of the same problems that prior administrations have. Most notable among them is membership. Membership Chair Pete Farmer and his committee have been doing a splendid job and many of our newer members will be definite assets to the Post. However young veterans still in their working years continue to find it difficult to attend our meetings. For most, a two-hour break in the middle of a workday is wholly impractical.

On the other hand, occasional suggestions to change our meetings to an evening hour have encountered resistance because many of our current members are of an age where driving after dark isn't a good idea. Remember that during much of the year the sun goes down before the dinner hour. The result for us is that younger veterans have effectively been shut out.

Further compounding the problem is the location of our meeting place, the Edmonds Senior Center. These folks have been wonderful hosts with nourishing and affordable meals, however by definition the Senior Center is for older people. It is not the sort of place where active young VFW members feel at home. We have heard from several that they feel out of place here.

So what is the answer? Let me tell you about an option that we are exploring. Our by-laws require us to have "at least" one regular meeting each month, but nowhere does it say that we can't have more than one meeting a month. What we're looking into is having two meetings each month—one at noon and one in the evening—with members having the option to attend whichever one they prefer. That way those who can't drive at night (or who prefer to meet at noon) can continue to do so and members still employed can attend a meeting after working hours.

We have not yet discussed locations and meals, etc., but we will be looking into our options soon. Meanwhile, let me stress that the two-meeting idea is only being explored right now; nothing is yet to the point where it might be brought to the membership for action.

However we are very interested in your opinions. My personal email is jamesblossey@comcast.net. Let me hear from you.