



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

VFW Post 8870
and Auxiliary
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Plan Now for Coming Post Events

May Staff Meeting: Tues. May 2, 9:00 AM American Legion Hall, Edmonds
May Post Meeting: Tues. May 9, Supper at 1715, Meeting at 1800 Legion Hall
Memorial Day Poppy Distribution, Memorial Day Weekend - sign up with Bob Crawford
Independence Day Parade and Picnic, July 4 - More info in June newsletter.

Veterans Plaza Funding Goal Achieved!



The largest single donation received from an individual or family has put the Edmonds Veterans Plaza funding goal over the top; \$16,000 from Bruce and Elaine Nickolson is the largest contribution from an individual donor, according to Ron Clyborne, chairman of the Plaza committee.

The volunteer co-chair of the Plaza's funding committee, Tom Mesaros, said that the local community is being encouraged to continue to support the Plaza with their donations. Mesaros added, "Experience has shown that there is a possibility of unanticipated cost overruns. And of course there is the occasional enhancement that the committee failed to think of. Having a financial cushion to cover items like these is a responsible idea."

The Plaza will consist of two complementary areas. The main plaza will feature a chest-high granite or marble wall honoring veterans of the five military services. The wall will incorporate waterfalls and emblems of the five services. Directly adjacent will be a Memorial Garden, a place of reflection dedicated to veterans that have passed away. Citizens may honor specific individual veterans by purchasing paving stones, dedicated benches and seating cubes that match the wall.

Donors Bruce and Elaine Nickolson are well-known locals. He is a 37-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, retiring as a Master Chief Petty Officer, followed by achieving an engineering degree the University of Washington and going on to found an electronics manufacturing firm, Opcon, Inc. Nickolson is a founder of the Edmonds Car Show and he and Elaine are founding members of the Edmonds Center for the Arts.

Persons wishing to be a part of the Edmonds Veterans Plaza may donate by mailing a contribution to Edmonds Veterans Plaza, c/o Edmonds VFW Post 8870, PO Box 701, Edmonds, WA 98020. (Make checks payable to Edmonds Veterans Plaza.) On-line donations can be made at <http://edmondsveteransplaza.com>.

Clyborne said that construction is planned to begin by August 1 and the Plaza will be dedicated at a public ceremony on Veterans Day of this year, Friday November 11.

Post 8870 Members: Prepare for Action May - July!



May, June and July are busy months for our Post, with Poppy distribution and other Memorial Day observances in May, Flag Day in June and, of course Independence Day, when we participate in the Edmonds Kind of Fourth parade and hold our annual VFW/AL barbecue/picnic. (Followed of course by fireworks in the evening.

If you have yet to sign up for poppy distribution be sure to see Bob Crawford at the Post Meeting this month and make a commitment to help at one of our locations on one or both days. Friday, May 28 or Sat, May 29.

There will be a new wrinkle in the event this year, as we will also have raffle tickets available for sale to support our Veterans Plaza and information on how families can honor individual veterans through the plaza.

Virtually all of the money our Post Relief Committee uses to fund Veteran's and community causes such as aiding homeless vets, supporting the Washington State Veterans homes, scholarships and other activities comes from our poppy distribution event. The more members we have on hand, the more money we are

Changes Proposed in TRICARE For Retirees

by Fred M. Apgar

Military Retirees will face major changes in their health care (TRICARE) benefits if Congress approves President Obama's 2017 fiscal budget. Retired military personnel will be required to pay substantially higher participation fees. If the budget proposal is enacted into law, the promise of low-cost lifetime health coverage to retired military personnel will have been broken. The proposed changes would not affect active duty personnel.

The proposal would consist of two options to retired veterans; a health maintenance organization, presumably centered around VA providers and facilities, A more expensive option would operate like a preferred provider organization, offering greater flexibility in providers. In addition to higher participation fees and co-pays, a system of means-testing would also be incorporated.

Post members who feel an obligation to support their retired military comrades should contact their elected representatives and urge them to preserve the present TRICARE program of health coverage as it currently functions.

From the Book Shelf

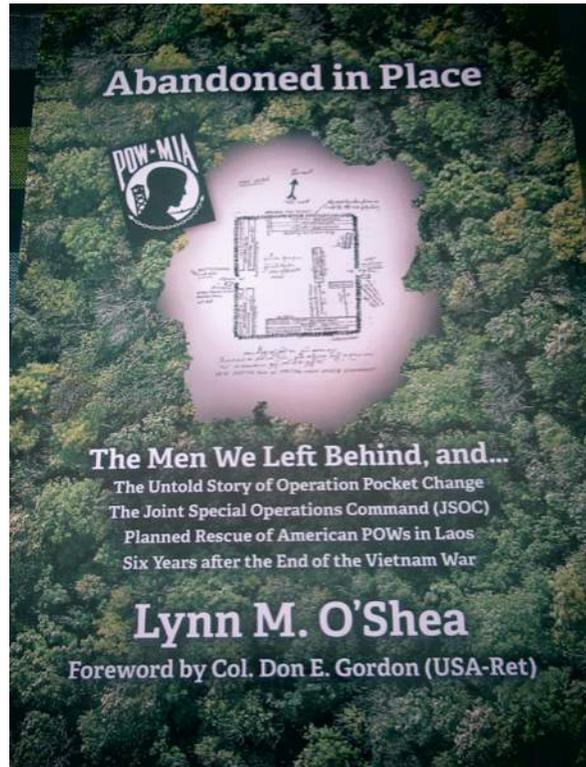
Abandoned in Place

by Lynn M. O'Shea

Probably few people have ever heard of Lynn O'Shea. Lynn devoted much of her adult life as an advocate for families of United States servicemen missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. At the time of her death, Lynn served as the Director of Research for the National Alliance of Families for the Return of America's Servicemen. This organization is the only national POW/MIA advocacy group that represents families from all past conflicts.

Ever since the end of America's involvement in the Vietnam War, a question has lingered. Did the United States government, either knowingly or unwittingly, abandon members of our Armed Forces to prison camps in Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War? Lynn was not related to a POW or MIA serviceman. Instead she took an interest in the case of Staff Sergeant John Jakovic, whose POW/MIA bracelet she wore. The book, Abandoned in Place is the result of her years of meticulous and tireless research to answer the question.

Lynn assembled an impressive array of documentation on her subject. The material included documents that have been declassified and obtained through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) from agencies such as the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), Defense Mapping Agency (DMA), and the National Security Council (NSC). Interestingly, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), which played a significant role in operations to "investigate" the issue, refused to cooperate. The book has been meticulously footnoted and annotated and includes numerous documents, maps, photographs, and drawings that support the facts she presents regarding the issue of warriors left behind.



There is much in the book that will shock the reader. You will read about:

- Pham Louang prison camp in the remote hills of Laos near the village of Nhom Marrott;
- Operation Pocket Change, a failed and inept CIA operation to discover the secrets of Pham Louang;
- Continual faulty intelligence that led to the "mindset to debunk" thousands of live sightings reports;
- Internecine fighting between and among various intelligence agencies;
- The flawed hearings of the Senate Select Committee on POW's and MIA's;
- The motivation behind Senators McCain and Kerry to aggressively conclude no Americans were left behind;
- The decision to place the remains of a Vietnam Unknown in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier despite compelling evidence as to the identity of the remains, and then, subsequently, removing the remains of Air Force Lt. Michael J. Blassie; and
- The ineptness of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command.

Thanks to the steadfast efforts of Lynn O'Shea, our nation now has a much clearer understanding of how and why the U.S. Government left men behind. Abandoned in Place provides the reader with a riveting account of the ineptitude, lies, cover-up, and deceptions made by officials who, seemingly, valued their careers more than the men who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the country they loved.

"From the Bookshelf" will be a recurring series of book reviews that will appear in the VFW Post #8870 newsletter from time to time. This review was written by Fred Apgar.



Speaker for May Post Meeting - Dr. Sally Chung

Dr. Chung's training spans many settings along the West Coast, including community mental health, the VA, and university counseling centers. She works with a range of concerns, including depression, anxiety, stress, adjustment, relationship issues, and post-traumatic stress disorder.. Dr. Chung has a private practice in Bellevue working with individuals, couples, and groups.

News From VFW National

MIA Updates

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced the identification of remains of four American servicemen who had been missing in action since World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

- Navy Lt. Julian B. Jordan, 37, from Georgia, and Seaman 2nd Class Rudolph V. Piskuran, of Ohio, had been missing since Dec. 7, 1941, when the battleship USS Oklahoma they were aboard suffered multiple torpedo hits and capsized as it was moored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. They will be buried on dates and locations yet to be announced.
- Army Air Forces 1st Lt. Leonard R. Farron, 23, will be buried May 4 in his hometown of Tacoma, Wash. On Oct. 15, 1942, Farron was piloting a P-39 Airacobra that failed to return to base after a strafing mission over Tassafaronga, Guadalcanal. He was assigned to the 67th Fighter Squadron, 347th Fighter Group, 13th Air Force.
- Army Cpl. David J. Wishon Jr., 18, of Baltimore, will be buried May 6 in Arlington National Cemetery. Wishon was declared missing in action after his unit was heavily attacked by enemy forces in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea on Dec. 1, 1950. He was assigned to Medical Company, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division.