



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

VFW Post 8870
and Auxiliary
Edmonds, WA
www.vfw8870.org
Mike Denton
Editor@vfw8870.org



July 2016
Vol 12 No. 7

Events on the Horizon:

Staff Meetings: 9:00 AM, First Tues., American Legion Hall, 117 6th Ave. S., Edmonds
Post Meetings: Second Tues., American Legion Hall; Dinner at 5:00 PM (\$5) Meeting at 6:00 PM

July Post meeting takes place on Tuesday, July 12

August 13 - VFW Night at the Ballpark with the Everett Aqual Sox

Mukilteo Teacher Receives Washington State Recognition

At the recent Department of Washington VFW convention that was held in Pasco, a local teacher was recognized as the Elementary Teacher of the Year for the state of Washington. The teacher recognition program is sponsored by the National VFW through its Citizenship Education Teacher Awards Program, and it recognizes teachers for their on-going efforts to promote American history, traditions institutions, teach and reinforce citizenship education topics, and promote democratic values and beliefs.



Nancy Thompson, a music teacher at Serene Lake Elementary School in the Mukilteo School District had been nominated for this recognition by **Edmonds VFW Post #8870**. She went on to earn Elementary Teacher of the Year honors by VFW District 1, and competed against other elementary teachers from across the state for state honors. Nancy's nomination materials have been forwarded to National VFW, where she is under consideration for national recognition.

Nancy is described by her Principal, Dr. Karen Reid, as an "outstanding music educator who has consistently demonstrated a sincere commitment to teaching children about American history and instilling in them the traditions that makes our nation the emblem of freedom". Thanks to Nancy's efforts, each month the school celebrates specific historical events and those people who played significant roles in our nation's history. The Veteran's Day program she plans and coordinates each year, honors veterans and features performances by the school's band, chorus, and orchestra. Most of the music and poetry in the productions, are original pieces written by Nancy. She cares deeply for the veteran and military communities. Nancy is a graduate of Montana State University and has taught in the Mukilteo School District for 14 years. She and her husband, Jeff, and their 9 year old daughter reside in Bothell.

Dear Commander Blossy and
members of the VFW Post 8870,
I want to thank you for
the honor of being named your
Elementary Teacher of the Year.
A true career highlight... and I
am so proud to represent
our area at the WA State
Convention in Pasco.
Thank you to each and every
one of you for your service
and continued support of our
community. You are appreciated!
God bless America &
Sincerely,
Nancy Thompson

THANK YOU



Post 8870 at the Edmonds Waterfront Festival

Thanks to the generosity of the Rotary Club of Edmonds, producers of the annual Edmonds Waterfront Festival, who provided us with booth space, the Post was able to have a presence to promote our programs to the community and unaffiliated veterans during the June event. This was our first time out for this event, but we hope to be able to continue this effort in future years, with improved staffing.

*L to R Don Stapleton, Les Abel
and Karl kurfuss staff the Post information booth*

VFW Post Presents Jim Harkness Freedom Scholarships

At the June 14, 2016 VFW Post #8870 meeting, the recipient of the Jim Harkness Freedom Scholarship was recognized by the Post. This year, which marks the fifth year of the program, the scholarship was named to honor Jim Harkness a WW II Army veteran. Jim is a long-time member of the Post, who has served his colleagues in a variety of leadership positions. Jim served in the 758th Field Artillery Battalion and landed in Cherbourg, France to join in chasing the Germans back to their homeland. For more than a month, Jim and his unit engaged the enemy in the Battle of the Bulge. Jim's wife, Dorothy joined him in presenting the \$1500 scholarship to this year's recipient, Chloe Ames.

The Jim Harkness Freedom Scholarship was established to identify and reward deserving graduating seniors who have achieved an outstanding record of academic achievement, leadership, and community service and understand and value the freedom and rights guaranteed to us all by our Constitution.



Chloe is a recent graduate of Kamiak High School in Mukilteo. During her high school years, Chloe pursued a rigorous academic schedule, taking one or more Honors or AP courses during all four of her high school years. She graduated with a GPA of 3.7. Chloe was a member of the National Honor Society and the Kamiak Pep and Show Bands. Community service is important to Chloe, and she served on the Mukilteo Youth Advisory Board for the Mukilteo City Council. She also volunteered a considerable amount of her time to assist classroom teachers and students with special needs at Serene Lake and Picnic Point Elementary Schools. Chloe taught at her church's Vacation Bible School and served as an assistant Sunday school teacher.



Help - Send Money! As you should all be aware, the Post general fund is separate from our relief funds, which are largely funded by poppy contributions. Relief funds are in great shape, The Plaza Fund is over goal, but our general operating budget fund is severely depleted. Donations from the membership would be very helpful to allow us to fund purchase of covers, pins, awards, supper for meetings, etc. You can easily donate by credit card at the Post 8870 web site (<http://vfw8870.org/contribute/>) or send a check to Edmonds VFW Post 8870 PO Box 701

From the Book Shelf

The Bedford Boys:

One American Town's Ultimate D-Day Sacrifice

By
Alex Kershaw

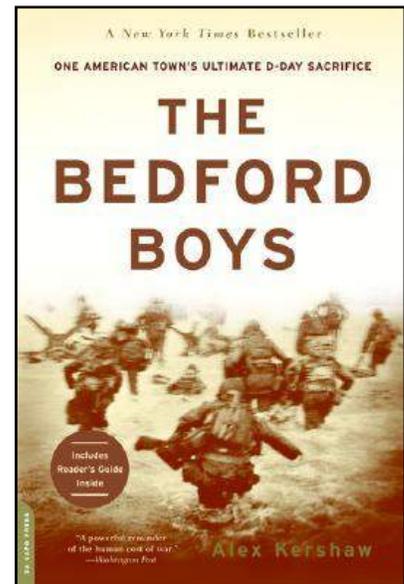
This exhaustively researched book presents readers with a different perspective of the D-Day landing on Normandy. It is a group biography that chronicles life in a small Virginia town prior to, during, and in the aftermath of WW II. At the outset of WW II, Bedford, which was a small town located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of rural Virginia, had a population of nearly 3000 people. Drawing on the information he obtained through interviews with survivors, family members, newspaper articles, letters, and personal diaries, Kershaw tells the story of the sacrifices made by so many of the town's "sons" and how the impact of those deaths forever changed the lives of family and friends who were left behind in the close-knit rural Virginia community.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's, times were hard for those living in rural Virginia. For many of the young men in Bedford, the lure of earning money for their families by volunteering for the National Guard was appealing. When the National Guard was called to active duty at the outset of WW II, 103 Bedford residents went off to serve their country. Thirty four of these young men were still with the Company A, 116th Infantry Battalion, 29th Infantry Division on D-Day. The Company was assigned to the first wave. In compelling detail, Kershaw describes how, within minutes of landing on Omaha Beach, 19 of the Bedford Boys were killed. Subsequent to the invasion, three more boys from Bedford were killed in the Normandy Campaign. The book depicts how these ordinary young men were able to perform extraordinary acts of bravery and self-sacrifice.

One of the most poignant portions of the book is the simultaneous arrival of nine telegrams soon after D-Day. Kershaw provides gripping detail regarding the effect of the tragic news on the Bedford community.

Sixty years after the Bedford Boys stormed the beaches at Normandy, the last surviving "boy", Ray Nance, passed away. He had lived his entire life with survivor's guilt. Bedford still grieves. In fitting tribute to the Bedford Boys, their hometown was chosen as the location of the site for the National Guard's National Monument.

For anyone with an interest in the history of WW II, this is a must read.



"From the Bookshelf" is 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.

In Memoriam: Dr. Robert W. Otto 1922 - 2015 WWII Veteran, POW, combat wounded

Post 8870 lost one of our more senior comrades late last year when Robert Otto, long time VFW member, passed away on December 7, 2015. Born October 1, 1922, at home in Jerome, Idaho, Bob graduated from Jerome High School, attended Utah State Univ. and The College of Idaho; then worked in the California naval shipyards before entering the Army in 1943. Sgt Otto participated in 12



Bob Otto (left) with Austrian artist Josef Schutzenhofer, with his painting dedicated to Americans shot down over Austria during World War II. Above right is Bob in younger days.

missions as a tailgunner before being shot down aboard the B-24 'Texarkana Hussy' over Pollau, Austria in June 1944. Severely burned, he was taken POW to Stalag Luft IV in Poland. A German Death March survivor, he was liberated at Fallingbommel, Germany in May 1945 and awarded two Purple Hearts and the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Bob married Mary Ann Plastino on March 24, 1946, in Jerome. They farmed west of town for several years, during which he served as County Auditor and rode with the Jerome Posse. The family moved to Ft. Collins, Colo. in 1952 where Robert finished his undergrad work at Colorado A&M. In 1954, they moved to Pullman, Wash. where he graduated in 1957 from Washington State College with a doctorate in veterinary medicine. Two more children were born during the college years, Randy and Robyn. After teaching veterinary medicine at Kansas State University, the family settled in Edmonds, where he built a veterinary practice. Later he was the Area Director for the Northwest Animal Hospital Assn. and honored as Washington State Veterinarian of the Year. He retired from his practice in 1992.

Bob was a founding member of the Edmonds Senior Center and was very active in the Exchange Club. Following his retirement, he served with Christian Veterinary Missions as Short-Term Shuttle Coordinator and Chaplain, then in the mission field on the Navajo Indian Reservation, in Haiti, Bolivia, Malawi and Kenya. He obtained his minister's license and served at Family Life Center and Sunrise Chapel as an assistant pastor before leading a small church called The Gathering at Garden Court until 2012.

In 2001, Bob was honored by the Polish government at a ceremony dedicating a statue commemorating those who were interred at Luft Stalag IV, accompanied by his son, Randy. He was also accompanied by John Nichols, who wrote *The Last Escape*, including Robert's story of his interment and liberation. In 2008, he was a guest of the Austrian government and took his three children with him to attend the unveiling of a memorial by famed artist Josef Schutzenhofer (above left) commemorating those who helped liberate Austria. The following year, Bob wrote his autobiography, *A Walk with God*. This led to many speaking opportunities with the VFW, schools and libraries. In 2011, he traveled with Honor Flight to visit the World War II Memorial in Washington DC. Look for a more detailed description of Bob's wartime experience in a future issue of this newsletter.

New Members Inducted at June Post Meeting

Welcome Josh, Dan and Chris!



Joshua Crabtree

Josh served with the Army 2000-04 and was trained as a combat engineer. He served in Kosovo and Kuwait. Josh was with the 70th Engineer Battalion 1st Armored Division in the Iraq War 2003-4. Awards include the Army Commendation Medal and the Army Achievement Medal (2). Josh graduated from the UW. He is a foreign service specialist with the State Department. Josh and Natalia reside in Mukilteo and have a daughter.



Daniel Doyle

Dan served in the Navy 1966-69. He was trained as a corpsman and served in that role in Vietnam in 1968. He was with Bravo 3rd Recon 3rd Marines and was delivered to Khe Sanh the 1st day of the siege via a Caribou aircraft. He recalls running out the back ramp as it was still moving. He later went to Quang Tri, also in I Corps. Awards include a Presidential Unit Citation and the Fleet Marine Combat Operations Insignia. Dan is a retired professor at Seattle University. He and Cathy reside in Edmonds. They have 2 daughters and 4 grandchildren.



Christopher Mazerolle

Chris is an Army veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan with 10 years of service. Trained as an Army diver, Chris often served in combat engineer units when deployed. He was in Iraq 2005-6 in 1-66 Armor 1st BN 4th Infantry Division. Chris was wounded after a roadside bomb attack. He served in Afghanistan 2010-11 in 1st Brigade Combat Team 101st Airborne Division. Awards include a Purple Heart and Army Commendation Medal (3). Chris was raised in Edmonds and now resides in Lynnwood. He is employed as a commercial diver.

Post Membership Goals Reached

Immediate Past Commander Jim Blossey reports he received a phone call recently from Fred Green, Past Adjutant of the Department of Washington, congratulating Post 8870 on surpassing our 100% membership growth and retention target during the VFW year just ended.

Greene said we will be recognized in 6 to 8 weeks (likely at our August Post meeting) in a visit to our post by Past Department Commander Glenn Albert, at which time he will present us with a white hat which Jim will accept proudly on our behalf.

A big Well Done to you all. Membership is the key to service and is every member's responsibility. Following is a comparative membership summary for District 1.

State	Post	Dst	Life	New	Reinst	Cont	Total	Adjusted Prior Year	Percent	Div	RS	City	State	N/R LM	Prior Annual	Retention
49	921	1	50	13	0	10	73	63	115.87%	9		SNOHOMISH	WA	0	11	100.00%
49	1040	1	194	2	0	56	252	273	92.31%	3		LYNNWOOD	WA	0	79	77.22%
49	1561	1	109	1	1	31	142	144	98.61%	5		ARLINGTON	WA	0	37	86.49%
49	2100	1	664	17	2	67	750	769	97.53%	1		EVERETT	WA	3	94	71.28%
49	2554	1	33	3	0	11	47	51	92.16%	9		SULTAN	WA	0	20	55.00%
49	7511	1	32	1	0	5	38	36	105.56%	10		MONROE	WA	0	5	100.00%
49	8870	1	147	7	1	52	207	196	105.61%	4		EDMONDS	WA	3	53	96.23%
49	9417	1	46	2	0	10	58	67	86.57%	9		GOLD BAR	WA	0	17	64.71%
District Total			1275	46	4	242	1567	1599	97.99%					6		



What Ever Happened To?



Katarina Nguyen is a talented young lady who was a three-time winner of the Patriot Pen contest while in Middle School, and won first-place honors in the Voice of Democracy for all four years of high school. She read her winning essays at Post meetings as well as the Memorial Day Ceremony. During her senior year, Katarina was awarded a Freedom Scholarship. She recently wrote to the Post to express her appreciation for what her involvement in VFW sponsored programs has meant to her.

Dear VFW 8870,

My name is Katarina Nguyen, a graduate from Edmonds Woodway High School in 2012. Throughout high school, I was highly involved with the VFW because I felt it was important for the younger generation to honor the Veterans that have made our freedoms possible. I would like to reach out and thank each and every one of you for your sacrifices to preserve our country's freedom and thank you for encouraging me and allowing me to share your stories. It's been a few years but I would like to reach out and thank you for helping shape my experiences during high school. It was an honor to speak at Memorial Day ceremonies each year as well as read my essays at your meetings. Because of you, our generation is able to enjoy the freedoms and opportunities we share and as a proud American, I sincerely thank you for all you have done.

Since graduating high school, I graduated college from Johns Hopkins University in 3 years and am currently Miss Washington Earth United States. I will compete for the national title of Miss Earth United States this summer and will attend medical school this fall. I was inspired to give back to the community by all of your sacrifices; although I cannot even begin to fathom the adversities you have endured for us, you have inspired me and motivated me to give back. You are selfless, brave heroes and to this day, when anyone asks me who my heroes are, I never hesitate to say that it is those that serve our country. Thank you.

Best regards,

Katarina Nguyen

Veterans of Foreign Wars Night at the Ballpark

with the Everett AquaSox

Saturday, August 13th, 2016
Gates open 6:00PM
First Pitch 7:05PM
Post Game Fireworks!

Enjoy a night out at the ballpark
with local VFW members as the
AquaSox take on the Salem-
Keizer Volcanoes. Reserve your
tickets today with the form
below.

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Ticket Order: # _____ x \$10.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL: _____

Payment Information

Payment by check:

Make checks payable to "Everett AquaSox"

A check in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed

Payment by cash:

\$ _____ is enclosed

Payment by credit card:

CC# _____

Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____

ALL ORDERS DUE BY **FRIDAY JULY 29**

Everett AquaSox

Mail order
form to:

Everett AquaSox Attn: Dustin Coder
3802 Broadway
Everett, WA 98201

Phone: 425-258-3673
Fax: 425-258-3675
www.aquasox.com