



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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



Vol 14 No. 12

Events on the Horizon:

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



VFW/Legion Christmas Party, Sat. Dec. 9 Start at noon, dinner at 12:30

Regular December Post Meeting Cancelled



Please Bring at least 1 canned meat and/ or soup to support Veterans in need and a new, unwrapped toy for our toy drive.

Our next regular Post meeting will be on Wed. January 17, 2018

John Shelton, VFW Post 8870 Guard, Featured in Edmonds Beacon



In the November 16th issue of the Edmonds Beacon, the photo at left and a story about John Shelton's Vietnam War experience appeared, which read in part:

"Sometimes, amid the red, white and blue celebration of soldiers on Veterans Day, we can forget what many of these grizzled old men actually did.

They killed. Many vets are used to the first questions lobbed their way – How many people did you kill in the war? Most don't want to talk about that. Then there's Shelton, a Marine sent to Vietnam in 1959 before, he said, "they even knew there was a war." Shelton was a sniper. He was 19.

When it was all over, Shelton said he had 78 confirmed kills in the Vietnam War. "

Post 8870 Past Commander Jim Blossey feels that the Beacon story emphasizes the wrong aspect of the job of a Marine sniper and submits the following to corrects the record:

We are very grateful to editor Brian Soergel and the Edmonds Beacon for all the thoughtful coverage they give to our local VFW veterans and military veterans in general.

The Veterans Day just past provides a good example. While we held a brief ceremony at the new Edmonds Veterans Plaza, editor Soergel was standing in the crowd during a sopping November rainstorm. He interviewed one of our more active members, took a nice photo of him and placed them both on the front page of his paper. We are very grateful.

But at this point there is an important note that needs to be made.

The veteran he interviewed, John Shelton, was severely wounded in Vietnam and has been confined to wheelchair ever since. John was a Marine Corps sniper and he was very good at his job.

(continued page 2)



(Shelton, continued from page1)

No one wants to kill another human being—not unless they are some sort of a psychopath—and you won’t find many of those people qualifying for today’s military. War is and always has been a dirty, messy, and highly undesirable job. It is not a game; it is not a matter of who has the highest score; it is a matter of who survives.

In the American military, soldiers go about their deadly job while trying to avoid being killed themselves. Sometimes even more importantly they do everything in their power to protect their comrades and buddies from being killed.

That is the job of the sniper—to prevent the enemy from killing or injuring your friends. Which brings us back to the killing question. What should be asked of a combat sniper is not how many people he has killed but how many lives have been saved by neutralizing an adversary intent upon killing your comrades.

The number of lives saved is, unfortunately, a question that no one can answer. In John Shelton’s case they must have numbered in the hundreds, perhaps even the thousands. His job was to eliminate threats to his comrades. His weapon and his skills were tools that he was able to utilize to protect those comrades. John and others like him are not life takers, they are life savers.

As a postscript, John Shelton, prior to entering the Marines, was a star high school running back with a four-year scholarship to UCLA. Instead he chose to serve his country, was sent to Vietnam and wound up in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. There would be no football career for John, but he still had his scholarship. So he went to UCLA and four years later emerged with a baccalaureate degree in psychology. He went on to earn a masters degree and ultimately a PhD in behavioral psychology and became Dr. John Shelton. He had a long and successful practice ministering to thousands of patients and, undoubtedly, saving many more lives.

So again, on behalf of Edmonds Post 8870 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, I would like to thank Brian Soergel and the Edmonds Beacon for their continued coverage. And, personally, I would like to thank Dr. John Shelton for his service to our nation. May you always be remembered as one who saved lives...on the battlefield and at home.

James Blossey  
Past Commander

## Veterans Remembered



Post member Ron Clyborne provided this photo which includes his father, shown among the crew of his WWII bomber before his last mission. Clyborne senior is the man at far right in the top row.

An Alumnus of Virginia Military Institute (VMI), 2nd Lt. Clarence A. (“CA”) Clyborne , served in WWII as a bombardier with the 9<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron, 7<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 10<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

Clyborne died in a Japanese POW camp in late Dec. 1943 of injuries sustained upon landing after parachuting from his B-24 Liberator. The bomber was hit by enemy fire and crashed during a mission to the Insein rail yards (Rangoon) Burma on 1 Dec. 1943.

His remains have never been recovered. He is memorialized on the tablets of the missing in the Manila American cemetery and as of 2017 in the Edmonds Veterans Plaza Memorial Garden.

*If you have such photos you would like to share, we would be happy to publish them in future newsletters.*

# Lives Of Vietnam Veterans Threatened By A Tiny Killer

BY DAN DOYLE

According to a story on **CBS News Baltimore**, there is yet another silent killer besides Agent Orange for Vietnam veterans to be concerned about; a parasite called a fluke worm that can live for decades in a person's without symptoms. When symptoms do show, it may be too late.

One gets this fluke worm by eating raw or undercooked fish. Apparently this disease is endemic to rivers in Vietnam. It is said that these flukes effect up to 25 million people worldwide.



*Some of the hundreds of Vietnam War veterans who have suffered from cholangiocarcinoma, (Photo by AP)*



*Preserved liver fluke parasites*

*(AP Photo/Sakchai Lalit)*

According to the CBS Baltimore piece, the disease “can be treated easily and effectively with a handful of pills if caught early on,” if not it can develop into a deadly form of cancer that affects the bile duct. When symptoms do occur they are most evident in the form of severe pain. When this happens, the patient may have only months yet to live.

A study was conducted by Seoul National University in South Korea of 50 Vietnam veteran volunteers at the Northport VA Medical Center in New York. Of the 50 blood samples given by these volunteers, nearly 20 percent of them came back positive or bordering positive for liver fluke antibodies.

If Vietnam veterans remember eating raw or undercooked fish while in Vietnam, get this checked out. Over the last 15 years some 700 veterans were found to have the rare bile duct cancer. Of these about half did not file claims for benefits, because they did not know that it was related to their time in Vietnam.

Now that this disease has been discovered to have clear links to Vietnam, there should be no having to “fight” for the benefits that belong to all whose health has been affected by this disease because of their service in Vietnam. This goes for the various illnesses that are connected to the defoliant Agent Orange too. We need Congress and the VA to pick up the ball on this before it is too late. We served our country. Now it's time for our country to take up its responsibilities toward those of us who have been negatively affected by these diseases that are directly related to that service.



## VA Releases Veteran Suicide Statistics by State

Report show state, age, gender and most common method.

**WASHINGTON** (Sept.15, 2017) the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) released findings from its analysis of Veteran suicide data for 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. The release is part of VA's comprehensive [examination](#) of more than 55 million records, from 1979 to 2014, which will be used to develop and evaluate suicide prevention programs across every state.

The new data include Veteran suicide rates and overall suicide rates by state, age group, and gender and list the most common suicide methods. Analysis of this information will help VA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention gain insight into high-risk populations and share that information with community-based health care providers and partners, continuing to expand the network of support for Veterans.

**Among VA findings:** Findings show there is variability across the nation in the rates and numbers of deaths by suicide among Veterans. Overall, the Veteran rates mirror those of the general population in the geographic region, with the highest rates in Western states. While we see higher rates of suicide in some states with smaller populations, most Veteran suicides are still in the heaviest populated areas.

The suicide rate among middle-age and older adult Veterans remains high. In 2014, approximately 65 percent of all Veterans who died by suicide were age 50 or older.

After adjusting for differences in age and sex, risk for suicide was 22 percent higher among Veterans when compared to U.S. non-Veteran adults. After adjusting for differences in age, risk for suicide was 19 percent higher among male Veterans when compared to U.S. non-Veteran adult men. After adjusting for differences in age, risk for suicide was 2.5 times higher among female Veterans when compared to U.S. non-Veteran adult women.

"These findings are deeply concerning, which is why I made suicide prevention my top clinical priority," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "I am committed to reducing Veteran suicides through support and education. We know that of the 20 suicides a day that we reported last year, 14 are not under VA care. This is a national public health issue that requires a concerted, national approach."

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide, and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Call 800-273-8255 and press 1, chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat), or text to 838255.

## VOLUNTEER FOR THE SEATTLE STAND DOWN

A two day homeless and at-risk veteran outreach event

December 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>

South Seattle College - Georgetown Campus

6737 Corson Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98108

Gene Colin Education Hall - Bldg. "C"

Signup NOW at:

<http://theseattlestanddown.org/volunteer.html>

*Merry Christmas!*



*and a very*

*Happy New Year!*