



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

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

Mike Denton
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Events on the Horizon:

Staff Meetings: 1st Tues., 9:00 AM at 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
Post Auxiliary Meeting: Second Thurs., Edmonds Senior Center at noon. No host lunch.
(Questions: Ruth Herren 425-337-1559)

Our next regular Post meeting will be on Wed. February 21, 2018

2018 Youth Essay Winners and Runners Up



Winners and their families pose with Commander Mike Denton following the award ceremony. The winners are displaying certificates.

At its January 17 meeting, Edmonds VFW Post 8870 recognized students who were 2017 winners of VFW's three annual essay contests.

The theme for this year's elementary school contest was "What Does a Veteran Mean to Me?" The contest was open to all public, private, and home-schooled elementary school students in the Edmonds and Mukilteo school districts in grades 3, 4, and 5. Winners advanced to district competition, culminating at the state level.

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Youth Essay Winners, cont'd from P.1

There was no 3rd grade winner this year and the 4th and 5th grade contests were a clean sweep for Brier Elementary School. This year's winning essay for 4th grade was submitted by Sara Ambachew and the runner-up was Brianna Reyes. At the 5th grade level the winner was Cole Harris and the runner-up was Nikolas Lopez.

For middle school students in the two districts, the contest is called Patriot's Pen and it culminates at the national level. It is open to all middle school students in grades 6, 7, and 8 and the theme for this year's contest was "America's Gift to My Generation." The winning entry was submitted by Mohuwa Wahid, a student at Explorer Middle School.

Edmonds-Woodway senior Olivia Olson once again took 1st place honors in both the local and district Voice of Democracy contest. While two contests for younger students requires a written essay, the Voice of Democracy is an oral competition requiring the submission of an audio recording. This year's topic was "American History: Our Hope for the Future." (See accompanying story on Olivia.) Lara Wahid of Kamiak High School was runner-up.

All winners received framed certificates and cash prizes of \$100 for first place and \$50 for the runners-up.

Olivia Olson - First Place Once Again

Olivia Olson had just delivered her moving Voice of Democracy speech—she had won first place for an unprecedented fifth consecutive time and—although she didn't know it—renowned Edmonds artist Michael Reagan was about to present her with the surprise of a lifetime.

Reagan is known for his remarkably lifelike pencil drawings of what he calls Fallen Heroes. His drawings have numbered in the thousands, though seldom has he done such a portrait for a living person. For him to do so, the individual would have to be exceptional indeed.

Those who have heard Olivia Olson speak know that she is not only exceptional, but mature and talented well beyond her 17 years. This year's essay, entitled *American History: Our Hope for the Future*, was, in the opinion of the contest judges, her best yet.

When she completed her speech—all completely memorized and without notes—the crowd gave her a standing ovation. Then Michael Reagan unexpectedly came forward bearing a large discreetly wrapped package.

The usually unperturbable Olivia was clearly bewildered at what was happening. Reagan showed copies of several military young women, now dead, whose portraits he had drawn, and said how consistently moved he was at Olivia's grasp of the meaning of patriotism and sacrifices such as these. He then unveiled a stunning portrait of Olivia and presented it to her as his personal tribute.

She looked over her left shoulder at her mother with an expression that wordlessly said Mom, what is happening? Then, fighting back tears but with a smile on her face she accepted the large framed picture. She stared at it for a moment, handed it to her mom and embraced Reagan for what seemed like a full minute. There was not a dry eye in the place, including the eyes of Michael Reagan.



Reagan presents portrait to Olivia

Tinnitus (and other hearing problems)

Any of us who ever served an artillery piece, or even spent much time firing any sort of gun have had our hearing affected. Back when I was on 3 inch and 40mm gun crews, the only man with hearing protection was the telephone talker. The rest of us tried to get by covering our ears. (Hard to do with a 3 inch shell in your hands.)Ed.

Tinnitus is the number-one disability among Veterans and affects at least 1 in 10 American adults. People with tinnitus describe ringing sounds, a buzzing sound, a high-pitched whistle, or numerous other sounds.

The causes and effects of tinnitus vary from person to person. Because tinnitus has many causes, VA believes the approach to treating it should be interdisciplinary. And because there is no cure for tinnitus, VA's goal is not to silence the sounds it causes, but to help patients manage their reactions.

About 80 percent of people with tinnitus are not bothered by it, because it does not affect their sleep or their ability to concentrate. Those who struggle with the noise in their head can be more prone to other mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety.

Testing for tinnitus—Tinnitus is common in Veterans, but there are no objective tests to diagnose the problem. In 2013, NCRAR researchers and researchers from Oregon Health and Science University conducted three phases of testing to try to distinguish Veterans with tinnitus from those who do not have it. Some differences were found between the groups, but also that no single test or series of tests could reliably diagnose the condition. The team concluded additional work is needed to develop a specific battery of tests for detecting the presence or absence of tinnitus with a high degree of confidence. For more information on Veterans' hearing loss and VA treatment and research, follow this link.

<https://www.research.va.gov/topics/hearing.cfm>



New Member: Jay Hansen

Jay Hansen was voted into membership and sworn in at the January Post meeting by Commander Mike Denton

Jay retired as a Lt. Colonel from the USAF. Among his other stations and duty assignments, Jay served in helicopters out of Danang during the Vietnam War.

Notable among Jay's activities is membership in the Mill Creek Chorale, where he sings low bass with Commander Denton. Jay resides in Mukilteo.

Post Auxiliary Seeks Members



If you are a friend or family member of a Veteran looking for ways to lend your support to Veterans and your community, then the VFW Auxiliary is the place for you.

VFW Post 8870 meets the second Thursday of each month at Edmonds Senior Center at noon. No host lunch.

For further information contact Ruth Herren at 425-337-1559

The Battle of Belleau Wood

by Dan Doyle



The 100th anniversary of one of the most storied battles of the long Marine Corps history will be remembered this year: the Battle of Belleau Wood in WWI.

Late in the war, the Germans, knowing that the Americans were entering the war in numbers, undertook a desperate, last ditch effort to defeat the Allies before the Americans could bring sufficient forces into the war on the side of the Allies. But, as usual, the Marines were already there. The German offensive was launched in a place called Belleau Wood, near the Marne River in France, near Paris. It was in the spring of 1918 and the Germans would

bring everything they could to the offensive. They would be countered by the 1st Bn, 5th Marines, among other allied troops.

One of the most famous Marine Corps quotes comes from a Marine 1st Sgt. by the name of Dan Daly who shouted to his Marines in their attack on the German lines, “Come on, you sons of bitches, do you want to live forever?”

As battered as they were, those Marines never fell back, never gave up, and fought with such wild abandon that the Germans began calling them “TeufelHunden,” or Devil Dogs. That name has become an unofficial moniker for all Marines.

On June 26, 1918 Marine Maj., Maurice Shearer sent a message: “Woods now entirely U.S. Marine Corps.” The battle had lasted 3 weeks and by the end the Marines had suffered more casualties in that battle than in all of its history to that point.

Like the Spartans at Thermopylae, this small force of Marines had held back and stopped a superior force. Because of this, all Marines who serve in the 1st Bn, 5th Marines (and a unit of the 6th Marines) can wear the French Fourragere insignia on the left shoulder of their uniform. They are the only Marine units allowed to wear this device. These units also were awarded the French Croix de Guerre with two palms and one gilt star for their actions at Belleau Wood.

In Memoriam

We will drape our charter at the February Post meeting in honor of the passing of two of our Life Members. Rest in peace Comrades.



Joseph (Ski) Kuchinski

Post 8870 member Joseph Kuchinski passed away on December 31, 2017. Joseph was born in Moosic, PA August 13, 1929 to Henry Sr. and Cecelia Kuchinski. He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers, Henry Jr. and Vincent Kuchinski. "Ski, as he was he was affectionately known, enlisted in the Navy in 1948. He defended our freedom with honor and pride for 30 years in which he served in both the Korean and [Vietnam wars](#). He was a proud member of the Knights of Columbus and [VFW](#) post 8870. A devoted member of Holy Rosary Church in Edmonds. Ski is survived by wife, Wanda, of 57 years; sister, Dorothy; daughters, Angela Kuchinski, Trina Myers, Lisa Beavin (Ron) and son, David Kuchinski; grandchildren, Bryce, Mckenzie, Breeahna, Lereana, Ryan, Kyle, Jamie and three great grand children. Services were held at Tahoma National Cemetery, January 26, 2018.



Richard Clyde

Richard Clyde , World War II Veteran and Life Member of VFW Post 8870 died January 24, 2018 at age 92 in his home town of Langley, on Whidbey Island.

The Clyde name is ubiquitous in Langley. There's Clyde Alley and Clyde Road. The famous Clyde Theatre, built in 1937, still shows movies. Clyde Motors was once adjacent to the theater at the corner of First and Anthes.

Richard grew up in Langley during the Great Depression. He worked at the family garage in high school and frequently ran the projector at the theater. Richard went back to work in his father's garage after he returned from World War II. He eventually bought the business in 1954.

American History; Our Hope for the Future

(The full text of Olivia Olson's winning Voice of Democracy essay)

The binding is a bit loose, the pages curl slightly with age, and the passages have been highlighted and margins doodled in by previous students. My American history textbook is certainly aging, but the messages it contains are timeless. Sitting in class and thumbing through those yellowed pages, I am suddenly transported through time.

The birth of a new nation begins to unfold from dense paragraphs in Chapter 3. The American Revolution. Thirteen scrappy colonies tenuously bound in the ideals of liberty and democracy. Protesting the tyranny of Britain, Bostonians dump tea in the harbor, twelve delegates meet at the first Continental Congress, and George Washington recounts Thomas Paine's iconic words to his troops, "these are the times that try men's souls." And when their souls were tried, their bravery, patriotism, and determination to forge a better future never wavered, and the United States of America was born. The reading concludes with an illustration of the Battle of Yorktown and the simple caption, "a glorious victory for the newly formed nation."

An insert in Chapter 7 discusses American inventions. A cartoon image depicts Thomas Edison refusing to give up on his lightbulb, claiming, "I have not failed, I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." And nearly 100 years later, visionaries like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates advance computer technology, putting libraries and symphonies at our fingertips. The spirit of innovation is an inherent part of our history, one fostered by the belief that we can always improve the world around us. I look up from my textbook, sitting in a room lit by American innovation and chairs filled with students from all around the world. Their parents and ancestors came here for a better future and helped build, shape, and advance this nation.

A yellow Post-it note serves as a forgotten bookmark and draws my attention to a black and white photograph in Chapter 16. Women pour into the streets, donning signs that demand gender equality and the right to vote. In the section on Civil Rights, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his dream to a crowd at the Lincoln Memorial, and hundreds of people march across my page at Selma, protected by the National Guard. The subjugation of women and people of color are unignorable stains on the tapestry of our history. But today, these stains serve as reminders not to repeat the mistakes of the past. And they also remind us, that even in the face of oppression or prejudice, the American people can exercise the rights earned for each citizen to realize the intent of the Constitution: that we are all created equal.

Now notice I say earned, not given, when talking about our rights as American citizens. Because the liberties we enjoy, our unalienable rights to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" have been bravely defended by our veterans. Without them, we wouldn't have had the security to pursue innovations that changed the world, the freedom to speak our minds, nor the ability to stand here today, in the land of the free and the home of the brave, looking towards a bright future.

The bell rings suddenly, dismissing my history class and shaking me from my thoughts. I look at the glossy U.S. flag cover of my textbook and slide it into my backpack. As I walk to my next class, I think about the students who will traipse through these halls 60 years from now. High school seniors, just like me, will read their updated American history textbooks and be transported through the events of the past. I hope those chapters fill them with the same pride that I feel today. I hope they live in a world where these qualities, those of Washington, Gates, and King, characterize what it means to be an American. I hope that my children, and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren live in a country that continues to foster an innovative, resilient, and brave society.