



# the *Veteran's Voice*



## VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

Edmonds Post 8870 & Auxilliary  
vfw8870.org - commander@vfw8870.org

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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 re Auxiliary: Valerie Ehlers, Pres.: 206-853-5673 or email: [val4erie9@gmail.com](mailto:val4erie9@gmail.com).)



**Christmas Party! Sat. December 15, Gather 1:00 PM, Dinner 2:00 PM**  
**Our next regular Post meeting will be on Wed., January 16, 2019**

### A stirring Program at November Post Meeting



The November meeting of Post 8870, taking place the day before Thanksgiving was relatively lightly attended, no doubt due to the necessity of some members to be at home with family making preparations for the holiday. Still, some 24 stalwart members attended and we were treated to a two-part program that was memorable.

First, our past Teacher of The Year, Nancy Thompson of Serene Lake Elementary in Mukilteo, joined us to perform her new

musical composition of the "In Flanders" Fields poem. A beautiful new piece of music, both well composed and superbly performed. We sincerely hope that Nancy is able to have her composition published and made widely available.



Part two of our program was courtesy of Post Member Chris Edwards, who brought two of his fellow National Guard troops to give a demonstration on the proper steps involved in folding the flag as we do it at burial services, as well as some explanation of the symbolism involved in each of those steps.

# Memories of Operation Barrel Roll

by Fred Apgar

Forty years ago I lost a dear friend in a senseless motor vehicle accident on an icy road in Montana. His name was Anonn Puanyathio, he was Thai, and he was a courageous warrior. His call sign was Hilltop. We became friends during my tour in Southeast Asia. We were both involved in the ground war in Northern Laos (Barrel Roll).

The ground war in Laos was waged by a US sponsored army, comprised almost exclusively by Hmong, a native Laotian ethnic minority. Operations relied on a network of road watch teams (RWT) and forward air guides (FAG). Hilltop was a FAG, a fearless trooper who accompanied Hmong soldiers and served as a link between ground forces and our airborne command center.



*Fred Apgar, then  
and now*



Hilltop was among the best of our FAGs. We worked together for a year and became life-long friends. His friendship was a gift. Anonn had a wonderful sense of humor and was one of those individuals who thrived in combat. He was born to be a warrior.

Hilltop's hometown was close to the base at which I was stationed in Thailand. When our schedules

permitted, he took me to his world. We shared some memorable experiences. Anonn was a quiet and gentle person, but in the field he was a respected leader; assertive, and confident, who exuded a command presence. On numerous occasions, Hilltop engaged in firefights with the North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao, suffering several wounds, and forced to recede into the depths of the jungle, evading the bad guys to await pick-up at first light.

I was honored to have Anonn attend our Squadron's Sawadee Party for those of us whose deployment was over and were returning home. It was at that party, our last time together, when Anonn presented me with a gift of two pictures; one of him at Long Tieng and one of himself sitting on top of a captured Soviet made PT-76 tank. He also presented me with a Soviet made watch he salvaged from the wreckage. The successful ambush took place in the Ban Ban Valley.

It took more than a year after the war ended, but finally, Hilltop received permission to fulfill his life-long dream and immigrated to the United States. After surviving the war, it was ironic that Hilltop's life would end on a snow covered Montana highway.



*Anonn Puanyathio*

Three years ago, I was privileged to return to the battlefields of Barrel Roll. One of my destinations was the Ban Ban Valley in search of a connection to Hilltop. Of course, I will never know if the tank I found was the very same tank that Hilltop had stood upon in 1969. I like to think it was.

## In Memoriam: George H.W. Bush President, Navy Veteran, VFW Life Member

Like many wartime pilots, Lt. j.g. George H.W. Bush named his airplane after a girl back home. But he had to call it "Barbara III," since he lost his first two planes — one during training and one to enemy fire. That's how dangerous flying was in World War II. There were 16 pilots in George H.W. Bush's squadron, according to retired Adm. Samuel Cox, director of Naval History and Heritage Command. "Half of them were killed or captured before the end of the war," Cox said.



He flew the TBM "Avenger", a carrier based torpedo/ bomber which had a three-man crew. His target on Sept. 2, 1944, was a Japanese radio transmitter on the island of Chichi Jima.

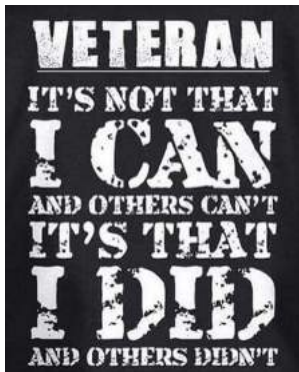
His plane was hit as he began his run into the target but he stayed with it until he dropped his bombs. Out over the water, Mr. Bush told his crew to bail out.

"The Japanese came out after him. Some fighters from the flight were able to strafe the Japanese boats and keep them away during the four hours that Bush was actually in the water," Cox said. A U.S. submarine got to him before the Japanese could. A 20-year-old George H.W. Bush spent 30 days on that submarine thinking, as he later told the author James Bradley, "Later, I learned that neither Jack Delaney nor Ted White had survived. One went down with the plane; the other was seen jumping but his parachute failed to open." Bush has been quoted as saying "I think about White and Delaney every day"

George H. W. Bush was one of eight VFW members who have become U.S. Presidents.

*Source: CBS NEWS December 4, 2018, 6:41 PM*

### The Commander's Corner



Now and then, I run across little things on the internet that give me pause and this graphic on the difference between "can and did" is one of them. Indeed there are some who "can't", which we certainly understand, but there are a lot more who simply "don't" and that is what separates veterans from the rest. It is good to be counted among the small percentage of our fellow Americans who "did".

**Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and best wishes for the new year.**

## VFW Announces New Logo

The new VFW logo and visual language embraces the organization's storied 119 years of service to America's veterans, service members and their families, while underscoring its forward-thinking approach to service and distinguished membership base. The VFW believes the new logo will improve market position and provide visual clarity to its mission.



“We’re excited about the bold, new look,” said B.J. Lawrence, national commander of the VFW. “There’s a lot of complex meaning built into our new logo, yet it clearly communicates who we are and what we’re about – service to nation while in the military and continuing service to our nation as veterans.”

The new logo is a drastic change from its predecessor, and is the first-ever official logo that was designed without the organization's traditional Cross of Malta shield, which remains the official seal of the VFW. It includes an artistic representation of service stripes which represent length of service on most U.S. military uniforms. As such, the first and leaner of the two service stripes represents the organization's steadfast entry into its second century of service to America's veterans, service members and their families. The second, broader stripe, represents its first storied century of service, spanning back to 1899. In addition to the direct metaphor of the stripes, the visual progression leading to the build of the letter “V” represents our sustained and forward movement into achieving the VFW's mission of service to others.

The distinctive gold coloring gives nod to the VFW's stringent membership eligibility requirements and the gold standard of service the VFW provides. The red represents the danger each of its members has faced and the energy with which the VFW operates.

In support of the project, the VFW has created individual custom logos for use by each of its 52 VFW Department headquarters in all 50 states and overseas, and nearly 6,300 individual VFW Posts.



### Notes from the Auxiliary

*by Valerie Ehlers*

At the November District 1 meeting I met Department VFW Commander Linda Fairbank and received one of her pins. I also met Department President Ruth Lamoureux and Department Junior Vice President Marjorie Stetson. All the Auxiliaries were thanked for all the hard work we've done this year. Membership goals were discussed and we were told that we will be getting a new auxiliary in the district very soon! We contributed 10 hygiene kits for homeless veterans to District President Mary Davenport along with some other auxiliaries. We also gave some extra supplies that could be used in making more kits.

We have set up our display in the lobby of Edmonds Senior Center. Come by, take a look, and let me know your thoughts about it. You can call me at 206-853-5673, or send me an email at [val4erie9@gmail.com](mailto:val4erie9@gmail.com) .

We are always happy to welcome new members to the Edmonds Auxiliary to VFW Post 8870. If you are interested in joining us, give a call or send an email to Valerie at the phone number or email address above.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed New Year to you all! We look forward to seeing everyone at our January meeting!