



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS



VFW Auxiliary

The Veterans' Voice

Edmonds VFW Post 8870

PO Box 701, Edmonds, WA 98020 - 425-245-8545

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Commander Rose Gilliland: commander@vfw8870.org

Newsletter Editor, Mike Denton: editor@vfw8870.org

Post Calendar

Staff Meeting: First Wed, 4:30 PM 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., at Holy Trinity Church, 657 Daley St in Edmonds, No host lunch.

(Questions: call Patsy Ethridge-Neal phone: (206) 919-6533

Our next regular Post meeting will be on Wed. January 15, 2020

Meeting and event information can be found on the Post website: www.vfw8870.org

Follow us on Facebook: VFW Post 8870 - Edmonds, WA

VFW Legion Christmas Party Well-attended



On Saturday, December 14, members of American Legion Post 66 and VFW Post 8870 gathered at the Legion Hall in Edmonds for our annual Christmas gathering. Many thanks to Paul Bustard for providing turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, which he has done for a number of years.

In gratitude for Paul's efforts, Post Commanders Les Abel and Rose Gilliland presented Paul with a handsome leather jacket, decorated with appropriate USMC insignia. Paul puts in many hours seeing that our annual event is well fed.

Paul had a bit of an delay in getting the turkeys on time from Costco, his usual source, where there were some issues with timing expectations. By way of apology, the fine folks at Costco, provided the turkeys at no

charge and also committed to continue providing the turkeys free in the future. The food; turkey, mashed potatoes, ham, and all the trimmings were delicious!

continued on page 2

continued from page 1



Post Commanders Les Abel and Rose Gilliland presented checks from each post to Mike Reagan in support of his Fallen Heroes Foundation.

A variety of items contributed by members of the two Posts were auctioned off to raise funds.

Mike Reagan offered to produce two sketched portraits for winning bidders, which sold for a total of \$ 1,000.

Other items

and door contributions came to \$ 611. The total of \$ 1,611 was split between the two posts.

Reagan surprised (stunned might be a better word) Past Commander Mike Denton with a Christmas gift of a portrait sketch of Mike's then teenaged mother, (shown at right) circa 1932, which he showed as a "sample" of his work. Reagan said he "mined" Facebook for the Denton photo.



One of the long standing traditions of our Christmas party is the collection of toys for underprivileged children, and donations of food for our local food bank, which is developing a new focus on the needs of veterans for the coming year. Our comrades were generous as always in their donations. Commander Gilliland arranged for the delivery of the food donations to the food bank. and personally presented the toys to the Chaplain's office at Naval Base Everett for appropriate distribution to children of active duty members of the armed forces.



Gift Cards for Veterans Home



Kurfess presents the gift cards

Just before Christmas, Post 8870 Vice Commander Carl Kurfess visited Retsil Washington Veterans home to deliver gift cards with a total of \$ 1,000, purchased from our Veterans Relief Fund to staff member Tami Reuter. Washington Veterans Home Retsil is a 240 unit senior care community and has been a recipient of support from our Post relief Fund for many years.



At right is an exterior view of the Retsil facility.

Edmonds Veterans Plaza Update

State Grant Funds Awarded

We continue to raise funds for the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Edmonds Veterans Plaza. Shown below are Commander Rose Gilliland and Past Commander Jim Traner being presented with a check for \$ 1,000 from a representative of the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee. This grant money is raised through the sale of Veterans Remembrance Emblems. The



emblems include campaign ribbons or military awards, and are stickers that can be placed on Washington license plates. This grant is the result of an application made by Maria Montalvo of the EVP Committee.

The VAAC is authorized to disperse funds for projects that pay tribute to living and deceased veterans.

The VAAC Operates with the motto of No Veteran Forgotten, and serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor and the Director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs.

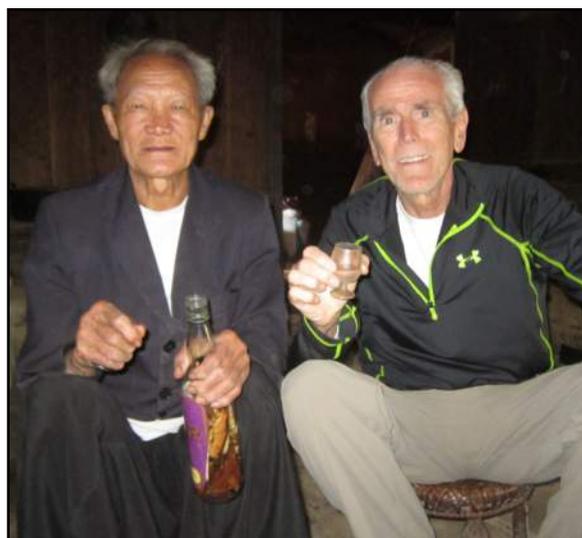
Fred Apgar Remembers

The following is an excerpt from Fred's 8-part reminiscence of his trip to Vietnam and Laos, to retrace his steps from the war. You can find the entirety of his writing on his Facebook page, some of which have also been posted on our Post 8870 FB page.

Meeting Seng Keu

Route 7 is a major route in northern Laos. It connects North Vietnam with the PDJ in the center of northern Laos. A major infiltration route for the North Vietnamese, it remained under Communist control throughout the war; however, our CIA supported Army of Hmong (ethnic Laotian hill people) conducted regular operations in the area and the road was continually surveilled by airborne FACs and subjected to routine interdiction sorties.

Nong Het is the eastern most town on Route 7, lying just a few miles from the border with Vietnam. The village has the distinction of being the birthplace and childhood home of General Vang Pao, the leader of the Hmong Army. At Nong Het, we met, quite randomly on the street Seng Keu, an 80 years old Hmong. Upon hearing that I had been in the Air Force, he jumped up, grabbed my arms and told me we had been comrades. He told us his story.



Comrades reunited

Seng Keu served in the Hmong Army. He had fought with a Special Guerrilla Unit (SGU) almost exclusively in Barrel Roll, (Operation Barrel Roll was a covert U.S. Air Force and Navy Task Force interdiction and close air support campaign conducted in the Kingdom of Laos from 1964 to 1973, concurrent with the Vietnam War.) moving from Lima Site to Lima Site as the ebb and flow of operations dictated. Initially, his unit, like most of the newly formed SGU units engaged in guerrilla operations, ambushing enemy units and then quickly retreating into the relative safety of the jungle. In time, however, Vang Pao's forces began to be used in more of a conventional warfare role, against NVA (North Vietnamese Army) and PL (Pathet Lao) forces, with U.S. air support.

I sat, mesmerized, as Seng Keu ticked off the names of the familiar locations at which he had engaged NVA and PL forces in skirmishes. Seng Keu was delighted to learn I had been involved in the war in Barrel Roll. When I told him our call sign was Alleycat, he held my hands and thanked me for the many nights when Alleycat had sent Spooky (gunships) to his team when they were engaged with the enemy. We marveled at how the paths of our lives had crossed so many years ago. It was as if we had always been friends and brothers.

We talked more about Seng Keu's life during the war. He and his wife had raised 14 children, five of whom had died. Two of his sons had died while fighting against the PL and NVA. I felt privileged to have met a person with whom I shared a wonderful moment of bonding, respect, and friendship. At one time, we had been connected on the battlefields of Laos, and 45 years later, we re-discovered that connection.