



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



### **Upcoming Events Calendar**

Please take time to review the calendar and if there are additions that are necessary, please contact the editor at [commander@vfwdistrict1.org](mailto:commander@vfwdistrict1.org)

January 4th	District Meeting—Alderwood Boys and Girls Club-1200
January 7th	Staff Meeting—Traner’s Office 0900
January 10th	Post Meeting— Edmonds Senior Center—Lunch at 1130-Meeting at 1230
January 18th	Midwinter Conference- Yakima
January 28th	Memorial Service for Snohomish Veterans— Edmonds Memorial Cemetery— 10AM

### **Post Helps Military and Veterans at Christmas**

For all of you who stand outside the local grocery stores twice a year or all of those of you who have helped out on Buddy Poppies in the past, your hard work was translated into \$500 of gift cards to be given to needy families by the Chaplains at JBLM, Naval Station Everett, Coast Guard, and the Marines. In addition, we gave \$500 of gift cards to the Old Soldiers Homes at Retsil and Orting. Since I personally delivered cards to JBLM and to Orting, I know how appreciative those folks were to receive them. The Chaplain’s assistant at JBLM told me of a family with 7 children trying to make ends meet and how much they would appreciate any assistance they could receive. With 45,000 troops stationed at McChord and Fort Lewis, our \$500 was a drop in the bucket. However, I suspect the families who received them didn’t view them that way. So next Spring when the signup sheet goes around for Buddy Poppies, don’t just pass it on the next person sitting next to you. Consider where your efforts really go—to helping military families and to veterans who need our help.

### **Joint AL VFW Christmas Party**

We had a great Christmas party in December. Paul Bustard, John’s son, prepared his gourmet turkey feast for us and admission was an toy for Holly House and/or food for the Edmonds Food Bank. For the first time this year, we had a raffle as part of the activities and the officers each brought an item or items to be raffled. We ended up raising over \$500 for the Posts. When we dropped the toys off at Meadowdale Middle School where Holly House is held, we estimated we had over 50 toys donated by members of the Legion and/or VFW. I have no idea as to the amount of food items but our members were equally generous to the Food Bank as they were to Holly House. A big thanks goes out to everyone who brought food to the party as well. No one left hungry. And finally, thanks to everyone who setup and took down. We left the place spotless and I know the Senior Center appreciated that.

### **District I Meeting**

Our District meeting will be held on January 4th at the Alderwood Boys and Girls Club. We will be recognizing the Voice of Democracy, Patriots Pen, and Youth Essay winners. In addition, the Teachers of the Year will be recognized. This is a special meeting and we would like to have everyone in the chow line by noon. Once we have everyone seated and fed, we will begin our awards ceremony. Immediately following the ceremonies, we will begin our District meeting. Post 8870 and 1040 will be hosting the event, so if you could plan on helping with the set up and tear down, it would be appreciated as we are anticipating up to 80 guests. In addition, Department Commander Ted Streete and his line officers will be in attendance. We will attempt to move the meeting along as quickly as possible. Please note that the only Bowl Game on TV that afternoon is the BBVA Compass Bowl featuring Houston vs. Vanderbilt so you are aren’t missing anything exciting in the way of football.

## Post Contributes \$2,000 to Mike Reagan's Fallen Hero Project

As most of you know, our Post is a big supporter of Mike and his efforts to provide portraits to any families of fallen service men and women who request one. To date, Mike has drawn over 3,500 portraits. At the annual Christmas party, Post Commander Fred Apgar surprised Mike with a check for \$2,000 to continue to support his project. For once, Mike was at a loss of words, an unusual situation as his friends can attest too. A few days later, the VFW Foundation provided him with a check for \$25,000, the second payment of a 3 year commitment by National. Mike has always had our support and it is nice to have National do the same. The war continues to consume American lives and Mike continues to draw portraits of young men and women who given their all for our country. Hopefully, that will come to an end in the near future. In the meanwhile, Mike is providing a way for families to say good bye to their loved ones.

## Book Honors Korean War Veterans

If you are a Korean War veteran then you are eligible for a free hard covered book produced by the Korean government to thank American veterans for their service. It is a well done book covering both the war and the aftermath of the war and how the country has been successful due to the sacrifices of so many American servicemen. If you are interested in copy, let us know in advance and we will try to have sufficient copies available at the next Post meeting.

## Unpaid Members

A few of you are reading this and realize you haven't paid your dues. Guess what, your membership expired on January 1st. The best deal in town is still a VFW membership for \$35. That works out to 8 Grande, Non-Fat, 1 Pump Vanilla, Extra Hot Lattes from Starbucks. The guy that owns Starbucks sold the Sonics to a bunch of robber barons from Oklahoma City. Your VFW protects active duty military and veterans from similar villains, the US Congress (see the article "What VFW Does"). \$35 is cheap.

## What VFW Does

I attended a VFW meeting at another Post when under "Good of the Order" a comrade got up and discussed the "COLA Penalty". For those of you who not familiar with the term, Congress recently passed a bill that will be extremely detrimental to our military men and women and military retirees. I have provided an excerpt from the VFW website ([www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)) and what you can do to help rectify this.

**Background:** Congress passed a budget deal that includes a provision that penalizes working age military retirees younger than 62 by cutting a full one percent from future cost of living adjustments (COLA). VFW calculates that a Gunnery Sergeant or Sergeant First Class (E-7) with 20 years of service would lose more than \$80,000 in income by age 62. This also unfairly punishes those who have been medically retired as a result of their wounds defending our nation. This is totally unacceptable and will have a devastating impact on retirement benefits for retirees and survivors and jeopardizes the future value of military career benefits, while also adversely affecting recruitment, retention and our national security.

The VFW is now working with members in both the House and Senate to find a bipartisan solution that will replace this unacceptable provision. We are urging all of our members and advocates to contact their legislators and demand they find a solution that doesn't balance the budget on the backs of our military retirees.

**Action Needed:** Call, email and schedule appointments with your legislators today. Tell them this should be the first priority when they return to Washington after the New Year, and that the solution cannot penalize veterans, military retirees, or jeopardize the future value of military career benefits. Asking those who have given the most to shoulder the burden of reducing government spending is unacceptable.

So the next time you are recruiting a new member and he or she asks what do we do, just refer them to the National website. What we do as an organization is to mobilize when Congress decides to balance the budget on the backs of service personnel and veterans. Without an organization like VFW protecting our interests, who else would?

## Chaplain's Column—Rock Roth

One of the many benefits of serving as our Post's Youth Programs Coordinator (as well as your Chaplain) is coordinating the following Post competitions: Voice of Democracy Audio Essays (open to high school students), Patriot's Pen Essays (open to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders), and Youth Essays (open to 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> graders). Along with other members of our Essay Evaluation Committee, I read and evaluated a number of excellent essays submitted by students from schools in the local area. I also had the very great privilege of representing our Post by presenting 'Achievement Award Certificates' to all contest participants. It is really a joy to see, hear, and experience the excitement that these certificates bring to participating students. I have visited at least 8 schools this year.

I would like to tell you about one of the schools I visited. On Wednesday, 4 December, I visited Providence Classical Christian School and presented 'Achievement Award Certificates' to ten very excited third graders during a school assembly. The Assembly – the environment - at Providence Classical Christian School was different. Let me explain. At all schools students are wonderful. At all schools students and faculty are welcoming and friendly. At all schools students and faculty are respectful and courteous. Providence Classical Christian School was different because prayer was offered at the opening, during, and at the end of the assembly. The Bible was read and quoted by students and faculty, openly throughout the assembly. America was acknowledged as "One Nation Under God". The existence of Christ was acknowledged and glorified. Another thing, albeit less important, that makes the school different is that all the students were in 'uniform' – skirts, white blouses, and sweaters for the girls; slacks, white shirts, and sweaters for the boys. I'm certain that there were economic differences but you certainly could not tell by looking at the students. It was a marvelous experience.

Hopefully you will be able to attend our 10 January Post meeting during which you will meet our superb contest winners, those placing second, and those recognized as runner ups. These will include those participating in Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen, and Youth Essays.

Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year. God Bless our Troops and God Bless America

### More Changes in Dues

I received a letter from Linda Fairbank, Department membership chair, regarding the ongoing saga of changes in National dues. Apparently, they will now honor the old price for continuous members through January 31st. However, the . We also have new membership applications and will attempt to have them at the next Post meeting. Until then, continue to use the old ones except when someone is signing up for a Life Membership. The new forms are an improvement on the old ones, but the only substantive change is in the Life Membership Installment Plan. You must now pay \$45 before being able to select Life Membership and make payments on the installment plan. Also, the new forms clarify that a member must have the Expeditionary Global War on Terrorism ribbon, not just the Global War on Terrorism ribbon. One final note—payments received after 1/31 with the improper dues submitted will be returned.

### Veterans Services

#### For the Visually Impaired

For those veterans who are visually impaired, they will be given first priority in the lending of audio and braille books, playback equipment, and other specialized materials. Information regarding these services and applications for free library services can be obtained by visiting the web site for Washington Talking Book and Braille Library at:

[www.wtbbl.org](http://www.wtbbl.org)

#### Service Dogs for Disabled Veterans

America's Vet Dogs is the premier provider of guide and service dogs for disabled veterans. Guide and service dogs will be placed with qualified veterans. Information regarding this service can be obtained by visiting their web site at:

[www.vetdogs.com](http://www.vetdogs.com)

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**The Last Word—Commander's Column by Fred Apgar**

On behalf of VFW Post #8870, I want to wish you all a New Year that is filled with good health and happiness for you as well as the members of your family. I am not too sure about other nations of the world, but it has been a custom in our great nation to make Resolutions for the New Year. Typically, we make promises to ourselves hoping to better ourselves and our lives. Typically as well, very few of us succeed in fulfilling our resolutions. Research indicates that only about 10% of us successfully implement the promised changes.

Several months ago, we shared with you the many opportunities in our Post in which you could become involved. In fact, we **need** your involvement. I was disappointed that not one member stepped forward to volunteer their time to assist. We are similar to other organizations inasmuch as a small core of our members are responsible for doing most of the work. Some among that core group have been serving our Post in a variety of roles for many years, and they are entitled to be able to lighten their loads. Along with our membership in VFW Post #8870, comes the responsibility to become involved.

It is my sincerest desire that one of the resolutions you make for the New Year will be to volunteer to serve your comrades by assuming a leadership role. It is also my desire that you become part of the solution by fulfilling your New Year's Resolution.

I look forward to hearing from you (206-940-7502 or [udorn7@gmail.com](mailto:udorn7@gmail.com)).

*The views expressed in this column are solely those of the Commander and do not represent those of VFW Post #8870, its membership, or VFW*