



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

VFW Post 8870 and Auxiliary
Edmonds, WA
www.vfw8870.org
Jim Traner,
Editor@vfw8870.org



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Upcoming Events Calendar

Please take time to review the calendar and if there are additions that are necessary, please contact the editor at editor@vfw8870.org

December 31st	Last day of membership for unpaid continuous members
January 6th	Staff Meeting—American Legion Post 66 Hall (117 6th Ave. S., Edmonds) 0900
January 9th	Post Meeting— American Legion Post 66 Hall—\$5 Lunch at 1130—Meeting at 1230—BRING YOUR RAFFLE \$.
January 10th	District 1 Meeting—Post 2100-12:00 Lunch 1:00PM Meeting

Veterans Plaza Update

The committee in charge of selecting the design for the new Veterans Park is nearing its decision on the winner of the final concept. Three of the committee members are from our Post, Jim Blossey, Ron Clyborne, and Jim Traner. Last summer the committee placed a request for design ideas on the internet using the Post’s website. The thought behind the posting was some local high school and college landscape architectural classes would submit a few suggestions. What happened was proposals were submitted from across the United States and one was even submitted from Mexico. Bottom-line, we received a number of excellent submissions which were narrowed down to two firms who were interviewed by the committee. Both designs are excellent and both feature a “contemplation park” in the grassy area at the top of the Plaza while the plaza itself is used to commemorate veterans from all branches of the service. The final selection will be announced in January with the next step being approval from the City Council. Once that is obtained, we will begin fund raising activities to pay for the Plaza. This is our project and our Plaza and we will all have to chip in to make it a reality.

Post to Recognize Teachers and Essay Winners

Just a heads up to mark your calendars to attend January’s Post meeting on the 9th. Every year we honor the winners of the Youth Essays, Patriot’s Pen, and Voice of Democracy as well as the Elementary, Middle School, and High School Teachers of the Year. We try and make this a special meeting for both students and teachers and your attendance will help us accomplish that goal.

Christmas Party Brings Cheer to Us and Gifts to Kids in Need

If you missed this year’s function, too bad. It meant more food for the 72 who did attend. This year’s dinner was held at the American Legion Hall which was dressed up festively for the function thanks to Terry Traner, Jay Able, and Karin Pederson. Paul Bustard brought the turkeys and Jim Traner brought a ham (Fred Apgar who usually donates the ham was sightseeing in Vietnam), while everyone else brought desserts, salads, mashed potatoes, gravy and all the fixings. At the end of the meal, I think only the bones were left. We had some special invitees this year which was nice to see, The Purple Heart Association and the DAV. While we planned on 50 attendees, 72 just made it that much better. In addition, we had our annual raffle and raised \$620 thanks to the staff officers all contributing a basket (or two or three). Chris Edwards did a great job as MC. As in past years there was a cost of attending. Everyone was asked to bring an unwrapped toy and food for the food bank. Following the function, Dennis and Karin Pederson, and Jim and Terry Traner took the toys to the Holly House who were setting up for a one day give away at the Meadowdale Middle School. Pam, Holly House’s director, thanked VFW and American Legion for our donations. Without seeing that operation, it is hard to describe the scope of it, but words don’t do it justice. There will be a number of underprivileged kids who are very grateful for our efforts on Christmas

Student Veterans



Ten Things You Should Know About Today's Student Veteran

Student veterans are a highly diverse group—as diverse as America itself.

Veterans do not see themselves as victims. Ever.

They can feel very alone on campus.

They are often unaware of their own mild traumatic brain injuries.

There are three things you should never say to a student veteran (but they still hear them every day). “These wars were atrocities and a waste of human life,” “I don’t get why you’re having so much trouble—you volunteered, right?” and worst of all, “Did you kill anyone?”

Female veterans suffer deeply, and almost always in silence.

They often want to go back to the war zone.

Combat trauma is an injury, not a mental illness.

To succeed, veterans need your understanding, compassion and respect.

Student veterans are one of America’s greatest untapped human resources.

Source: <http://www.nea.org/home/53407.htm>

Our Post has been an ardent supporter of Edmonds Community College veterans and their resource center since its inception. However, the ten items are good reminders that when we meet student veterans we reach out to them and invite them as equals and comrades. I can remember wandering the campus of the University of Washington without any resources dedicated to assist returning veterans. The transition was difficult at best. We applaud ECC Veteran Resource Center and continue to support them in their efforts to assist student veterans.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony

Each year Naval Station Everett has a ceremony commemorating Pearl Harbor Day. I have attended a number of these events, and I am always honored to be in the presence of members of the greatest generation that are Pearl Harbor veterans. I have never much liked the term “Pearl Harbor Survivor” because these guys aren’t just survivors, they are warriors in every sense of the word. In the past, Erv Schmidt from our Post attended these ceremonies but his passing left another empty chair in the row of honored guests. Erv manned an anti-aircraft gun and returned fire even though his ship had been sunk and was resting on the bottom, fortunately right side up. I never thought Erv was a just a “survivor”. Only a few of the “honored guests” chairs were occupied this year and I suspect that in the very near future, they will all be empty. In the meantime, the young sailors attending the event line up to have their pictures taken with the WWII veterans and it is a meaningful experience for both generations. The Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony happens every year. Next year it will be on a Monday, December 7th at 9:30AM. That should give each of you ample time to put it on your calendar and attend the ceremony. This is about giving respect to a small band of individuals who most likely will not be attending many more of these events.

You Are No Longer a Member of the VFW if.....

With the exception of a few of our newer members whose memberships run from the date of payment to a date one year henceforth, everyone else’s membership (with the exception of Life Members) expired on December 31st meaning you are no longer a member in good standing in the VFW if you haven’t paid (take a look at your card if you’re in doubt). Dues are \$35 a year which is less than a dime a day. Heck, you could probably crawl under the bleachers at the local football field and find enough change to cover your membership. We have an excellent Post that is active in the community, assisting veterans, promoting Democracy, and recognizing our outstanding teachers and students. Its probably worth more than a dime a day.

Wreaths Across America



Lorraine Zimmerman, President of the Navy Wives of America—Totem #277 and her associate, Chrystal, were our guest speakers for December's meeting. Lorraine is the local representative of Wreaths Across America, an organization which places wreaths on veterans graves. At Arlington, every one of the graves is decorated with a wreath while locally about 500 veterans graves at Washelli Cemetery receive a wreath. A ceremony commemorating the placement of wreaths is held at the same exact time across the world 1200 hours at Arlington and 0900 here locally. Our Post has supported Wreaths Across America with an annual donation and, hopefully, will do so in the future.



Bring Your Raffle Tickets and Money to January's Meeting

Please turn in your raffle stubs and money to our Quartermaster at January's meeting. Remember that the drawing is January 24th and we won't have another meeting until February.

What This Flag Symbolizes



This flag is hung in Legion Hall recognizing that we are a commemorative partner of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam war. I thought you may be interested in what each item on the flag symbolizes.

"The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration" is the official title given to the Department of Defense program in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. The traditional use of the color gold to signify a 50th Anniversary was chosen for the phrase "50th Anniversary" and symbolizes the specific mission of the Department of Defense program as outlined in the Congressional language "to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War." A representation of the Vietnam Service Medal rests below the inner rings. The red, white, and blue inner rings represent the flag of the United States of America and recognize all Americans, both military and civilian, who served or contributed to the Vietnam War effort. The outer black ring serves as a reminder of those who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action during the Vietnam War. The black ring surrounds the red, white, and blue rings to call attention to their sacrifices, the sacrifices of their families, and the defense of our nation's freedom. Within the blue ring are the words "Service, Valor and Sacrifice"; virtues demonstrated by our veterans during the Vietnam War. The gold-rimmed white star located between the words "Service" and "Valor" represents hope for the families of those veterans for which there has not been a full accounting. The blue-rimmed gold star located between the words "Valor" and "Sacrifice" represents the families of those veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the war. The blue star at the bottom of the inner blue ring represents the families of all veterans and symbolizes their support from home. At the bottom of the inner blue ring are six white stars, three on each side of the blue star. These six white stars symbolize the contributions and sacrifices made by the United States and its Allies, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Thailand. The center circle contains a map of Vietnam in black outline relief, signifying both the country and the Vietnamese veterans who stood with our veterans. The subdued outlines of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and surrounding waters represent the area of operation where U.S. Armed Forces served. The green laurel wreath signifies honor for all who served. The phrase "A Grateful Nation Thanks and Honors You" is the personal message to each veteran, civilian, family member, and all who served and sacrificed during the Vietnam War. The seal's blue background is the same color as the canton in the United States Flag.

Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars

We are conducting our annual membership drive for eligible Ladies to join the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Membership in the Ladies Auxiliary is limited to wives, widows, mothers, foster and stepmothers who have performed the duties of parent, grandmothers, daughters, granddaughters, foster and stepdaughters (who attained that status prior to age sixteen and for whom the duties of parent were performed), sisters, half-sisters, foster and stepsisters (who attained that status prior to age sixteen) of persons who were or are eligible for membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Members must be citizens of the United States, or United States Nationals, and not less than sixteen years old.

If you are eligible for membership, we would certainly like to have you join our organization. To establish eligibility, we need a copy of the Veteran's service discharge or separation certification (DD-214) or other papers such as travel orders, pay, etc.

Women eligible of membership in the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be eligible for dual membership in the Ladies Auxiliary.

For further information, contact 425-337-1559 and ask for information on the Ladies Auxiliary. If no one answers, be sure to leave your telephone number and name so we can respond to your call.

Commander's Column—Jim Blossey

As we begin a new year, it is tempting to look back at twelve extraordinary months, pat ourselves on the back, and rest on our laurels. Donation receipts from Buddy Poppies set records for both Memorial Day and Veterans Day, we had a very successful move to the American Legion Hall for all our meetings, and participation in our joint Christmas party was significantly greater than in prior years. Of course, there is much more, but let's look ahead instead. We have two significant opportunities before us in 2015—to increase participation from our large base of inactive members and to attract post-Vietnam era veterans to our post. By definition, the latter group is younger than most of us; generally they are still working. We need to address what it would take for them to want to join us, and whether our meeting calendar could be made to fit their work schedules. Only 40 or so registered members of our Post choose to attend our meetings and other events, yet our rolls comprise over 200. Our challenge is to find ways to persuade them to come to our meetings and events, perhaps even finding ways to make it easy for older ones to get here. Together these two opportunities have the potential to greatly enhance our active participation. On the other hand, they involve two largely disparate age groups with little in common, except for having served in military conflicts. In what ways can Post 8870 be made attractive to both groups? We have the brains and talent to address these challenges and the new year of 2015 might well be the time to do it. Think about them and—when asked—step up and participate in the discussion. Being active and accomplishing things underlies the key to happiness. At this time of year, when we wish others a Happy New Year, let's resolve to do something to make the year a happy one—for ourselves, our Post and for others.

Happy New Year, Comrades.

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**110 James St., Suite 105
Edmonds, WA 98020**

**Tele: 425-640-8650 Toll Free 1-800-444-
9115**

**robert.j.smith@ampf.com
Www.rjsmithandassociates.com
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