



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

VFW Post 8870
and Auxiliary
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Mike Reagan Honors Polish Soldiers



In a recent ceremony in Warsaw, Poland, government officials unveiled the portraits of 66 Polish Special Forces soldiers who had been killed in the Global War on Terrorism. The soldiers were killed while working with American Special Forces. Twenty two soldiers were killed in Iraq, and the remaining number died in Afghanistan. The portraits were drawn by Post member Mike Reagan, which he donated to the Polish government. The portrait presentation was the highlight of a ceremony that established a National Remembrance Day of Fallen Veterans. The framed portraits will remain on permanent display in the newly established Polish Veterans Museum.

In 2003, Mike established the Fallen Heroes Project, and since then, he has drawn more than 4400 portraits for the families who have lost loved ones in our nation's Global War on Terrorism. Mike's compassion has brought

untold comfort to the members of our nation's Gold Star families. Mike has also honored the memory of deceased members of our Post by presenting portraits of them to family members.

Remembering the Tet Offensive

48 Years ago, January 31, 1968

Read Jim Traner's account of his Tet memories on Page 5



New Member

Nicholas Brower



Nick is originally from Boise, ID and joined the Marines there in 2001. He served until 2005. He completed two tours with the 1st Force Service Support Group during the initial invasion of Iraq and later was stationed at the MEK Compound in Fallujah. He received two Meritorious Promotions to Lance Corporal and Corporal. Awards include the Good Conduct Medal and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (2). Nick works as a mechanic and plans to attend Seattle Maritime Academy, QMED program. He is an active hiker, climber,

Putting Relief Funds to Work

Post member Rose Gilliland travelled to Orting recently to present a check to Terry Nesbitt of the Washington Soldiers Home on behalf of the Post 8870 Veterans Relief Committee.



Military Bases No Longer Accepting IDs from Five States

from an article "Military Times"

State-issued driver's licenses and identification cards from Illinois, New Mexico, Missouri, **Washington** and Minnesota can no longer be used to obtain a visitor's pass because those cards don't comply with federal standards, officials said. DoD is expected to Issue Guidance 'Soon' for Blocked State IDs. (EDLs to Be Accepted.)

The changes impact visitors who are attempting to secure a visitor's pass to the bases using one of the non-compliant state ID cards, including WA State DL. Visitors who are accompanied in the vehicle by a Defense Department card holder can continue to access the installations using any state's driver's license, officials said.

Ed. Note: There is a bill in the Washington State Legislature (a revival of a 2015 Senate bill) which is intended to bring Washington into compliance with the Fed. 2005 "Real ID" act. In the meantime, it is likely that W.S. Enhanced DL will be accepted. It would probably be prudent to carry your passport when attempting to visit military installations until this is sorted out.

Edmonds Veterans Plaza Raffle!

To Help build a lasting tribute to Veterans; past, present & future, We will be raffling off two original, signed Seahawk posters by our own **Mike Reagan**.

1,000 tickets will be sold @ \$5.00 each to raise \$5,000 toward the Post contribution to Veterans Plaza construction costs.

Stay tuned for details of timing and ticket distribution.

Other fund raising activities continue and recent reports put the total just north of \$ 280,000.

Second Prize



Edmonds Center for the Arts & Operation Military Family Cares present:

An Interactive Workshop with AXIS Dance Company

Friday, February 5, 11:00 am-12:30 pm

FREE Admission with Pre-Registration



**This workshop is open to veterans, their families & friends,
and will be followed by a complimentary lunch.
All ages, levels and abilities welcome!**

Go behind-the-scenes with one of the world's most acclaimed and innovative ensembles of performers with and without disabilities! In connection with AXIS Dance Company's performance at Edmonds Center for the Arts (ECA), AXIS dancers will lead a free workshop and demonstration for veterans. The workshop was developed alongside a new piece the company will perform at ECA, called *to go again*. Choreographed by Joe Goode, *to go again* is based on stories from veterans at Palo Alto Veterans Hospital.

Participants will warm-up using exercises that AXIS employs to work with a physically-diverse group, and then explore some simple choreographic techniques. The workshop will conclude with an excerpted performance of *to go again*, followed by a Q&A. **Join dancers after the program for a lunch hosted by Operation Military Family Cares!**

The workshop is 90-minutes long and will be held at **American Legion Post 66**, 117 6th Ave S, Edmonds, WA. Space is limited to 30 participants. **RSVP to Gillian Jones, ECA Director of Programming, at 425.275.9483 or gillian@ec4arts.org.**





Vietnam: Remembering the 1968 Tet Offensive

by Past Commander Jim Traner

I know that the WWII veterans who were there have a vivid memory of the Battle of the Bulge. The Tet Offensive left similar memories for anyone who was “in country” on January 31, 1968. For those who are unfamiliar with the term, Tet is Vietnam’s New Year and there was to be a cease fire during the week of Tet. Instead, virtually the entire country was attacked by a well-coordinated offensive by the Vietcong. It’s been 48 years since the Tet Offensive but for those of us “in country” at that time, it doesn’t seem that long ago. My unit, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, was south of the Michelin Rubber Plantation in the north end of Iron Triangle at the outbreak of Tet Offensive. We had been in contact with enemy units on a fairly consistent basis in the preceding week with A Troop bearing the brunt of the casualties. You’d have thought that someone somewhere in the intelligence branch could have smelled a push coming since I doubt we were the only ones making contact with the enemy. When the Tet Offensive did hit, we were ordered to move down to protect Long Bien and Bien Hoa, a road trip that took 12 hours and covered about 80 miles. Armored vehicles in a column have a tendency to kick up a bit of dust, particularly in “dry season” and I always seemed to be at the end of the column. We were low on water and didn’t have time to resupply so it was a very hot, dusty, and thirsty trip. As I recall, on the way south we went through a small village in the dark and saw what I thought was a low rock wall in the road ahead. When I got alongside the “wall” it was bodies of what I believe were civilians assassinated by the VC earlier that day. Without going into any details, we got to our destination at II Field Force HQ, the area we were sent to protect, and accomplished that mission. Later we moved to either Bien Hoa or Long Bien and some of the areas we went through looked like pictures of cities bombed in WWII. Total devastation. In the long run, the Tet Offensive resulted in a total defeat of the Vietcong but also costing a lot of American lives as well.

On a side note, I was due to go on R&R when Tet broke out. Three of us from my unit ended up flying to Hong Kong on the first flight leaving Vietnam following Tet. When we arrived, an Army information officer came on board and warned us not to talk to the reporters on the tarmac. We had no idea what he was talking about but when we got off the airplane there was a gauntlet of reporters and television cameras waiting for us. Apparently the military had shut down access to Vietnam and these guys were chomping to get a story. We didn’t talk, but I think we should have. Walter Cronkite, the CBS News Anchor, was saying the war was lost, and we knew we had just kicked ass. But orders were orders.....