



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

VFW Post 8870
and Auxiliary
Edmonds, WA
www.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: Ruth Herren 425-337-1559)

Our next regular Post meeting will be on Wed. January 17, 2018

Annual Legion/VFW Joint Christmas Party Held



The Silver Bells Carolers brought a mood of heightened festivity.

To the caroler's left is a beautiful hand-made quilt donated by Dorothy Harkness, which was bought at auction by Buck Weaver.



Ron Clyborne displays raffle winnings.



Dinner which included turkey, ham and all the trimmings was enjoyed by a nearly full house.

Many thanks to Paul Bustard for providing turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy.

Raffle items donated by the post leadership brought over \$ 1,000 for the general fund. Members also donated food for the Edmonds Food Bank and new toys for disadvantaged children, long-standing traditions for this event.

In Memorium

VFW District 16 Commander Donn Dale passed way on the evening of Dec. 18, 2017

Services were held on January 6, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. at the Toutle Christian Church, 5067 Spirit Lake Hwy, Toutle, WA 98649. Condolences may be addressed to Doreen Dale at the family home: 323 Cornell Rd Toutle, WA 98649.

The family requests donations to The Puget Sound Honor Flight, Northwest Battle Buddies or VFW.

Post 8870 member Harley Crain. Just prior to going to press, we learned of his death last summer. We had sent birthday greetings to Harley to which his wife responded to inform us of his passing in August, 2017. Harley was a Life Member of Post 8870 and resided in Edmonds.

We will drape our charter in honor of our departed comrades at the January meeting.

Wreaths Across America

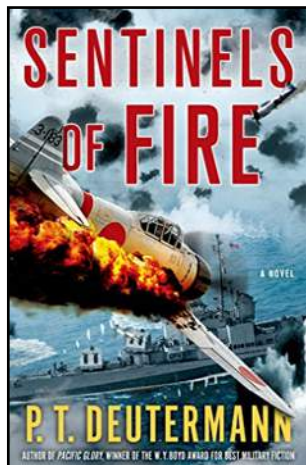
At more than 1,200 locations across America, including Seattle-area cemeteries, more than half a million wreaths were placed. VFW Post 8870 donated funds toward the purchase of wreaths for the Evergreen Washelli ceremony.



The rifle team from VFW Post 1040 in Lynnwood marches into the Wreaths Across America ceremony at Evergreen Washelli on Saturday Dec.16. It's the eighth annual ceremony held here. (Photo: Alan Berner/The Seattle Times)

From the Bookshelf

by Mike Denton



P.T. Deutermann's novel *Sentinels of Fire* tells the tale of a lone destroyer, part of the Allied invasion forces attacking the island of Okinawa and the Japanese home islands.

By the spring of 1945, the once mighty Japanese fleet has been virtually destroyed, leaving Japan open to invasion. The Japanese react by dispatching hundreds of suicide bombers against the Allied fleet surrounding Okinawa. By mid-May, the Allied fleet is losing a major ship a day to murderous swarms of kamikazes streaming out of Formosa and southern Japan. The radar picket line is the first defense and early warning against these hellish formations, but the Japanese direct special attention to these lone destroyers stationed north and west of Okinawa.

Author's Note:

"My father was a division commander (Commodore) of destroyers at Okinawa in 1945. I wish I could say that he told me all about it; he did not. He wouldn't speak of it. It was simply that bad.

Navy KIA exceeded those of the ground troops in the campaign. Considering the meat-grinder nature of the Okinawa land battle, with hundreds of thousand engaged, that is truly significant. Navy losses were driven by the ferocious Japanese kamikaze assault. I've long believed that the Okinawa campaign played a significant part in the decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan. The Japanese knew they could not hold Okinawa, but were determined to make the Americans bleed for it and perhaps think twice about invading the home islands. I think they succeeded in that."

P.T. Deutermann spent twenty-six years in military and government service, including command of the guided missile destroyer USS Tattall for a three-year tour of duty, which included combat operations off Lebanon.



VFW Sets the Record Straight on Decision Ready Claims:

On Dec. 14, VA sent veterans an email promising they would receive claim decisions in 30 days by working with organizations like the VFW through the Decision Ready Claims (DRC) process. To set the record straight, VFW National Veterans Service Director Ryan Gallucci put together a video explaining why the 30-day promise is misleading, and what the DRC process really means for veterans seeking to access their earned benefits. Gallucci also joined CBS Radio's Connecting Vets on Friday morning to spread the word on how this program really works and why veterans need to have a candid conversation with their accredited VFW Service Officer about whether or not DRC is right for them. Watch the video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=italW3Teodg&index=6&list=PLS17GMBRjUlainaY_E9NyGFCaKZ0dUnPg

Youth Essayists to be Feted at January Post meeting.

Voice of Democracy WINNER Olivia Olson; RUNNER-UP Lara Wahid

Olivia is once again also the District 1 winner and will represent Post 8870 and District 1 at the Department competition in Spokane later this month.

Patriot's Pen WINNER Mohuwa Wahid (No Patriot's Pen runner-up)

Youth Essay 5th grade WINNER Cole Harris; RUNNER-UP Nikolas Lopez

Youth Essay 4th grade WINNER Sara Ambachew; RUNNER-UP Brianna Reyes

We are very proud of all of the young people who entered and will feature photos and further details in the February newsletter.

Remains Of 132 American Marines Found on Tarawa

by Dan Doyle



Painting depicting the Tarawa landings.

This is one of those stories that are weighted down with melancholy. It has equal parts of sadness, joy, and closure in it. It began 72 years ago on the sandy beaches of the small South Pacific atoll of Tarawa. Over a period of only three days (November 20-23, 1943) the battle for that tiny atoll would become one of the bloodiest battles of WWII.

The small atoll of Tarawa had a garrison of 4,500 Japanese soldiers. They had dug in and heavily fortified the island against such an attack and would put up a fierce defense of it when the Marines began to land. 18,000 Marines and Navy Corpsmen were sent ashore to take the island on November 20th. As with so many military endeavors, things happened that were not prepared for.

It was low tide when the Navy landing craft approached the beach and, they became grounded on the reefs off shore. The Japanese raked them with heavy machine-gun fire. (My uncle was a Navy driver on one of those landing craft.) The Marines waded ashore through hundreds of yards of chest deep waters and withering machine-gun fire, to be met on the beach with brutal hand-to-hand combat.

In the course of those three days, 990 Marines and 30 Navy Corpsman and LCI drivers were killed in action, but the Marines were able to take the island. 520 were listed as MIA. A private group called History Flight, based out of Marathon, Florida, has used ground penetrating radar to find the remains of some 139 missing Marines. On July 26, 2015, History Flight brought 36 of them on the first leg of their return home to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The identification process continues under the auspices of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. When the identifications are completed, the Marine Corps will return the remains to their families. A military ceremony was held there to mark their return on Sunday, July 28th, 2015.

REST IN PEACE. YOU ARE FINALLY HOME.



No One Does More for Veterans: Counting the Ways

The following table of statistics from VFW National illustrates how the nearly 2 million members of VFW make a difference. There is much of which VFW members may be proud.

Your editor did a little arithmetic with these stats and the results gives Post 8870 good reason to be particularly proud of itself.

Dividing the \$12 million dollars raised through the “Buddy Poppy” program nationally by the total number of Posts (6,380) results in an average of \$ 1,880 per post for the year. You and I, Comrades, raised well over \$ 25,000 in 2017, or thirteen times the national average!

Well Done!



The VFW by the numbers

Nearly 1.7 million

Number of VFW and VFW Auxiliary members.

6,380

Number of VFW Posts worldwide.



Helping struggling military families

6,399

Number of grants provided to military families facing financial hardship through *VFW Unmet Needs* since 2004.

\$4,136,000

Amount of grants provided through *VFW Unmet Needs* covering housing for struggling military families since 2004.

2,702

Number of military families who received assistance with housing needs since 2004.



1899

Year that the VFW started to fight for veterans, service members and their families.



Honoring the fallen

9.3 million+

Number of VFW “Buddy”[™] Poppies distributed by the VFW last year.

\$12 million

Amount raised through the VFW “Buddy”[™] Poppy program for needy veterans.



Helping veterans get justice

116,791

Number of veterans VFW assisted in submitting new VA claims in 2016.

15,398

Number of VA claims filed by VFW Pre-Discharge offices in 2016.

24

Number of Pre-Discharge offices across the nation, including the military district of Washington, D.C., area.



Improving life in America

8.8 million

Number of volunteer hours contributed by VFW members annually.

\$52.1 million

Amount donated annually to local community service projects by VFW members.



Inspiring patriotism in young people

46,000+

Number of high school students who competed in the 2016–17 Voice of Democracy competition.

122,000+

Number of students who competed in the 2016–17 Patriot’s Pen competition.

Some Thought on the Ending of the Vietnam War

by Fred Apgar



While Visiting Vietnam & Laos, Fred made a friend of a former enemy.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Vietnam Peace Accords. The Accords were signed on 27 January 1973, but it would take two more agonizingly long years before the last Americans were evacuated from Saigon as the North Vietnamese were rolling through the streets of Saigon and breaking through the gates of the American embassy. There were, of course, many legacies of the Vietnam War, but the definitive history of the Vietnam War is yet to be written.

More than forty years later, our view of the war is only slightly clearer. We will probably never be able to identify our nation's self-interest in that conflict, nor will we ever be able to attach meaning to the overwhelming loss of blood and treasure. Unfortunately, those college professors, whose left-wing ideology crafted the anti-war sentiment at home, are using the same rhetoric to write the historical

perspective of the Vietnam War. Similarly, politicians and decision-makers, whose ineptitude prolonged hostilities, project themselves as objective observers.

My perspective is that the men and women in the enlisted ranks and the junior officers did everything that was asked of them. We followed the chain of command, adhered to military discipline, and committed ourselves to our assigned missions. We trusted our military and civilian leaders to provide us with a mission that was in our nation's best interest, for which we, in return, did our jobs and risked our lives.

The real failures were the Colonels and Generals. They permitted unrealistic competition between the military branches and placed daily statistics ahead of meaningful tactical and strategic operations and missions. By failing to challenge the military's civilian leadership and our country's political leaders, they let us down. It was their responsibility to protect us by demanding reasonable rules to prosecute the war and tasking assignments that adhered to logical and rational military doctrine. A foreign policy that sought to minimize the risk of antagonizing Russian and Chinese feelings gave us Rules of Engagement that clearly resulted in the unnecessary loss of American lives.

Since we were never truly committed to victory, we should have never risked defeat. That was the immorality of the Vietnam War. ▣

(VFW Post 8870 Past Commander Fred Apgar has moved away, but he stays in touch and shares his thoughts with us from time to time.)