



# The Veterans' Voice

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

Edmonds VFW Post 8870

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

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## Post Calendar

Staff Meeting: First Wed, 4:30 PM online via Zoom

Post Meetings: Third Wed., 6:00 PM online via Zoom

Post Auxiliary Meeting: (Questions: call or email Jo Boyett, 206-818-4212, joaboyett@cs.com)

**For the foreseeable future, Post meetings will be held online in the “Zoom” format.  
Look for invitations with the link from which to join the meeting in your email.**



This rather subdued “Happy New Year” graphic seems to reflect the mood going into 2021, with the pandemic ongoing and so many of our friends and family experiencing medical and financial challenges.

There isn't a lot to report from the holidays. We certainly hope everyone was able to enjoy a pleasant, Covid safe holiday season. We did, of course have our little Zoom party over cocktails, in lieu of our usual Post meeting and that proved a pleasant time

with a pretty fair turnout. Hopefully, we will be able to make up for it with a real bang up July 4th party after an honest to goodness downtown parade this summer.



## Christmas Toy Drive - Covid Style

The Christmas toy drive partnership between Edmonds VFW Post 8870 and Teri's Toybox in downtown Edmonds was a resounding success. Coordinated by Post Chaplain Dan Doyle, approximately \$2,500 worth of toys were purchased at the toy shop and donated — all of which were distributed to children of families in need.

In the past, the VFW has collected toys for distribution to children of families in need during its annual VFW/ Legion Christmas party. When that party was canceled this year due to COVID, Post Chaplain Doyle contacted Teri's Toybox owner Teri Soelter and arranged to place a box in the store marked for VFW's Toy drive. Store patrons enthusiastically purchased and donated, making it a win-win for kids in need and for this local business.



Chaplain Doyle with Teri Soelter, store owner

## Fred & Nancy Diedrich 75 Years Together *by Fred Apgar*



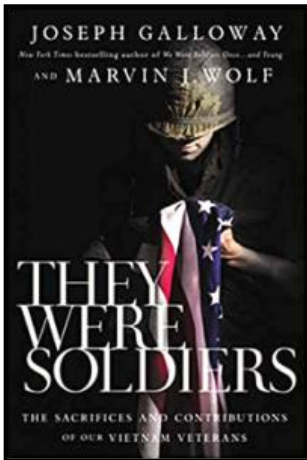
On October 22nd, 2020, Fred Diedrich, a WWII Army paratrooper and his British born wife, Nancy, celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary. Following his participation in the D-Day Invasion, Fred returned to England and met a young English girl named Nancy Stanley. Nancy and her family had experienced the war's fury first hand during the numerous German bombing raids that took place from 1940 and into early 1942. including a bomb exploding near their home, causing substantial damage. Fred and Nancy dated, and they took a liking to

each other. In September 1944, Fred and his unit were sent back into combat, participating in Operation Market Garden and then the Battle of the Bulge. By April 1945, the war in Europe was over, and Fred was serving in an Honor Guard unit in Berlin.

During that time Nancy had faithfully written letters to him. Since they had very little time together in England, theirs was a romance by mail. In one of his letters, Fred proposed marriage, and her immediate response was a resounding "yes". Since Fred had been scheduled for a furlough, the wedding was planned for October 22, 1945. However, Fred's furlough was cancelled, and he received orders to return to the United States.

Nancy knew that "doing nothing" was not an option so she wrote a letter to the Commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, Major General James Gavin, addressed to him "Somewhere in Europe". Shortly thereafter, Fred was summoned to General Gavin's Headquarters in Berlin. The General held up a letter and asked Fred, "Corporal Diedrich, do you know Nancy Stanley?". Fred, nervous facing a two star general, hesitated and finally replied, "Yes, Sir." The Commander then asked, "Do you want to marry her?" to which Fred replied in the affirmative. General Gavin told Fred he couldn't grant Fred a special furlough, but he would be sending Fred on a special errand to England. Fred soon found himself on General Gavin's plane on his way to England. Hitching a ride in a mail truck, Fred arrived at Nancy's home, and the wedding took place as scheduled. After a brief honeymoon, Fred returned to Berlin on General Gavin's plane. Within days, he was on a troop ship headed home leaving his new bride behind. Seven months later, on May 2, 1946, the newlyweds were reunited. Nancy had sailed to America on the Queen Mary with over 2000 other war brides and more than 900 babies. After a cross country train ride that deposited the English war brides and their babies in towns and cities all across America, Nancy, and two other brides, finally arrived on the west coast to join their husbands.

## From the Bookshelf More on “They were Soldiers” Chapter 8 - Mike Reagan

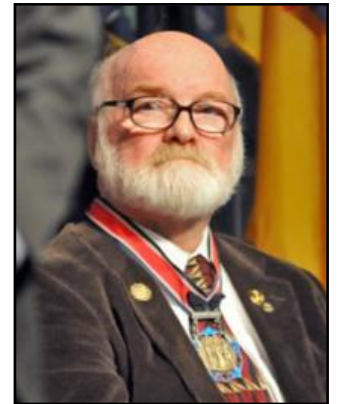


In the last issue of this newsletter, we published a brief review of Joseph Galloway’s recent book, “They Were Soldiers”, a follow-on to his earlier “They Were Soldiers Once - and Young” in which Galloway tracks his earlier subject’s post war lives, including their careers and their challenges in dealing with leaving the war in Vietnam. It is a well written book, some of which may be difficult reading for combat veterans, for that matter it isn’t easy to read period, but it tells a great story of some great Americans and is well worth your time.

The book is divided into four parts covering quasi related career paths of these veterans. Part One is called “Artists and Professionals” and **the reason for this follow-on article is Chapter 8, titled Michael Reagan...** yes, that Reagan, our very own Marine artist in residence.

Most of us in Post 8870 have heard Mike tell the story of how Vincent Santaniello died in his arms in Vietnam in 1968, the event that lives in him every day and is the inspiration for his ongoing Fallen Heroes Project, which, last we heard, had produced in the neighborhood of 7,000 portraits of those heroes for their loved ones. Galloway describes Mike’s return home from the war, the path he took to his long career at the University of Washington, and on into “retirement” and this second career that is his daily life and that has proven his salvation.

Read Mike’s story for yourself. (Oh, and the rest of them too) Makes us proud to call him friend and comrade.



## Members in the News

Norm Goldstein appears in Times Article.



We were pleasantly surprised to find Norm Goldstein (at right) appearing in a photo in the Seattle times sports section recently. The article reported on the passing of Gary Seefried, noted Seattle basketball coach, of Covid. The photo was taken at Basketball Legends Dinner attended by both men.

Norm is a Navy veteran of WWII and retired as Vice principal of Mountlake Terrace H.S. in 1980 after a long career teaching and coaching basketball, there and at Ballard H.S.

## Trivia - The Commander in Chief

*By Carl Kurfess*



A timely reminder following a period of discussion of the powers of the Presidency reminds us that the President of the United States, is also the Commander in Chief of all the Armed Forces. Article II, Section 2, Clause I of the Constitution, states: "...the President of the United States is commander in chief of the United States Armed Forces". The President possess the ultimate authority, but no "rank", maintaining civilian control of the military.

Starting with George Washington in 1789, a number of Presidents have had military experience, but this is not a requirement. As of 2016, no member of the U.S. Marine Corps or U.S. Coast Guard has yet been elected President. The most frequent military experience is Army/Army Reserve with 15 presidents, followed by State Militias at 9, Navy/Naval Reserve at 6 and the Continental Army with 2 presidents serving. Eight presidents served during World War II, while seven served in the military during the American Civil War. 16 presidents have served in the rank of O-6 or higher. Three, George Washington, Ulysses Grant, and Dwight Eisenhower, have served as Generals of the Army.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 codified the default operational chain of command, running from the President to the Secretary of Defense, and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commander. While the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff outranks all other military officers, he does not have operational command authority over the Armed Forces. However, the chairman does assist the President and the Secretary of Defense in the exercise of their command functions.

## Traner Bros Vietnam Christmas



Reflecting on Christmas Day 1968. Dave's unit was somewhat newly arrived in Vietnam while I had spent 16 months in country with most of that time in the field. I was what you'd call a seasoned trooper while I knew my brother was in for a steep learning curve as he was in a reserve unit. Today those reserve units are as good as any regular Army units but not so much in 1968. His unit was on the DMZ in I Corp while I was stationed in III Corp with the 11th Armored Cav in the lower 1/3 of Vietnam. I decided to see him for Christmas and got the necessary orders cut. Getting there was a challenge. A Huey ride to somewhere, buying a beer to some aircrew heading North and two days later I arrived after some interesting stops on the way. I got there Christmas morning in time for some of the best chow I'd had in Nam. Christmas dinner there was even better. That unit may have

been green but they had the best cooks in Nam. I damn near kidnapped one for our unit. My brother and I headed off to the beach after breakfast. Of course, the temp was probably approaching 100 by 10am, and his unit was stationed near the South China Sea with white sands and warm water. After swimming for a while, I was floating around (literally) when I heard my brother yelling for help. I looked around and saw him several hundred meters offshore with a GI who had ventured too far out and was in the process of drowning. I swam out and took over the life saving duties while he went in for help. He returned with another guy and an air mattress and the 4 of us made it to shore. It was a close call and looking back, we were both minutes from drowning.

*cont'd from page 4*

Thank goodness we had grown up swimming in rivers and were both strong swimmers. So what do you do for an encore? Well, you find some beer, get a case of M79 grenades, go back to the beach, drink the beer, toss the empties into the surf, and blow them up with the thumper. I think we paced our drinking with our grenades so it came out pretty close. Back to the chow line for a Christmas meal and packing my gear for a 5am departure back to Blackhorse Basecamp. I doubt many can match that Christmas day in 1968 which remains a vivid memory after all these years.

Jim Traner

## **News from Department of Washington**



To say "Time has flown by" would be a welcomed phrase for 2020. I don't think there is anyone that would say they're sad to see the end of this year. What is sad is how fast this command year is going. Not being able to travel much has really focused my efforts on upgrading both the Service Division and HQ. Lots of changes have taken place since installation; from our website to our Service Division restructure, we have been moving our Department into the 21st Century, finally. You'll notice on our website "real-time" reporting; "How to" links; as well as all the information you need from all our committee chairs. We enhanced HQ with FOUR new heating and air cooling systems and upgraded our internet service. Our Zoom account was not only purchased but due to an overwhelming amount of participants, we upgraded to an "unlimited" account. A great problem to have. Now, National is trying their best to support not only our Department but ALL Posts that are having financial "challenges."

Midwinter is still a "go" for now, but for those that don't want to travel, or feel uncomfortable around others, all of midwinter will be broadcast on Zoom. The midwinter banquet is not going to happen during midwinter. It will be rescheduled for Spring if we're able to hold it.

Our Department's 100th birthday is coming up, and for now, we plan on having a 20's ball! Our birthday is on May 12th so our gala is scheduled for the night of the 8th. Let's hope we can hold it!

That's where we've been, and where we're going. Let's hope 2021 allows us to get back to what we do as a VFW: taking care of our Veterans, their families, but more importantly each other! Please, stay healthy, stay safe, and have a great New Year!

### **Mid-Winter dates changed**

Mid-Winter has been postponed until February 19 & 20, 2021.

It is still going to be at the Hotel RL in Olympia. 360-943-4000

All reservations that have been made in our block have been shifted to those dates for your convenience.