

VFW *The Veterans' Voice*

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

December 2021-Vol. 19 No.12

Edmonds VFW Post 8870

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Post Calendar

Staff Meeting: First Wed., **4:30 PM American Legion Hall (or online via Zoom)**

Post Meetings: Third Wed., **6:00 PM American Legion Hall (or online via Zoom)**

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

**Post meetings are again being held in person at the
Edmonds American Legion Hall (or online via "Zoom")**

(Look for invitations with the link from which to join the meeting via Zoom in your email.)

Masks are optional for vaccinated members for in-person attendance, Light snacks will be provided

Next Post Meeting Wednesday January 19, 6:00 PM

Joint Legion VFW Holiday Party Revived



Our annual Christmas/New Year party with American Legion Post 66 was revived this week, (after being cancelled in 2020



due to COVID) without our usual turkey dinner, but with plenty of "pot luck" food provided by the members. We used the occasion to present checks from both Posts to Mike Reagan's Fallen Heroes Foundation and to Gary Walderman for Heroes



Mike Reagan



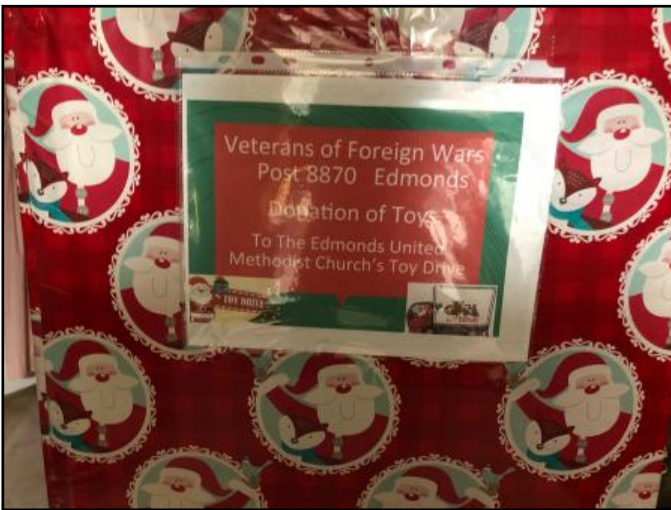
Gary Walderman

Cafe, our favorite local organizations benefitting veterans. Thirty some members and guests attended.

Veterans & Families Enjoying the Party



Toy Collection



The Post held its annual toy collection to support our local Food Bank's toy distribution program for families in need. Once again, we placed our collection box at Teri's Toys in downtown Edmonds, for which Chaplain Dan Doyle collected donations and delivered them to the food bank. (With some help from other members and spouses) Members of both posts brought toys

to the party on Dec. 15 as well, adding significantly to the totals.



Wreaths Across America



Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach of the Veterans Memorial Wreath Foundation, is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery,

as well as at more than 2,500 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states (locally including, among others Evergreen Washelli in north Seattle) at sea and abroad.

Wreaths Across America is a project of American Gold Star Mothers. In the photo above left, 8870 members Mike Reagan and Bob Little are shown among those braving the downpour on Saturday December 18, to lay wreaths on some 3,000 veterans' graves.



Reflections

(From the newsletter of Jim Traner's Vietnam unit)

When I travel to my local VA hospital for treatment, I see mostly aging Vietnam Veterans in the hallways, but increasingly, I see more recent veterans (male and female) that look almost out of place among the the overwhelming number of veterans of our war.

Our war puts us in a unique position. What we have been and continue going through, puts us in a position to better understand what our recent brothers and sisters (*and sons and daughters, ed.*) in arms have given and lost in the war on terrorism. We know what they face in trying to gain recognition and compensation for what they have given. We are all part of an unbroken chain of service to our country that extends back more than 250 years. The challenges of recent veterans are essentially the same challenges we faced.

So, the next time you encounter a more recent veteran, take the time to thank them for their service. (That's more than we got!). Let them know they are our brothers and sisters and engage them in conversation. Let them know that we understand better than most what they have been through and what they face now that they have come "back to the world". Tell them and show them that there is life and love after war.

K.H. Elliott. (11 ACR, 541st MI-)

80th National Pearl Harbor Remembrance

Memories of Erv Schmidt

by Fred Apgar



Eighty years ago, on December 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan declared war on the United States attacking the US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor. Ervin Schmidt, a highly decorated Naval veteran and member of the Post #8870 for over 70 years, enlisted in the Navy in August of 1940. Assigned to the battleship USS California, found himself in what was known as “battleship row” at Pearl Harbor, on that fateful day.

When the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, Erv was asleep in his bunk several levels below the main deck. When the first of two torpedoes struck the California, one of Erv’s bunk mates was killed instantly.

Dazed by the attack, Erv and several of his shipmates tried to make their way to their battle stations but were overcome by smoke and fumes on the second deck. They survived only because others carried them to the main

deck. After a second torpedo struck, the ship began to list and the Captain issued the order to abandon ship.

Erv chose to remain on the ship with three others, since they could not swim. They manned a 50 cal. anti-aircraft gun to fire at the attacking Japanese planes. Of the 1500 USS California crew, over 200 were killed in the attack.



USS Torsk, SS 423, as a museum ship in Baltimore, MD

depth charge attacks and a ramming by a Japanese light cruiser. On August 11 and then on August 13, 1945, while operating the Sea of Japan, the Torsk sank two Japanese Naval ships, which were the last two ships sunk by the US Navy in World War II. Erv held the distinction of serving in combat at the outset of WW II in the Pacific and during the last naval action of WW II; the only person to claim that distinction. He passed away one month after celebrating his 98th birthday, on February 10, 2014.

Three days after the attack, Erv was reassigned to a heavy cruiser, the USS Chicago. For the next year, the Chicago engaged the enemy in the Battles of Coral Sea and Solomon Islands. On January 29, 1943, the Chicago sustained severe battle damage and once again, Erv heard the command to abandon ship. Erv then volunteered for submarine duty, first serving as a radio and sonar operator on the USS Saury and later on the USS Torsk.

During his numerous patrols on the Saury and

Torsk, more than 20 Japanese ships were sunk, and Erv and his crewmates survived numerous



Torsk Radio/Sonar Shack

The Lost Battalion

More reflections by Jim Traner

The movie *The Lost Battalion* has been around for some years (Rick Schroder plays the Major), and I got interested in looking up some facts on it. Most are pointed out in the movie – 554 soldiers attack the Germans in the Meuse-Argonne offensive and 107 are killed, 63 missing, and 190 wounded in the 5 days before they were rescued. Their Commander, Major Whittlesey along with two others received the MOH. Here's where it gets a bit odd – Whittlesey acted as a pallbearer at the burial of the Unknown Soldier along with Sgt. York on November 1921. A few days later he booked passage on United Fruit Company ship going to Havana. The first night out of New York, he disappeared and was never seen again. He is presumed to have committed suicide by jumping overboard. A number of letters were found in his state room addressed to relatives and family and instructions to the Captain of the ship on dealing with the disposition of his baggage left in his stateroom. A sad story but losing all those men through no fault of his own was probably a heck of a burden to carry. Also, I wonder if participating in the Unknown Soldier ceremony triggered something. We will never know.



From the Commander's Desk



Greetings fellow Veterans,

I just wanted to say a few words in reflection on this past year. 2021 has been a challenging year. A once in a lifetime (hopefully) pandemic has continued making life more challenging. Looking back at our activities, we were unable to do anything for Memorial Day, but we were able to have a Fourth of July parade, (although without the barbecue). We were able to award Eagle Scout certificates in August, hand out poppies at a September farmers market booth. We had

Veterans present at the 9-11 Memorial in September. We were able to hand out poppies for Veterans Day at some stores in November, and had a Veterans Day event at our plaza, with coins presented. We had a Toy drive in partnership with Teri's Toybox in November and December. We are planning a Christmas get together in December with our yearly raffle, toy drive and food drive. We were able to donate to most of our Relief Fund charities this year, see minutes of our meetings for details.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers that gave their time and effort to help us with these activities. However, we have ample opportunities to continue to help our fellow Veterans and our community by continuing to volunteer for these and other events in 2022. We will have our Student Essay and Teacher of the year winners honored at our January meeting. Our poppy drive for Memorial Day and Veterans Day is looking good, plenty of time to pick your shift in advance.

Your Post continues to need your help. Help us to do the best we can. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.