

Christmas Social at Post 3063

by Harold Rodenberger



Approximately seventy members of our post and auxiliary along with their guests were treated to a sing-along, gift exchange, a visit from Santa and elf plus a delicious prime rib dinner at our December social.

The evening started with Lynette Russell playing piano, singing and leading the sing-along. Everyone enjoyed the Christmas music and we even had a few solo singers who enjoyed the spotlight while Lynette accompanied and encouraged.

Santa (Ann Leake) was her usual jolly self, passing out candy canes and HO, HO, HO's throughout the evening. She also officiated at the gifting for children and exchanges for adults.

Russ Seelig fit the part of an authentic elf with authentic elf ears as he called ticket numbers for the gift exchange.

Our caterer, Willie Williamson, served a delicious prime rib dinner and, as the old social notices said, "A good time was had by all."

Of course we don't have a Christmas party every month, but we do have a social night every month on the third Thursday with a catered dinner and an evening of social interaction among our members and guests. Except at Christmas we have a nominal charge of three dollars for members and five dollars for guests to defray part of the expenses of catering the dinner.

To become more involved in your post and auxiliary mark your calendar and plan to attend future socials.





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The Post Newsletter is published monthly. Submissions must be received by the editor five days before the last day of a month for inclusion in next month's issue. Contact Charles Anderson with questions about material at editor@vfwseattle.org

Post business meetings: First Thursday of each month at 1900. Social evenings with a catered dinner: Third Thursday each month at 1830. Doors open 1730 for both events.

2015-2016 Post Officers

Commander—Aaron Stoltz
Senior Vice-Commander—Nestor Tamayao
Junior Vice-Commander—Robert Richardson
Quartermaster—Harold Rodenberger
Adjutant—Pete Krawitz
Chaplain—Bill Griffith
Judge Advocate—John Hoglund
Surgeon—Justin Mamallo
Service Officer—John Hoglund
1-year Trustee—Gail Engler
2-year Trustee—Russ Seelig
3-year Trustee—James Williams

Quartermaster's Update



This past year was a good one for your VFW Post. After purging our rolls of members who have moved on to their reward we have stabilized our numbers and begun to grow in size. As of this writing we are at 139 members from a low earlier in the year of 121.

Members attending our business meetings routinely number in the twenties and our social nights have been well attended. Believe it or not, despite these increasing numbers there is room in our hall for more members to attend both events every month so how about a New Year's resolution to visit your VFW on a regular basis?

Finally, I'd like to share two vignettes from the past year. One member of the Ballard community saw a bronze grave marker in a local recycling facility, paid \$60 to rescue it and brought it by the post to see if we could find the proper owner. Another local citizen saw a large American flag in a dumpster, rescued it, paid to have it dry cleaned and brought it by the post so it could be restored to its proper use. In both cases I was impressed by the sincere feelings of the people involved in doing their part as citizens of this great country.

Commander's Letter



As 2015 comes to a close, our post faces a unique challenge. The encampment next door is an established reality and, as was predicted, there is no line around the block of potential renters beating our door down to use our hall for their special events.

The lack of rental income would devastate many other VFW posts around the country. However, sound financial decisions made by some of my predecessors and good timing on our real estate sale prior to the subprime mortgage meltdown of 2008 will allow us to weather the storm as we enter a new year.

To the credit of all of you, attendance at meetings and socials has held steady and we have been adding new members. Please continue to stay involved and not allow short sighted decisions by city officials to dissuade you from staying involved in this organization. When we advocated for a more appropriate location for "Murraysville," I repeatedly heard our critics accuse us of being "fearful." Apparently, the irony was lost on them that VFW stands for "Veterans of Foreign Wars." By definition, we do not scare easily, but courage alone does not pay bills. However, in true military fashion we will "improvise and overcome."

2015 was not only a year of challenges for the post but for our nation as well. Islamic Terrorism, rampant abroad, has now recently hit us here at home in a manner that even the deluded are having difficulty explaining away. Hopefully, 2016 will be a year of change in how America addresses the threats that many of our citizens have belatedly and only reluctantly been forced to acknowledge. As veterans, you understand the necessity of confronting evil and we are uniquely positioned to educate others regarding that need. While we face challenges, we know we have previously overcome greater ones through our history which gives me optimism for the year to come. May 2016 be kind to you all and to those you love and care about. I look forward to seeing all of you frequently in 2016.

Birthday Greetings*

Ray Brack
Peter Krawitz
Michael Lawrence

Steven Moody
Dwight Thomas

* Remember, you are entitled to a free dinner at the Post in your birthday month!

From the Editor: A new year brings a new look to the Post Newsletter. We will be publishing monthly to bring you more current information. This means more opportunities for members to share your stories and photos from service days. It's been said that everyone has a story to tell; why not share yours with your comrades at the Post?



Revisiting Post History

by Charles Anderson

As Post Historian, I have been reviewing archival material stored in various locations at the post and often coming across fascinating bits of history that shed light on how this post operated many years ago. For example, 55 years ago the annual installation of officers was an elaborate affair, attended by considerable numbers of people (approximately 250 in April 1960). For an occasional glimpse into the past, I'll include interesting bits from our history once in a while in this newsletter.

Except for the italicized text below, the following is taken verbatim with all its original abbreviations and formatting from a story in a local newspaper(1960).

Elected and appointed officers Ballard 3063, VFW, will be installed at a public joint ceremony of the Aux., in the Ballard VFW Hall, 2812 Market St., 8 PM, April 7.

Jack C. Hulslander, 2nd Dist. Cmdr., and Lora Waters, Natl. Aux. Council Member, will be installing officers. Roy S. Hulten will be emcee. *(Although the newspaper story stated "The color team of the U.S.S. Seattle All Navy Post Aux. will assist," this might have been the Color Team of the Ladies Auxiliary to All Navy Post 3469 VFW.)* Entertainments and refreshments after installation. Past Aux, Presidents of Ballard Post hostesses.

[There follows a long list officers including the standard ones we have now as well as a Historian, Legislative Officer, Color Bearers, and a Patriotic Instructor. Additional appointments to committees besides our current ones were Civilian Defense, Insurance, Hospital, Funeral Arrangements, Planning and Greeters]



All post officers, elected and appointed are requested to appear for the installation ceremony in full post uniform.

[Editor's note: This photo is from an original in a scrapbook and not linked by date to the story. However, the comrades certainly appear to be wearing a special uniform and our post was once known as the "Red Hat Post."]

An "historical outline" in handwriting is part of the scrapbook for 1960-1961. In part it reads "The aim of 1960-1961 administration has been to preserve the aims of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States stated in article 1—Objectives of the National Constitution and Bylaws. Mainly: Fraternal, Patriotic,

Historical and Educational. In any one of the above fields Post and Auxiliary well participated."

Activities: Begin with Installation of Officers on April 7, 1960. It is a pride of Ballard Post to always stage colorful and ritualistic ceremony of the officers' installation. It attracts a great number of veterans and guests not only from the V.F.W. but from other veterans' groups as well. It brought to this year's installation approximately 250 people. This is Fraternity! This is Community. There are many events that follow the installation. Post and Auxiliary must attend other Posts and Auxiliaries installations. Then comes May and with it Sale of Poppies, Loyalty Day, Arms Day, Memorial Day, etc.



Our VFW Members Helping the Community

by Harold Rodenberger

Sometimes people ask me, "What does the VFW do?" To answer, I decided to wrap some of the activities of November and December into one article showing the members of our post (with a few extra helpers) doing good in the community.

November 10 saw Clark Silliman presenting a talk to the North Hill Community Club in Normandy Park. He discussed the VFW from our National Headquarters down to our Post, explaining what all the levels do and what programs we have to support veterans.

Veteran's Day Activities

- At Catherine Blaine K-8 School in Magnolia, Comrades Engler, Griffith, Richardson and Rodenberger attended the Veterans Day assemblies on December 10 to share with the students their experiences in the military services.
- Members visited Evergreen-Washelli, Crown Hill and Lakeview Cemeteries to honor veterans.
- Gail Engler and Elizabeth Servey passed out Buddy Poppies at the Magnolia QFC.
- Auburn hosted their Annual Veterans Day parade with our members Chuck Murrell, Elizabeth Servey and Aaron Stoltz participating.
- Clark Silliman presented his VFW speech at the Ladies Circle at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Magnolia.
- Our members visited the VA Hospital where our post members Jesse Basher, Gail Engler, Jon Guncay, John Hoglund, Justin Mamallo and Elizabeth Servey, along with members of her scout group, visited with patients and handed out snacks and drinks.



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- On Thanksgiving Day Comrades Basher, Guncay, Mamallo, Servey and Stoltz from our post visited the VA Hospital again bringing cheer, conversation and snacks to the patients and staff.
- During this period several of our members visited our 95-year-old member, Herb Leake, in his new residence in a local retirement home.
- Also during November each year our post sponsors local young people who participate in the VFW Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen programs. This year our post sponsored Savannah Bertolli in VOD and Rebecca Semere in Patriot's Pen. We presented each of them a \$50 check for participating and Savannah placed third in our District 2 judging.

December 4-6 we donated the use of our kitchen to our adopted unit, HHC 81st ABCT, donated \$250 for gift cards for the junior enlisted families and helped celebrate at their Christmas Party on December 6th with elves and other helpers



Elf Russ Selig



Caterer Drew preparing dinner



On December 11 Comrades Engler and Servey helped new member John Shrewsbury celebrate his 99th birthday in a local retirement home. They presented John with an American Flag to display on his wall to remind him of his time in Europe during WWII. The next day, John visited the post where we presented him with a VFW cap. I asked if he had any advice for the younger generations. He said, "Love one another. If everyone loved each other we wouldn't have all the wars we do." Then I asked his recipe for such a long and healthy life. He replied, "I drank good booze and still have a little every Thursday night at happy hour in the retirement home." I'm not sure about applying that recipe to everyone but it seems to have worked for John. Congratulations, John, on your 99th. Come visit us on your 100th and we'll have a special birthday celebration.

Our new member, 99-year-old John Shrewsbury



On December 11 Comrades Griffith (our Chaplain) and Mamallo (Surgeon) participated in a wreath laying ceremony at Lakeview Cemetery as part of the nationwide wreath laying ceremonies sponsored by Wreaths Across America when, at 1200 EST, wreaths are placed on all the graves at Arlington National Cemetery and at the same time across America (0900 PST) wreaths are placed on veterans' graves in local cemeteries.



Justin Mamallo and Bill Griffith (flag bearers) and others laying wreaths

On December 17 we had our annual Christmas dinner at the post with a visit from Santa, gifts for the children and on Christmas Day and again on New Year's Day members of our post visited patients at the VA Hospital, as we make it a practice to schedule those visits for all major holidays. If you would like to accompany the team that visits the Hospital or any of our veterans' visitations, for that matter, please contact the Post Quartermaster (206-972-2135) for details.

Throughout this time period, as they do all year, other members of the post continued their work. Our Service Officer, John Hoglund, made phone calls and visits to our members, especially the elderly; our Publicity Team, Charles Anderson (Newsletter Editor), Bob Kettle (Facebook Manager) and James Williams (Webmaster) worked their technical magic with publicity for our post; our Commander, Aaron Stoltz, and the other line officers, Senior Vice Commander Nestor Tamayao, Junior Vice Commander Rich Richardson, Chaplain Bill Griffith and Officer of the Day Al Simpson conducted the meetings and many of our members made spontaneous visits to nursing homes, flew the American Flag on their homes and encouraged patriotism in many ways.

If you are interested in joining us in these activities, come to our meetings, talk to the officers and get involved so you can become an active member in a great VFW Post doing many things to serve the community and our veterans.



Alyson Teeter recently joined our post. She gains her eligibility from service in Korea, earning the Korean Defense Service medal and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. She is a member of the National Guard and lives in the Fremont area of Seattle.

Aly comes to us with impressive qualifications in the communications and public administration fields having been the Public Affairs Officer for USAF commands in Hampton, VA, and Osan, Korea; Chief of Public Affairs and IG, 129th Rescue Wing and as a Constituent Services Representative to a US Senator. She has broad expertise in website and social media management along with advanced technical writing skills. We hope to have Aly transition into a position as our webmaster giving James Williams, our webmaster for the past seven years, some well-earned rest and allowing him to move on into other areas of service in the VFW world, perhaps at the state and national levels.

Welcome to our post, Aly. We are glad to have you with us.



Life Aboard an LST

By Bill Hoeller



In the early 60s I served aboard the USS Lorain County (LST-1177), home ported in Little Creek, VA. At 442' in length, Lorain County was in the last class of LSTs built with bow doors. We could shoehorn about 500 Marines and their personal gear into troop berthing compartments with 5-high canvas-bottomed bunks, jam the tank deck full of LVTs and fill the truck deck with all manner of wheeled and tracked stuff including the M-50 "Ontos."

We ate a lot of beans and rice when Marines were aboard. I'm sure cooks were under orders during those times to, "Feed everyone just enough for an adequate bowel movement, and do it cheaply ... period!" "Cheaply" was the operative word.

I slept in a forward compartment very close to a door leading to the forward end of the tank deck. When Marines were aboard for exercises they kept pallets of C-rations on the tank deck next to the door. Chow became so bad a few of us would sneak onto the tank deck at night, take a few cases of C-rations and eat those for a few days during a mid-watch. Marines caught on to our midnight raids and stationed a guard on their chow.

During practice amphibious landings we "attacked" an Island in the Caribbean many times, and shot the hell out of coconut crabs at the gunnery range. We carried four causeway sections, two on each side, and used them end-to-end as a floating pier in the event the water close to the beach was too shallow to actually get the bow on the beach.

We had three open 3"/50 twin gun mounts, two forward (one on each bow) and one aft behind the bridge. The first time I heard the one behind the bridge fire I was on the bridge and wasn't expecting it, and damned-near crapped when the thing went off.

All LSTs have a stern anchor that gets dropped at some point prior to actually beaching. The purpose of the stern anchor is to keep from broaching in heavy seas and not to pull the LST back off the beach. Backing the engines does that.

We lost the stern anchor and wire rope anchor line once when on the way to the beach we dropped the anchor too soon. Pulled the wire completely off the drum. It was the only time I saw the captain go berserk. We got it back a few weeks later.



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We once checked out a beach just inside Guantanamo Bay that we hoped would be suitable for back loading people in the event of an emergency. We headed for the beach, dropped the stern anchor, paid out the anchor wire, ran the bow ashore, opened the bow doors, dropped the ramp, said, "This looks good," raised the ramp, closed the doors, and *attempted* to back off. We were stuck in the mud for over a day until tugs could pull us off. "Scratch that beach off the list."

In 1962 the country was deep into the Cold War. On October 22, 1962, we were alongside a pier in Little Creek when we heard that all liberty had been cancelled, and that crews in the Norfolk area were being recalled to their ships. We suspected our normal routine of going to sea, landing the Marines without killing them, and drinking coffee would no longer apply. That evening I remember watching President Kennedy speak on television about the Cuban crisis.



In the middle of the night we got underway and went alongside an ammunition barge moored in Hampton Roads. We loaded ammunition all night long for the Marines and for our three gun mounts, and sailed the next day to Morehead City, NC. We spent the better part of a day loading Camp Lejeune Marines and their equipment.

Leaving Moorhead City we sailed for Cuba becoming part of a Navy Amphibious Squadron carrying a Marine Battalion Landing Team.

I remember the Marines on board were a pretty serious bunch, and their demeanor rubbed off on us. The ship's crew continually exercised at General Quarters while we prepared to "land the landing force." When not at general quarters the Marines would come out of their berthing compartments, exercise like hell, hang around for a while, and go back down below. It was brutal in those berthing compartments, particularly in the warm waters of the Caribbean.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis passed we continued to steam off Cuba until early December, when we returned to Moorhead City to offload the Marines and then back to Little Creek for our favorite watering holes in Virginia Beach. The events that took place during those couple of weeks in October and early November 1962 were tense, and the country got lucky.

Women Veterans: This week, four state commanders who are women veterans – one from each of the VFW's four conferences –traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with VA and Department of Labor leadership and congressional staff to discuss ways the federal government is addressing the needs of women veterans. The group is tasked by Commander-in-Chief John Biedrzycki to identify barriers that are unique to women veterans when they access their earned health care and benefits. Based on these meetings, and the group's input, National Legislative Service will launch a survey in the coming weeks to gather direct feedback from women veterans, which will assist in developing the VFW priority goals necessary to eliminate any existing barriers. [*VFW Action Corps Weekly*, December 11, 2015]