

January 2024

6785 NEWS



VFW Post 6785 Newsletter

Post 6785

Sign Up for Events and Read Post Documents!

Visit our website <https://vfwpost6785.org/>

To sign up for upcoming events, read post documents.



Post Commander

Walt Tanimoto

Greetings 6785 and Happy New Year!

The focus for 2024 is on recruiting. We are close to attaining 100% membership but need that extra boost from everyone to attain and maintain a vital post membership.

Post elections are also coming up in a few months and I am looking for our members to volunteer for leadership positions and committee chairs/co-chairs.

2024 is the year of the dragon; personality traits of people born in the year of the dragon are: charismatic, intelligent, confident, and powerful. They are naturally lucky and gifted in everything that they do, and tend to do it to the best of their ability holding high standards.

The Year of the Dragon, will be a favorable time for change, growth, and progress, as the combination of the dragon's dynamic energy and the grounding and stabilizing influence of the wood element will inspire imagination, leadership, and new ideas.

I look forward to 2024 its challenges, rewards, and Comradeship.

Go For Broke!

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Join VFW Post 6785 and volunteer working with the community and doing more for veterans!



Jr Vice Commander

Rick West

The Essay competition is over for 2023 and our post award ceremony will be held on 13 January 2024.

The Post had: 2 – Voice of Democracy, 34 Patriots Pen (1 second place winner at District), 30 Youth Essay entries. (2 second and third place winners at District).



Quartermaster & Surgeon

Rich Klug

In my first year as Quartermaster, I was fortunate to have received expert training from our former QM, RC Sample. I have some big shoes to fill, but everyone is patient and I believe we are moving along with few hurdles. All issues and obligations have been met on or before the deadlines. This can be a challenging position, but I am really enjoying it and have learned a great deal.

Surgeon: I had met with the Hospital staff and monthly bingo was set to start in November 2023. Unfortunately, the evil COVID monster raised its ugly head again with an increase of infections at the hospital. This resulted in a shut down and consequently another delay in the start of bingo and other on-site activities until January 24. More VA bingo information to follow.

We can still provide items of need or diversion to our veterans but we will not be able to be there in person. To that end, we are working to obtain items suggested by the staff at Voluntary services.

I would like to restate my request that any of our members who involve themselves with a Vet, whether transporting them to the hospital or a “wellness call”, or a visit, please make sure to report this to the post Surgeon so it can be logged as community service. Along with that, your time and mileage (if applicable) is important.

That’s about all for now. Remember our Vets, they could use some “love”, recognition, and acknowledgement.

Please do your part and contact a veteran by card or call to let them know they are not forgotten.

Adopt a Road Clean-up

TJ Williams

12 noon on January 12th is a fun opportunity to volunteer and get to know some of your fellow Post members.

We have adopted a very nice stretch of road right off of one of the three main entrances to Kent, near the 84th Street exit. Our Post will be picking up litter 4 times a year. We will be furnished grabbers and gloves, so there is not so much bending down and we keep our hands clean. Large heavy duty trash bags will be provided by the City of Kent.

We will meet at Commander Craigs Home on 93rd South (21920 93rd Ave S Kent, WA 98031) at 12 Noon. There is plenty of parking with backup parking on 92nd Street, and it is a good area where your car will be secure. We will provide a shuttle for you and your equipment to the start of your pick-up route and pick you up at the end to deliver you back to your parked car. Your whole commitment is probably less than two hours. Our stretch of clean roadway is protected with sidewalk on one side and a large paved area on the other side for safety. The route starts at the bridge over Harrison Creek on 218th and follows 218 West to the turn south where it becomes 88th Ave. Hope to see you there, sign up on line or call me 206 769 8585



Color Guard

Alan B'Hymer

Community Parades

Our Post participates in several Community Parades throughout the year. Here are a couple we marched in during the last couple months.

Auburn Veterans Day Parade was conducted on November 11, 2023. We had a good contingent of members march in this event. This was the 58th year of the parade. The parade's purpose is to honor our country's Veterans and active military personnel. There were over 200 units and about 6,000 participants. Our Post was parade unit number 51.

The Kent Winterfest Parade was held on Saturday December 2, 2023. Our Post Color Guard has led this Parade since its inception. They must like us. Immediately upon the parade's completion, the parade organizer verbally graded us with a loud "A+". We were then asked if we would agree to lead next year's parade to be held on December 7, 2024. We agreed. So... please mark your calendar and consider joining in for next year's event.





Honor Guard

Scott Eliason

The Post is always on the lookout for new recruits to the Post Honor Guard. Most uniform items are provided, including hats, jackets, shirts, and identifying pins. We are currently funding all new trousers in a uniform shade of gray. The Honor Guard is currently providing military honors in the afternoons on the 1st and 2nd Thursday of each month at Tahoma National Cemetery. On request, we also provide services at private cemeteries for veterans and their families. Any member of the post who is interested in joining should call the Honor Guard Chair, Scott Eliason at 206-310-4157 or e-mail at sreliason@msn.com. Training is provided on the M-1 Garand rifle and the procedures and rituals we follow to give our deceased veterans a dignified and respectful farewell.

Included are some recent photos from services held during the fourth Quarters this year.





Color Guard

Alan B'Hymer

Community Collaboration

Our Post has often worked with other Civic minded groups and Municipalities to further the recognition of Veterans and their contributions to society. A recent example is the Interurban Trail War Memorials in nearby Pacific, Washington.

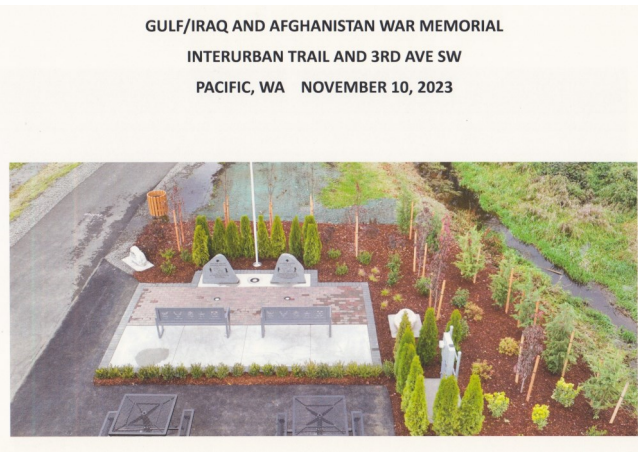
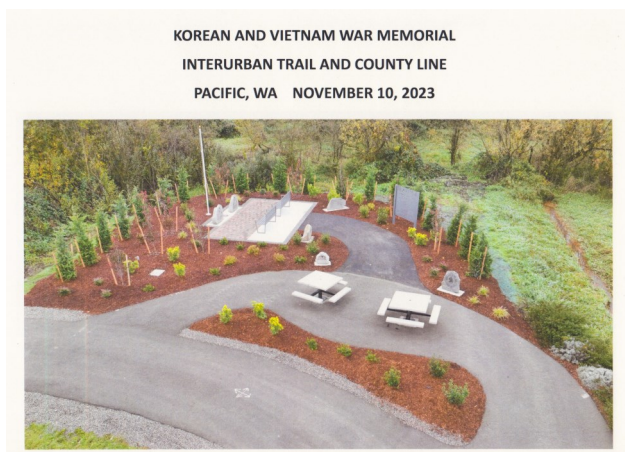
During our Kent Cornucopia Days Celebration this past Summer of 2023 several of our Post Members staffing the Post Booth were approached by some friends including Leanne Guier, the Mayor Pacific and Pete Lewis, previously the Mayor of Auburn. A few years earlier, we had worked with Pete to establish the Vietnam War Memorial at Les Grove Park in Auburn. They asked if we would be interested in working on the idea of placing War Memorials along the Interurban Trail.

The idea sounded intriguing, and we agreed. We contacted Auburn and Federal Way VFW Posts and got them to help. Together we spent the next several months working together developing plans, selling pavers to help with funding and establishing Ceremony Protocols.

On November 10, 2023, the Three VFW Post's members with the several groups involved, along with Press and Dignitaries dedicated the three memorial sites and raised the American Flag at each. Here are some photos - Enjoy!



WWI AND WWII WAR MEMORIAL
INTERURBAN TRAIL AND ROY ROAD SW
PACIFIC, WA NOVEMBER 10, 2023



KOREAN AND VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL
INTERURBAN TRAIL AND COUNTY LINE
PACIFIC, WA NOVEMBER 10, 2023

GULF/IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WAR MEMORIAL
INTERURBAN TRAIL AND 3RD AVE SW
PACIFIC, WA NOVEMBER 10, 2023





Service Officer
Randy Clawson

In the last few months of 2023, I was called on to help three Veterans with VA disability claims. The experience gives me the opportunity to discuss a few things that may be very important to Veterans, especially those in their sixties or older. The Veterans I helped were both in their 90s, and though they had received VA benefits such as health care and educational help, they had never considered seeking the VA compensation benefits for injuries or illness received during their military service. In my years as a Washington State VFW Service Officer, I have met several Veterans who simply never realized such benefits were possible, and they had never thought of asking. All you veterans who are reading this, Disability benefits are possible for you. Please ask about this, to your Post service officer, or the accredited service officers of your VFW.

The three veterans I helped were guided to me by employees of an assisted living facility to which they were applying for residence. These Veterans were being helped by their adult daughters and families with many of their activities of daily living, and they were there to help discuss their Veteran experience with me. They helped me ask their Veteran about their military service – what branch of service, what years were they in, what part of the world they served in, and did they get injured or sick at all during their enlistments, and more. The daughters filled out the actual paper forms I had brought and the Veteran's signed them, and then I put them in the mail to the VFW Office I work with in downtown Seattle so they could be reviewed by VFW service officers who are accredited to a higher level of responsibility than I am. That VFW office then forwarded the claim forms to the VA itself.

When any Veteran wishes to apply for VA disability benefits the best advice is to work with a Veterans Service Officer for help with the forms. I naturally recommend VFW service officers, but there may be valid reasons for choosing a service officer from another organization, like the American Legion, or the Fleet Reserve Association, or DAV. Any of them have had the training to do good service to the Veteran. Check on the internet – or have your daughter or son check for you - to find the Service Organization office nearest you. The two important points here are:

1. Do NOT try to fill out the forms yourself. For the best chance of getting the claim approved, get help from an organization that deals with these things daily. The forms do NOT contain sneaky tricks that only the initiated know about, and there is no required wording or phrasing that the VA looks for. The experienced service officer simply knows what information is needed by the VA to find the medical or service information that is needed to support your claim.
2. You have every right to answer a TV advertisement from an attorney, and to turn to that law firm for help with your claim. The difference is that the Veteran Service Organization will do this service for you at no charge, it is part of the organization's legal charter. Any law firm is going to charge you for their services.

When a Veteran is at the point in his or her life where they are looking for an assisted living facilities, they often face a situation where their income is not enough to pay the bill altogether, but it is too high to allow them to receive state assistance. In those very, very common cases the assisted living center often tells them about a VA benefit called Aid and Assistance, and that is usually when they hear for the first time about VA disability benefits at all. Again, talk to a Veterans Service Officer.

Aid and Attendance is a VA benefit that is different from “regular” disability. It does not stand alone. It is granted if the Veteran meets the qualifications, AND if the veteran is already receiving or is applying at the same time for other VA disability benefits or a VA pension.

Again, talk to a Veterans Service Officer.





USO Chairman

Ken "Pepsi" Przepiora

We at the SeaTac Airport USO are ever so grateful for the companies, organizations, volunteers and individuals that have donated so much to help keep our doors open to the 74,500 active military and families that passed through in 2023 alone. Organizations like our own VFW Post 6785 which donated a \$2000.00 check this year.

Busy Volunteers not only make sure that everyone is fed and comfortable but, hustle keeping busy stacking the 14,000 cans of soda, cooking 4.3 miles of Hotdogs, brewing the 23,400 cups of coffee, and making sandwiches two loaves at a time. They have also handled 3.6 million pounds of luggage! (Just as a side note, the 4.3 miles of hot dogs were cooked on the same hot dog machine that our very own Post 6785 donated 13 years ago!)

On Thanksgiving Day many of our military guests are unable to continue to their assigned duty stations and are our guests for the day. Volunteers made them feel at home with a complete turkey dinner topped off with apple and pumpkin pie. Ninety-four dinners were served.

Congratulations go out to a new USO volunteer, Rick West. He is our 4th volunteer from 6785. There is still much need for more volunteers. We are hoping to be opened like we were before the Pandemic serving our military family 24/7.

The USO is a safe haven for our military family. It is a place where they can relax, catch up on sleep, and contact loved ones via computer or phone. God willing, our doors will remain open with donations and people willing to give a few hours of their time.



Thanksgiving Food to Soldiers at JBLM Ft Lewis

VFW Post 6785 Teamed up with a local church in Kent to provide Thanksgiving meals to active service members' families at Joint Base Lewis McChord - Ft Lewis.

Using post relief funds 6785 donated \$500.00 to St John the Baptist Church to help raise funds to purchase Thanksgiving meals for soldiers families in need. Turkeys, stuffing, cranberry, all the fixing to make a Thanksgiving meal!

This effort was led by Post Jr Vice Commander Rick West.



Contact Information Change?

VFW Post 6785

Email is our primary means to communicate with you. Please send mailing, phone, and email address changes to the Post Adjutant at:

vfwpost6785@yahoo.com

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Christmas at the Renton Veterans Center

VFW Post 6785 sending Christmas cheers at the Renton Veterans Center.

On 22 December 2023, members of VFW Post 6785 and Auxiliary delivered toys for the children and a donation to help with veteran's activities housed in this facility.

The Renton Veterans Center (RVC) provides permanent and transitional housing for Veterans, including singles, couples, and families.

With 59 units of permanent housing for Veteran individuals and families, the RVC offers a variety of Veteran-specific services. Reading groups and art classes for children in the youth center engage young residents, and case management services help adults find the support they need. The program is open to homeless veterans or homeless Veterans with families, earning between zero to 60% Area Median Income.

VFW Post 6785 thanks VFW life member Kenneth A Przepiora or "Pepsi" as we call him, and Lorraine Przepiora VFW Auxiliary member at large for coordinating this year's RVC efforts.

Happy Holidays!



VFW Post 6785 Veterans Day Visits to Local Schools

Top Photo: VFW Post 6785 thanks Post Service Officer Randy Clawson for taking the time to visit and talk with students and teacher at Evergreen Middle School during their Veterans Day assembly.

Bottom Photo: Members of 6785 were invited to talk to students and parents about Veterans. 6785 also took the opportunity to thank the student's parents who served and presented them with a US Flag, poppy, and lapel pin.

As combat veterans, we play an important role in educating our nation's youth about the principles and ideals upon which America was founded. VFW members regularly provide students with rare insight into the great sacrifices our service members make to maintain freedom for all of us.



VFW Post 6785 Information and Recruiting Booth

VFW Post 6785 members recently manned a VFW information and recruiting booth at the Fred Myers in Covington, Washington.

The VFW recruiting and information booth gives us the opportunity to meet with the public and veterans to answer questions about veteran's initiatives, VA benefits, and how to become a member!

This event is also one of our fundraising activities to help us maintain post operations and serve veterans.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is the nation's largest and oldest major war veterans organization. Founded in 1899, the congressionally chartered VFW is comprised entirely of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. With more than 1.4 million VFW and Auxiliary members located in nearly 6,000 Posts worldwide, the nonprofit veterans service organization is proud to proclaim "NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS" than the VFW, which is dedicated to veterans' service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs.



Puget Sound Honor Flight

VFW Post 6785 out of Kent, Washington teamed up with the USO Northwest, VFW Auxiliary Volunteers, volunteers from several organizations, and Puget Sound Honor Flight to welcome home veterans from October's honor flight.

Volunteers included several members from VFW Posts, VFW Auxiliary, American Legion Riders, Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution, the Bag Pipers, Active/Guard/Reserve service members, and several other individuals volunteering from various organizations.

VFW Auxiliary members and quilting organizations Sew N Sew and River City Strippers Quilt Group out of Cathlamet, Washington for made wonderful patriotic quilts and knit hats which brought smiles to returning honor flight veterans.

Puget Sound Honor Flight Mission 34 is also the 10th anniversary of Puget Sound Honor Flight at Seatac International Airport.

Mission 34 was VFW life member Jim Traner's last mission. Jim served in the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment during the Vietnam War, and joined VFW Post 8870 out of Edmonds, Washington. Over the years Jim volunteered in many positions of responsibility from the Post to the Department. Jim recently passed away, but he was able to complete Mission 34 of honor flight.

Last, thank you Alaska Airlines for your hospitality and support to Puget Sound Honor Flight and to veterans!





Jr Vice Commander

Rick West

Duty At Tahoma National Cemetery

I've been volunteering at Tahoma National Cemetery for about five years. Because it's a national cemetery the government provides military funeral services for the families of deceased veterans if requested. I'm one of the honor guards who assist at the cemetery. The Army issues old M-1 rifles, fitted with blank adapters to provide a three-volley salute to the deceased veteran during the service. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 6785, provides these services twice monthly. On other days of the month different organizations such as the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans or other service organizations perform the military honors at the cemetery.

Over the years I've noticed each veteran's service takes on a distinctive characteristic depending upon the attendees. Some services are large with over sixty or seventy attendees. Others may be smaller with only family members. In some services the attendees wear their Sunday-best suites. Other services are more casual with the younger folks wearing jeans or tee shirts and some of the older members wear hats with tractor logos on the front. Some have singing while others are somber and quiet. Some bring musical instruments such as bagpipes, guitars, and violins. In others the only music is the lonely echo from the bugler playing taps. In some cases, a minister or a priest may say a few words over the deceased veteran. In other cases, a member of one of the service organizations will say a short eulogy.

Yet, the services that mean the most to me are not the large events with music and speeches. The services that I care about are the small events with only one or two attendees sitting alone in the shelter. They typically sit close, touching as if to find warmth and comfort in each other. These are the saddest services for me. There are no bagpipes or other instruments. No ministers attend these services, nor is there anyone to say a few comforting words to the survivors. There are no extended family members, no former co-workers, no neighbors, just the surviving widow and perhaps her daughter saying goodbye to the deceased veteran. It's at these times that I stand up as straight as I can and do my best to look military. If possible, I always go to the attendees and offer my heartfelt condolences afterwards.

These small, lonely services are why I volunteer at Tahoma. They may only have themselves to say goodbye to someone they loved and cared for, yet they won't be alone. We, by being there, show respect and appreciation for the deceased veteran's service. We may only be able to provide a small bit of comfort, but we are there and in a time of sadness for the survivors. This is the VFW at its finest providing support to veterans and their families when most needed.

Unfortunately, as the number of veteran funerals increases, many veteran service organizations are having challenges getting members to volunteer for these services. In some cases, the service organizations are using non-members to fill up the ranks of honor guard. In other cases, the organizations are ceasing their support to the national cemetery all together. The United States has a long tradition of showing respect and honor to her veterans as they pass from history. It would be wrong for this custom to cease. Yet without the support of service organizations such our post it will be harder to fulfill these obligations. We are always looking for volunteers, if you'd like to join our post honor guard, please contact Honor Guard Chair, Scott Eliason at 206-310-4157 or e-mail at sreliason@msn.com.



Newsletter Editorial and Post

VFW Post 6785

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Copy Deadline: Email newsletter input or photos to Walt Tanimoto at wttanimoto@gmail.com . Submission does NOT guarantee placement in the newsletter. All articles and photos are subject to editing for length, content, or both at the discretion of the Newsletter

Committee and Post Officers.

Newsletter Committee:

Alan B'Hymer

Rich Klug

Walt Tanimoto

