

National Legislative Priorities (continued on page 3)

Members of The American Legion family visited Washington DC on Feb 27-Mar 1 for National Commander Schmidt's testimony to Congress and to visit our Senators and Representatives to advocate for the American Legion's legislative priorities. Those priorities include.

Fully fund a superior national defense as the global war on terror continues.

The United States must counter the draw-down of our Armed Forces by enhancing foreign policy, improving military intelligence, and increasing cyber operations and capabilities. Additionally, The American Legion strongly advocates for a good quality of life for troops and an improved transition from military service to civilian life.

Limit outsourcing, unify VA's programs

Continued focus is needed to ensure VA can meet challenges in delivering high-quality timely benefits and health care to veterans. In 2017, critical policy choices must be made, primarily the future of the Veterans Choice Program. A community care option is now a basic expectation for enrollees in VA's health-care system. Con-

gress should pass legislation to unify VA's multiple non-VA care programs with VA as the coordinator and guarantor of care.

Reform VA's claims appeals process

Congress must pass appeals modernization legislation that would provide veterans with a simple, fair and transparent appeals process in which the vast majority would receive a final appeals decision within a year of filing an appeal.

Institute gender-specific health care for women

Women veterans face remarkably different experiences than their male counterparts when transitioning in and out of combat roles, in between services and back to civilian life. VA must ensure an improved quality of life for women veterans with gender-specific health care to meet their needs.

Reclassify cannabis for medical research

Studies show great promise that medical cannabis is a viable solution for treating many problems. The American Legion supports increased research into cannabis as part of the larger effort to develop complementary and alternative treatments and therapies.

Quilts of Valor Award Ceremony

Ames Unit 37 is teaming up with Quilts of Valor to award 12 Quilts of Valor to area veterans. The Award Ceremony



will take place at the start of The American Legion Post meeting on March 9, 2017 at 7:30 p.m.

A Quilt of Valor is a lifetime award given to veterans and service personnel as a way to honor and

thank them for their military service. Five have been awarded to Ames Post members already and they are

invited to bring them to the ceremony if they wish.

Please join us as we honor these men and women who have been nominated to receive a Quilt of Valor.

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Post Commander Pat's Comments

Greetings Legion Family. Traveling back from a wonderful vacation, sitting on the plane and trying to figure out what important knowledge I can share with you this month. Unfortunately, my brain has been in vacation mode over the last 10 days and it doesn't seem to want to function properly yet. (As if it ever has!).

First off, for those that made Mid-Winter Conference, it was truly enlightening. Every time I go to Mid-Winter, I walk away with good information that needs to be shared. I participated in the VA & R Commission as the Secretary for this group. One of the bits I picked up was that National Cemeteries are taking advanced qualifications now. This has been done at the state level for many years but never at the National level. Now, you can pre-enroll for internment meaning having all the documents filled out and the papers pre-filed so that your loved ones don't have to rush to find

your information in 2 or 3 short days. More info to follow.

Another fun fact is that the Department of Iowa American Legion helped veterans to the tune of 149 Million dollars last year with assistance with compensation and benefits. The total for the entire veteran population of Iowa was 300 Million. That means that our American Legion provided 50 percent of this vital support while the other 7 veterans organizations recognized in the state provided the other 50 percent combined. WE DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!

As we wrap up this short article, I just want to say thanks to everyone for your support and patronage to our Post. We definitely have a super revitalization going on and it is because of members like you. Keep up the good work and have a great March!

Thank you for your service.



By the time you read this, National Vice-Commander, Doug Boldt will have been at the Post on the 20th of February. We had a hamburger dinner that evening that was well attended. Special thanks to Jodi Looft, John

Schomaker, Sharon Bellinghausen and Anthony Perdue for getting the meal together. And a special thanks to the Auxiliary for making the deserts. Vice-Commander Boldt was here as part of the National Membership drive. Our post has worked diligently to make our goal of 519 Legionnaires. We did not quite make that goal by NVC Boldt's visit but will keep working. If you haven't renewed or you know someone eligible, dues are \$45. You can help by renewing or enrolling a new member.

Comments from the Unit

Happy 98th Birthday to The American Legion! As part of their Birthday month celebration, the Ames Unit will be participating in a Quits of Valor Award Ceremony on March 9, at 7:30 pm. Check out the article on it elsewhere in this newsletter.

The membership committee will be contacting you if you have not paid your 2017 dues yet. Remember the service person whose eligibility you joined on as you continue to honor them with your membership. Senior dues are \$25 and Junior dues are \$5 and may be sent to 225 Main Street, Ames, IA, 50010.

Ames Unit 37 received an award at the Midwinter Conference from The Ameri-

can Legion of Iowa Foundation for its financial support. The Foundation awards many scholarships and grants throughout Iowa in areas of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, Community Service, Americanism, and Children and Youth.

The Story County Meeting will be held in Cambridge on Thursday, March 16, 2017 at The American Legion Hall, 221 Water Street at 7:30 p.m. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. The Sixth District Conference will be held April 8, at the Maxwell Community Center, 84 Main Street with call to order at 9 a.m. Everyone is welcome.

There are many state and national

scholarships available to graduating seniors. Deadlines range from March to June and more information can be found on the state and national Auxiliary websites <http://www.iowaala.org/> and <https://www.alaforveterans.org/>

Have you volunteered in the community or helped a veteran or their family. Those hours and dollars can be counted on our annual reports to Congress. Send a record of those hours and dollars to Sandy Deacon at sdeacon818@msn.com by April 20th.

Squadron Commander Roger's Comments

It has been a busy month for the S.A.L. In the first 3 weeks of the month, we hosted the monthly supper, several members attended the Mid-Winter Council, and we hosted a breakfast. A heart-felt thank you goes out to all of you who volunteered your time, energy, and skills for any or all of the events. Hopefully, we can all catch our breath over the next couple of weeks. But don't kick back and get too comfy. If you take a look at the calendar, opportunities galore await you, either as a volunteer or as a guest. Please make use of your time wisely and help out however you can.

We are almost into March and our

member numbers are still not where we want them to be. Last year, we had 191 members. This year, partially due to the knowledge that we were losing a few members to other Posts, we set a goal of 180 members. So far, we have 157 who have signed up for this year. If you have forgotten to renew, please do so as soon as possible. If you know of someone who should be a member, please encourage them to join or renew. The member fees help us to meet our financial obligations. (The cost to be a S.A.L. member is only \$45 for adults, \$10 for those under the age of 21, and \$10 for those who are dual members.) But more importantly, your

membership gives the Legion and the S.A.L. a larger voice when it comes to ensuring that our veterans receive the care, support, and encouragement that they need. Additionally, your participation in Post sponsored events helps to support our many programs.

Speaking of programs, if you have a family member who meets the criteria for the annual scholarship award, the forms have been sent out and the essays are due to the Post by midnight, March 15th. Let's encourage our young people to take advantage of this program. The award is not enormous, but it is enough to help offset the cost of some of their books.

Clubroom News

Well, it's almost spring! It sure has felt like it the last week or so. We really appreciate all of you who patronized the post during the cold winter months. March madness is almost upon us. We will be opening early if the Cyclones have a game during the Conference tournament and the post season tournament. Bring a snack to share and enjoy great drink specials. Go Cyclones!!

Burger Night Wednesday, March 8. Burgers will be served from 5-6:30pm. Come in and enjoy our fantastic burger basket for only \$5. These 1/3 lb. burgers are served with all your favorites from the garden and a side of fries. Eat them here or take them to go!!

Country Music Dance Night. Friday, March 24. 9pm-1am This is fast becoming a very popular event at the Post. Come down early and have some lessons starting at 8pm.

Weekly Bonus Drawing Night. Tuesday, March 28 is the first bonus drawing night of 2017. Drawings will commence at 6:30pm. Members must

be qualified for the drawing by consistently entering into the weekly drawing.

Fish Fry Friday, March 31 5:30-7pm. It's Fish Fry time again. Join us for fish, fries, hushpuppies and coleslaw for just \$8.

Stop by the clubroom and check out our Happenings for the month's appetizer special, birthdays, and events.



Your Credit Card Accepted At Post: The new credit card processing system has been installed and is operating at the clubroom. We now accept Visa, MasterCard and Discover.

We keep working to make your visit to the clubroom and the Post more convenient and fun. If you haven't been in for a while, stop in and meet Jodi and renew old acquaintances or make some new friends. We are open from 3 on weekdays and noon on weekends. Stop in and say hello.

Legion Riders



On Sunday May 28th, 2017, the Legion Riders will be welcoming the NATION OF PATRIOTS traveling flag to Ames. This year they have reversed the

order of the route and we will be the 2nd stop of the ride instead of the 47th as we have been the last few years.

We will hold the flag over Memorial Day and then ride it to Mason City on Tuesday May 30th. We will be working out the details of this event over the coming weeks. We don't have to have our fund raising completed at this time but will continue to work at this as the summer continues, and get it completed and sent in to Madison, WI by Labor Day.

For those who unaware of what this is about, this Nation of Patriots flag is taken to all 48 states between Memorial Day and Labor Day by riding organizations like ours. Every dime that is raised by each group is returned to the group to distribute to needy veterans of their choosing. The money to run the Nation of Patriots is collected by a \$5 fee collected from the riders escorting the flag from stop to stop.

Other than that, there has been some complaints from our group that we aren't getting enough riding in, so we are in the process of setting some more of that up. along with maybe doing more stops at the Veteran's Home in Marshalltown to give rides to anyone who would like one and also maybe some of the area nursing homes to do the same. And maybe just some more lunch and dinner rides for the members and anyone else who would like to join us.



Country Dancing

March 24th

9:00 pm – 1:00 am

(Lessons start at 8:00 pm)

CLUBROOM COUPON

Any Tuesday in March

Present Coupon to get

2 drinks for the price of 1.

Cash Purchase Only

Priorities (continued)

Provide mandatory end-of-service exams for reservists

Active-duty servicemembers have the right to physical examinations when separating. This same right to an end-of-service exam is not authorized for reserve component servicemembers. This unfair treatment must be changed.

Repeal unfair offsets that penalize disabled veterans and widows

Many military retirees must forfeit some of their retirement pay to receive their VA service-connected disability compensations. It is equally outrageous that VA survivor benefits (DIC) are offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. The American Legion supports legislation to repeal both of these unjust offsets.

Defend veterans education benefits

The American Legion continues to focus on the sustainability of this important earned benefit, while ensuring that veterans receive the most benefit possible.

Continue funding programs to end veterans homelessness

To fully implement VA's pledge to eradicate veterans homelessness, Congress must continue making responsible investments in affordable housing and programs that move veterans and their families off the streets and into stable housing.

More information on the legislative priorities can be found on the American Legion website, www.legion.org.

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 225 Main Street
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LOOK INSIDE FOR COUPON

MARCH

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
 Find us on Facebook at American Legion Family of Ames, IA Post 37			1 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY BINGO	2 DOLLAR DOG DAY	3 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	4 STEAK DINNER 5:30—7:00
5 BINGO	6 LEGION RIDERS 6:30	7 TACO TUESDAY AUXILIARY REGULAR 6:30	8 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY BURGER BASKET 5-6:30 BINGO	9 DOLLAR DOG DAY LEGION MEETINGS & QOV AWARDS	10 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	11
12 BINGO	13 BUILDING FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE	14 TACO TUESDAY SAL REGULAR 6:30	15 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY BINGO	16 DOLLAR DOG DAY STORY COUNTY CAMBRIDGE	17 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	18
19 BINGO	20	21 TACO TUESDAY PAST PRESIDENT'S PARLEY 7:00	22 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY BINGO	23 DOLLAR DOG DAY COMMITTEES SOCIAL 6:00 OPERATIONS 6:15	24 FIREBALL FRIDAY COUNTRY DANCE NIGHT 9PM—1AM	25
26 BINGO	27	28 TACO TUESDAY BONUS DRAWING 6:30-9 40&8	29 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY BINGO	30 DOLLAR DOG DAY	31 FIREBALL FRIDAY FISH FRY 5:30—7:00	