

Riders Complete Mission With 1800 Wreaths



What you see at left is a small part of the Ames Municipal Cemetery following the honoring of 1,800 veterans with the placement of Wreaths on December 16 in that cemetery as well as Ontario.

The day saw the completion of the Wreaths Across America mission of Legion Riders Chapter #37 along with help from the Legion family members and citizens of the city of Ames.

The work began with the reading of a proclamation by Mayor Haila that was passed by the City Council. Placement of the wreaths began following that reading and was accomplished in only 45 minutes.

Thanks to the Director Cliff Barker and the Riders.

Veterans to Gather at the Capitol in Des Moines



Legionnaires will gather at the state capitol at 9:00 AM on January 17 to discuss our legislative priorities with the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Last year was a very successful year for veterans legislatively in Iowa. We hope that this year will be equally good.

Assistance for veterans filing claims is becoming a critical need. Filling that need has been done by the veterans service organizations and the counties up to now. It is time for the state to take a larger role in filling that need. We will be presenting a proposal to the legislature to do exactly that, provide grant money to the organizations and counties to help fill that need.

We will also continue to advocate for veterans courts. That and the need for help with veterans claims to the VA will be the primary requests this year. Please come to Des Moines and help.

Squadron to Award Scholarships

Hello everyone. Just a quick reminder that the applications for the 2024 S.A.L. Merit Award are now available. The application is available now on the Ames Post 37 web site, through the Ames and Gilbert High School's web sites, the Home School Network, or at the Post Clubroom (Just ask the bartender for a hard copy).

We are now awarding two (2) \$1000.00 awards. The deadline for submission is Thursday,

February 29, 2024 at 7:00 pm.

The current High School senior is eligible; if the student is a descendant of an Ames Legion Post 37 Member and the student can live anywhere, or if the student is the descendant of a veteran that lives anywhere, and the student attends High School at Ames or Gilbert High Schools, or if they are Home Schooled but live with-in one of the two school districts.

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Post Commander Jay's Comments

Hello and welcome to 2024!

Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and that Santa was good to you. If you haven't paid your dues, by the time you're reading this, you may still have time to pay them before the \$10 increase goes into effect on January 1st.

I don't have a lot to say this month, I just hope to make 2024 better than 2023. Membership is a main priority but please understand, the income we re-

ceive from dues doesn't fully cover all our expenses and leave enough money to fund our various programs.

Bingo helps, but not enough and the income from Bingo can only be used in very specific areas. We will need to be creative in coming up with fundraisers to help generate additional income. That's where we'll need your help, supporting whatever activities the leadership team comes up with in the coming

year.

Also this year we'll be looking to expand our efforts for "Be the One" and Buddy Checks. Please let me know if you know of anything going on in the community that might benefit from the Legion's involvement.

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy New Year! Hope to see you January 6 at our first Steak Night of the New Year.

Unit President Jamie's Comments

Happy New Year Legion Family! I hope everyone has had time to celebrate with family and friends, but also take some time for self-care.

The month of December seems to have flown by with so many activities and ways to participate with our Legion Family. As you may know, I am also the chair of the Wreaths Across America committee with our Legion Riders and what a great event that turned out to be this year! This ties with our Auxiliary since the Wreaths Across America program is one of our National President, Lisa Williamson's projects.

This year, we were asked to attend the Ames City Council meeting as Mayor Haila signed a Proclamation for Wreaths Across America Day for December 16th, 2023. Mayor Haila has spoken at each of our annual wreath days since 2019 and wrote "I encourage Ames residents to join in extending thanks and appreciation to our veterans and their families for their service and

sacrifice". Thank you to all that attended, donated towards the purchase of wreaths, unloaded the truck, place wreaths, etc. This is a big project and thank you everyone.

I also want to thank our members for participating in our cookie fair held in conjunction with the SAL sausage and biscuits breakfast. It truly takes a village of volunteers and so many people stepped up to coordinate, bake, refill trays and cashier. A couple of our Juniors helped at this event this year, so that is always fun to see more than one! We encourage all members to participate as their schedule allows. Many hands make light work!

In December, we also blessed a veteran's family with Christmas presents as part of our commitment to Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation. Once again, the Legion FAMILY came through and blessed this family with many gifts as well as gift cards for activities and groceries. We wrapped gifts, checked

them off our lists and they were delivered on Dec. 23rd to a very grateful family. Thank you all for helping us give back to our veterans, one family at a time.

Please mark your calendars for January 17th as the Legislative Day at the Capitol. Please remember to vote every chance you are given. It is our right, but also a responsibility to be sure we are advocating for our veterans, the military and their families!

Lastly, Mid-Winter Conference will be held February 1-4 and we will be collecting warm hats to turn in at the conference, so if you have extras or want to purchase or perhaps knit a few yourselves, members can take them to the conference if you are not attending. We will have a box for this collection at the Post!

Wishing you all a wonderful 2024 filled with happiness and peace. As William James said, "Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."

Squadron Commander Cort's Comments

Happy New Year to my fellow Squadron Mates! I trust everyone has had an enjoyable Christmas season with friends and family. Now we look forward to all of the opportunities that 2024 brings. The SAL and the whole Legion family can look forward to continuing the great works we all invest in for the benefit of veterans, our youth and Ames community.

The SAL of course will still accept membership renewals to maintain and add to our current membership. One of the ways you can help us with membership is to let us know if you have had a change of address or are aware of someone who has moved. We mail out renewal reminders and need to know if your address has changed. Please email your change of address

requests to Steve Malmquist, s.malmquist.SAL37@gmail.com.

Your SAL had a very successful Biscuits and Gravy Breakfast last month. We served 130 people. I was delighted to see the turnout and to be able to visit with many of our guests. We recognize the importance of community and just being intentional about our outreach. It is very encouraging to see that play out in our events like this. Thank you to all who came out and to those who also helped buy up all those boxes of cookies at the Auxiliary's cookie fair. The proceeds from this co-event will go to one or more of our many worthy causes.

The Ames Junior Air Rifle Club has now competed in two of the eight Iowa Postal Matches. Our Ames club has 13 members competing against several

other clubs around the state. We are delighted with everyone's individual improvement so far. It has been very encouraging to see our newest members not only learn the sport and how it works but to begin to show improved mastery in rifle marksmanship. In January, nine members will compete in the American Legion Postal Match. This will be the club's third year in a row of participation and gives our shooters a chance to compete against competitors from around the country.

I look forward to what 2024 has in store for our Squadron. If you haven't been to an SAL meeting for a while or looking to attend your first meeting, I encourage you to come out to our January meeting and find out how we run our meetings and the important issues we make decisions on. Hope to see you there!

Clubroom News

Happy New Year to all!! We hope that everyone had a joyous Holiday season. I can't believe how time has flown. The holiday season was busy around the clubroom and it was so great to see everyone.

Bring it on!!! We want you to bring down your very best chili for our **Annual Chili Cook-off**. You may drop off your chili on the 31st or the morning of the 1st. We also encourage those not competing to bring a snack to share. There are prizes for first, second, and third place. As a bonus, the winner has bragging rights all year long. Of course, all are welcome to come in and sample all the delicious entries and watch some football. Please have your chili here by 2pm. The clubroom will open at 12:30pm.

Don't forget that the post is the ultimate place to enjoy all your favorite sports events. Come join us and cheer on your team with us!

Curbside Meals

Wed. Jan 3-Hot Beef

Wed. Jan 10-Meatloaf

Wed. Jan 17-Chicken and Noodles

Wed. Jan 24-Grilled Pork Chop

Wed. Jan 31-Creamy Tuscan Chicken

Friday, January 26-Taco Bar 5-6:30pm and then Music Bingo from 7-9pm. If you haven't been to a Music Bingo yet you should check it out. It is a fun time!



Thanks to all that made the events happen this month and for a very fun and festive clubroom Christmas party. Ken

Woodley, Mike Deacon, Sandy Deacon, Tom Fowler, Julie Rinard, Bill Donovan, Addison Donovan, Russ and Vicki Belz, Marty and Jo Kelly, Andrea Gronau and Colten Christiansen

Legion Riders

Happy New Year Ames Post 37! Thanks to everyone for another successful Wreath Day. 1800 Wreaths placed at two cemeteries and a good start on reconciling a records system of all of the veterans interred within Ames.

There's no way we could do it without you, our donors or the cooperation with the City of Ames.

Our most recent elections saw us retain all of the existing officers with one exception. Rich Archer stepped down as treasurer after many years of service. Jodi Mann has taken that position and we WISH Rich all the best and thank him for his dedication to making sure the Riders always had a solid financial outlook.

Stay tuned and look for some exciting changes in 2024 for your Riders and again, thanks for all you do for us.

Ride safe and Ride often, but be safe

VA Health Research

The Veterans Health Administration has joined in a large research program though the National Institutes of Health that will be used to help understand how genes, lifestyle and environment influence health and wellbeing.

This program is completely voluntary. Those that join can leave the program at any time.

The program is a large research program with the goal of helping researchers understand more about why people get sick or stay healthy.

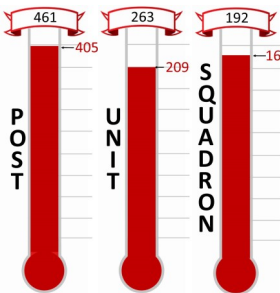
People who join will share information. This might be about their health and habits and may also be about family history and genetics.

This program works closely with the Million Veteran Program but is separate. You can join both.

There are brochures at the Post or you can go to veterans.joinallofus.org to learn more and make a decision on joining.

This is completely voluntary and will have no effect on any VA benefits.

Membership Moving Up



The red part of those membership thermometers keeps moving up. We need that to happen. We need our current members to renew for 2024 and we need new members to enroll in each of our organizations.

On the front page, you read about the legislative campaign that we will be pursuing later this month at the Capitol. Part of the problem there is the decline in membership that we have been experiencing around the country. That decline leaves less money to keep our service office open.

Here in Ames, we have mostly avoided that decline. In the nearly 50 years that your editor has enjoyed membership in

the Ames Post, the Post has consistently had between 450 and 525 members. We are fortunate to live in a town where the citizens understand the value that organizations like The American Legion family bring to the community.

It is important to understand that the value you bring by being a member is not just to Ames. That value spreads throughout Iowa. Your membership helps a Vietnam veterans in NW Iowa that is struggling with Agent Orange. Your membership helps a Gold Star family make sure that those children get the education they deserve.

It is very important to remember that the value you bring goes to supporting the four pillars of the American Legion family, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, Children & Youth. Sometimes it feels like the value we bring to Ames is just by being a bar on Main Street. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Drive through the cemetery, you will see the value of the Legion family in Ames. Come meet the youth that we support through our programs, 5th Grade flag essay, Boys & Girls state, the Cub pack we sponsor, the members of the shooting club, the recipients of the Squadron scholarships, that's the value of the Legion family. We hope you feel that value.

We do operate the lounge but that is only to provide for our members to get together and enjoy each others company. As veterans and veteran family members, we share a common bond. The lounge provides a place for us to really share that bond. Please don't ever believe that the lounge is supported by your dues. It is supported by you but never by your dues money. That goes to the four pillars.

Lets make that red move up. Legion and SAL members that haven't renewed still have a few days before January 1 to renew and avoid the dues raise. Renewing either now or later, you will help keep the pillars strong.

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 ★ Past Post Commander Don Ander- ★
 ★ son passed away this fall. Com- ★
 ★ mander Anderson served the year ★
 ★ 1992-1993. Our sympathies go to ★
 ★ his wife Jan and their family. Don ★
 ★ was buried with full military honors ★
 ★ by the Post Honor Guard. ★
 ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

AMERICAN LEGION POST NO. 37

225 Main Street
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG
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JANUARY

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
YOUTH AIR RIFLE 1-3 AT IZAAK WALTON	1 CHILI COOKOFF	2 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP AUXILIARY REGULAR 6:30	3 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL HOT BEEF	4 DOG NIGHT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE 6:00	5 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	6 STEAK DINNER 5:00—7:00
7 BINGO	8 LEGION RIDERS 6:30	9 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP SAL REGULAR 6:30	10 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL MEATLOAF	11 DOG NIGHT LEGION REGULAR 7:00	12 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	13
14 BINGO	15 VFW POST MEETING 7:00	16 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP	17 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL CHICKEN & NOODLES	18 DOG NIGHT SOCIAL COMMITTEE 6:00	19 FIREBALL FRIDAY MUNCHIES NIGHT	20
21 BINGO	22	23 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP	24 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL GRILLED PORK CHOP	25 DOG NIGHT 40&8	26 FIREBALL FRIDAY TACO BAR & MUSICAL BINGO	27
28 BINGO	29	30 TOASTED CHEESE & SOUP	31 WINESDAY WEDNESDAY CURBSIDE MEAL CREAMY TUSCAN CHICKEN	 Find us on Facebook at	American Legion Family of Ames, IA Post 37	