

Dale American Legion *-serving their country, now serving their community*

by Brandon Beard

Members of American Legion, Abe Lincoln Post 444 have at least two things in common — all served our country in the military and all at some point in their lives have called the town of Dale “home.”

Started in 1947, the Dale Legion Post has remained in the same location since its inception 71 years ago — on 309 East Medcalf Street. The building itself was originally a Hudson car dealership; the front area of what is now the legion served as the showroom. In the 1970s, the bar area was added to the Post home.

And though the brave individuals who have served our country have certainly earned the right to enjoy a few drinks at a private bar, Legion members dedicate much of their time and resources to helping the community. Every Memorial Day, Post 444 members perform services at three local cemeteries (including Dale Cemetery, of course) honoring fallen heroes. On Veterans Day, the Post visits both of Dale’s nursing homes to honor the residents who also served their country. And on Flag Day, members hold a flag ceremony at David Turnham for students to understand the importance of the flag. The

Post also sponsors an annual essay contest for fourth graders at David Turnham, the winners of whom receive monetary prizes.

Local organizations such as the Community Action Center, Boy Scouts, the fire department and the park board receive donations from Post 444. Funds come from cookouts the Legion hosts one Saturday

every month, during which anyone and everyone is welcome to stop by the Post Home and purchase a plate (“We almost always sell out at the cook-outs, so we always tell people to pre-order,” says Post Commander Don Daigle). The Legion is also open to the public on Wednesday evenings, beginning at 4:30 p.m., for meal specials that change weekly and are the cook’s choice.

With the Dale Fall Fest just a few days away, Post 444 is gearing up to man the Pronto Pup stand at the event. This year, don’t miss Dale Legion members leading the parade presenting the colors on Saturday; this is the first time in several years the Legion has led the parade, as the fire department took over those duties for awhile. Legion members will also appear during the parade on golf carts.

With 75 current members of Post 444, the Legion is always welcoming more. Those interested in joining can stop by the Dale Post with their DD214 (Discharge papers and Veterans Separation documents) and pick up an application. Several members of the Dale Post have celebrated 50 years with the Legion this year — including Darrel Jenkins, Virgil Heneisen and Bob Van Winkle. Current officers include Commander Don Daigle, Vice Commander Dennis Philipps,

Adjutant Rich Begle, Finance Officer Dave Balbach, Historian Leroy Breitweiser, Sgt. at Arms Parvin Smith and Service Officer Pat Ewing.

Commander Daigle has been a resident of Dale since 2009. Originally from Green Bay, WI, he served in the Army from 1960-64 during the Vietnam War, joining the American Legion in the 1960s. He transferred his Legion membership upon moving to Evansville, and did so again when he and his wife, Dorothy, moved to Dale nine years ago. He has served as Post 444 Commander for the last three years.

“He’s done such a good job, we’re gonna make him keep it,” jokes Gary Byers, a Dale native who also served in Vietnam and is a long-time Legion member.

Daigle also encourages male relatives of Legion members and other war veterans to join the Dale Sons of the American Legion, which he says currently has more members than the actual Legion. The Sons organization devotes a lot of time helping out in the community and raising funds through golf scrambles and raffles.

Sacrificing for their country. Serving their community. That’s what makes American Legion Abe Lincoln Post 444 an integral part of the Dale community.



Abe Lincoln Post 444 Memorial Day Ceremony Detail

ERWIN EXCAVATING & FARM DRAINAGE

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- Lakes/Ponds • Field Tiling

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SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

All times are CDT

Saturdays: 4:30pm at St. Nicholas in Santa Claus

Sundays: 7:00am at Mary Help of Christians, Mariah Hill

9:00am at St. Joseph in Dale

11:00am (Spanish/Espanol) at St. Joseph in Dale

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