

# AMERICAN LEGION 298

## HISTORICAL ARTICLE

by John Groves



In 1918 there was no Veterans Affairs, government programs to take care of the returning troops, they were on their own.

With this thought in mind, veterans began to gather in the United States and in Europe to form an organization that is known today as the American Legion. In 1920 Jacob Liesmann who was in his 30's and Thomas Roberts in his 20's, along with other veterans from that period of time gathered to form Post 298 of the American Legion in Dixon MO. The post is now one of the oldest in the state of Missouri and in the United States that has been active and never closed its doors.

The first building Post 298 was located in, is still standing in downtown Dixon, MO. It is on the second floor of a two story building across the street from Gann-Johnson offices and next to the now, Tri County lumber yard. One of the family members of Jacob Liesmann, recalled how she and some of her family used to sit outside on the sidewalk next to the lumber yard and listen to the dance music on Saturday nights in the summer. The building was marked with an engraved stone that held the names of the men who helped establish the post.

Unfortunately, Jacob Liesmann passed away, not too many months after returning from the war. The post remained at that location until 1989 and then, it was moved to its current location. The stone marker holding the names of those who were the founding members was placed into the new front of the Legion Hall located on 100 West 5th Street, along with the new stone, holding the names of the members who helped build the new facility. This organization has been around now for 99 years and it has approximately 100 members on the rolls today. You might look at the history and wonder what the American Legion Post 298 does.

The American Legion performs many functions to promote, Citizenship, Americanism, and Patriotism in our

youth and communities. It serves veterans, their widows, and orphans by working constantly to maintain and promote the rights and benefits earned by veterans through service to their country. The legion provides transportation services to the Columbia VA in Columbia MO hospital for veterans who cannot afford to drive or those who are unable to drive to medical appointments.

The legion also provides Color Guards for parades; Memorial Day and Veterans Day parades. Another service is providing activities at the Veterans Home, located in St James MO, donating money and gifts at Christmas time and running the bingo games for the residents. The Legion supports the local Oratorical competition at the High School level, then state, and national level. The Legion sponsors high school juniors and seniors to attend Boys and Girls State which, teaches students how governments function.

The Legion provides school awards throughout the area for achievements. The Legion provides support and structure for the Legion Baseball teams in both the A and AA competitions. The Legion posts American Flags in the Dixon area on patriotic holidays, donates flags to schools, and conducts flag disposal for the community. The Legion also provides Funeral Honor details, consisting of personnel who present the American flag to a designated recipient, firing detail, and taps to ensure each service member is honored for their service no matter the rank nor time in service.

American Legion Post 298 aids many charitable, civic and other organizations throughout the year. The Legion also has an Auxiliary service that was established in 1921 and currently has 24 members that support Post 298. The Auxiliary is made up of members wives and husbands of Post 298 and they support the Legion in all of the afore mentioned activities and all fund raisers.

The last burial place for Jacob Liesmann is the Dixon City Cemetery and for Thomas Roberts, it is a lone maker in a field off of N Highway outside of Dixon. We are proud of all that served our country before us and encourage others who follow, to continue the tradition of God, Flag, and Country!



Former American Legion Hall.

Photo submitted by John Groves



Current American Legion Hall.

Photo submitted by John Groves



American Legion Hall building corner stone.

Photo submitted by John Groves



Cemetery stone.

Photo submitted by John Groves