

## Features



TOP

# American Legion Honor Guard Serves the Community Well

NOVEMBER 07TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

## American Legion Honor Guard Serves the Community Well

**Dexter, Missouri** - The Kenady-Hanks American Legion Post #59 Honor Guard was created in 2007. Since that time they have attended more than 800 funerals to honor veterans one last time.

“Our first military funeral was in Brosley, Missouri in October of 2007,” commented Tom Love. He is a dedicated member of the American Legion and an Honor Guard member as well.

Robert Crow, Jerry Seabaugh, and Bill Alexander were among the first Honor Guard members and they have since passed away. Bill Pippins, Sr., Roger Hubbard, Jim Russell, Jim Adams, Gary Kitchen, Charles Smith, and Bill Miranda were also founding members of the Honor Guard.

Since that time many have served including Tom Love they are Eric Smith, Daryl LaPierre, Les Barker, Chuck Smith, David Vaughn, Randy Cannel, Bruce McClintock, Jeff Masterson, and Junior Cagle.

“Most funerals that have been performed are out at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield,” continued Love. “As time permits we will do military honors outside of Stoddard County. We have traveled to Kennett, East Prairie, Poplar Bluff, and Cape Girardeau.”

The State of Missouri gives the Honor Guard unit \$100 for their time at a funeral

</images/2015 Images/Honor Guard 1.jpg>

and all monies have been donated to the American Legion Post #59 in Dexter. Those monies over the years have helped sponsor Boys State, Girls State, Missouri Highway Patrol Summer Camp for youth, local Boy Scout Troops, recognition of Outstanding Students, aid to local veterans, and Christmas gifts to veterans in nursing homes in the area.

Twice each year they host a Fishing Day and Fish Fry at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Along with funerals and other events, the Honor Guard participates in the Missing in Action service held each year at the cemetery. In addition to the Rifle Salute, the Honor Guard assists with the Flag Folding and presentation of the flag to the next of kin. They serve in parades, Veterans Day, Memorial Day, POW Ceremonies and Laying of the Wreaths at Christmas. They are very busy throughout the year and extremely active in our community.

“The Honor Guard receives no other outside assistance,” continued Love. “Members pay for all transportation, meals, uniforms, cleaning of uniforms, and any other expenses pertaining to the ceremony.”

This Honor Guard unit has never missed a single ceremony due to weather. They have performed in rain, freezing cold, sleet and snow and the stifling heat of summer to make sure a military service is performed for our heroes.

</images/2015 Images/Tom Love 3.jpg>

On this Veterans Day please remember those who still serve our country even into retirement. The Honor Guard never misses the call to duty when a soldier whether currently serving or served has passed on. He or she deserves a military service. They deserve our attention and most of all our prayers to their family.

The oldest member of the current Honor Guard is Jim Russell. He is 82 years old and still to this day serves and does what he can to honor the memory of a soldier to be buried. Many of the unit members are aging. Younger people are not stepping up to help as most funerals are during the day when they are working; therefore relying on the retired has become normal for the Honor Guard.

Anyone wishing to help either financial with a donation or by volunteering are asked to contact Eric Smith, Commander of the American Legion (573) 718-2021

or Gary Kitchen OIC of the Honor Guard at (573) 614-1370. Any branch of the military service man or woman may participate.

“Families appreciate the Honor Guard and are overwhelmed by their act of kindness,” Love said.

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