



# THE AMERICAN LEGION

*"The Friendly Word" from "The Friendly Post"*

1655 Simms Street

Post 178

Lakewood, CO



## Plaque Honoring Veterans Dedicated at Post 178

On Veterans Day, 2023, Post 178 dedicated a new plaque at the base of our flagpole that stands as a testament to our commitment to honor Veterans. This magnificent piece of art was designed by the talented **Chuck Elsen** and installed with precision by **Past Commander Mark Ward**,

**Personal Touch Engraving and Gifts** deserves thanks for creating the plaque and providing it to us at their cost. Everyone's dedication to this project reflects the passion we share for our mission. The plaque not only beautifies our Post but also serves as a lasting tribute to the heroes who have selflessly served our nation.

—Commander Wes Vanderpool



## Harold A. Nelson

February 28, 1915 – October 22, 2023

**Staff Sergeant, F Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division U.S. Army**

Harold Arthur Nelson, a longtime member of Post 178, passed away October 22nd at the age of 108. He was born on February 28, 1915 on the kitchen table at a farm in Wolbach, Nebraska where there was no heat, no electricity, and no running water.

He grew up helping his Dad farm with walking plows, horses, mules, and lots of muscle. After daily chores he walked three miles to and from school every day for twelve years. He graduated in the Class of 1933 from Wolbach High School.

He was drafted into the Army on July 14, 1941 and was in the front-line infantry fighting in Africa, Sicily, and Italy. He made, and survived, six amphibious invasions under enemy fire.

His military awards include: Good Conduct Medal, American Defense

Service Ribbon, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, American Campaign Medal, WW II Victory Medal, Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Clusters, Combat Infantry's Badge, Bronze Star, and, finally, nearly 80 years late, the Silver Star.



He had many stories of the saga of his helmet and how it saved his life three times. At times he relied on his farming skills to milk a cow using his helmet and give it to his men.

The 3rd Infantry Division fought for 635 straight days in combat. Just before the invasion of southern France, Harold earned enough points to return to Wolbach and Frances Tate, the sweetheart who had been waiting for him. He had a 3-day leave and they rushed to Smith Center, Kansas where they married on September 19,

**LEGION CHAPLAIN**  
*Mary Johnson*

We have entered the Winter Holiday Season and my prayer for everyone is that you be filled with light. Whether the light comes from lighting a menorah in celebration of Hanukkah (December 7th-15th), following the light of a star to the Christ child at Christmas (December 25th), or lighting candles through the cultural celebration of Kwanzaa (December 26th-January 1st), I pray that your holidays be filled with peace, love, and joy.

*Dear Lord, protect and bless all Veterans and their families throughout the holiday season. May we all remember those who have gone before and those still missing. May we also celebrate the camaraderie that we share with those around us. As always, we pray for your protection and for peace on earth. Amen.*

**COMMANDER'S REPORT**  
*Wes Vanderpool*

Hello Post 178! I hope this month finds you well as we approach the festive season and celebrate another year at the Post. It has been a year filled with camaraderie, shared experiences, and a steadfast commitment to honoring our Veterans.

As we gather with our families and loved ones during this Christmas Season, please take a moment to reflect on the sacrifices made by our brave servicemen and servicewomen. Their dedication to duty and the preservation of our freedoms deserve our deepest gratitude. As members of The American Legion, we are part of a community that values service, sacrifice, and the bonds forged in the crucible of shared experiences.

This Christmas, let's extend our gratitude to our Veterans, remembering those who are no longer with us and acknowledging the sacrifices of those currently serving. Our Legion Family is a beacon of support, and together we can make a positive impact on the lives of our fellow Veterans.

In the spirit of Christmas, I encourage each one of you to come together, share stories, and create lasting memories. As we celebrate this joyous season, may the warmth of friendship and the spirit of giving be ever-present in our hearts.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to The American Legion Post 178. Here's to a joyous Christmas and another year of honoring our veterans. Ever Forward!

**SAL REPORT**  
*Brad Hall*

Well, it's December and we can put another year in the books.

Activities at the Post include the **RCI Christmas Party** which is a really great event that **Ranya** puts on for active and Veteran military families. The **Auxiliary's**

**Angel Tree** fundraiser can use donations as this is a great way to donate and give back.

Hey, just a little something that really chaps my backside. When at the Post and you stumble upon something (food, phones, candies, or anything that someone has left

lying around), please don't assume it was left there for you to take home with you. We leave food in freezers all the time which is intended for friends and other members who we're in the process of contacting. Sometimes it's food for a meal that is coming up or being planned. Either way, if it does not belong to you, leave it alone. Please!

Have a great Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

**RIDERS REPORT**  
*Steve Petersen*

Greetings from the Riders. This time of year has slowed things down for us. However, as always, we want to thank

Post 178 members for your support for our **Friday Night Dinners**. We welcome any menu suggestions from members that may enable us to continue supporting our charities.

We'll be serving our tacos and burritos during the **Post's Christmas Party** on Friday evening, December 15th. The party will also feature live music by **"Night Crew."**

Saturday, December 16th is **Ranya Kelly's annual Christmas gig** where, with Santa's help, she delivers a bevy of gifts to active duty military families. Ranya deserves our appreciation for all her hard work, as well as her volunteers. It's a joy to watch all the children receive their gifts and speak with Santa.

Merry Christmas and God bless you and yours through this Holiday Season.



*Riders volunteers help Ranya Kelly get ready for her big Christmas Party at the Post Saturday, December 16th.*



**BUSINESS REPORT***Bob Heer*

On December 15 Night Crew will be hosting a **Christmas Party** here at the Post. Music kicks off at 6:00 p.m. and is open to all Post members. Flyers are in the Post lounge.

On December 16th **Ranya Kelly** will be distributing toys to children of military families so there will be no Bingo that Saturday.

The Post will be closed on **Christmas Day** to allow our staff to spend time with their families and friends. On **New Years Day**, **Dave McBrien** will be serving Steak and Eggs. Remember that on January 1 you need to use your new blue key card to access the Post.

A big thank you to **Chuck Elsen** and **Kathy and Doug Schwab** for scrubbing and applying a finish to seal the back hall floor. What a difference it has made. Maybe they will want to do the game room next (hint, hint).

I also want to thank those of you who reached out to me when I was looking for a new snow plowing company. Through your recommendations we have a new company under contract. Should you need to leave your vehicle at the Post on a day when snow is expected please park it in the North parking lot next to the building but not in front of the garage door.

**AUXILIARY REPORT***Kay Scott*

Our **Veterans Day Dinner** was a tremendous success due to the time, teamwork and quality of the Spaghetti meal served. A BIG HEARTY THANK YOU to **Judy Myers, Jan Casper, Dee Yurko, Shari Davis, Beth Hall, Penny and Ayla Polston, Carol and Brian Conway, Deb Dickinson, Tracy Servantes, Stephanie and Daisy Vanderpool, Yvonne Trujillo, Lori and Randy Kipp, Leslie Hughes, JoAnn Nichols, and Eddie with Community Services.** We served 120 meals that included 47 of Post 178 Veterans.

The October **Bizarre Bazaar** during Bingo days on Thursdays and Saturdays, ending on Veterans Day, was very successful! Organized and operated by our very own treasurer **Judy Eberley**, a bit over \$2,200 was raised. Two donated quilts were raffled, and donations were received for shirts and snacks. In addition to Judy, a hearty thanks to **Donna McKelvy, Theresa Randolph, Toni Berumen, Kathy Schwab, Joy Nichols, and Russ Scott** for your time and help making this project successful, and to **King Soopers** for donation of some of the snacks. Congratulations to the quilt winners, **Mike Moyer** and **Dick Moore**.

The **Second Annual Keep the Vets and Kids Warm Drive** has ended. Thanks so much for all those donating handmade and purchased hats, scarves, and other items to be donated to the **RCI Christmas Party** for military families.

Please remember to submit paper coupons from your newspaper for our **Coupon Clipping Project**. **Fran Bowers** continues to process these coupons and sends them to locations around the world. Coupons are good six months beyond expiration date for food and non-food products (no pet food) and cannot be store specific (for example, King Soopers, Walmart). The receptacle and further details for the coupons are in the **Coupon Clipping Corner** of the Game Room at the Post.

**Wednesday Dinner Nights** in December will be the full menu of Burgers, Fish, and Shrimp with sides of French Fries, Onion Rings, Baked Beans, and Cole Slaw. Beginning in January 2024, we will continue to serve this menu on the second Wednesday of the month when the HOGS meet, but stay tuned because we are planning a few delicious offerings in the New Year!

Our December meeting will be on the 5th at 6:00 p.m. and we will focus on helping **Ranya Kelly (RCI)** with her **Christmas Party for Military Families** on Saturday December 16th which will end at 1:00 p.m. There will not be Bingo that day. Our first meeting of 2024 will be Tuesday January 9th at 6:00 p.m.



**Bizarre Bazaar** volunteers **Judy Eberley** (l.) and **Donna McKelvey** with **Randy Baria**, who drew the winners of the Auxiliary's Veterans Day Quilt Raffle. **Mike Moyer** took home the Declaration of Independence quilt, and **Dick Moore**, can now keep warm with the Birth of a Nation quilt created by **Marta Fyffe** in honor of **Rosemary Young**.





1944 by a Justice of the Peace. He always said, "Twenty dollars and 20 minutes, and it lasted almost 50 years!"

He was discharged at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas on June 23, 1945. Harold and Frances settled in Denver where he took a job at Merchants Biscuit Company as a painter at 39 cents an hour. The company became Bowman Biscuit Company,

then Keebler Company. He worked there for 33 years as a mechanic, maintenance foreman, then Project Engineer. His last project was a \$10,000,000 new baking line for which he invented the "Nelson Lapper," a machine to lap seven layers of dough to make the Keebler saltines tender and crispy. He retired in 1975.

The couple had two daughters; Carolee and Patricia; four grandchildren, Niccole, Erin, Emily, and Jennifer; and six great grandchildren, Christopher, Jacob, Jonathan, Cody, Isabel and Jackson.



Harold was an avid hunter. Growing up he shot pheasants from his upstairs bedroom window for dinner. He hunted pheasants every opening day on the same farms since 1946. He got a buck deer in the mountains of Colorado every year for 47 years. But fishing was his all-time favorite.

He travelled with his family to every state in

the United States, parts of Canada, Mexico, and an amazing trip to Europe. His wife, Frances, passed away very suddenly on a vacation in Wisconsin Dells in 1991.

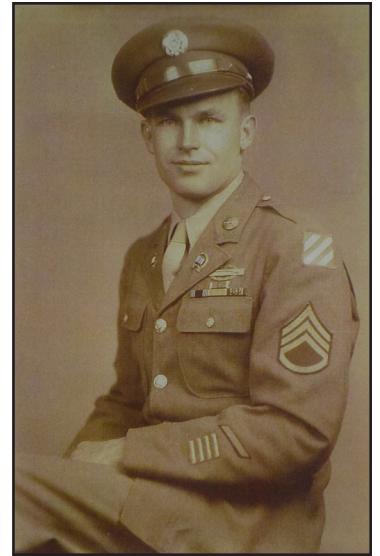
He was a lifetime member of The American Legion Post 178, VFW Post 501, VFW Post 3631, Lakewood Elks #1777, Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 375, and the Society of the Third Infantry Division, US Army. He was inducted into the 3rd ID's Marne Hall of Fame which recognizes Dogface Soldiers for their lasting impact of service, valor, and achievements.

Two weeks prior to his passing, Harold, his daughter, Carolee, and her husband, Derryl, visited "his girls" and people at the casinos in Black Hawk/Central City. They always welcomed him as a hero. He lived for "my hugs from all the girls." On the way home, they stopped

on the Dean Rossi ranch, where he has fished for many, many years. He even caught two fish!

Harold had a rich and wonderful life. By every definition he was a patriot, hero, and a national treasure. He will be missed.

*Source: Olinger Crown Hill Obituary*



### **Harold Nelson at Post 178**



*Harold's 102nd Birthday Party with Hal Mund, Bill Radunz, and Dewey Fries.*



*Harold's 104th Birthday Party with trophy presented to him by Dewey Fries and Hal Mund.*



*Harold and girlfriend Jeannie Gold.*



*Harold's 108th Birthday Party with Tuskegee Airman Col. James H. Harvey III.*