

# Veterans in Assisted Living Honored by Local American Legion Post, Riders, and Auxiliary

By Dana Trumbull ... April 18, 2024

The Queen Creek American Legion Post 129, Legion Riders and Auxiliary have teamed up to honor local veterans who are residents in Queen Creek assisted living facilities. Organized by Auxiliary Chaplain Becky Overlin, the group recently visited Countryside Assisted Living and presented 13 veterans with certificates of appreciation, challenge coins, gift bags filled with their favorite goodies, and blankets embroidered with their branch of service. Probably the greatest gift given to the aging veterans, however, doesn't come in a bag; it's the gift of acknowledgement, attention, and respect.

The veterans – and several additional residents of the facility – also came out-

side to enjoy a mini-parade as the Legion Riders looped through the drive on their motorcycles three times in salute to those who served.

“Thank you with all my heart,” said Hannah Smith, wife of veteran Richard Smith. “I know you made him very happy.”

The Duane Ellsworth American Legion Post 129 has served Queen Creek since 2005. Post programs focus on assisting and uplifting veterans, their families, the community, and our nation's youth. Meetings are held at the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce, 22246 S. Ellsworth Rd., on the 3rd Saturday of each month, at 9am.

The Auxiliary, which is open to spouses (male and female), grandmothers,

mothers, sisters, and daughters of veterans, meets at the Chamber on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 6pm.

The Legion Riders group, which is open to Post members and Auxiliary members who have a valid motorcycle license and a motorcycle, meets on the first Saturday of each month, approximately 11am, after working at the United Food Bank Volunteer Center in Mesa. The location of meetings can vary (they are, after all, on wheels!), so call for more information: Jay Duarte, 916-899-3369 or email: [jdsailorman@gmail.com](mailto:jdsailorman@gmail.com).

To learn more about the American Legion in Queen Creek, go to [queen-creeklegion.com](http://queen-creeklegion.com) or contact: [info@queencreeklegion.com](mailto:info@queencreeklegion.com). For more information about the Auxiliary, email: [executiveboard-aux@queencreeklegion.com](mailto:executiveboard-aux@queencreeklegion.com).



Caption, above: Legion Riders (L-R) Bryan Rudd, John DeCastro, and Ralph Jabara looped through the drive on their motorcycles three times in salute to those who served. Photo by Dana Trumbull



Right: Legion Riders (L\_R) Ralph Jabara, Bryan Rudd, and Craig Barnes; Post member Christopher Puma; and Legion Rider John DeCastro visited with resident veterans, recognizing them with certificates of appreciation and other gifts. Seated: Navy Veteran and resident of Countryside Assisted Living, Clyde “Willard” May, who was recognized for serving 8 years in the Navy. Photo by Dana Trumbull



Above: Jim Mathews (seated in chair) visiting with Post members (L-R) Dennis Walker, Pieter Dijkstra, and Bruce Fraser. Mathews served four years as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne during the Korean War. Photo by Dana Trumbull



Above: Legion Rider Ralph Jabara and Auxiliary President Pat Miller present veterans Richard Smith, who served in the Marines for 3 years and in the Air Force for another 8 years (holding certificate), and Gerri Neri, who served in the Army Reserves for 6 years (striped shirt), with certificates of appreciation, embroidered blankets, challenge coins, and chocolate. Background, L-R: Legion Riders Craig Barnes and Bryan Rudd. Photo by Deb Guy