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Each stained glass window is surmounted with a gold star.

Iowa State Remembers

by Jean Macdonald
Technical Journalism Senior

A QUIET HALL filled with soft cathedral light is an unusual place to find in the middle of a busy, modern college. Gold Star Hall, Iowa State College's memorial to its war dead, is such a place.

Visitors and students realize the full beauty of the hall when they see sunlight streaming through stained glass windows onto the gold stars set in a marble floor. However, those beautiful windows were not part of the original Iowa State College Memorial Union building. The building was planned as a memorial to the Iowa State men and women who served in World War I. As a shrine to those who had given their lives, the Gold Star Hall was built at the main entrance to the Union.

The names of those who gave their lives in World War I were carved into the stone walls of the shrine. Hand lettered lists of the men who died during World War II have been placed in cases which hang beneath the carved areas. Under these lists of names are stone benches where students meet to go downstairs to the Union Grill for coffee and cokes.

Each year on Armistice Day a short memorial service is given in the hall, and a wreath is placed over the gold star centered in the marble floor. The first ceremony was held on November 11, 1928, but it wasn't until 1943 that the stained glass windows were installed.

Robert E. Pierson, president of the 1943 Union Student Board, presented the windows with these words:

"It had been the feeling of the Memorial Union Student Board for years that stained glass windows should be installed in Gold Star Hall. A committee was appointed on March 9, 1942, to determine what might be done to insure the installation of the stained glass windows. Through the work of this committee, the dream of 15 years now has been realized. May we not forget the inscription on these walls:"

And then he quoted the words that every Iowa State student and alum recognize as the verse carved into the stone wall above the entrance to Gold Star Hall—

"For Thee they died—Master and maker, God of Right—The Soldier dead at Thy gate, who kept the spears of honor bright, and Freedom's house inviolate. Drinkwater."

The committee began work immediately, and Harold W. Cummings was appointed to make the windows.

Windows Depict Virtues

There are 12 windows in Gold Star Hall, placed in the hall by pairs. Each window depicts a virtue and the design of the window is the explanation of the virtue. The 12 virtues depicted are learning, courage, patriotism, justice, faith, determination, love obedience, loyalty, integrity and tolerance. The artist suggested that development of these virtues is achieved through college.

Knowing the stories behind the scenes give them so much more meaning. You can see the "Dinkey" of the old Ames and College Railway, that famous piece of transportation that ran between the college and downtown Ames. You'll be reminded of the legend of how sites for planting of campus trees were chosen; they (and no one knows who "they" are) say the college's first president, Dr. A. S. Welch, tossed out potatoes, and then wherever a potato fell, a tree was planted.

Love of school and of our fellow men gives a sport scene in the window of love. Since our game with Northwestern in 1895, Iowa State varsity teams have been referred to as the "Cyclones." A scene from that game at which Iowa State won by so great a score that sports writers reported that our team was a "cyclone from the west" is portrayed in glass.

Be sure to look for symbols of Iowa State's divisions. You'll find a woman student with a cherry pie. Remember, the pies are the Veishea project of the home economics women.

Memorial Service

Maybe on November 11, 1954, you'll be walking through Gold Star Hall at 11 a.m. You'll see the ROTC members of the armed forces place the wreath on the center gold star and then sound taps. From across the street you can hear the sounding of the hour from the campanile. It plays a little melody that says:

"God of our fathers,
Be with us yet,
Lest we forget,
Lest we forget."

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