



The American Legion's  
3<sup>rd</sup> District, Department of Missouri  
"Third Herd"



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**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

**1 January 2025**

Web Site Address  
[www.mo3rdherd.com](http://www.mo3rdherd.com)

And our  
[www.facebook.com/ThirdHerdMissouri](http://www.facebook.com/ThirdHerdMissouri)

This newsletter is available to  
view on our website

**Upcoming Meetings**

Meetings are held Quarterly on  
the second Sunday of the month  
at Posts throughout the District.

03/09/25, Post 236, Excelsior Springs

06/08/25, Post 216, Bethany

09/14/25, Not Scheduled Yet

The Commander is the source of all  
content unless otherwise noted.  
Submit articles and pictures for the  
Newsletter by email to the  
Commander. (Subject: Newsletter)  
two weeks prior to Quarterly  
publishing. All submissions subject  
to editing.



***BATTEN DOWN THE  
HATCHES . . . ROUGH  
SEAS MAY BE AHEAD***

The national elections are behind us and changes are headed our way. We had a Democratic President with a Democratic Senate and a Republican House of Representatives. Post election, we will have a Republican President with a Republican Senate and a Republican House of Representatives. There will probably be some changes taking place in our lives. Will it be smooth sailing or rough seas ahead? Time will tell.

As legionnaires, what we do should go on relatively unchanged. We will continue to be veterans taking care of ourselves and our fellow veterans. We will continue to serve in our communities. We will continue to honor our fallen brethren.

We need to work with the new administration just like we did the last. Log onto the American Legion National website and go to the legislative agenda section. Read about the veteran issues that need your support. Use the tools found there to contact & pressure your congressional representatives to act on your behalf and the Legion's behalf.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> DISTRICT MEETING**

Griffith-Skiles Post 237 in Richmond, Missouri hosted the quarterly 3<sup>rd</sup> District meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December at 1500.

I would like to thank Commander Jack Lauck and Griffith-Skiles Post 237 for hosting this meeting. Attendees that were visiting this post for the first time, were encouraged to take a few minutes after this meeting to look at the displays around this room. This is the Griffith-SKILES post and much of what you will read on these walls is about Charles Jackson Skiles, Eugene Skiles, and Garold Leroy Skiles. The three of them were lost 83 years ago on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Charles & Eugene were on the USS Arizona. Garold was on the USS Oklahoma.

Attendance was normal but less than it should be. Every post in the district should have a representative attend if possible. Legionnaires were present from only 5 of our 24 posts (District staff members from posts: 61 – Kansas City, 95 - Liberty, 285 – Hamilton & 557 – Polo. Non-staff members from 237 – Richmond & 557-Polo.) The post-meeting potluck meal was excellent.

While I would love to have all 24 post Commanders and their adjutants present, any member from any post can attend. District meetings are not just for district staff. They are a chance for post officers to interact with District staff. If you decide to come to a district meeting, try to not come alone. Bring another member from your post with you. If your spouse is an ALA member, bring them because a 3<sup>rd</sup> District ALA meeting is also occurring at the same post.

Four to five Posts have been setting the budget, approving donations, electing officers for as long as I have been attending. We need more participation on the district level. We have various committee positions we cannot find anyone to fill. We have District Officer positions that we need candidates for.

As Commander, I am in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of my 2-year term. The district constitution says my position is a two-year term and I cannot be *elected* to succeed myself. However, no legionnaire has stepped up to take over the job of commander. As a consequence, I will remain your District Commander for the foreseeable future until my relief can be found, elected & trained to take my place.

I would like to personally thank Griffith-Skiles Post 237 in Richmond and Commander Jack Lauck for hosting our December meeting.

Note: A copy of the official meeting minutes are always posted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Herd webpage following each meeting. [www.mo3rdherd.com](http://www.mo3rdherd.com)

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I was out driving with my wife of 50+ years when my mind began to wander as it often does. She is used to this happening and is just thankful that my septuagenarian brain still functions. “Answer a question for me?” I said. She looked at me as if to ask “What now?”. I asked her “How many military branches are there?” She said “Four.” I asked her to name them and she said “Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines”. I told her she was wrong and there were more than that. She had a puzzled look but after a few moments shyly said “Space Force?” I told her that was correct but there was still our ‘Brother From A Different Mother’. She asked me to explain and I told her she forgot the United States Coast Guard. She asked me why I referred to the USCG as a brother from a different mother. I informed her that the Coast Guard is not under the control of the Department of Defense. The Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security during peacetime. In wartime, the Coast Guard can be transferred to DOD by Presidential &/or Congressional action.

As a veteran, why should I care about this? If the Department of Homeland Security spends all their budget on immigration and border security, our veteran brothers in the Coast Guard might not get paid! This is just one of the many issues receiving legislative attention from the American Legion.

Read the article later in this newsletter to find out how you can get legislatively involved.

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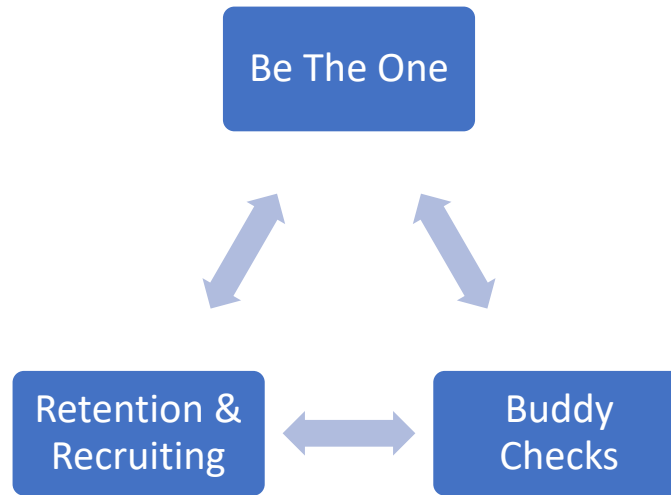


### ONLINE TRAINING = BASIC TRAINING

On-line course consisting of 6 lesson units and 1 exam unit. (History / Veteran Affairs & Rehabilitation / National Security / Americanism / Children & Youth / Course Conclusion / Final Exam). It is self-paced. You can log out and log back in whenever you have free time. Upon successful completion, you will receive a link to a web page to print out a course completion diploma. Graduation also qualifies you for an “American Legion Education Institute” lapel/hat pin. As an incentive, I will buy the pin for any district member that shows me that they successfully completed the course while I am District Commander. (Sadly, only one legionnaire in the district has taken me up on this offer! ☹️)

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# AN AMERICAN LEGION TRIAD



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All three of these programs work fine independently. However, they work a lot better when worked together, ‘hand-in-hand.’

First, we must train ourselves to recognize suicidal signs in others. Then we must be actively involved in our veteran community to have contact with individuals needing intervention.

“Be The One” program provides us with the training. “Retention-Recruiting Calls” and “Buddy Checks” provide us with the opportunity to find veterans in crisis.

As legionnaires, we cannot just hide in our posts ignoring the world around us. Veterans in need are not going to just show up at your door. You need to seek contact with fellow veterans that might be troubled.

## **“Be The One” TRAINING**

As a post, you can have training brought to you or you can seek it out individually.

The Missouri Department of Mental Health has assembled the Missouri Veterans Suicide Prevention Team (MOVSP). Go on-line to [dmh.mo.gov/veterans](http://dmh.mo.gov/veterans), go to the MOVSP article and click on the ‘find a trainer’ link. The training is about 90 minutes long and is good for both veterans and non-veterans. You can train just your post or you can open your doors and offer training to your community. This could be a great, low-cost Public Relations event for your post. Veteran suicide is an issue but so is teen suicide.

Individual training is also available on line. National Headquarters has partnered with the Columbia University 'Lighthouse Project' to provide access to training. Go to [www.legion.org/betheone](http://www.legion.org/betheone) . On that screen you will see a red block labeled 'FIND A SESSION'. Scroll down that new page and select a scheduled training session. At the time of this writing, there are 3 upcoming sessions. Two are from 1330-1500 Central (90 minutes) on 10/3 and 10/17. The third is from 1630-1800 Central (90 minutes) on 10/10.

### **Retention-Recruiting Calls**

Past Department Commander Mark Clark shares a personal story of a successful suicide intervention. It occurred during a membership revitalization event. A Post 1000 member was called. The conversation started out casually. "How are you doing? We saw that you were not part of any local post and just wanted to check up on you." The casual conversation continued and the gentleman slowly started to open up to the caller. However, some of the things he said sounded problematic. The caller, signaled to others at the event. He kept the phone call going while others called authorities to perform a "wellness" check on the possibly suicidal gentleman. The call ended when emergency personnel arrived at the veteran's home. Later during the event, the veteran called back and thanked the member that called him for sending him help.

### **Buddy Checks**

Engage with your roster, both current members AND expired. Either way, they are veterans that have earned and deserve our caring & respect. 'Buddy Check' calls are wellness checks. These veterans might have issues that could lead them to self-harm or suicide. They might be depressed, lonely, financially stressed, medically house-bound, etcetera. If we take care of our fellow veterans, they will take care of us. They may join back up if they are expired. They may just speak well of us to others that may result in others joining. They may have been despondent/suicidal & may be turned around by realizing that someone still cares about them.

Design some of your post events to help your local veteran community. Host a veteran luncheon event for the veterans that do not drive at night. If they do not drive at all, consider offering to give them rides to and from. Or pack them a lunch and deliver it to them (allow time for a short visitation). Invite all local vets to attend. If you call a member that no longer attends meetings, ask them why. You might find that whatever drove them away no longer exists. This might make them want to get involved again.

Don't pressure them for dues either. If they are expired, politely ask them why they left. It might be something you can fix. If they are overdue and planning to renew, ask them to do so as soon as possible to save the legion the money it takes to send out renewal notices. If they are current members & already renewed for the coming year, thank them for their continuing support of the legion.

### **Do your part . . . Pick up the phone and make some calls**

Here is a perfect example of a "Buddy Check" that resulted in a positive outreach:

Commander Chris Stull of Clyde-Gustine Post 236 in Excelsior Springs shared the following story with me. He has two older members in his post that are father and son. The father, Allen Odell, served in World War 2 and his son, Andrew Odell, served in the Korean War. Both have been continuous members in the American Legion for 71 years! The advanced age of these members has limited their post activity. It was up to the other members in the post to “Buddy Check” them & stay in contact.

Chris has personally stayed in touch with these two men. The only thing Allen Odell has ever asked for is for someone to come by to sit in the garage with him and share a beer. A couple of months ago, Chris was talking with the son. He said his father needed help at his home but would not ask for himself. The railing system on his front porch was in bad shape and unsafe. It needed to be replaced and a ramp was needed for easier access. Chris said he would take care of it.

Chris talked to both his Post 236 membership and to the Excelsior Springs SAL squadron. Both organizations agreed to share the cost of materials. Plenty of members stepped up to volunteer their time & labor.

In fact, once the project got rolling, even the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 236 and the local VFW jumped in to help.

The one-day project started on Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>. Due to an unforeseen material shortage, construction was completed the following Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. The end result was a good looking, well-built and safe porch with a ramp. Allen was delighted!

Commander Stull said, “We need to do more things like this for the veterans like this man. If it was not for these men and women, the rest of us would not have been here to do our part.”

## **CONCLUSION**

*These three programs work individually. But they work markedly better when worked simultaneously, ‘hand-in-hand’.*

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## **DÉJÀ VU**

Are you seeing things? Is this the current newsletter or an old one? Didn’t you see that article in the last issue? Maybe you did and maybe you didn’t! Important things are worth repeating. Yes, some of the articles you have seen before. Some are similar but have been updated. Others are totally new. Do yourself and me a favor and read through it before you judge it. (NOTE: It might be more interesting if more members contributed to it.)

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## ONLINE TRAINING = BASIC TRAINING

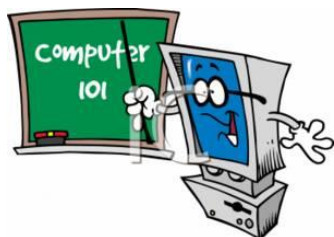
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## MYLEGION.ORG

The system still has issues but use it if you can. If you encounter a problem, use the ‘help’ button and click on ‘known issues’ to see if the problem has already been reported. If it hasn’t been reported, do so. The system is only going to get better if we use it and provide feedback. This system is invaluable to Post Commanders, Post Adjutants & Post Membership Chairpersons. The search functions will help you locate Post 1000 members to potentially transfer into your post and the administrative functions are designed to make the Adjutant’s job much easier.

Remember the “We want you back!” retention letters that used to exist? Well, they’re back! With just a few key strokes, you can print off letters addressed to your post members that are behind in their dues. The letters are customized with your post’s dues amount filled in and your post Commander’s name at the bottom. It has a detachable portion at the bottom with mailing instructions.



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Computer got you confused?!? If you are a post Commander or Adjutant, you need to get computerized to function effectively in today’s American Legion. If you need help finding your way around in MyLegion and other legion websites, let me know and I will try to find you help.





## **POW-MIA EMPTY CHAIR**

Every quarter, we feature a dedication to a POW-MIA individual or group. This quarter we honor 27-year-old, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Donald B. Alexander from Saint James, Missouri. He was assigned to the 497<sup>th</sup> Bomber Group, 871<sup>st</sup> Bomber Squadron as a B-29 Flight Engineer.

On January 27, 1945 his B-29 Superfortress "Ghastly Goose" departed from Saipan in the Mariana Islands on a mission to bomb aircraft assembly plants in Tokyo, Japan.

Some records indicate they were badly damaged by anti-aircraft fire or rammed by a Ki-61 over Japan. They were able to depart the target area under some control. It was determined they needed to ditch into the water, with low fuel also being a challenge. Observing aircraft could see a number of beacons and flashlights, signifying the bomber was intact and at least some of the men were alive in the water. However, subsequent search and rescue attempts were futile, hindered by foul weather conditions in the Sea of Japan. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Alexander and the other 10 members of his crew were reported missing. They were all officially declared dead on January 28, 1946.

Lest we forget.



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## **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Membership dues were supposed to be paid for 2025 by January 1<sup>st</sup> of 2025! If dues are not paid by Jan. 1 of each calendar year, the member is considered to be *delinquent*. After Feb. 1, the member is classified as *suspended*. If not paid by June 30, the member is *dropped* from the membership rolls.

Simplify your life and the life of your post adjutant. Each year on July 1<sup>st</sup>, the legion starts collecting dues for the upcoming membership year. Pay your dues as soon as possible after July 1<sup>st</sup> and everyone's life will be simpler. By renewing early, your post will reach its retention goals easier (and sooner). The American Legion will also save a lot of money by not having to send out renewal notices (which will help keep dues from going up).

Think about it this way: If you were buying a season pass to an amusement park, you would be expected to pay for the pass before you could use it. You should treat the legion the same way. ***You should pay for the new year before the start of that year.***

How is your post doing with renewals? Go to [www.missourilegion.org](http://www.missourilegion.org) and look at the district report on the membership page. The three rightmost columns are the important ones.

Note: If your membership is delinquent, suspended or expired, some of the American Legion membership benefits may not be available to you.



## **LEGISLATIVE INVOLVEMENT**

When I was on active duty, I never thought about joining a veterans organization and I was never approached by one. When I retired, I felt my veteran rights were being threatened. The BRAC Commission was closing military facilities at every turn which would limit my ability to utilize military medical & commissary facilities. Any time Congress wanted to make monetary changes, it seemed like they wanted to target military retiree & veteran benefits. I found myself wanting to join an organization that would fight to maintain &/or improve my veteran rights. I found the American Legion!

The American Legion is constantly present in the halls of Congress. Some of our members are also members of Congress. The strength of our political influence depends on the volume of our membership. Our membership represents a huge voting block that Congress cannot ignore. However, we cannot sit back & rest on our laurels. We must work to keep our membership numbers strong and growing to maintain our influential status.

Besides maintaining our current benefits, the legion has been instrumental in gaining us additional benefits. The Legion helped bring about the GI Bill. They helped pressure the Veterans Administration into recognizing and providing treatment for PTSD, Agent Orange Exposure and most recently, Toxic Burn Pit Exposure. These changes didn't happen overnight. It took a lot of work from dedicated people to make these things a reality.

You can help by putting additional pressure on Congress. Go online to [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) Select the 'Programs' menu, scroll down and select 'Legislative'. Click on the 'Learn More' button. On the left-hand menu, click on 'Legislative Action Center'. Here you can read about the latest issues the Legion is supporting to benefit veterans. Explore this page. From here you can sign up for email alerts. From any of the issue pages, you can have a form letter with your name on it sent to your Senator &/or Representative.

This 'Legislative Action Center' allows you to have a personal impact on veterans' issues with only a minimal amount of personal effort. Won't you help?!?

NOTE: There is a shortcut for legislative involvement. Log in at [www.legion.org/action](http://www.legion.org/action) This takes you to a simplified page for rapidly voicing your views on important topics. (Less reading & more action). You can make entries here as often as you wish. Be aware that this legislative access page can be used by the public too! Have your non-veteran friends use this page to voice their concerns too!

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**3-YEAR RENEWALS:** How does this work? Here's how. This can only be done online through National. You have to log on to [www.legion.org/renew](http://www.legion.org/renew) or [www.legion.org/join](http://www.legion.org/join) , which ever applies. Fill out the form and use your credit card to pay. Dues for all three years are charged right up front. National will send the Department/Post yearly portions to the Department in 3 yearly installments. Your post adjutant will issue your new membership card as soon as National reports that your dues are paid.

Why would I want to do this? Here is why. Renewing this way saves the legion a lot of money. For the three-year period, no renewal notices will have to be printed and mailed out. With this being a direct electronic payment to National, there will be no paperwork to process which saves labor cost. It also locks the dues rate in at the *current rate* for all three years. At the end of the three-year period, any renewal by the member will be at whatever the rate is at the time of the renewal.

So the member saves a little money, avoids renewal notices & saves the legion money. Doing so will help keep future dues as low as possible for as long as possible.

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# **UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER**

## **January 2025**

- 1 New Years Day Office Closed**
- 1 Be The One Day**
- 18 80% Membership Target Date**
- 20 Inauguration Day**
- 20 Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday – Department Office Closed**
- 28 Coast Guard’s 109th Birthday**

## **February 2025 (Americanism Month)**

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 2 Four Chaplains Sunday**
- 6 Law & Order/Fire Fighter Nomination due to Department**
- 6 Distinguished Legionnaire Nomination due to Department**
- 6 Distinguished Service Nomination due to Department**
- 11-12 Lincoln Pilgrimage -Springfield, IL**
- 14 Valentines Day & Ash Wednesday**
- 17 President’s Day – Department Headquarters Closed**
- 22-26 National Washington Conference**
- 23 Oratorical Contest – Southern Boone County High School, Ashland, MO 1:00 p.m.**

## **March 2025**

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 1 Spring Department Executive Committee Meeting – Harry B. Pryor Post 152, 123 E. Broadway, Ashland, MO 11:00 a.m.**
- 1 Missouri Boy State Trivia Night – Lindenwood University 6:00 p.m.**
- 1 Eagle Scout Application Dues to Department Headquarters**
- 2 Missouri Boy Sate Board meeting – Lindenwood University**
- 12 90% Membership Target Date**
- 15 American Legion’ s 106th Birthday**
- 25 Registration For State Youth Government Day due to Department**
- 29 Vietnam War Remembrance Day**

## **April 2025 (Children & Youth Month)**

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 9 State Youth Government Day 10 95% Membership Target Date**
- 15 Annual Post Data Report Due to Department**
- 18 Good Friday – Department Headquarters Closed**
- 20 All Scholarship applications are due to Department**
- 20 Easter**
- 27 American Legion Family Day**

## **May 2025**

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 5-8 National Spring Meetings – Indianapolis, IN**
- 7-8 Truman Pilgrimage – Independence, MO**
- 8 Truman Holiday - Department Headquarters Closed**
- 10 2025 Membership Award forms due to Department**
- 14 100% Membership Target Date**
- 16-18 86th High School Oratorical Contest – Hillsdale College Michigan**
- 23 National Poppy Day**
- 26 Memorial Day - Department Headquarters Office Closed**

Most of our lives are rather busy. Cold weather has driven us indoors. This will be the perfect time for your post to put on a pot of coffee & hold an indoor, informal ‘workshop’ session to brainstorm public relations, fund raising and recruiting ideas. Start planning your upcoming activities for the rest of the membership year. Make plans and execute the best ideas.

As always, continue working on your public image. How does the public perceive you? Do they think you are just a bunch of crotchety old geezers that put out flags occasionally and spend the rest of your time sitting around drinking beer and telling ‘war stories’.

Take advantage of every opportunity to present your American Legion post to the public in a positive light.

*Make your post a place a veteran would want to join regardless of their service branch or era.*



**IN-COUNTRY**



**THE 1,000-YARD MEETS THE TWO-YARD STARE!**

