



The American Legion's
3rd District, Department of Missouri
"Third Herd"



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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

1 July 2024

Web Site Address
www.mo3rdherd.com

Facebook Address
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.

06/09/24, New Commander Assigns

09/08/24, New Commander Assigns

12/08/24, New Commander Assigns

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.



JUL-AUG-SEP
2024

June 20th was the first day of Summer & July 1st is the first
day of the 2025 Membership Recruiting & Retention season.

Our district completed the 2024 membership year with mixed
results. We have 25 posts spread over 9 counties. Some did
exceptionally well and sadly others failed to meet their goals.

As of June 21st, here are the statistics:

- 7 posts with 100% or more
- 5 posts with 90% or more but less than 100%
- 10 posts with 80% or more but less than 90%
- 3 posts with less than 80%

I realize that money is tight and inflation is burdensome.
However, smokers always find money for cigarettes. Lottery
players always find money for lottery tickets. Legion members
that want to be legion members can also find the money for
dues. (Legion dues are less than \$1.00 per week.)

Don't be phone shy. Make those retention calls!

3rd DISTRICT MEETING

Wilson-Axline Post 216 of Bethany hosted the District Meeting on the 9th of June at 1500.

Attendance was above average but still less than it should be. The post-meeting potluck meal was excellent. Eighteen legionnaires were present but only 6 of our 25 posts were represented (District staff members from posts: 61 – Kansas City, 95 - Liberty, 285 – Hamilton & 557 – Polo.) (Non-staff members from posts: 106 – Albany & 216 – Bethany.)

While we would like to have all 25 post Commanders and their adjutants present, any member can attend. District meetings are not just for district staff. They are a chance for post officers to interact with District staff.

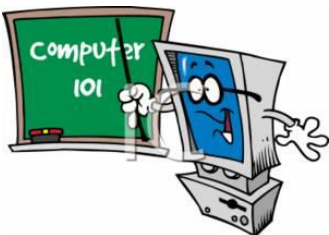
Four to five Posts have been setting the budget, approving donations, electing officers for as long as I have been attending. We need more participation on the district level. We have various committee positions we can't find anyone to fill. We have District Officer positions that we need candidates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

As Commander, I am in the 4th 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.

In addition, I am currently the Zone II Vice Commander covering Districts 3, 4, 5 & 7. This is a one-year term on Department Staff and I am filling this position simultaneously.

I would like to personally thank Wilson-Axline Post 216 and Commander Alan Guernsey for hosting our June meeting.

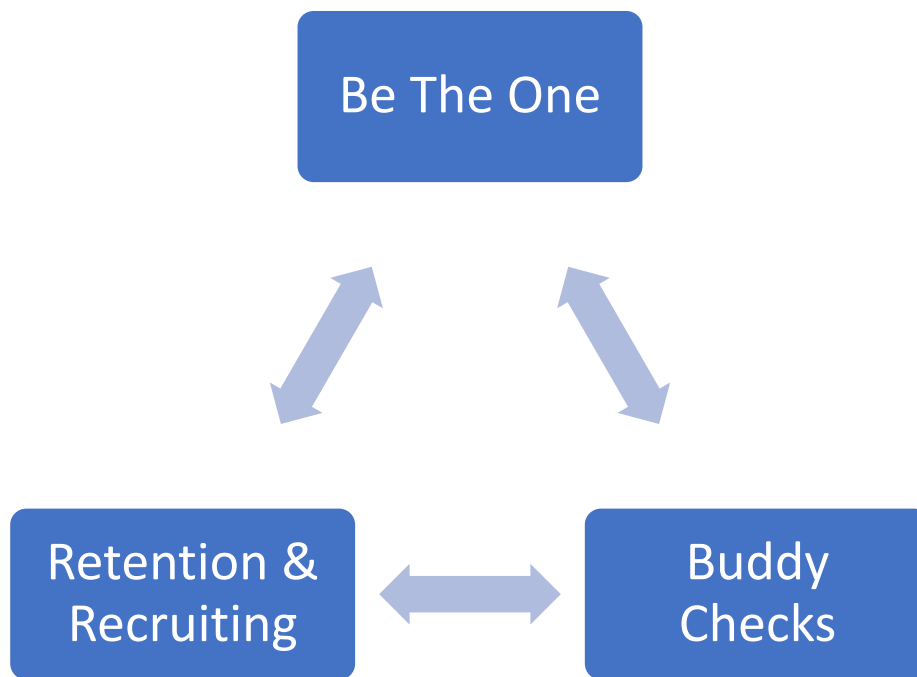
Note: A copy of the official meeting minutes are always posted on the 3rd Herd webpage following each meeting. www.mo3rdherd.com



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.

AN AMERICAN LEGION TRIAD



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, 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. 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. They are from 1330-1500 Central (90 minutes) on 7/11, 7/18 and 7/25.

Retention-Recruiting Calls

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 what ever 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 13th. Due to an unforeseen material shortage, construction was completed the following Saturday, April 20th. 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'.



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! ☹️)

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.

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.)



POW-MIA EMPTY CHAIR

Every quarter, we feature a dedication to a POW-MIA individual or group. This quarter we honor the 79 submariners missing with the depth charge sinking of SS-257, USS Harder on August 24th 1944.

The Harder made six patrols before it was sunk, with its fifth being the most successful, according to the Naval History & Heritage Command, sinking three Japanese destroyers and heavily-damaging or destroying two more in four days. Its last-known location was in the South China Sea off Luzon during its sixth and last war patrol.

Lost for 80 years, the discovery of USS Harder was announced on May 24th of this year. Resting at a depth of 3,750 feet, the vessel sits upright on her keel relatively intact except for the depth-charge damage aft of the conning tower.

“Harder was lost in the course of victory. We must not forget that victory has a price, as does freedom,” said Samuel J. Cox, U.S. Navy Rear Admiral (retired). “We are grateful that Lost 52 Project has given us the opportunity to once again honor the valor of the crew of the ‘Hit ‘em Harder’ submarine that sank the most Japanese warships — in particularly audacious attacks — under her legendary skipper, Cmdr. Sam Dealey.”

The USS Harder received the Presidential Unit Citation for her first five patrols, six battle stars for World War II service. Dealey was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor “for his outstanding contribution to the war effort on Harder’s fifth patrol.”

Lest we forget.



FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The on-time period for the collection of dues for 2024 has passed. Membership dues were supposed to be paid for 2024 by January 1st of 2024! 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.

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 and look at the district report on the membership page. The three rightmost columns are the important ones.

Note: If your membership is delinquent, expired or suspended, 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 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 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!

MEMBERSHIP HEADLINES

DUES INCREASE: The National Convention Finance Committee recommended and the National Convention Delegates approved an increase of \$5.00 in membership dues starting with the 2025 membership year. Despite staff reductions and process improvements, the continued decline in membership and ever-increasing costs of doing business make this increase necessary. This was not an easy decision to make and could not be postponed any longer.

NOTE: The Department of Missouri does not anticipate a need to increase state dues for the foreseeable future. They have implemented many cost cutting measures to hold down their administrative costs. For example, the “Missouri Legionnaire” newsletter that was mailed to you on a quarterly basis is now posted on line. This saves the department the cost of printing & mailing a copy to every member in the state. Another example is where the District Commanders now bring the annual membership packets back from the annual convention for distribution. These packets can be quite heavy and are very costly to mail to all the posts. Hand-delivery by the District Commanders has resulted a substantial savings.

UNDERWATER POSTS: Every post votes and sets their own dues amount. In the past, the post adjutant has sent in \$32.50 (\$18.50 for National & \$14.00 for Department) for each membership renewal. Starting July 2024, the post adjutant has to send in \$37.50 (\$23.50 for National & \$14.00 for Department). Your post is considered to be underwater if your post dues amount is less than what you have to submit for a renewal. If your annual post dues are less than \$37.50, your post will need to hold a vote to raise your dues amount.

3-YEAR RENEWALS: How does this work? Here’s how. This can only be done on-line through National. You have to log on to www.legion.org/renew or 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 (3 x \$45 = \$135 until July 1st and then 3 x \$50 = \$150 thereafter). 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.

POST ACTIVITIES (past & future)

Wilson-Axline Post 216 - Bethany

6/9/24 – Hosted the 3rd District Quarterly Meeting

Clyde-Gustine Post 236 – Excelsior Springs

4/13/24 & 4/20/24 – Performed home improvements & repairs for WW2 veteran

Boutwell-Clark-Craven-Eads Post 285 – Hamilton

This post provided “Honor Guard” services for ten (10) veteran funerals last quarter.

This post partners with the Second Harvest Community Food Bank to distribute food to citizens of NW Missouri that are in need. This event is held in the parking lot of the post on the 3rd Friday of every month.

These two (2) are the only post accomplishment inputs I received for publication. 😞

I haven't received any announcements for upcoming events for publication. 😞

It is hard for our posts to support each other if we keep our activities a secret from each other.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

July 2024

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 1 Consolidated Post Report due to National if you are filing an electronic report through MyLegion**
- 1 'Certification of Post Officials' form due to Department so that District Commanders can pick up post membership packets**
- 4 Independence Day – Department Headquarters Closed**
- 7 Newsletter Competition Entries due to Department or can be hand delivered to the Department Convention office NLT than 9:00 am July 12, 2024**
- 11 -14 Department Convention - Hilton St. Louis Airport**
- 19 Cutoff for National Convention Registration**
- 25-27 National Membership Workshop- Indianapolis, IN**

August 2024

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 4 USCG Birthday (1790)**
- 8 -18 Missouri State Fair -Sedalia**
- 15-20 97th American Legion Baseball World Series – Shelby, NC**
- 18 – 22 National American Legion Legacy Run**
- 23-29 105th American Legion National Convention, New Orleans, LA**

September 2024 (American Legion National Disaster Preparedness)

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 2 Labor Day - Department Headquarters Closed**
- 8 3rd District Meeting, 1500**
- 11 Patriot Day**
- 16 American Legion Day**
- 16 Fall Conference -Cutoff Date for Room Reservations**
- 20 POW-MIA Recognition Day**
- 20-29 Combined Americanism Conference – Indianapolis, IN**
- 24-28 80th Cotton Carnival Celebration – Sikeston, MO**

October 2024 (National Disability/Employment Awareness Month)

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 7-10 National Fall Meetings, Indianapolis, IN**
- 12 Eisenhower Pilgrimage – Abilene Kansas**
- 13 Navy's 230th Birthday**
- 14 Columbus Day**
- 18-20 Fall Conference -Capitol Plaza**

November 2024 (Membership Retention Month)

- 1 Be The One Day**
- 3 Daylight Savings Time Ends (Clocks back an hour)**
- 5 Election Day**
- 10 Marine Corps' 226th Birthday**
- 11 Veterans Day – Department Headquarters Closed**
- 28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday**

December 2024

- 1 Be The One Day**

- 7 Pearl Harbor Day Remembrance Day
- 8 3rd District Meeting, 1500,
- 20 Space Force's 5th Birthday
- 31 Membership Cutoff for Lincoln Pilgrimage

Most of our lives are rather busy this time of year with outdoor activities. However, many times the summer heat & humidity limit our participation. This is the perfect time for your post to put on a pot of coffee & hold an indoor, air-conditioned, informal 'workshop' session to brainstorm public relations, fund raising and recruiting ideas. Start planning your upcoming activities for the rest of the 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 era.

September 20, 2024 POW-MIA Recognition Day



WE WILL NEVER STOP LOOKING FOR YOU!



