



**The American Legion
Department of Missouri
District Three**

November 1, 2009

Dear Commander and Adjutant,

During the weekend of October 23rd, I attended the Department of Missouri Fall Conference in Jefferson City, MO. During the conference the annual Americanism awards were distributed. Thirteen posts in our district received awards. I congratulate those posts on a job well done and I urge the other sixteen posts to submit their consolidated reports this year.

I cannot stress enough the importance of those consolidated reports. Department uses them to judge the success of department programs and National uses them as leverage when dealing with Congress. As an example, for the sake of argument, let's say that one legionnaire volunteers at a VA facility just four hours a day. Let's also assume that the average pay for an employee would be ten dollars an hour. Now you take twenty hours a week, which is four hundred dollars a week, that come out to over 20,000 dollars a year, and that is just one person. Multiply that by the thousands upon thousands of volunteer hours provided by all of the legionnaires and you are talking some big bucks saved. And, we all know that one thing our congress understands is money. And that is just the volunteer. Then we have all of those hours that our Honor Guards render toward honoring our departed veterans at funerals, educational classes provided to the school, the hours spent working on Boys State, the Oratorical Scholarship Program, etc.

Of course, another main topic during the conference was Membership. If you have noticed, the goal for every post this year is very attainable. All National is asking for is last years membership plus one. As of today, we have one post that has already attained that goal. I know we can do it.

This year there was two Flag Amendments Resolutions were introduced in Congress. Senate Bill 15 has 47 co-sponsors and House Resolution 47 has only 4 co-sponsors. We are urged to contact our Representative and urge him to support this resolution. The Flag is ours and should be honored.

Then we come to that tax thing again. Department Judge Advocate, Jim Davis, talked at length on the importance of each post having their own constitution and by-laws. For the most part the Officer's Guide contains most everything you would need for this. If your post does not have its own constitution and by-laws, be sure to get them written and submitted to Department. One of the main reasons for this is for the protection of the officers. Each post should also be incorporated.



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Taxes - - With the passing of the Pension Reform Act of 2006, as of January 1, 2007 all non-profit organizations MUST file a tax return. Prior to this, if a non-profit organization had an income of less than \$25,000 no filing was required. But that all changed with that bill. Now EVERY POST must file their return. It is a fairly simple form – Form 990 – and must be done on line. Each post must file returns for every year from 2007 until now. If you fail to file for three years in a row you can, and probably will, lose your non-profit status. National does not and will not file your return, each post must do it itself.

One of the main goals of our Department Commander this year is that our Legion is in every high school in the state presenting citizenship awards. This is a relative inexpensive thing to do, medals do not cost that much from Emblem Sales and they leave a lasting impression in the hearts and minds of the students who receive them.

Another rather inexpensive thing to do, and it also is very important, is having a post representative at every District meeting. We have only four meetings a year. But, it is during these meetings that all of the decisions are made concerning the business of the District and the spending of your money. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2010. This will be a very important meeting in that we will be discussing making changes to our by-laws. If you have a member who wishes to attend, why not have the post reimburse him or her for the gas it takes to travel to Excelsior Springs? We are in need of a Vice-Commander. If you know of any legion member who would like to serve in this important position, please send me his or her name. Chuck Collier, who was our Southern-Vice Commander, has moved to Florida and has resigned from his position. The qualifications for the position are very extensive – the candidate must be a member of The American Legion and dues paid up for the year.

That pretty much covers the content of the Fall Conference. Thank you for all you do for the Legion and our country.

See you in January at the District meeting.

John F. Kopp, Commander
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