



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



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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

1 April 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, Post 216, Bethany

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.



***SPRING/SUMMER
2024***

Spring is here and Summer is following closely on its heels. All the things that come with the change of seasons are upon us. Spring rains feed the world we live in. They bring out the leaves on the trees, the sprouting of flowers in the beds and the growth of our grass lawns. Spring signals the start of many jobs on our "Hunny-Do" lists. It also marks the beginning of our outdoor recreating (mushroom hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, baseball, etc).

Spring is also when The American Legion has its final membership push for the current year. The final 2024 membership target dates are 95% by April 10th and 100% by May 15th. These targets are very reachable but only if every post actively works on membership retention and recruiting. As a post you can not just set back and let membership happen! No one post member/officer can successfully do it either.

Get your post members together, put on the coffee pot and make some phone calls.

Every post can benefit from a good revitalization!

3rd DISTRICT MEETING

Clyde Gustine Post 236 of Excelsior Springs hosted the District Meeting on the 10th of March at 1500.

Attendance was sadly normal but the post-meeting BBQ meal was excellent. Eighteen legionnaires were present but only 5 of our 25 posts were represented (61 – Kansas City, 95 - Liberty, 285 - Hamilton, 236 Excelsior Springs, & 557 - Polo).

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 my 3rd year. 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 Clyde Gustine Post 236 and Commander Christopher Stull for hosting our March 10th meeting.

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

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.)

AMERICAN LEGION MULTIYEAR MEMBERSHIP IS HERE

Eliminate the yearly hassle of remembering to renew your American Legion membership by taking advantage of the new multiyear membership available to current and potential members. Legionnaires needing to renew 2024 or veterans joining the organization for the first time can lock in a three-year membership by visiting legion.org/renew or legion.org/join.

A multiyear membership was approved by the National Executive Committee of The American Legion during the organization's Spring Meeting last May. Resolution 1: Purchase of Multiple Years of Membership approves "a five-years pilot program offering the purchase of these consecutive 12-month member terms at the then current dues rate."

Here is what you need to know about the three-year membership:

- ❖ Multiyear member sign-up is only available on the national American Legion website. Current or potential members cannot renew or join for three-year membership at the post level or through MyLegion.org.
- ❖ Renew now with a three-year membership by visiting legion.org/renew.
- ❖ Join now with a three-year membership by visiting legion.org/join.
- ❖ Legionnaires already renewed for 2024 will soon be able to renew under the multi-year membership starting with the 2025-member year.
- ❖ Payment for the three-year membership will be upfront.
- ❖ There is not a discount rate with the three-year membership.
- ❖ Membership cards will be sent annually by Legion posts.
- ❖ Those who sign up for a multiyear membership will not receive a renewal notice during the time they have signed up for the multiyear membership.

Please note that the multiyear membership will work just like PUFL. Whatever rate the member renews at is the what the post/department/national will receive for the duration of that timeframe. Once the member renews after the three-year renewal is up, the renewal rate will adjust to the new rate. For questions, please contact Department headquarters.

BE THE ONE – NOT Just A One Year Program

Every year, the American Legion elects a new National Commander. Each new commander places emphasis on a program of personal interest. Our outgoing National Commander J. “Jim” Troiola put Suicide Prevention in the spotlight and named this campaign “BE THE ONE”.



Unlike previous commander's programs, BE THE ONE is going to continue indefinitely. As a society, we have an ongoing problem of suicide within our communities, especially amongst our veterans. Local help is available from the “Missouri Veterans Suicide Prevention Team” for the asking. The team is directed by Jon Sabala, Missouri Department of Mental Health Veterans Service Officer. This team of volunteers conducts suicide prevention training around the state. Currently there are only a handful of team members doing this training. They have sent out emails to the American Legion, DAV and VFW challenging them to host training at the district level and post level. Having them conduct a training session at your post would be a great public relations opportunity. You could make it a community event open to the public. After all, veterans are not the only potential suicide group. Teen suicide is also on the rise and the public could receive some much needed, potentially life-saving information. This training is free, approximately 90 min. long and designed to help prevent **ALL** potential suicides (not just veterans). (<https://dmh.mo.gov/veterans>) (<https://www.facebook.com/MOVSPT>)



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, not one legionnaire in the district has taken me up on this offer yet! ☹)



POW-MIA EMPTY CHAIR

Every quarter, we feature a dedication to a POW-MIA individual or group. This quarter we honor multiple MIAs associated with a repatriation flight following World War 2.

On May 17, 1946, a C-47 plane loaded with 12 wooden crates containing the bodies of 40 deceased Americans exhumed from sites across Asia.

Some of the remains had come from the prisoner cemetery at Rangoon Prison Camps, Laos, Cambodia, Pacific islands, Malaysia, South French Indochina and crash sites in China, and other burial sites in Burma.

It was manned by a crew of three. Also onboard were eight passengers, seven of which were American Graves Registration Service Personnel.

The aircraft's intended route was a routine flight from Rangoon, Burma to Calcutta, India. The weather conditions were poor for flying, with severe thunderstorms, line squalls and heavy monsoon rains.

It never reached its destination. There is bitter irony in the loss and subsequent MIA status for the crew (and the 40 remains that had been previously located).

Over six decades later, the crash site has been located and positively identified. Many of the families of these men still wait for the positive identification and repatriation of their loved ones remains.

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.

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.

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!



VERSUS

“My post
small and

**BE THE
ONE**

is too
we don't

have the manpower to support both of these programs plus
membership revitalization!”

“Both of these programs are important but we can't do both!”

My answer to these excuses is “Yes, you can!”

Both programs are inner-twined!!! In both cases the mental health of the veteran is of the utmost importance. In a rural setting, you know most of the veterans in the area. In fact, many of them are on the roster of your post.

They may not drive anymore. They may not attend meetings anymore for one reason or another. They may be expired members. Regardless they are all local veterans that deserve our attention!

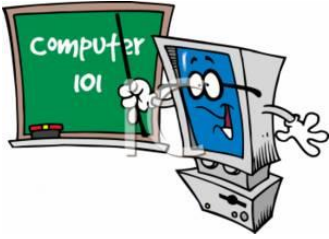
An older veteran sitting home alone could easily become depressed and depression can lead to suicide.

Engage with your roster, both current members and expired. ‘Buddy Check’ calls are wellness checks. 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!



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.

POST ACTIVITIES (past & future)

Clyde Gustine Post 236 – Excelsior Springs

3/10/24 – Hosted the 3rd District Quarterly Meeting

Boutwell-Clark-Craven-Eads Post 285 – Hamilton

We provided “Honor Guard” services for eleven (11) veteran funerals last quarter.

Monthly, we partner 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.

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

I didn't receive 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.

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: Ten (10) of the twenty-five (25) posts in District 3 are going to be underwater when dues increase July 2024. Every post votes and sets their own dues amount. For each membership renewal, the post adjutant sends in \$32.50 (\$18.50 for National & \$14.00 for Department). Starting July 2024, the post adjutant will need 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 post dues are less than \$37.50 your post will need to hold a vote to raise your dues amount before July.

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 new rate is.

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.

2024 DATES TO REMEMBER

April 2024 (Children & Youth Month)

- 1** **Be The One Day**
- 6 15th Annual Missouri Boy State Trust Trivia Night
- 9 State Youth Government Day
- 10** **95% Membership Target Date**
- 15 Annual Post Data Report Due to Department
- 20 All Scholarship applications are due to Department
- 27 American Legion Family Day

May 2024

- 1** **Be The One Day**
- 6 -9 National Spring Meetings – Indianapolis, IN
- 7-8 Truman Pilgrimage – Independence, MO
- 8 Truman Holiday - Department Headquarters Closed
- 10 2024 Membership Award forms due to Department
- 15** **100% Membership Target Date**
- 17-19 85th High School Oratorical Contest – Hillsdale College Michigan
- 18 Armed Forces Day
- 24 National Poppy Day
- 27 Memorial Day - Department Headquarters Office Closed

June 2024

- 1** **Be The One Day**
- 9** **Cutoff for Department Convention Registration**
- 9 3rd District Meeting, 1500, Wilson-Axline Post 216, Bethany, MO
- 10-14** **Missouri Cadet Patrol Academy – Jefferson City**
- 14 Flag Day
- 14 Army's 249th Birthday
- 15** **Consolidated Post Reports due to Department Headquarters if you are filing a paper form.**
- 16 Father's Day
- 19 Juneteenth Day – Department Headquarters closed
- 22-29** **84th Missouri Boys State**
- 28-30 Missouri American Legion Legacy Ride
- 24 JROTC applications are due to Department Headquarters
- 25 Korean War Remembrance Day
- 30** **Toot Your Horn entries due to Department**

July 2024

- 1** **Be The One Day**
- 1** **Consolidated Post Report due to National if you are filing an electronic report through MyLegion**
- 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 quiet this time of year. The holidays are behind us and it is still cold enough to keep us from outdoor distractions. This is the perfect time for your post to put on a pot of coffee & hold an informal 'workshop' session to brainstorm Public Relations and recruiting ideas. Start planning your activities for 2024. Make plans and execute the best ideas.

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.



National Vietnam War
Veterans
Day

29 MARCH

