



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



Commander Edward A. Weaverling
101 E. Samuel St., Hamilton MO. 64644
816-805-2319 commander.third.district@gmail.com

Adjutant Robert C. Emery
16001 E 31st St., Independence MO 64055
816-313-5109 remery18@comcast.net

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

1 October 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.

12/08/24, Post 237, Richmond

03/09/25, Post 236, Excelsior Springs

06/08/25, Post 216, Bethany

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.



OCT-NOV-DEC
2024

September 21st was the last day of Summer. The start of the
Fall season is upon us. As the weather cools and the days get
shorter, our lives and the world we live in will change.

The city pool has closed for the winter and our schools are
back in session.

Fall festivals, Homecoming parades and car shows are
occurring throughout the 3rd District.

Football season has started with games at all levels (pro,
college, high school, pee wee, etc).

Lawn care is making the change from mowing grass to raking
leaves. Soon the scent of burning leaves will fill the air.

The harvest is underway and we now share the road with
tractors, combines and the trucks that support them.

And the major family holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas
are just around the corner.

3rd DISTRICT MEETING

Jarchow-Schroeder Post 61 of Kansas City hosted the District Meeting on the 22nd of September at 1500.

Zone 3 Vice Commander Alex Slocum was a visiting guest. He is running for Senior Vice Commander at next years Department Convention. He spoke briefly to the legionnaires present and then departed.

Attendance was about average but still less than it should be. The post-meeting potluck meal was excellent. Legionnaires were present from only 4 of our 25 posts (District staff members from posts: 61 – Kansas City, 95 - Liberty, 285 – Hamilton & 557 – Polo. Non-staff members from 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. 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 3rd 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 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.

Last year I simultaneously held the position of Zone II Vice Commander covering Districts 3, 4, 5 & 7. Due to a change in the Department Constitution & By-Laws, I had to give up this position.

I would like to personally thank Jarchow Schroeder Post 61 and Commander Dan Heiser for hosting our September meeting.

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



James A. LaCoursiere Jr.

National Commander of The American Legion 2024-2025

James A. LaCoursiere Jr. (La coursey air) was elected national commander of The American Legion on August 29, 2024, in New Orleans, during the 105th National Convention.

An Air Force veteran, LaCoursiere has been a longtime field representative for the American Legion Department of Connecticut's Soldiers, Sailors and Marines Fund, which financially assists veterans and their families in need.

LaCoursiere has held many leadership positions at The American Legion post, department (state) and national levels. He is a member of American Legion Post 91 in Moosup, Conn. He has also served as a national vice commander, Connecticut state commander, and chairman of the national Legislative Commission.

LaCoursiere is married to his wife, Lisa, and has two children (Patrick and Meghan), and three stepchildren (Jason, Kaylene and the late Johnathan).

Born to a military family in Honolulu, Hawaii, LaCoursiere attended Montville High School where he played junior varsity football, varsity football and varsity track.

As national commander, LaCoursiere is strongly committed to raising awareness for The American Legion's Be the One mission to prevent veteran suicide.

Annual elections are behind us and yes, nobody stepped up so I am still your District Commander. I also realize that many of you are experienced Commanders & Adjutants but we also have some new officers amongst us. Let's all help these new officers settle into their newly elected positions.

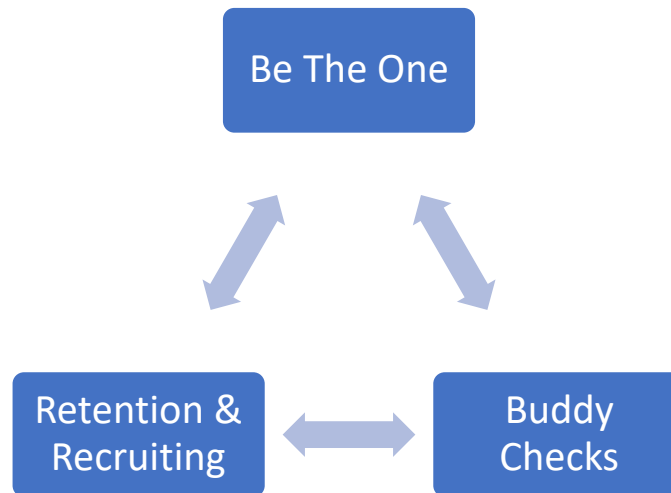
The Annual Department Convention is over and it gave us some changes as well. Last year I was also the Zone 2 Vice Commander over Districts 3,4,5 & 7. Due to changes in the Department Constitution & Bylaws, I had to hand off that position to Calvin Bumgarner.

Our new Department Commander is John Buckwalter & the new Senior Vice Commander is Jarome Goolsby. These two gentlemen just came back from the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis in July and the 2025 recruiting/retention goals for the coming year are published online.

This years National Convention was held 23-29 August 2024 in New Orleans, LA. After the convention, the new National Commander started his year touring the United States.

He toured Zone 2 (Districts 3,4,5,7) in Missouri last month. He flew in on Thursday, September 19th. His itinerary took him to several locations in the 3rd District. On Saturday, September 21st, he had a luncheon/tour of the Missouri Veterans Home in Cameron. He also had 'Meet & Greet' visits at Jarchow-Schroeder Post 61 in Kansas City & Robinson-Beeching Post 508 in Stewartsville. On Sunday, September 22nd, a brunch was held in his honor at Smithville Post 58 in Smithville. After the brunch, he was handed off to the Department of Kansas to start his visit to that state.

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. 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 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! ☹)

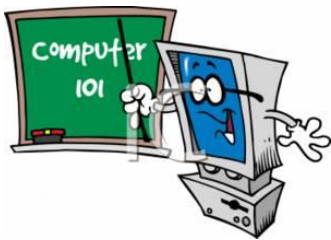
MYLEGION.ORG

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.)



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 not only a man but also a ship.

The man is Lt. Commander Tom Slaughter Sutherland, a Kansas City, Missouri native. The ship is the Gato-Class submarine, USS Scamp (SS-277).

52 U.S. submarines were lost in WW2. After the war, every state was assigned a submarine to memorialize with New York & California being assigned 2 submarines each. Missouri was assigned the USS Scamp and a memorial plaque to this fine ship and her crew is in the Capital rotunda in Jefferson City.

Commander Sutherland was the Executive Officer of USS Scamp when she went on her 8th and final war patrol with 83 souls on board.

USS Scamp was lost on or about November 16, 1944 while on B-29 'Life Guard' duty off Inubo Saki just east of Tokyo Bay. Scamp and her lost souls have never been found.

Lest We Forget

NOTE: Two other Missouri comrades were part of this lost crew. They were Gunner's Mate First Class William Wayne Chapman and Machinist's Mate Second Class Robert Joseph Hill. Both men were from Saint Louis, Missouri.



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!

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 or www.legion.org/join, whichever 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.

POST ACTIVITIES (past & future)

Jarchow-Schroeder Post 61 – Kansas City

9/22/24 – Hosted the 3rd District Quarterly Meeting

Boutwell-Clark-Craven-Eads Post 285 – Hamilton

This post provided “Honor Guard” services for 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.

Hardin Post 487 – Hardin

10/5/24 – Car Show 10am to 3pm at Hardin Central High School (500 NE 1st Street)

These three (3) are the only post inputs I received 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

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 in Jefferson City

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. However, outdoor activities will wane and cooler weather will soon drive 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 era.



When it seems things can't get any worse, they usually can.



