

American Legion Missouri District 17

Second Quarter 2025

Member's Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 2



Second Quarter 2025



Welcome to the restarting of a District 17 Newsletter. This issue will attempt to review the 2nd quarter & give some information on the upcoming quarter. Below is listed the basic duties of the officers based on our Constitution.

Commander: It shall be the duty of the Commander to preside at District Meetings, to act as an organizer in the district, to install officers of the Posts when called upon and to act as a liaison officer between Posts in this District and the Department of Missouri, Inc. The Commander must be a member of a Post in the 17th District. The Commander shall appoint all Appointed Officers and Committee Chairpersons necessary to carry out the programs of The American Legion. The Commander shall attend all Department Executive Committee Meetings, Department Conferences and Department Conventions.

Barb Riggle, District Commander

Senior Vice-Commander: It shall be the duty of the Senior Vice Commander to be prepared to perform the duties of the Commander when called upon and shall succeed the Commander in case of death, resignation or removal. The Senior Vice Commander shall be the district membership Chairperson and serve on the Department of Missouri Membership Commission.

Charles Holt, Senior VC

Vice-Commander at Large: It shall be the duty of the Vice Commander at Large to assure the several Committee Chairs carry out the programs of The American Legion. The Vice Commander at Large shall be responsible for assuring the Committee Chairs submit candidates for Boys State, Cadet Patrol and other Ameri-

can Legion programs in a timely manner to assure acceptance of such candidates by the Department of Missouri.

Heather Lawson

Adjutant: It shall be the duty of the Adjutant to keep a correct record of all proceedings of District Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings. Revised December 9, 2017 The Adjutant/Finance Officer shall receive all money belonging to the District and account for the same. The Adjutant/Finance Officer shall pay all bills ordered by the District Membership or Executive Committee. The Adjutant/Finance Officer shall keep account of his or her receipts and expenditures and give or send reports of same to the District meetings or on demand of the Commander or the Executive Committee. The Adjutant/Finance Officer shall turn over to his or her successor all money, vouchers, books and papers belonging to the District. The Adjutant/Finance Officer shall chair a committee to prepare an annual District Budget.

Mark Reed

District Service Officer:

It shall be the responsibility of the District Service Officer: to advise and assist Post Service Officers as required. The Service Officer shall be familiar with laws and practices under which veterans benefits are obtained and advise Post Service Officers of such as required from time to time.

Bob Franks

Chaplain: It shall be the duty of the Chaplain to offer prayer at the opening and closing of District Meetings and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Commander including; but limited to Memorial Services and Dedications.

Jack Rennaker

Judge Advocate: The Judge Advocate is the District Parliamentarian. The Judge Advocate shall be familiar with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* and constitutional form of rules under which the District operates. The Judge Advocate shall advise the District Commander of all matters of parliamentary procedures.

Joe Younger

Sergeant-At-Arms: It shall be the duty of the Sergeant-at-Arms to retain possession of the District Banner and to post it and the Colors of the United States at each District Meeting. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall serve as the official greeter on behalf of the Commander at District Meetings and shall inform the Commander of all distinguished visitors present at District meetings. The Sergeant-at-Arms and/or any Assistant Sergeants-at-Arms appointed by the Commander is responsible for seeing that each member attending a District Meeting has copies of the meeting agenda and other pertinent documents.

Wade Harris

Historian: It shall be the duty of the Historian to compile historical records of the District and other such duties as the Commander may direct.

Bill Roark

Regional Vice-Commander: Should the Commander appoint Vice Commanders to oversee certain regions or groups of Posts within the 17th District such Vice Commanders shall visit each Post within his or her assigned region at

least once each year. The Regional Vice Commanders shall ascertain the Posts under their supervision are holding at least one meeting per calendar quarter and that their membership has sufficient numbers to continue the charter of such post. Below is a list of the Regional Vice-Commanders and the posts in their regions. These VCs should be your first contact for information or questions.



Vice-Commander - North:

Posts: 19, 38, 138, 276,

Jeff Griffth



Vice-Commander - South:

Posts: 220, 374, 434, 637

Heather Lawson



Vice-Commander - East:

Posts: 112, 142, 306, 434

Nicholas Gerdes



Vice-Commander - West:

Posts: 69, 125, 639, 676, 1214

Bill Roark



Editor: In order for District 17 to stay in touch with all 16 posts in the district we will be using various methods including a website:

www.district17.org.

or at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/193892113992284>

If you are looking at this online, just click it for access.

We will also be in touch by email to all post commanders and adjutants and they can pass those along to all post members. The website will also have all the newsletters available to all district members. If you would like to send information to be published in a newsletter which will be done 4 times per year, just send the information or questions to editor@district17.org.

Bill Roark

District 17 Committee Chairs

Below is a listing of district committee positions and the Chairs of that position:

Americanism - Mark Reed.

Baseball - Bill Roark.

Boy Scouts - Nicholas Gertes.

Boy's State - Mark Reed.

Cadet Patrol - Allen Hines.

Children and Youth - Lisa Campbell.

Membership - Charles Holt.

National Security - Wade Harris.

Oratorical - Bill Roark.

Publicity - Bill Roark.

VA & Rehabilitation - Mark Reed.



From the Desk of the Commander

Since taking office in June, I've been to the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis. I came away from the workshop with some ideas, and I will need the help of District Officers, Chairpersons, and Post Officers to accomplish my goals for the District.

I know everyone is tired of hearing about "Be The One" and membership. We can increase our membership by engaging with our current members and reaching out to former members. Let them know we care about them and do a Buddy Check to see how they are doing if they haven't attended a meeting in a while. Be The One to ask questions if you see someone struggling; it may save a life.

Missouri has been an accomplished American Legion Department, and with the foresight of Department Past Commander Mark Clark and the Department administration, we have a Department of Missouri American Legion College. I was able to attend the inaugural class this year. I strongly encourage everyone to attend, whether you hold an office at the Post level or not. You will learn things that will help you and your Post. I also strongly encourage all post members, Auxiliary, and Sons of the American Legion to take the

online Basic Legion course; it is free and will take about 2 hours to complete, and it doesn't have to be done in one session.

Barb Riggles,
District 17 Commander



Past Commander's Message

It was my privilege to serve as your district commander for the past 2 years. I had the honor to work on Mark Reed's election as Department Vice Commander for Zone 3. He then sat out a year for Alex Slocum to take over, but was reelected by a motion from our district at the Department Convention in Cape Girardeau. He will now serve our 2026 year as Vice Commander for Zone 3. If you get a chance some time, please thank Mark for his service to The American Legion.

Our membership for the past year was not the best, but we finally pulled out a pretty good finish. We finished 2025 with 1,557 members which placed us at number 10 out of 16 posts for an average of 90.57% as a percentage of goal for the year. Some of you might not be aware that 17th District ranks #5 for district size with 1,557 members. Hopefully we will meet our goals for the coming year since they have become more aware of the difficulty in setting goals that are almost impossible to achieve (Thank you to Alex Slocum who is now the Vice Commander for the Department of Missouri) for setting goals at 1 new member for each post. So now we need to replace about 7% of the members we might lose from death, old age, moving from state, etc. and then the new at the district level plus 16 new members. That means we now need 1,573 members for 2026 for 100%. If you have questions or need any help email me editor@district17.org
Bill Roark
Past District 17 Commander

EDITORIAL OPINION

This will be the Editorial Opinion about what ever the editor decides to write about. It will be a discussion about items of potential concerns of veterans about things happening in the world.

Let's talk about "The Rule of Law" as in "No one is above The Rule of Law" even the President. We hear this quite often on newscaster's and politician's speeches. Well for me and most veterans that rule is The Constitution of the United States. Before any political discussions I generally try to make sure we all agree about this rule. First lets see what The American Legion feels about it. (taken from their website).

The American Legion believes national security must be maintained to fulfill the mandate for a strong national defense. As stated in the Preamble, "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America... To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy."

The Legion is an organization of veterans who fought for freedoms, which they are dedicated to keeping and preserving. As one of the Four Pillars it was founded on, the Legion believes national security is upheld by keeping a well-funded Department of Defense, a good quality of life for troops and a sensible transition between service and separation.

If we consider the importance of this statement from The American

Legion, then we must see it is the second most important pillar of the legion. It falls just after just after Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation as the first pillar. It then lists it as National Security. Which is quoted below:

Every member of The American Legion has sworn an oath to protect and defend this country against **all enemies, foreign or domestic**. The events of Sept. 11, 2001 has shown that at no time should National Security not be foremost in everyone's mind. Legionnaires are vigilant in their scrutiny of legislation at all levels of government to ensure this nation's security is always protected.

As mentioned above we all swear an oath to the Constitution. As all military and elected officials swear the same oath before they serve the US. This will differ in small details depending on the specific branch or position involved, but it appears below taken from the oath of the Vice President of the US.

"I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same: that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, and I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God."

This oath that everyone that wins election to congress must quote comes from precedents started in 1884 and continues until today. If we don't abide by our oath then we may end up with Anarchy in which no sane person would every want for our country.

Political Violence:

In recent times we have had political violence with the last being Charlie Kirk (a conservative Christian activist) and before that Minnesota elected state officials Melissa Hortman and her husband were murdered in their home (they were democrats). This was the result of Political Violence that has no business in our country. These are things that happen in 3rd world countries and socialist dictatorships.

Here is a definition that I found. Political violence is violence which is perpetrated in order to achieve political goals. It can include violence, which is used by a state against other states, violence which is used by a state against civilians and non-state actors, and violence which is used by violent non-state actors against states and civilians. It can also describe politically motivated violence which is used by violent non-state actors against a state or it can describe violence which is used against other non-state actors and/or civilians

It doesn't matter if you are a liberal or a conservative this form of violence is evil and can never be OK with anyone for any reason. A lot of this is a product of "social media" in which they foster political violence as a way to balance the scale against "the other side" and some weak minded people have fallen for it. **NO ONE** ever wins when this happens. I personally am so pissed off over Facebook I haven't posted in about 6 months. Remember this "your Facebook posts will never go away" and when you lease expect it they will jump up and "bite you".

These are my ideas and if you like them or if you don't, it's OK.

Bill Roark - Editor

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Here

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IS YOUR ADDRESS CORRECT?
If NOT, call 417-207-0038
or email us at news@billroark.com

American Legion District 17 is located in SW Missouri and includes the following counties; Polk, Dallas, Greene, Webster, Christian, Douglas, Stone, Taney and Ozark. We have 18 Legion Posts in the district which includes the largest (post 639) with over 750 members to the smallest (post 413) with less than 20 members. This newsletter is designed to get information about District 17 and all our post's activities available to all the post's within the district. If you would like to contact our district, email to adjutant@district17.org.



THE AMERICAN LEGION PREAMBLE

"For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a 100-percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness."