



# The American Legion

## Department of Arkansas

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Greetings My Fellow Legionnaires,

With less than 100 days left in this 2016 – 17 Legion year, I am asking each of you to reach out to those 2681 Arkansas Legionnaires who have not renewed their membership for 2017 to please do so at this time. It is never too late for new membership.

We are the largest war time veterans' organization and our voice is making a difference in Washington D.C. and in our State. Our voice to the current congressional leaders included statements on Reforming VA's claims appeals process; Institute gender-specific health care for women; Support those who care for wounded veterans; Repeal unfair offsets that penalize disabled veterans and widows; Defend veterans education benefits; Ensure those returning from active duty retain re-employment rights; Support veteran-owned small business; Continue funding programs to end veterans homelessness; and Protection for the American Flag. Action is being taken on these and other Veteran issues thanks in part to you and your fellow Legionnaires. On the State level of government, through partnering with the other service organizations, we were instrumental in gaining passage of two key laws: State Income Tax Exemption for active duty Arkansans and Military retired pay. The American Legion was in the forefront in support of a state bill requiring High School students to pass a United States civics test before receiving a diploma.

The programs of the American Legion are effective to the degree that the posts adopt them and put them into operation. "The post is to a large degree are autonomous, restricted only by broad general guidelines made clear in the national or department constitution and by-laws"

There are four very important requirements placed on the Post in our Department:

**Membership**; Each Post must collect membership dues and submit the Department's and National portion to Department Headquarters in a timely manner. The Post Adjutant's Manual suggest that those membership reports be submitted weekly.

**Certification of Officers**; Post officers shall be elected and installed annually before the Department Convention. The Post Adjutant is required to certify to Department Headquarters the names and ELIGIBILITY of the newly elected officers immediately after their election.

**Department Child Welfare Funds**; Established with a motion from the floor of the 1949 Department Convention. This fund is used as an emergency fund to assist Veterans with dependent children or children of veterans at their time of need. Originally the fee was less than twenty-five cents per member. At a DEC meeting in January 1972, the fee for the Department Child Welfare Fund was raised to fifty cents per member based on the membership as of June 30 of the preceding Legion year.

**Consolidated Post Report**; This report is the key to how well The American Legion as a whole will be able to report to the American people its actual accomplishments for the past year. Information from the CPR is frequently shared with members of Congress, giving them a snapshot of the valuable community service provided by our American Legion Family. *This report should be submitted to Department by May 1, for the Post to be considered for Department Children and Youth program awards.* It must be submitted to Department **No Later Than June 15.**

Remember, it is much easier to correct or change policy and/or procedures from the inside than it is from the outside. If you are not pleased with the practices of your Post, District or Department, then become involved by attending all of the meetings and making positive comments and suggestions for improvement. *Remember, the members of a Post control the destiny of their Post, with each of the members present having one vote.*

Thank you for the service you gave to your country and especially for the continued service you are giving to The American Legion. Be sure to tell your Legion story to ALL of your family and friends and to your friends' friends.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.W. Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J.W. Smith, Commander