



Thoughts from your MEMBERSHIP Chairman

If you are reading these words, chances are you are a Legionnaire who is concerned about the direction our organization is taking. I am too!!! It is you and me who has got to reach out and reverse that trend. We've got to make sure that we ask every veteran we come in contact with if they are a member of The American Legion. There are over 224,000 veterans living in Arkansas!! As of December 3, the membership of the Department of Arkansas was 8,672 which is 69.38% of our year end goal of 12,500. That goal is only 5.6% of Arkansas' veteran population!

Here are just a few questions that you can ask a veteran that should encourage them to join us, allowing The American Legion the ability to continue with our support of veterans and their families and insuring that the VA benefits are protected.

- Have you ever bought a house with the GI Bill?
- Have you ever gone to school on the GI Bill?
- Have you ever used the VA for your healthcare?
- Have you ever filed a VA claim?
- Have you ever been a Boy Scout or Girl Scout?
- Have you ever walked into a USO?
- Have you ever been or known someone who attended Boys State or Girls State?

If you would like to learn more about your American Legion? There is an online course that provides the history of our organization along with all of our programs. You can take this course by going to www.legion.org/alei. You do not have to finish the course in one setting. Upon completion, you will receive a certificate and a pin to wear on your cover or lapel. I found that after taking this course, it became a lot easier to answer the question of "Why should I join the American Legion".

We all need to be recruiters. Stop and think, why did you join the Legion. Maybe it was because you found that the members 'speak the GI language', or for the comradre. Maybe it was because you wanted to be a 'stake holder' in the largest and most powerful Veterans Service Organization in the world, whose members served their country and are continuing to serve veterans and their communities. For whatever your reason may be, we need to reach out to our fellow veterans, invite them to become a part of our organization. If we fail to curtail the annual membership loss, we are going to be faced with ever increasing membership dues, along with curtailed benefits available to our members. **WHO IS GOING TO FILL OUR SHOES?** Who is going to lead your Post next year or the year after?

MERRY CHRISTMAS 2017, let's make 2018 a record membership year!!!!

J.W. Smith
Membership Chairman
Department of Arkansas