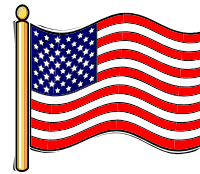


Voice of the Vets Sidney American Legion Post 217



NEWSLETTER

January - February, 2025

Sidney, OH 45365

FROM THE COMMANDER



The start of each New Year is a time to reflect on the year just past and make plans for the future. It holds a special magic, with a promise of new opportunities and the possibility to change our lives for the better. Welcome in the New Year by sending inspiring messages to your loved ones to mark this special time of year. Do not forget to follow through with those New Year's Resolution(s) you have made! Somehow this year it feels especially important to express our hopes and dreams for better days ahead in 2025!

† **In Remembrance:** The following Comrade of Post 217 has been transferred to Post Everlasting: **George Elsass, Korea**. Please take a moment to remember our Legionnaire and his family and friends.

Welcome New Members! We did not have any new members join our post during November and December. If you know of a veteran, please reach out to them regarding joining the American Legion. We have so many opportunities and programs to offer our community and to serve honorably. Please refer them to either 1st Vice Commander Jerry Muhlenkamp or me.

Membership: The renewal process began on July 1 for 2025-2026. The American Legion's success depends entirely on active membership, participation, and volunteerism. According to our Membership Chair, Gary Bonnoront, we are currently at 75.2% renewal; thank you to all who submitted your renewal

early to help us attain this percentage. However, we are down in our renewal percentage compared to 84% last year at this time. We still have 100 members from 2024 to renew to reach our goal of 100%. Remember, your benefits expire December 31, 2024. A list of members needing to renew for 2025 is posted on the Bulletin Board in the entrance way to the facility. If you have any questions, please reach out to either 1st Vice Commander Jerry Muhlenkamp or Membership Chair Gary Bonnoront.

For those still needing to renew, you can submit your \$45 membership renewal to Gary Bonnoront at: American Legion Post 217, PO Box 297, Sidney, OH 45365. You can also renew online at <https://www.legion.org/renew>, click on "Renew membership online" or <https://mylegion.org>. You can reach me at (937) 638-9797 if you need any assistance. Let us work together to reach the 100% goal.

EXCITING NEWS! Our Veterans Memorial Park project continues to make progress. See the Head Trustee, Jack Curl's entry for specifics on the park and other ongoing projects. We continue to accept orders for brick pavers; however, placement of the etched bricks is temporarily on hold until the spring. Other tasks will be addressed in the Spring including landscaping. If you have not seen the development of the project, please stop by and be sure to come into the Canteen to see the patriotic mural. You will not be disappointed. Thank you to everyone who supports and donates to this honorable tribute to veterans.

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Americanism and Government Testing:

We completed the grading process of the A&G tests in November. I am pleased to share that at the Shelby County Council Meeting on December 4, 2 of our 6 Post 217 winners were selected to represent the County and competed at the District Level on December 22, 2024. We had one student advance to Department: Riley Randolph, 11th Grade, Sidney High School. Congratulations to Riley. The winners at Department will receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. with the highlight of the trip being a Wreath Laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery. This year we offered the 4th Grade Flag Education Program to five local schools. Hardin Houston and Christian Academy participated. Our post winners were Hardin Houston Charlotte Eilerman who scored 100, and Christian Academy River Brumbaugh who scored 95. I am pleased to announce that Charlotte Eilerman placed first at 2nd District on December 22, 2024. Congratulations Charlotte!

American Legion Buckeye Boys State: We have actively collaborated with the local schools to obtain names of eligible candidates to attend Buckeye Boys State at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, June 8-15, 2025. Once the schools have submitted names, the post will conduct interviews and select their representative(s) for the program. If you have any questions, interested in participating in the interview process, or interest in being on Staff with Buckeye Boys State, please reach out to me.

Gifts for Yanks Program: This program is completely dependent on the Legion Family fundraising efforts. We continue to accept donations throughout the year to reach our annual goal of \$5,000. Will you please consider donating? You can also mail your donation to Sidney American Legion Post 217, P.O. Box

297, Sidney, OH 45365. Any monetary contribution makes the life of a veteran just a little bit better. Thank you in advance for your donation.

Election of Officers: Election of Officers for 2025-2026 is quickly approaching. The Executive Committee will appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of at least 3 members to identify potential candidates to be announced at the Regular February Meeting for the position of Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, and Treasurer. If you are interested in being on the Nominating Committee or applying for one of these positions, please reach out to 1st Vice Muhlenkamp or me. Leadership by Example!

Attention All Volunteers: Your dedication and support of our events is greatly appreciated! Without you we would not be able to provide those services to our veterans and community. I encourage those members who are able and have not had an opportunity to volunteer even if it is for 2 hours a month. Together we can make a difference! Special thank you to our Trustees who have worked extremely hard on the various projects throughout the year and to their fearless leader, Jack Curl!

Upcoming Events:

January 8, 2025: Shelby County Council American Legion Meeting: 7 p.m. at Jackson Center Post 493.

January 12, 2025: Second District Winter Conference, 9 a.m. at New Bremen Post 241

January 20, 2025: Martin Luther King Jr Day

January 17-20, 2025: Mid-Winter Conference, Marriott Columbus NW

February 2, 2025: Second District 4 Chaplains Service 1:30 p.m. at Wapakoneta Post 330 Annex

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February 5, 2025: Shelby County Council American Legion Meeting: 7 p.m. at Sidney Post 217

February 9, 2025 Veterans Center Brunch, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

February 17, 2025: President's Day

In closing, I realize how fortunate I am to count each of you as my friend; I am profoundly grateful for your service to our country and fellow veterans. I wish you and your family a Happy New Year filled with hope, health, and happiness, and of course, with a generous sprinkle of fun and laughter.

2025 starts a new chapter in **YOUR** Book of Life. Make each day count to ensure at the end of the year, your Book becomes a Number One Best Seller!

**Your Commander,
Judy Johnson**

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FROM THE 1ST VICE COMMANDER

Membership Goal: 504 members

**Paid membership as of 12/17/2024:
379 paid 75.20%**

Here we are, working our way through another cold, long winter. I am one of those that is not a big fan of the cold, so I am always anxious for spring weather to start popping up. The good news for us fair weather lovers is it won't be long, and we will start seeing more of that bright warm sunshine that most of us love.

We continue to do our best supporting the programs for our fellow veterans and community brothers and sisters. We can always use more volunteers to help provide these much needed and greatly appreciated programs. Please consider contacting any one of the officers or committee members and we will be able to direct you to the appropriate people to get you involved in a program you are

interested in. No matter how much or little time you have available to volunteer, we appreciate everyone's help.

I would like to take a few moments to test the waters with our members. We would like to increase our membership as our numbers continue to dwindle. Every year we lose 35 to 45 members who have passed on, and others who no longer renew their membership for many reasons. We would love to find ways of serving our communities and especially our veterans with new, fresh ideas. We need your input to help us brainstorm ideas to evaluate and explore for possible implementation to meet these needs. One thought I have which I would like feedback on is possibly starting a Youth Air Rifle Club. This is actually an Olympic sport, and it involves many learned skills, not only about sport shooting but also about gun safety, self-control, competition, concentration, and other individual skills that are so helpful for our young children to learn how to navigate through those teen years of growing up. So please send me your thoughts about a program like this, if children you know locally might be interested in participating in.

My hope is, should we find we have enough interest in starting up a Youth Air Rifle Club, we are able to find some of our younger Veterans who would be willing to step up and help set up the program and manage the program moving forward.

Please email your thoughts and comments to: Americanlegion217@gmail.com, In the subject line put: ATTN: Jerry Muhlenkamp

Or drop off a note or letter at the canteen marked to my attention.

Thank you all, and HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**Jerry Muhlenkamp
1st Vice Commander**

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FROM THE TRUSTEES

Happy New Year Veterans, Family, and Friends,

Hopefully, this letter finds you in good health or better. We are so grateful for you and your service. Thankful for our volunteers and those who patronage our Canteen.

Here is a recap of last year:

- 1) Veteran Memorial Park Gazebo was stained and waterproofed, thankful for all who volunteered their time to make this possible.
- 2) The Eagle Scout Project is progressing. Aiden Lee, Troop 95, has the retainer wall in place, the war medallion is displayed inside the retainer wall, the filler of salt and pepper rocks is still pending to be placed inside the wall. He will be contributing two benches to complete his project.
- 3) There is electric installed to the Gazebo, to lights to shine on the Eternal Flame, and for the new Veterans Memorial Park sign (which will be coming soon). We will be building a retainer wall around the sign.
- 4) There will be salt and pepper rocks along the sidewalk to the Gazebo.
- 5) More donor granite pavers have been placed along the walkway to the Eternal Flame. We have additional spaces if you would like to contribute a donation to having your name or business name etched on the pavers.
- 6) There are plans to have lighting on the Memorial Statue at the entrance of the driveway to the Veterans Center in addition to placing a

retainer wall around that Memorial too.

- 7) The parking lot pavement was sealed to prevent potholes from developing.
- 8) There is a new 12'x20' galvanized steel Gazebo on the patio.
- 9) The picnic table was upgraded with new boards.

We are in the process of replacing the floorboards in the Canteen area on the upper level. A few areas are still in need of painting, like the inside doors in the kitchen and a small room towards the entrance of the building. We are purchasing a new dishwasher for our kitchen.

We are looking for suggestions for things our younger children can do while visiting our building. We love having our young people visit. In fact, I bring some of my family here as well. However, we have to abide by State and Federal Laws. No one under the age of 18 is permitted to be seated at the bar or at the electronic machines. Nor are they allowed to play on the machines or open the pull tab tickets. They can't even sit on someone's lap who is playing on the machines or seated at the bar. This is a private club, and we have to abide by the rules at ALL TIMES. We never know when we may be inspected by AFT (Alcohol, Firearms, and Tobacco). They can collect data from our security cameras if necessary. The penalties are harsh to include but not limited to fines, forfeiture of alcohol/gambling license, and closure of business. Employees could be arrested and fined. We want everyone to enjoy their time at our Center but not jeopardize our business. If you notice an issue, please report it immediately.

We are striving to maintain a safe environment. We upgraded the fire system 2 years ago and have an annual inspection. We have AEDs on hand and hopefully will not need to use them.

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While I am on my soapbox 😊, both sides of the entrance doors and the door leading to the patio need to be unlocked in case of a fire or other event that warrants an emergency exit. I realize this is a pain, however, we were cited by the Fire Marshal for not having the doors unlocked during his inspection. This could potentially close our business if warranted.

Please help us solve these problems. We are brainstorming what we can do for our younger visitors so please submit your suggestions. One more thing, we are desperately in need for more Honor Guard/Color Guard volunteers. Many of our volunteers have either passed away or moved out of the area. It doesn't take a lot of your time, just a desire to honor our fallen veterans and local veteran activities. It is a way of continuing to serve!

On Behalf of the Trustees,

God Bless All and Prayers,

Prayers for Peace!
Jack Curl, Head Trustee

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FROM THE SONS of AMERICAN LEGION

SAL monthly meetings are on the 3rd Monday of each month, 7:00pm, at the Legion. Hope to see you all there. Also, please consider recommending a SALS membership to any eligible individuals you may know and feel free to contact the SALS commander for any information at (419) 235 9607.

Wishing you a Happy New Year to all!

Your SAL Commander,
Michael Humphrey

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FROM THE AUXILIARY



I hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday and look forward to the New Year ahead.

Buckeye Girls State applications are due back by January 14th.

Scholarship forms will be available in the canteen on January 15th.

Our next Brunch is on Sunday February 9th. So please ladies remember those tasty salads & desserts you all so graciously donate. They are loved by everyone.

We will be hosting the Auxiliary District Meeting on Sunday, March 2nd. So please mark your calendars to attend.

Thanks for all your help and support.

Linda Limbert,
Post 217 Auxiliary President

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Wednesday Bid Euchre Night

We are looking for Legionnaires, Auxiliary, & SAL members to join us for Wednesday Bid Euchre Night.

Spouses are welcome!

If interested, please provide name and telephone number to the Canteen and we will contact you once we have enough members interested in participating.

A Special
“Thank You!”
to our volunteers
who help out
at our Post and
in our Canteen!

**WE INVITE YOU TO VISIT
THE CANTEEN AND SHARE SOME
GOOD TIMES WITH YOUR FRIENDS!**

**AMERICAN
LEGION**

Post Officers:

- Judy Johnson, Commander
- Jerry Muhlenkamp, 1st Vice Commander
- Gary "Tiny" Stockton, 2nd Vice Commander
- Patricia Hamberg, Adjutant
- Eric Lunsford, Treasurer
- Jim Moorman, Chaplain

Executive Committee:

- Phil Wogoman
- Bill Knasel
- Jerry Muhlenkamp
- Jim Neilan
- Buddy Terry

Board of Trustees:

- Jack Curl
- Patricia Hamberg
- Bill Knasel
- Brian Mantor
- Jerry Schmidt
- Gary "Tiny" Stockton

VISIT OUR WEBSITE - WWW.SIDNEYLEGIONPOST217.ORG