



Voice of the Vets Sidney American Legion Post 217



NEWSLETTER

January - February, 2026

Sidney, OH 45365

FROM THE COMMANDER



To My Fellow Legionnaires,

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 feels especially important to express our hopes and dreams for better days ahead in 2026!

Welcome New Members! I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new members to Post 217: **Daniel Boyer-US Army, Chad Francis-US Navy, Berry Rains-US Navy, Ronald Van Horn-US Navy, and Steven Young-US Army.** Thank you for your service and for choosing Post 217. We look forward to having you as a part of our team!

Membership: The renewal process began on July 1 for 2025-2026. The American Legion's success depends entirely on active membership, participation, and volunteerism. Please see 1st Vice Commander Muhlenkamp's entry regarding important information. According to our Membership Chair, Gary Bonnoront, we are currently at 84.11% renewal; thank you to all who submitted your renewal early to help us attain this percentage. We still have 74 members from 2025 to renew to

reach our goal of 100%. All posts achieving 100% quota by January 14, 2026 will split \$6,000 equally. Remember, your 2025 membership benefits expired on December 31, 2025. 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.

Appreciation For Our Veterans Honor Guard: I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the members of our Veterans Honor Guard. Regardless of weather conditions, (rain, sleet, snow, 1 degree or 90-degree temperatures), you stand tall to render military honors to fallen veterans and post the Colors at Community Events. Phil Wogoman and Bill Carpenter have served as Commanders of the Honor Guard, leading an elite group of veterans. In the interim, Bob Shoffner has assumed the role of Commander during their absences.

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Thank you to the following members of the Honor Guard: Marc Adams, Gary Bonnoront, Orville Borgert, Jack Curl, Patricia Hamberg, Sherrye Lamma, Jim Lamma, Theresa Manteuffel, Jerry Muhlenkamp, Mark Nelson, Don Nuss, Rick Lunsford, Dale Peterson, Ken Pirics, Steve Smith, Bob Steckman, and Tony Speelman. Thank you for your continued service and representing the Honor Guard with pride! If I have omitted anyone, please let me know as each of you deserves this special recognition!

Americanism and Government Testing:

We have 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 3, 2 of our 6 Post 217 winners were selected to represent the County and compete at the District Level. The County winners were Emmalee Carter, 12th Grade, Christian Academy and Brooke Voress, 10th Grade, Sidney High School. Both students won at District 2 and will advance to The Department of Ohio on January 8, 2026. Department winners 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. We are currently in the process of completing and grading the 4th Grade Flag Education Program tests. Christian Academy, Hardin-Houston, Holy Angels and Northwood are participating in this program. More information will follow, after all tests are graded in January 2026.

American Legion Buckeye Boys State:

We are actively collaborating with the local schools to obtain names of eligible candidates to attend Buckeye Boys State at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, June 14-21, 2026. 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. Thank you to an anonymous donor who contributed \$1,500 to this program. The membership voted to contribute \$3,500 to total \$5,000. We hope to raise more donations for 2026 as this program benefits all veterans, even those from our region. 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 2026-2027 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 on February 17, 2026 for the position of Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Adjutant, 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. It is especially important this year as several officers will be stepping down and positions must be filled to continue our Charter. Leadership by Example!

Sunday Brunches: It is important to recognize the volunteer members in our

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Auxiliary Post 217 and Legionnaires who have dedicated their time and support to all our Brunches. Unfortunately, due to the preparation time, the age of our current volunteers, and lack of support from other members, we must discontinue offering the Brunches. We know the Community appreciated the Brunches as we appreciated their support. We are saddened to make this announcement. As you see, volunteers are an integral part of our existence in order to continue providing 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 past year and to their fearless leader, Jack Curl!

Post 217 Newsletter: Did you ever wonder who is behind creating and publishing our newsletter? Well, I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Dave DeVelvis, Post 217 Legionnaire, US Army veteran, for his excellent work in updating and posting our Bi-monthly newsletter and keeping our website updated. Thank you Dave, we appreciate all your hard work and dedication!

Upcoming Events:

January 16-18, 2026: American Legion Dept of Ohio Mid-Winter Conference, Marriott Columbus NW

January 17, 2026: Firefighter of the Year Award Ceremony for Lucas Woodward at the Mid-Winter Conference

January 19, 2026: Martin Luther King Jr Day

January 20, 2026: American Legion Post 217 Regular Meeting 6 p.m.

January 25, 2026: Second District Winter Conference, 9 a.m. at St. Marys Post 323

February 1, 2026: Second District 4 Chaplains Service 1:30 p.m. at Wapakoneta Post 330 Annex

February 4, 2026: Shelby County Council American Legion Meeting: 7 p.m. at Sidney Post 217, A&G Awards presented at this meeting.

February 16, 2026: President's Day

February 17, 2026: American Legion Post 217 Regular Meeting 6 p.m.

March 8, 2026: Second District Spring Conference, 9 a.m. at Ft. Recovery Post 355

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.

2026 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!

***Judy Johnson,
Commander***

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FROM THE 1ST VICE COMMANDER

Membership Goal: 472

Membership Paid: 397 84.11%

We had several transfers into our post. I want to say thank you and Welcome! We hope to see you at our monthly meetings which are on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM in our meeting room. All paid members are welcome to join us for any of our meetings. Please don't feel afraid that if

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you come to a meeting you are going to get stuck on some committee, this is not the case at all. We want and need all of our members to be informed of what our post is doing and your input helps guide to address issues our members are seeing needing addressed, and we can always use new members to help out!

Have you ever given any thought to paid up for a Paid Up For Life Membership? This is a way to eliminate having to remember to get your dues paid on time. There are some sizeable cost reductions at different age milestones. Age 70 offers a very nice reduction in cost for members to purchase paid up for life membership. If you are interested please see Gary Bonnoront.

Welcome to a new year. I saw a quote I want to borrow from Craig Grooms, President and CEO for Ohio Electric Cooperatives:

“Military service is not always about fighting wars. It’s about growing up. Building confidence. Learning self-discipline. It’s about being part of something bigger than yourself. “

I believe this is true for many veterans. I know it fits me and many veterans that I served with.

We continue to ask you to check your membership card and if you are not paid up for 2026 to please send us your money (\$45.00) so your membership for 2026 is paid. Your 2025 membership expires on December 31st and your benefits stop so please get your dues paid ASAP. We need, and want, all eligible veterans to be active members and contribute to the needs of other veterans. Your friendship means more than you know to many fellow veterans. We have a list of members not paid for 2026 posted on the bulletin board in the entrance so you can check the list if you are not sure if you have paid up yet.

Our strength comes from the number of members we have paid up. The VA has made great strides in making

improvements to the system that was badly broken and that is because we have kept our membership number up and members have become involved. I read recently that during this past year the wait time to see a VA doctor has been reduced by 75%. This is amazing improvement and it shows the power of our voice and membership.

**Jerry Muhlenkamp,
1st Vice Commander**

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FROM THE TRUSTEES

Hello Fellow Veterans, Auxiliary, Sons of American Legion Family and Friends,

We made progress on our Veterans Memorial Park this year; however, still have work to do. We really wanted to have this project completed, but sometimes things happen. The weather played a big factor in slowing us down. We still have to place salt/pepper rocks and plant grass seed. Just a few small items and the park should be completed.

The following is an update on the Trustees projects:

1. The parking lot has been resealed and relined.
2. More donor names have been engraved on the Granite Pavers and placed along the walkway leading to the Eternal Flame.
3. Several dying trees have been removed along the property line.
4. Lights have been installed on both the entrance Memorial Statue and the Memorial Park sign.
5. Handicap ramp installed outside the Patio room door.

The new hall chairs have made a significant improvement! Wow!!

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- 6. Our kitchen is in really great shape with the new appliances and flooring installed this year.

We are so thankful for all of our Volunteers and our Honor Guard. We have had a full compliment of members on the Honor Guard; however, it will be challenging during the winter months as some members will be going to Florida and others with health issues. Please give them all your support and prayers. Please let us know if you are interested in becoming a member of the Honor Guard. You do not need to be present for every event.

We can only keep the American Legion prospering and marching forward if we ALL work together. If you have any suggestions to promote the American Legion comradery, please let us know. We strive to have our younger veterans join and be active alongside our current members for it will be them who carry the torch into the future.

We are reviewing and starting a list of projects that may be needed to keep the building in great shape. Don't hesitate to submit any suggestion you may have.

We as Trustees, want to thank all who helped with these projects and who volunteer in various roles to keep the daily operations of this organization going! Your assistance is greatly appreciated! Thank you for our Commander and her leadership. She needs more support to help keep our programs going.

We are thankful for all who are serving, have served, and serving our American Legion Post 217. Also thankful for my fellow Trustees.

May God Bless your service to others and your family. Wishing each and every one a safe and Happy New Year.

**On Behalf of the Trustees,
God Bless All and Prayers,**

**Jack Curl, Head
Trustee**

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FROM THE POST CHAPLAIN

Chaplain's Corner

Greetings Fellow Veterans, Family, and Friends! Starting a New Year is wonderful!

We may have had a few things not go as expected this past year; however, we are looking forward to our next year. It is always great to reflect on our positive accomplishments and also to learn lessons on those things which we felt did not turn out the way we had hoped. May God bless us as we move forward. Take some time in this next year to slow down, breathe, and maybe reflect on those positive endeavors.

We have many veterans that need help, prayers, and assistance. It is great calling and talking to them. Even more, check on their wellbeing, offer assistance around their house, or maybe provide transport if needed. This is a wonderful service to them and to the American Legion. To quote Matthew 25:40 when Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." What a core teaching on compassion and eternal significance of acts of kindness.

We need to be grateful for each other and

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Wednesday Bid Euchre Night

*All Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and
SAL members are eligible to
join in the fun!*

Spouses are welcome.

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
- Jack Curl, Chaplain
- Sherrye Lamma, Post Service Officer

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