



Commander's Corner September 2020

Last month the American Legion National Executive Committee (NEC) adopted a set of resolutions that redefined the vision, mission, and values of the American Legion. Their objective was not to make sweeping changes, but rather to clarify things in a time when clarity can be a welcome change from what reaches our eyes and ears on a daily basis.

The new motto is: **"Veterans Strengthening America"** – It is short, sweet, and to the point, and it replaces the similar "Veterans Still Serving America". "Strengthening America" is our day job now: our calling as Legionnaires, as veterans, as part of the American Legion family. The new Mission statement goes on to say how we will do that job: **"The American Legion strengthens our communities, states and nation with programs and services for our veterans, the military, and their families."** It is pretty compelling and straightforward guidance for our post, district, and department to follow. They also released some new value statements to further build on these foundations, but I am not going to include those here. Instead, I want to focus on what we are doing to meet these goals head-on at Post 233.

1. **Outreach and recruiting** – Our programs will only be successful if we meet our veterans and their families where they live and provide them services in our community. This means that we need them to know that we are here, know what we are offering, and know that they can join us in strengthening America. We are marketing, but we are also reaching out through partnerships with other local agencies to make sure they are helping to tell our story and funneling those who need our kind of help to us. We are reaching our most fragile veterans by outreach to local nursing facilities, as much as we can these days. We are also working with corporations and other veteran-led non-profits that serve veterans, leveraging what we do well to help them in their missions. A rising tide should lift all our boats (Navy and Coast Guard folks, you are welcome for that analogy).
2. **Establishing clearly defined programs** – with budgets and goals and objectives that can be measured and reported on to our membership. Sometimes I think a lot goes on between meetings that not everyone sees, not everyone knows. Much of it is administrative, but also the work we do directly with veterans and their families and similar support efforts sometimes go unseen by the general membership. I want everyone to see, so everyone can share!
3. **Focusing more on our members!** - Given our focus on the people who walk-in for help, it can seem like we forget that we have a large community of veterans and their families, right here and ready-made for us to serve. Over the next few months, we will be looking at real ways to increase the value of membership and to provide better communication to our members about the ways we can help. For this, we need input from membership. We need to know how best to serve you. You can call, email, or stop-in with your ideas. We will consider them all and try to implement programs to meet the biggest needs first.
4. **Looking Forward, Looking Back** - We will continue to plan for the long-term future of the post. We are evaluating every available option to continue this mission for the new generations of veterans we know will come. We are trying to build relationships between veterans old and new, by providing opportunities to find common ground in our shared history and in service to one another.

Veterans Strengthening America – what could be better?

Thom Williams, Commander, Post 233