



American Legion Training Newsletter

National Headquarters
Internal Affairs Division

August 2017

Edition 1, Volume 3

Never Stop Learning, Because Life Never Stops Teaching



I want to start by thanking you for having something very special in your heart that makes you care about our American Legion Family, the four pillars on which it

By **Denise H. Rohan** stands, our veterans, their families and our communities.

Someone mentored you to this point, and I hope they are still around to see you growing in your understanding of and faith in our organization. I also hope the person who mentored you is proud of your accomplishments, and that you will be just as proud of the accomplishments of those you mentor along the way.

You see, we are all teachers in some way or other. There is always someone watching us and deciding if they want to emulate your actions. As parents, we hope to be good role models for our children. As Legionnaires, we need to be role models for those who will carry the legacy of our great American Legion Family forward.

Denise H. Rohan is a U.S. Army veteran retired from the Univ. of Wisconsin Madison as assistant bursar while managing the UW Madison, Green Bay & Colleges' \$120 million loan portfolio. She is a graduate of Mt. Senario College and the Collegiate Management Institute. She currently serves as a volunteer in the 115 Fighter Wing, WI Air National Guard Airman & Family Readiness Program.

Rohan is the leading candidate for national commander of The American Legion.

Over the last couple of years, I have had the opportunity to visit many departments and see some of the training opportunities available. I am thrilled to see past commanders, past presidents and other current and former leaders teaching or taking the course. It just goes to show that you can teach an old dog new tricks.

When people tell me they don't have time to take a formal training session, I point them to www.legion.org and American Legion Basic Training (formerly ALEI). The website will allow you to search and pinpoint areas of interest while the Basic Training coursework will give you the basics and history of what we do. Both allow you to learn on your own schedule and time. However, attending a class or training session

allows you the opportunity to share ideas and get questions answered in person.

As we enter the new

Legion year, departments will be challenged to increase the percentage of family members who have completed Legion Basic Training. It is hard to grow The American Legion Family if you don't know about it. Please encourage your fellow Legion

Family members to sign up for the online course or the offline in-person course.

Never stop learning, because life never stops teaching.



Putnam County, Ind., 4-H Fair, home of the Greencastle Post 58 American Legion Burger
Photo credit: **Michele A. Emery**

This volume covers training offered by different American Legion districts and departments throughout the country. Feel free to contact any of the authors for more information on how to start your own American Legion College.

Are you a trainer? Can you write? We need your submissions. Send your training ideas to train@legion.org.

Submissions should focus on stimulating training and what your departments and posts are doing.

All contributions will be credited to the author.

Subscribe at www.legion.org/newsletters

District American Legion College Soars in the Hoosier Heartland

The 11th District of The American Legion Department



By *Richard E.
"Rich" Brown*

of Indiana held a very successful District American Legion College during the month of April 2017, in a local high school

classroom. The course was held every Tuesday in April (four sessions) and was open to all Legionnaires and SAL members. The 30 attendees hailed from six of Indiana's 11 districts and represented 17 different posts and squadrons. The college culminated in a graduation ceremony during which the attendees were presented with a unique pin and certificate in recognition of their completion of the 11th District American Legion College's inaugural class.

The location for the course was purposefully chosen to be in an academic setting in order to minimize distractions, which



Dept. IN Graduation Pin

can be all too prevalent in a traditional post setting. One of our past district commanders

who teaches at a local high school offered his classroom for the site of the course. Each Tuesday evening began at 6 with a salute to the colors and the Pledge of Allegiance, and ended promptly at 9 with a salute to the colors.

The first evening session covered an introduction to the program, the selection of problem statements, a class on resolutions, and ended with a class on parliamentary procedure. The second and third evening sessions covered the topics of leadership and mentoring (students were also encouraged to submit drafts of their proposed resolutions for review by instructors). The final evening session consisted of a mock department Resolutions Screening & Assignment Committee meeting, mock Department Executive Committee meeting, class photo, and the graduation ceremony presided over by our department commander.

The selection of problem statements on the first evening of the college was a critical aspect of the curriculum – each student was given a problem statement covering an area of possible reform within the organization and then the assignment of writing a resolution to implement a solution to the problem. The assigned resolution was then written, edited, orally defended and potentially adopted during the culminating event of the college on the final evening – the mock Department Executive Committee meeting.

Feedback from the students was overwhelmingly positive, and the wide reach of this course across several districts within the department magnified the impact of the

program. The majority of the students had not yet served as district commanders and especially appreciated the parliamentary procedure, resolutions, and mock Department Executive Committee portions of the college as critically important learning experiences to prepare them for future success within the organization.



2017 Graduate Class

Several districts have inquired about hosting a similar program of instruction and many leaders have realized the importance of developing future leaders within the organization through a formal training program within the department. Hopefully, within the next three years an annual department college can be instituted in addition to the colleges held periodically throughout the state.

Richard E. "Rich" Brown is a member of the National Media & Communications Council and adjutant of American Legion Post 186. He is a past department vice commander of the Department of Indiana, guest instructor at the National American Legion College, and is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

For questions concerning this article, please feel free to contact Rich at: riebrown@sbcglobal.net.

IF YOU DON'T KNOW, YOU CAN'T GROW

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE



By **Mike Rohan**

When I joined the U.S. Army, my drill sergeant taught us from day one that to get ahead in the Army (and life itself) you must grow and develop yourself and others. He taught us that if we wanted to move on to a new assignment, get a promotion or be given leadership roles, we needed to grow in our current assignment. We needed to know more than anyone else about our unit, our current leaders and our jobs.

When you think about it, "Grow and develop yourself and others" is exactly the mantra we need in The American Legion today. It doesn't matter if you are 20 or, learning about American Legion history, the programs and the responsibilities of office are key to success at the post, department and national levels. If you don't know, you can't grow.

A few years ago we developed an American Legion College program that was designed to be used at the post, district or department level. The program consists of 51 lessons that were written and are included on a CD that was provided to your recent

National American Legion College graduates.

We have also developed three courses that are designed for your district and/or department to present as an organized college program. These courses can be combined with lessons like The American Legion Extension Institute (soon to be called American Legion Basic Training), National Membership Workshop and LEAD training offered by the National Internal Affairs Division.

The advantage of developing your own Legion College is that Knowledge is Power. It doesn't matter what organization you belong to – learning about its operation, customs and rules is a necessity for moving ahead. Developing your knowledge shows interest and prepares you for leadership roles across the organization. The advantages are many:

- ☐ Earn the right to speak
- ☐ Right way, wrong way and The American Legion way
- ☐ You can't start at the top
- ☐ Knowledge creates interest in running for office
- ☐ If you don't know, you can't grow

These ideas aren't meant just for our new members, they are meant for every member. It



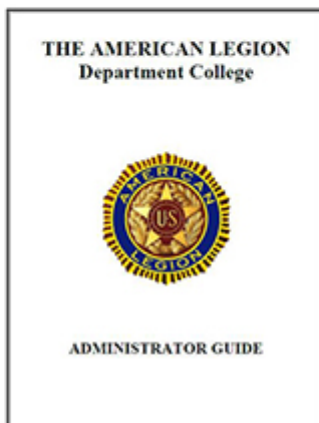
doesn't matter if you just joined or if you just finished serving as department commander – learning never stops. And age or disability should never be a factor in learning or growing, because *if you're not dead, you're not done!*

No, you heard me correctly, I said if you're not dead, you're not done. We have members who have slowed down because of age and/or disability but that doesn't mean they don't have something to offer!

A strong American Legion is full of members of all ages working together and growing together to ensure our veterans are cared for; our children develop as good citizens; and our communities provide a healthy environment for a strong America.

Mike Rohan is a U.S. Army veteran and a past Dept. of WI adjutant. Mike is a 40-year member of the Legion and a 26-year member of the SAL. He has a BS in Educational Admin. from Mt. Senario College. Mike has been married to Denise H. Rohan for 42 years and has one son, Nicholas, and two grandchildren.

For questions concerning this article, please feel free to contact Mike at: mdnrohan@gmail.com.



NATIONAL TRAINING

The American Legion 99th National Convention

Subject Matter Expert Training

Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Hall 2, 1st Floor

Saturday, August 19, 2017

9:00 AM	MyLegion.org - Libby Vickers, IT
10:00 AM	Memb. & Revit. Tng. - Dept. Adj. Abe Abramson (ID)
11:00 AM	Bldg. Relationships W/Vet Ctr. - Louis Celli, Dir., VA&R
12:00 PM	Post Operations - Brad Buskirk, Asst. Dir., Memb.
1:00 PM	Building a Post - Brad Buskirk, Asst. Dir., Memb.
2:00 PM	Recruitment & Retention - Brad Buskirk, Asst. Dir., Memb.

Monday, August 21, 2017

9:00 AM	Recruitment & Retention. - Brad Buskirk, Asst. Dir., Memb.
10:00 AM	Memb. & Revit. Tng. - Dept. Adj. Abe Abramson (ID)
11:00 AM	Bldg. Relationships W/Vet Ctr. - Louis Celli, Dir., VA&R
12:00 PM	Post Ops. - Brad Buskirk, Asst. Dir., Memb.
1:00 PM	Bldg. a Post - Brad Buskirk, Asst. Dir., Memb.
2:00 PM	MyLegion.org - Libby Vickers, IT

Incoming District Commanders' Training

Atlantis, Grand Ballroom, Section 4, 2nd Floor

Monday, August 21, 2017

9:00 AM	Opening Comments – N.C. Charles Schmidt (OR)
9:20 AM	Post Analysis - Mark Shreve (GA)
9:50 AM	District Revitalization - Mark Shreve (GA)
10:15 AM	MyLegion.org - Libby Vickers - IT
11:00 AM	100 Years of The Am. Legion - PNC David Rehbein (IA)
11:15 AM	Leadership Panel (interactive training with past and current American Legion leadership)
11:40 AM	Strategic Plan at District and Post Level - MP&A Committee Chairman Randy Goodman (GA)
12:25 PM	Leading Candidate Comments – Denise H. Rohan – (WI) Nat. CMDR's Rep., Legislative Commission)



The American Legion is proud that the state of Nevada and specifically the city of Reno will be welcoming approximately 9,000 American Legion Family members to its fine city.

These members gather at the national convention to help further their cause of patriotism and support for our servicemembers past and present.

The National Convention of The American Legion includes the following separate events: the American Legion Auxiliary's national convention, the Sons of The American Legion's convention and The American Legion Riders Legacy Run. The combined membership of these organizations is nearly 3 million nationwide.

To learn more about the convention visit:

www.legion.org/convention/about