

Legionnaires at every level must lead the way in reinforcing this vision. I would like you to note that the term veteran is generic, meaning all veterans, not just veterans of American Legion Post 216. For the city of Milford, this Post, the Honor Guard, the Color Guard, and the Memorial Day Parade represent veterans and their families. Parades occur once or twice a year but this facility, with its looming tank and cannon, are a reminder to all that pass, that veterans of all branches have served to protect our great nation. This building is a very important symbol because it is a reflection of ourselves. We may not be as fit and spit shined as we used to be, but we still have great pride in our common ancestry and this facility should always reflect this.

Secondly, this facility should be a place where veterans and their families always feel welcome. With that, I charge Legionnaires, Auxiliary Members and Sons of the American Legion to welcome all veterans and their family members who enter this facility. When someone walks into the club room, don't simply don't ignore them, but take a moment and to say hello. We as Legionnaires have been afforded the responsibility of welcoming our comrades, and comrades of our forefathers, into our home. I travel extensively and it is always a good feeling walking into a Post where immediately someone shows an interest in you by a simple hello or welcome to our Post.

I'd like to point out that the S.A.L. has stepped up and performed many key functions around this Post. Comrades, we also need to step up and volunteer wherever we see an opportunity. One of the most important opportunities is supporting Bingo. A second opportunity would be organizing activities to draw members to the Club Room. Ideally each of us should volunteer a couple of Fridays a year to assist the Bingo Team, or to organize or assist with a fund raiser to draw veterans to the Post.

One of the more cohesive units within this organization are the Riders as they are comprised of Legion, Auxiliary, and S.A.L. members. They have two common bonds; a love for motorcycles and a desire to help around the Post. The Riders are not a separate organization they are a simply reflection of the entire post and what it should be. Let's challenge each organization to work together towards our common goals.

As with any organization we need to have goals. Many of these goals are known to us such recruitment, retention, taking care of veterans and families, and sponsoring many of the American Legion programs. These programs include the Poppy Program, Legacy Ride, Child Welfare Fund, Winlin Lodge, Scholarships, and many others. I will outline later specific goals for the Post and solicit your support. I would like to emphasize that the future of the Post is not completely in the hands of our officer's but lies within the hands of all our members. We need people with insight, a desire to do what is right, and people with not only ideas, but those who are willing to run with their ideas. I believe if we harness positive energy we will improve the Post and have a bright future.

In closing, I view my role as a Facilitator, so please keep in mind the phrase "Rich I think you should do this . . ." might be frowned upon. However, the phrase "Rich, this is what I would like to do, can I count on your support" will be more easily accepted. I have a family, and travel extensively with many work weeks exceeding 50+ hours. I ran for

this position because in the next year I'm looking forward to team building, working towards goals, and installing a sense of structure, with an underlying theme of helping fellow veterans and their families. Please join me, and my team, in doing the things necessary to move our Post forward in the coming year.

*Rich*