

Participation in Legion is ownership

If you read my previous article, "Skipping meetings? You lose out," in the October 2025 issue, you already know the truth: attendance matters. But let's take the conversation one step further, because simply showing up isn't the end goal; it's the beginning.

For generations, Legionnaires have shown up, stood up and stepped up. They didn't just wear the hat; they carried the responsibility that came with it. Today, that responsibility hasn't changed, but our habits have.

We live in a busy world. Work schedules, family responsibilities, technology distractions and — let's be honest — the comfort of staying home in sweatpants can make meetings feel optional. But when we skip participation, we don't just miss a meeting we miss opportunities:

- Opportunities to mentor new members.
- Opportunities to protect our traditions.
- Opportunities to innovate and grow.
- Opportunities to be part of something bigger than

ourselves.

Participation isn't about taking up a seat it's about taking ownership.

We need members who are willing to ask questions, share ideas, volunteer, vote, challenge outdated habits and help shape the future. The Legion was never meant to be run by the same handful of people year after year. It was designed to be powered by the many — not the few. That's why it was named "legion."

So, let's talk about our expectations:

- If you want change, you have to show up.
- If you want your voice to be heard, you have to use it.
- If you want the Legion to thrive, you have to help build it.

It doesn't matter if you've been a member for three months or 30 years — your perspective is valuable. Your membership

card is just as good as anyone else's.

Your experience matters. Your presence makes a difference.

The American Legion is not a spectator organization. It has never been. It was built by doers' people who refused to watch from the sidelines.

We owe it to the veterans who built this organization ...

We owe it to the next generation who will inherit it ...

And we owe it to ourselves. So here's the point: simple, direct and necessary:

Come back. Engage. Participate. Be part of the work. Be a leader.

Guest Column

Jennifer Havlick



Jennifer Havlick of St. Paul Christie-DeParcq Post 406 is the adjutant of the 4th District.