

## **DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER KERRI LONG DISTRICT 4**

I am deeply grateful to Commander Channel for the opportunity to serve alongside Team Channel, NEC Eugene O'Grady, and ANEC Mike Wilson during this past year.

My role as Department Vice Commander for District 4 of The American Legion, Department of New Jersey, has been an honor I will always treasure. From the very beginning, the journey was extraordinary. Accepting my Vice Commander's pin and marching at the head of the parade in Wildwood last June feels like it happened just yesterday.

The year was filled with highlights, so many that it's difficult to capture them all. The national convention in Tampa, the Washington conference, and countless other events added something special to this experience. The national membership training in Indianapolis was especially eye-opening, offering a powerful look at the scale and impact of the work our great organization carries out every day.

I felt privileged to witness firsthand the traditions upheld by Legion posts across our state, traditions that shine at events like High Point and remind us why our mission matters. The strength of our organization rests in the hands of dedicated legionnaires who show unwavering love and commitment to our veterans and military families. Our legacy continues to make a difference as we strive to *Be The One*, combat veteran homelessness, and work tirelessly to end the heartbreaking tragedy of veteran suicide.

I met truly wonderful people and deepened friendships with many I already knew.

No expression of thanks would be complete without acknowledging the incredible office staff—John, Larry, Lois, Trish and Tammie. Each one played a vital role in helping me be effective in my duties as Vice Commander. Their professionalism and dedication serve as the threads that bind us together.

This year has been a privilege, a learning experience and a source of lasting pride. Thank you for the trust you placed in me.