



## **Elizabeth (Betty) A. Gonzales- Commander**

Elizabeth “Betty” Gonzales was elected as the first woman Commander of the Department of Missouri during the Department Convention held in Kansas City, MO July 10-13, 2016.

Betty was born and raised in Cincinnati Ohio. She planned on going into the convent upon graduation but saw a Marine Corps uniform and her journey began! She enlisted in 1968 and was honorably discharged in 1970. Betty met and married her husband, John, in 1969. They began raising a family and started on another adventure as John went back to school and picked up a commission in the Air Force.

Conforming to the expectations of an Officer's Wife was quite an experience for Betty. She loved the travel and felt fortunate to be able to live all over the world. After arriving at Scott AFB, their duty station, Betty began working at what is now Regions Bank. She has been with the bank for 30 years and married 46 years. It's obvious she doesn't like change!

Commander Betty got involved with The American Legion 17 years ago and wishes she had done it sooner. As a member of Saint Louis Service Women's Post 404, Betty served in every position except Adjutant to include Commander for three years. She is also a member of the Post's Military Funeral Honors Team, Color Guard and Tribute to Women Veterans Committee.

At District Level she worked her way up from Vice Commander at Large to District Commander. In 2010 she became the first woman to serve as District Commander for the 11th/12th District of St. Louis. In 2015 she was selected as the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> District Legionnaire of the Year.

Over the past five years Betty served the Department of Missouri as a member of the Department Sub-Committee, Economic Commission, Membership Committee, and is presently serving on the VA&R Committee as the chairperson of the Department's Operation Comfort Warrior program.

At the National level Betty is the National Legislative Liaison to Congressman Ann Wagner, a member of Senator Claire McCaskill's Veterans Council and a member of The American Legion National Americanism Commission.

Betty is a member of The Marine Corps League, Detachment 725. She served as their Commandant in 2014-2015. In the Midwest Marine Foundation Betty serves as a Team Leader/Mentor for returning combat Marines and as a member of the Marine Corps Council.

Betty and John have four daughters, two granddaughters and two grandsons.

