

The Legion Link

February 2009

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Shining Stars

SHINING STARS

Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

E-mail: mail@floridalegion.org

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Paul Martel, Department Com-
mander

p.martel@floridalegion.org

561-389-3765

Happy New Year and I wish a healthy one for all of you. If you have seen the video on our web site you have heard me ask all of the Department chairmen to please send in an article to our Legion Link. The reason I ask this is not just for me, but to let all of our Legionnaires know what is going on and when. We all speak about communication, this also includes YOU! When you receive some information about, anything, you should bring the information back to your post, share with everyone, don't just keep it to your self. Remember when you first elected me and I asked you for a favor? Once a quarter, get the whole "FAMILY" together for a meeting, share this information with every one. And, more importantly, talk with the 'FAMILY' SEE IF THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS or maybe an idea they would like to share. As I travel around this state one of the most constant situations I hear about is, "HE SAID SHE SAID". All of this could be taken care of by HAVING A FAMILY MEETING, ALL OF THE FAMILY. Ask the family to bring a covered dish, have the meeting, then break bread. Have that meeting on a week end, so more of you can attend, talk, eat, drink and be merry. You will be amazed at the outcome. TRY IT!

Our State Golf Tournament will be held on March 7th, at Post 159 in Venice. There will

be a link on our web site with all of the information. Please try to get a foursome to play and help support our programs and Clarence Hill.

I would like to thank every District that I have attended as of now. But, most importantly, I want to thank you the members who have shown up at the post to stop by and say, HI! I know that you gave up your valuable time to be there, Thank You! Florida Legion is the best, ALL OF YOU ARE SHINING STARS.

Please keep our warriors, men and women who are serving, to keep us safe, in your prayers. You know how it felt; you were there at one time. Thank you and May God Bless



Convention Hotel Rate Break!

Anyone who makes a reservation under the "American Legion" room block on or before March 31, 2009 will receive an "early booking" rate of \$119.00 (that is a \$15.00 savings per night). This will include all reservations made to date that are in the "American Legion" room block. Please note that on April 1, 2009, that rate will no longer be available and all reservations made from April 1, 2009 to the cut off date will be at the contracted rate of \$135.00.

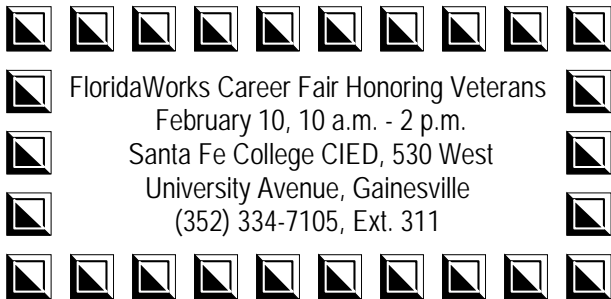
Phil Hearlson
Department Vice Commander
phearlson@aol.com
352-875-9054

Department Sergeant at-Arms
John Burroughs
johabd08@aol.com

Hello Everyone –

The Legion Link and The Source are newsletters put on our web site, and mailed to a few who do not have internet access, to inform our officers and members of membership, programs and other pertinent items. Department is now sending the newsletters at the end of the month for the next month (end of January for the month of February). Therefore: articles are due to Department by the 16th of the month for the next month. For this month only, Articles will be accepted until noon on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 (the office is closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday). The newsletters will be posted to the web site no later than the 29th of each month.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this change, please contact me.



FloridaWorks Career Fair Honoring Veterans
February 10, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Santa Fe College CIED, 530 West
University Avenue, Gainesville
(352) 334-7105, Ext. 311

Bob Pirucki
Department Chaplain
Kshoot2000@aol.com

My Fellow Comrades,

By the time you read this, many of our programs will be well under way. February is Americanism month. Plans should already be in place for Boys State, Oratorical, Four Chaplains Sunday and Religious Emphasis week. I encourage all to take part in the many worthwhile programs being offered.

Religious Emphasis week starts on Monday, February 2nd and continues through Sunday, Feb. 8th. Try to attend a Religious service of your choice...and take your family with you. Most people want to serve God, but only in an "advisory capacity." Remember "PRAY" is a four letter word, that you can say anywhere, and take my word for it....most Church's are "prayer-conditioned". Please don't wait for 6 strong men to take you to church! God tells us that "a lot of kneeling will keep you in good-standing". So.....give God what's right.....not what's left, as he grades on the "cross", not the "curve".

I hope all Chaplains are keeping a roster of their deceased Members, so that the information compiled can be used at Convention time.

Until next Legion Link, I wish you all God's choicest of blessings and good luck in working your Programs. Consider this: Kindness is difficult to give away, because it keeps coming back!! For God and Country

I want to thank all of you for your thoughts and prayers during Cindy illness and her passing on. Some battles you win and some you lose. She fought a hard battle but lost in the end, it will take time to heal, but now is the time to get back to work.

Post Commanders - it not too early to start thinking about nominating your Sergeant-at-Arms for the Eddie Humor award. The award will be presented at the Department Convention. Now is the time for your post to reward your sergeant-at-arms for his/her contribution to the success of your year of service to The American Legion. The form for this award can be found in the Post Administrative Manual. The deadline is May11 2009.

Now let's talk about the Children and Youth Fund. Information for a grant seeker can be found on the Legion Web Site. As I said, you can print everything you need from the link. The completed Application has to be back at Department no later than May 1, 2009. If you need my help please feel free to call or email me. 904.641.7358 cell 904.635.1481 Email: johabd08@aol.com For God and Country



Membership Round-Up Golf Tournament

The Florida American Legion is again sponsoring a Golf Tournament hosted by No-Vel Post 159, Venice, Florida on March 7th, 2009. The tournament is in conjunction with the Department's 90% Membership Round-Up at the Lake Venice Golf Club. This is one of the few opportunities for the Department of Florida to raise money for the Legion sponsored programs. In order for this endeavor to be successful it is requested that all American Legion Posts, Officers and Candidates sponsor a hole in the golf tournament. Hole sponsorship is \$50.00. Two of the programs actively sponsored are the National Emergency Fund and Clarence Hill's National Commander Fund. Please send your sponsorship money to Dave Griffiths Jr. 18834 McGrath Circle, Port Charlotte FL 33948. Please make your check payable to: 90% Membership Golf Tournament. The 13th District is handling all monies involved in the tournament. Money for all Hole Sponsors must be in by February 21st 2009. Please provide this information to your Post. Thank you. For God and Country: Arnold Makovsky Golf Committee Chairman, 941.456.8571 or amakovsky@embarqmail.com

85% Goal

February 4, 2009

Dianne Thibodeau, Membership
D.Thibodeau@floridalegion.org

We missed our 80% goal with only 75.48% but I'm not discouraged and you shouldn't be either. Thirteen Districts again got there as well as all the Areas! Congratulations to everyone for working so hard. Once again, District 4 (Jim Ramos) and Eastern Area (Art Dudley) were on top however, District 2 (George Segrest) goes ahead the next week by just .16%. Good work George!

Our next goal is 85% by February 4th then 90% by March 4th. Already nine districts have reached their February goal as well as two areas. Great job!

I recently received information from National about how they have changed the way they deal with DMS. We know this year they are trying new ways to improve the system. I want you to know they do listen to us, the "blue hats".

After recruiting a new member, they will send out a letter to the member requesting that they transfer to a local post (along with the many reasons why they should). They specifically mention that they need to bring a copy of their DD 214 with them to the local post. As part of that same letter, they mention that if they continue to stay with National, they will be required to submit a copy of their DD 214 (with Social security number blanked out) for verification. They are then assured that the copy will be destroyed.

Don't forget Irene still has post cards, created by National, which you can send to members who have not renewed their 2009 membership. Also, check with your Area and District Commanders for those canopies and signs. Have you set up a membership drive yet? Remember to get the Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion involved as well as the Legion Riders. We are a family.

In the next few days I will be contacting all the District Commanders about posts that have not had a change in membership in the last six weeks. The end of December was busy as was the beginning of the New Year. Well, no more excuses. Post Commanders need to get together with their membership committees and send post cards, make calls and visits and work with their District Commanders on having membership drives. You need to work those 400's. Did you ask for your list? Did you contact the people? Post 400 is only at 47.28%. We need your help.

Got ideas? Need help? Call or write. Just ask! I will do everything in my power to help us reach the top and then some. I want to meet all of you Shining Stars out there.

Art Schwabe
Department Resolutions Chairman

Now that you have broken all your New Years Resolutions by the time this is written, it's time to sit down and start writing the resolution for the Convention in June. It has to be signed by the Post Commander and in Departments hands by May 15th, 2009. Please look at the Florida Legion website regarding writing resolutions. I hope everyone had a Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you at the Convention. For God and Country

District/Area Membership Report as of Jan. 28, 2009

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
4	Jim Ramos	3,813	3,602	94.47
2	George Segrest	1,323	1,226	92.67
6	Earl Friedeborn	9,237	8,464	91.63
12	Carl Schneider	8,657	7,755	89.58
7	Keith Holz	4,582	4,094	89.35
16	Raymond Maya	12,033	10,720	89.09
17	James Baker	4,343	3,868	89.06
15	Kathryn Ferrin	5,784	5,150	89.04
8	Richard Francis	9,281	8,160	87.92
9	Joseph Motes	4,890	4,278	87.48
10	Larrio Walden	1,155	1,002	86.75
11	David Knapp	4,867	4,201	86.32
1	Martha Harris	6,518	5,553	85.19
3	James Troupe	1,705	1,436	84.22
5	Robert Brewster	7,915	6,593	83.30
13	Frank Ward	9,796	8,075	82.43
14	Louis Woodward	2,606	2,003	76.86
Eastern	Arthur Dudley	17,894	16,219	90.64
Central	Mike Addis	22,399	19,964	89.13
Northern	Joseph Nolan	17,776	15,499	87.19
Western	Fletcher Williams	7,841	6,779	86.46
SW	Dennis Bruland	19,077	16,235	85.10
Southern	William Hoppner	13,518	11,484	84.95
Dept			86,180	
Post 400		39,232	19,441	49.55
Post 208		1,538	1,685	109.56
Totals		135,500	107,306	79.19

*Stephen Shuga
Boy Scout Program
sshuga@cfl.rr.com*

Now with the winter holidays behind us we begin to refocus on the many tasks at hand. Scout units are doing the same as many of the students are nearly half done with their school year and so many Scouts prepare to complete their basic rank requirements looking forward to being promoted to the next rank so they can work on other personal requirements to better prepare them for their next challenge along the Scouting adventure.

As Legionnaires you can greatly assist our chartered Scout units by offering up your banquet halls (if you have them) so they can conduct their annual Blue and Gold banquet or to celebrate the birthday of the BSA during the month of February. This gathering of Scouts occurs all over our great nation and along with the fellowship brings hope that our young children are learning to be a bit more responsible and attentive to their surroundings as they grow a tad bit older.

January was a busy month for your Department Boy Scout Program. The 2nd Boy Scout Camporee was conducted at the Central Florida Council Leonard & Marjorie Williams Scout Reservation, Camp Lanoche in Paisley, FL January 16 – 19, 2009. Some 150 Boy Scouts and their leaders converged on Camp Lanoche to challenge the Camporee program and endure the abnormal freezing weather pattern that blanketed Florida during that period.

Visitors included former Department Commander Larry White, Comrade Kenneth Smith of Post 284 – 4th District, Comrade Jay Conti Sr. 4th District Public Relations Officer and 4th District Boy Scout Chairman Comrade Robert Scott. Thank you, comrades, for taking time out of your schedules to support our Boy Scouts.

Many of the Boy Scout Troop Leaders some Legionnaires and others that were not, stepped up to provide assistance and support to ensure that this Camporee program was successful for the Boys Scouts in attendance. Without those adults stepping up at the last moment, this event could have been disastrous.

Our next important Department Boy Scout featured event is the selection from candidate packages of the Eagle Scout of the Year. Department must have all packages No Later Than – March 2, 2009. Based on records recently reviewed there are over 35 potential Eagle Scout candidate packages that could be received and then some. I encourage you to seek out the candidate form from either the Department website – Boy Scout Link or through the National website under Americanism programs – Boy Scout link. There are potentially four young men out there who might earn scholarship monies to assist with their academic advancements. Posts need to push this information out to their Scout Troops and any other eligible Eagle Scout who meets the eligibility requirements to submit. For God and Country – Yours in Scouting



ATTENTION all EDUCATION CHAIRMEN

The National Committee on Education would like to recognize those individuals in a Post or District that have made efforts to promote the Education program of The American Legion. Please submit the nominee's name address and a brief statement describing his/her involvement in the education program of The American Legion and send it to Department Headquarters no later than April 8, 2009. One Post Education Chairman and one District Education Chairman will be submitted to National Headquarters for Certificate of Appreciation signed by the National Commander, Chairman of the Americanism Commission, Chairman of the National Committee on Education and the Director of the Americanism and Children & Youth Division. We look forward to seeing many entries submitted by our posts and districts to honor their Education Chairman.

*Sonny Bywaters
Department Disaster Preparedness Chairman
sonnybywaters@verizon.net*

The 2008 Hurricane Season is over but don't get too comfortable yet, because hurricanes are not our only disasters. We were very lucky, again, in 2008, and I hope we all learned something.

What did I learn? I learned that most forget the phrase "disaster preparedness" and go directly to "disaster relief." I learned when it comes to preparedness, some of us don't have a plan and that some of us don't even have a clue. If we all had a working preparedness plan, we may not need so much relief. I also learned most Chairmen were willing to call me back and work with me, (yes, I am old-school and I still prefer to talk one-on-one) while unfortunately, I did not hear from others.

We have time now before next season but don't wait, please contact me now if you need help forming a plan or to let me know that you already have one. A plan should not be complicated, it should only cover the necessary steps to take and names of those you must contact for help whether it be physical or knowledge. I realize that some are better at one or the other, but I feel that we can all learn.

Remember that a little work now we may save a lot of heartache and money later. Contact your District Commander or your District Chairman today. Serving God, Country, and You!



Jackie Gonzalez
Jackie@floridalegion.org

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Jackie Gonzalez and I am new at Department Headquarters. I will be assisting our volunteers, post and district levels, in educating the public about all the programs of The American Legion. It is my goal to assure that the public is aware of the benefits of this organization and our efforts in making a difference. Our public consists of, but is not limited to; our legion members, the media, the local and national elected officials, the decision makers and U.S. citizens in general.

It has been brought to my attention that the purpose of The American Legion has been misinterpreted and misunderstood. Some may not have even heard of The American Legion. Our main focus should be to make our public aware of who we are and what we do. It is our job to change this reputation that we have been given by the people and make it just as strong as the image of the American flag waving in the wind.

As the great Picasso once said "Action is the foundational key to all success." By utilizing our resources and PR tools, success is just a blink away. What the volunteers have done so far has been making a tremendous difference and should serve as evidence that our goal can be reached, if just a little effort is set forth. I have faith that in this coming year, with the help of the PR volunteers and the Department of Florida, we will have made a bold difference in creating the rapport we need with our public, educating potential members of the benefits we offer, and reassuring our veteran's of our appreciation and gratitude of their service.

Here are some upcoming events that you might be interested in participating in:

- Feb. 1st- Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony
 Located at the Mariner United Methodist Church beginning at 2:00pm
 Northern Area Chaplain- Charlie Haig, 7079 Mariner Blvd., Spring Hill
- Feb. 7th- Cook-Out
 Located at the Baldomero Lopez Veterans' Nursing Home at 11:00am
 USO show for residents, Contact Ken Ferrin for details: (813) 843-0154
- Feb. 8th- Kiwanis Club of Marco Island Car Show
 Located at the Healthcare Center on San Marco and Heathwood Dr.
 from 11:00 am until 3:00pm, Fees: No entry fee for show cars
 Contact Info: John DeRosa 239-393-0575
- Feb. 22nd- Four Chaplains Memorial Ceremony
 Located at Dale Mabry Post 139
 Southern Area Chaplain- Ed Croney, 3818 W Bay Vista Av, Tampa, FL



ENDORSEMENTS

Phil Hearlson - Department Commander
 Al Porter - Department Vice Commander
 Faye Skaggs - Department Vice Commander
 Sonny Bywaters - Department Vice Commander
 Fletcher Williams - Department Vice Commander
 Robert Meyer - Department Chaplain
 Charles Haig - Department Chaplain
 Sue Mason - Department Historian
 Dale Lueck - Department Sergeant-At-Arms
 Mike Addis - Department Sergeant-At-Arms
 Jim Corner - Northern Area Commander
 David Knapp - Southern Area Commander
 Bob Koger - Eastern Area Commander

Earl Friedeborn - Eastern Area Commander
 Kathryn Ferrin - Central Area Commander
 Richard Francis - Southwestern Area Commander
 Jerry Montgomery - 4th District Commander
 Greg Lovejoy - 5th District Commander
 Gregory Putman - 8th District Commander
 Joseph Motes - 9th District Commander
 Mark Johnson - 12th District Commander
 Carl Schneider - 12th District Commander
 Frank Ward - 13th District Commander
 John Ebling - 13th District Commander
 George Paradise - 16th District Commander
 Art Schwabe - 17th District Commander

Richard Mondro
Department Employment Chairman
dmondro@comcast.net

Veterans are Needed Now More Than Ever

The price of gas and food is rising, and there are real concerns how troubles on Wall Street will affect Americans on Main Street. The news has put the concerns of the economy on the front page, yet the predictions by the Bureau of Labor Statistics show unprecedented growth in the demand for qualified employees in corporate America. For the companies on this year's "Top 50 Military-Friendly Employers®" list, searching for the best this country has to offer is simple; look at the wealth of talented, educated and experienced in the world's best job training program – the U.S. Armed Forces.

Candidates with military experience are an asset and present a competitive advantage to employers. Companies need employees who bring ingenuity, a positive attitude, state-of-the-art training and experience to remain competitive in our global economy.

Corporate America still requires talent and continually looks for employees accustomed to accepting challenges in very diverse environments. This is why most appreciate having a military talent pool to recruit from.

While the economy may bring concern to the pocketbook, it has not deterred corporate America. This is when businesses challenge themselves toward greater success. These are times when business looks for employees with fortitude, attitude and spirit. This is when experience in BDU's translates well on a job résumé.

Employees with military experience perform beyond expectations. They possess transferable skills that can't be taught in the classroom or in the boardroom. The military creates problem solvers who can adapt to any environment. Their time-management and critical-thinking skills increase work flow and efficiency. Training and experience for the battlefield puts leadership and management skills in the civilian workforce.

The Top 50 list represents diverse industries and geographies. From railroads to microchips, from finance to utilities; the entire country is looking for veteran talent to keep our country moving forward. Corporate America needs employees who can lead today, not tomorrow. They are looking for new candidates who will be able to hit the ground running. The largest wealth of ready-to-lead technical and professional experience is in the thousands of highly qualified, and motivated, military service members who leave the service each year. Check out the Top 50 List on the Department Website at www.floridalegion.org

Fletcher Williams, Jr
Blood Donor Chairman
Fletcher.williams@cox.net

As this Legion year is drawing closer toward the end, there has been little or no activity as it pertains to the Blood Donor Program reporting. I know that there have been donations and I image that you may have forgotten to submit your report. As you know the Department Convention is 25 – 28 June 2009.

Please prepare a consolidate report of all your activity and return them to me no later than 15 May 2009. These reports will be utilized to determine the Post that will be rewarded at the Convention as indicated above.

So, let's get busy, prepare your consolidated Blood Donor reports and submit them to me by the suspense date of 15 May 2009. If you desire you can scan them in and email to me at fletcher.williams@cox.net.

Stanley Gold
Department Legislative Chairman
gold.stanley@yahoo.com

This month I am requesting help from around the state. Please contact your member of Congress to help with the problems of service people and their families, armed forces retirees, and disabled veterans in Florida. The following was sent to each member of Congress from Florida by the Department of Florida. Our five Dade and Broward members of Congress are doing their part... Thank them. (*See the last page of the Legion Link for a copy of Stanley's letter.*)



National Emergency Fund Post Excellence Award

Historically, American Legion posts have gone above and beyond the call of duty by helping not only The American Legion Family, but entire communities that were devastated by natural disasters. There are many American Legion posts that have handled logistics, provided shelter and extended support to their communities in times of natural disasters and are shining examples of The American legion at its best. National believes each and every one of these posts deserves to be recognized for that. Therefore, the National Emergency Fund Post Excellence Award has been established to award those posts who went above and beyond in service to their communities during National Commander David Rehbein's year.

There will be three tiers of the National Emergency Fund Post Excellence award: Gold, Silver and Bronze levels for the three posts that, nationwide, have provided the most outstanding service to their community during a natural disaster. A post that wishes to be considered for these awards must submit a written narrative (no more than 500 words), along with documentation to include newspaper clippings, photos or videos on CD or DVD to Department Headquarters no later than April 15, 2009. The National Gold, Silver and Bronze awards will be presented on stage at the National Convention in Louisville, Kentucky in August 2009. We look forward to seeing many entries submitted during some of the most challenging times in the history of our nation.