

The Legion Link

May 2009

Vol. 16 Issue 10



Shining Stars

Shining Stars

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Dept. Convention Agenda

Paul Martel
Department Commander
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561-389-3765

What a great time for all of us to live in the great state of Florida. The weather is just beautiful, cool in the morning and warm during the day. The sun shines almost all of the time. We have PEOPLE moving here every day, hmm!! (PEOPLE) now why did I say that? We have approximately 1.8 million eligible veterans here in Florida. In our Department we have 143,000 thousand members, does that sound like an equal balance? Every one of us, including me, say, "Where can we get more members?" I guess we are not looking in the right spots. It's not National who needs to recruit new members. It's not the State who needs to do that; it boils down to you and me. Also, this is not just the job of the membership chairman at the post. It is the job of each and every one of us. We need to have a collective meeting of the minds; we need to start asking, as our Department Membership Chairman says, JUST ASK! I am not complaining to you, I am not crying on your shoulder, what I am trying to say is this: We just have to do the job. There is not one reason why we can not be at 500,000 thousand in membership. The only thing holding us back is FEAR. We think when we see someone who may be a veteran, WHAT IF HE OR SHE SAYS NO!!!

In May and June our Districts will be having their Constitutional Conferences. You need to be at yours. You need to be part of who will lead your District. HOW ABOUT YOU? All the dates are on our web site.

I want to thank our American Legion Riders for the outstanding job they are doing for our

youth, veterans who are coming home, and all fund raisers. As they say we are ready to RIDE for any reason. If you do not have a chapter at your post you should have. The guys and gals who are part of the riders have been a shot in the arm for our Legion. And so, on behalf of the Department, once again, "THANK YOU!"

I just came back from Tallahassee where the homecoming for President Kathee was held. We had a great time at Post 13. She received many gifts, and rightly so. The food, music, and friendship were beyond explanation. I thank President Kathee for being the leader she is, the Auxilliary has done very well this year.

I THANK ALL OF YOU, for being who you are and what you do for our American Legion. I will see you in my travels. Hope to see you in Okeechobee on May 16th.



Happy May Day

Convention Information

This year we are excited to present the Dignity Memorial Vietnam Wall at our 91st Annual Department Convention. The wall will be on display for everyone not just legion members. Please tell all to come and they are encouraged to stay at the Caribe Royale and may use our American Legion Discounted rates.



"Must Do" Pre-Convention Requirements
Michael McDaniel, Department Adjutant

We are rapidly approaching our State Convention scheduled to be held from June 25th through the 28th at the Caribe Royale resort in Orlando, Florida. The Official Call to the convention will be mailed to each Post, each Department and District Officer and each member of the Department Executive Committee not more than forty-five (45) days nor less than fifteen (15) days prior to the first day of the Convention.

The date change for the convention this year from July to June may have caused some confusion regarding timetables within our posts and districts. I would like to take this opportunity to address some of the most frequently asked questions.

Q: When should the post hold its annual election of officers?

A: All officers of Posts, except the Post Adjutant, Post Service Officer and Post Judge Advocate, shall be elected and certified to the Department Adjutant not more than ninety (90) days, nor less than ten (10) days prior to

the Annual Convention (Article X, Section 13). ***Therefore, Post officers must be elected no later than June 15th.***

Q: When is the membership cut-off date for Post delegate strength at the State Convention?

A: Each Post shall be entitled to two (2) delegates and two (2) alternates and to one (1) additional delegate and alternate for each additional one hundred (100) members provided that the per capita tax is paid fifteen (15) days prior to the Department Convention (Article V, Section 4). ***Therefore, the delegate cut -off date for Department Convention is June 10th.***

Q: When is the latest a Resolution or Constitutional Amendment can be turned in?

A: Both resolutions and amendments must be at the Department at least forty (40) days prior to the Department Convention. Keep in mind that they must be typewritten, prepared in triplicate on forms supplied by the Department (*these forms can be found on the Department website or by request*). Additionally, amendments will be sent to each Post at least 30 days prior to the convention. ***Therefore, resolutions and amendments must be turned in to the Department no later than May 15th.***

Q: Can a Post be denied its vote for any reason at the State Convention if such Post is present at the State Convention?

A: Yes. If a post has not turned in all of their paperwork, to include the Post Officers Report and the CPR Addendum, they will be required to do so before they register their delegates to vote. Additionally, any post with outstanding dues or other monies owed to the Department will not be allowed to register until such debts are paid in full.

Q: What is the rule with regard to when the Districts have to have their elections?

A: District Constitutional Conferences (DCC) must be held not more than sixty (60) nor less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the Department Convention. The time and place is designated by the District Commander. ***Therefore, District Constitutional Conferences must be held between April 26th and June 15th.***

This year is a great milestone for the Florida American Legion. One of our own, Clarence Hill, is the leading candidate for National Commander for 2009-2010. This will be the first time in the history of The American Legion that a Legionnaire from Florida will hold this esteemed position. Stay tuned as I bring you more on this issue following the National Convention in August.

I certainly appreciate all the cooperation and assistance the Department has received during this transitional period. I look forward to seeing all of you in Orlando in June.



Patience is waiting. Not passively waiting. That is laziness. But to keep going when the going is hard and slow - that is patience.

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

As this Legion year nears completion I would like to recognize The Legion Family members who contribute to our organization by working behind the scenes.

Post Commanders you know who I am talking about. When you are going to have a function at your Post and preparations are required to make the event a success; they are the members who are always there to assist. These are the members who prepare the meals, decorate the hall, and take care of "clean-up duty".

We also have members who take on care-giving roles. They take neighbors and Post members who need assistance to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, and bring them to Post functions. Sometimes they are so quiet about what they contribute they are never recognized.

We are privileged to have a Department Staff who works tirelessly behind the scenes. They provide professionalism and a supportive environment making it possible for the Department of Florida to shine

Thank you to all volunteers and department staff, you are our unsung heroes. We are privileged to have you. Keep up the good work.

Department Convention Banquet

Friday, June 26, 6:30 pm, Dinner at 7:00 pm

Live music provided by Lou Galterio

Entertainment provided by the one and only -

Billy 'ELVIS' Lindsey

Tickets: \$45.00 each, contact Crystal at Headquarters

John Burroughs
Department Sergeant-At-Arms
johnabd08bd@aol.com

Last month I asked anyone if they would like to help us at the Department Convention. I hadn't had any respond. We can still use your help on the floor at the Convention. We will have a meeting at 7AM on Friday morning, June the 26 and if you would like to help us out I am sure that we can find something for you to do.

Post Commanders, don't forget to recommend your Sgt-at-Arms for the Eddie Humor award send that in with your year end report.

At the present time I only have three requests for grants from the Florida Children and Youth Fund and time is getting short.

For God and Country - Also please don't forget to tell your loved ones every day that you love them; time is short.



Blood Donor Program

Fletcher Williams, Jr., Department Chairman

Important Reminder

This is a reminder that if your Post desires to be considered for the Annual Award, you must have your report to me no later than 15 May 2009.

You can email the report to me at fletcher.williams@cox.net or snail mail at: 5908 Meadow Lane N., Crestview, FL 32539

Chaplain's Report

Jay Walrond, Department Chaplain

In my many years as District and Department Chaplain I have probably presided over more than one hundred funerals. And one recurring lament is the high cost associated with the interment of a loved one.

I started thinking about the possibility of alternative options to the standard funeral. Apparently I was not alone in my thinking for I have discovered several books on the subject and a number of web sites that offer many alternatives.

In the articles that follow I will attempt to offer a synopsis of my research.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Genesis 3:19

One of the least expensive options is cremation. There are crematoriums that will deal with you directly and save you the expense of dealing with a funeral home. The best bet is to look in the local Yellow Pages or go online to find one that is convenient and services your area. You may also want to check out the Cremation Association of North America. www.cremationassociation.org and check out the Member Directory. Another source is the Funeral Consumer Alliance www.funerals.org and check the Directory of Non Profit Funeral Consumer Groups. Funeral Groups sometimes offer no frills cremation services for very low rates.

In addition cremation offers a number of options for the disposition of the ashes of a loved one. There are no laws in Florida that prohibit the scattering of cremation ashes. But this doesn't mean that you can just scatter ashes anywhere. You may scatter ashes on your own property or that of another if you have permission. It is recommended that you get permission in writing. There are many options for scattering ashes at sea or on a lake. You should always check with the local or state governing body to see if a permit is required. Check with the Coast Guard and see what they recommend, I have done many scatterings of veteran's ashes with the local Coast Guard. Be careful when you scatter. I remember several years ago sailing out of Mayport on a FFG on Pearl Harbor Day when the wind took a sudden shift and covered sailors in dress blues with grey ashes as I headed for shelter in the helicopter hanger. Always remember to keep the wind at your back.

Next month we will be discussing other alternatives to the traditional expensive funeral. For the Lord and the Legion

Sue Mason
Department Historian
wacsmason@aol.com

The deadline for submitting your Narrative Histories, Scrapbooks or "Fun Books" is fast approaching. All entries MUST be received at Department by Friday 12 June. If you need to mail them, be sure they are mailed in plenty of time. Any book that you want to be considered for National judging must follow, to the letter, the guidelines in the *Officer's Guide*. Also, make sure that you don't confuse the instructions for one type of book with the one you are doing (narrative or scrapbook).

For those of you who are compiling Narratives, the explanation is on pages 169 to 174. There is a breakdown of the judging standards on pages 172-173. For the Scrapbook people, your section begins at the bottom of page 174 with the points break-down on pages 176-177. The District history or scrapbook section is on page 177. These are the pages in the 2006 edition of the *Officer's Guide*; other editions might have slightly different pages but they should be close. Do not include minutes or newsletters in your book. Also, remember that Narratives are just that. Think of it as a book with only a few photos and scrapbooks are a lot of photos with short narratives. The judges will be following these same guidelines.

For the "Fun Books" you can do anything you wish but I wouldn't recommend minutes or newsletters in them either. Good luck and I look forward to your entries.

If you have any questions, you can email me at *wacsmason@aol.com* or call me at (352) 383-9797.



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

Letters were recently sent to all Florida Chartered American Legion Scout units explaining the upcoming 2010 January Camporee. It is only available to Florida Chartered American Legion Boy Scout Troops and Venturing Crews. There was also a memo sent addressing a special Scout Patch that only Florida Chartered Cub Scout Packs can receive when the unit's membership complete their Citizenship/Americanism requirements based on rank requirements for 2009.

We are trying to offer some sort of program for each level of Scouting, a feat never done before. Hopefully our Florida Chartered Scout units will support them and participate.

Now is the time to prepare your Scout Narratives for the year (2008-2009). Please do not repeat information presented from recent years. Tell us what your units have accomplished. In order for Posts to be considered for the special Scout recognition, your Post must submit their CPR and be received at Department Headquarters by May 11th. The information provided from these Scout Narratives will be used to describe our Legion Scouting status and atmosphere around the state of Florida. The ultimate goal is to obtain the Frank N. Belgrano Trophy. This award began in 1936 and the State of Florida has received this in 1996, 1998, and 2004. We are well overdue and hope that this year's input will bring home the Frank N. Belgrano Trophy to the Department of Florida.

The Department CPR form has changed. The Boy Scout or Scouting section has been simplified. Please complete this section. It is used to validate information from other sources and is used to support a general report submitted to National American Legion and is used to determine Post recognition of Scouting activities for the reporting period.

The Talent Search is on seeking out the next Department Boy Scout Chairman. To ensure a seamless transfer, we are seeking someone to step up as a vice chairman to assist me, get acquainted with the program responsibilities and prepared to take the reigns at the end of the 2010 Scout Camporee in January. This Legionnaire should be someone that has the desire to take this chairmanship to the next level. Those interested in filling the Boy Scout Vice Chairman position, please contact Carol Polk as soon as possible. Candidates will be reviewed and selection made before the June annual convention.

The Department Boy Scout Program link will undergo some minor changes/updates over the next few months. Please be patient as we improve the link to better serve you. For God and Country – Yours in Better Scouting

District Constitutional Conferences

DATE	DIST	PLACE—POST #	REG TIME
May 2	14	43	8:00 am
May 9	16	273	11:00 am
May 16	2	241	2:00 pm
May 16	6	53	9:00 am
May 16	7	8	9:00 am
May 16	15	111	9:00 am
May 17	11	64	9:00 am
May 23	12	163	9:00 am
May 30	1	296	9:00 am
May 30	10	29	9:00 am
June 6	3	57	Noon
June 6	4	284	9:00 am
June 6	8	159	8:00 am
June 6	13	103	1:00 pm
June 7	5	316	8:00 am
June 7	9	180	8:00 am
June 7	17	6	Noon



100% Goal

May 6, 2009

Dianne Thibodeau, Membership
D.Thibodeau@floridalegion.org

District/Area Membership Report as of April 24, 2009

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
4	Jim Ramos	3,813	3,949	103.57
2	George Segrest	1,323	1,339	101.21
6	Earl Friedeborn	9,237	9,278	100.44
12	Carl Schneider	8,657	8,557	98.84
17	James Baker	4,343	4,257	98.02
16	Raymond Maya	12,033	11,764	97.76
15	Kathryn Ferrin	5,784	5,630	97.34
5	Robert Brewster	7,915	7,675	96.97
8	Richard Francis	9,281	8,897	95.86
9	Joseph Motes	4,890	4,686	95.83
10	Larrio Walden	1,155	1,100	95.24
7	Keith Holz	4,582	4,350	94.94
11	David Knapp	4,867	4,620	94.92
1	Martha Harris	6,518	6,157	94.46
13	Frank Ward	9,796	9,112	93.02
3	James Troupe	1,705	1,579	92.61
14	Louis Woodward	2,606	2,254	86.49
Eastern	Arthur Dudley	17,894	17,835	99.67
Northern	Joseph Nolan	17,776	17,460	98.22
Central	Mike Addis	22,399	21,744	97.08
Western	Fletcher Williams	7,841	7,496	95.60
SW	Dennis Bruland	19,077	18,009	94.40
Southern	William Hoppner	13,518	12,660	93.65
Dept			95,204	
Post 400		39,232	21,425	54.61
Post 208		1,538	1,873	121.78
Totals		135,500	118,502	87.46

It's May already and next month is June which means Convention time. April 1st was our 95% goal. The Department reached 86.06% but Post 400 only reached 53.75%. District 4 (Jim Ramos) and Eastern Area (Art Dudley) still lead with District 4 reaching their 100% goal. "Great Job" goes to Jim and all the commanders and volunteers in his district that worked hard on membership to help him reach the goal. You can't do it alone. Since then District 2 and District 6 have reached their 100% goal. Who will be next? The Eastern Area is currently at 99.33%. They only need 219 to reach 100%. District 12 only needs 142.

May brings us two membership goals. May 6th is our 100% goal and May 20th is our "100% plus 1 member" goal. I hope you all have plans in the works to ask, call or visit past members to renew. There should be a last minute membership drive scheduled. Hopefully you have worked Post 400 or were you waiting till the last minute? This is the last minute. We are quickly running out of time.

Last month I wrote about our National Commander, David Rehbein, awarding his National Commander pin to any American Legion family member who signs up at least five new members or renews/reinstates five current members? The program deadline is June 30th or when supplies are exhausted. He also has the belt buckle as a recruitment prize (deadline April 30th) as well as incentives for District Commanders and a Post excellence award.

This information needs to get turned in now. Hopefully the supplies are not exhausted. The Gold Brigade, Silver Brigade and Top Member Recruiter deadline is May 30th.

It has been a pleasure working with all of you this year. I know most of us have tried our best and that's all anyone can ask of you. Let's try a little bit harder, a little while longer. We all want to see Florida shine.

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.

For God & Country



Teacher of the Year Program
Fletcher Williams, Jr.
Chairperson

As we are getting closer to the Department Convention, this is a reminder that those Post(s) that have submitted a Teacher of the Year package, The District must insure that their winner is certified (sent under a letter from the District Commander) to the Area Commander no later than Thursday, May 14, 2009 and the Area Winner shall be certified (sent under a letter from the Area Commander) to Department Headquarters no later than Monday, June 1, 2009.



Deric C. Feacher
Boys State Director
directorofboysstate@floridalegion.org

Greetings and Salutations!

We are three months from Florida's Premier Youth Leadership Program, American Legion Boys State. Post Chairs, if you have not met with your delegates and their parents; it is crucial that you make contact with them. Delegate packets have been mailed out and Boys State delegates may have questions or concerns that you might be able to appropriately respond to. Therefore, you need to be in constant communication with delegates and their parents.

I am receiving emails and phone calls concerning District Orientations and that information is not privy to me. Please make contact with your delegates and inform them of the time and place when you will have your district meetings. During orientation meetings, please direct any and all questions concerning the Tallassee Community College Duel Enrollment State and Local Government Course to Dr. Rick Murgo at 850-201-8145 or murgor@tcc.fl.edu.

Please encourage your delegate not to bring a large amount of money, credit cards or valuables such as laptops, or other electronic communication or gaming devices. Boys State will not be responsible for these items if they are stolen, lost or broken. Cellular phones are permitted, but there are restrictions when these devices can be used.

We are preparing for a successful Boys State program and your continued contributions are what make it a success.

EDUCATE * ELIGHTEN * EMPOWER



National Oratorical Contest
Florida State Winner Finishes Third Nationally

INDIANAPOLIS (April 19, 2009) – A high school senior from Lafayette, Ind., capped a busy week-end of competition in Indianapolis by earning an \$18,000 college scholarship and first place in The American Legion National High School Oratorical Scholarship Program – “A Constitutional Speech Contest.” His winning oration was titled “A More Perfect Union.”

Andrew Dykstal, who attends Aldersgate Academy, in Lafayette, started the weekend as one of 53 state or territorial champions in the 72nd annual contest. He advanced to the championship through three rounds of intense competition.

Caroline Heydinger, of Battlesboro, Vt., earned a \$16,000 college scholarship with a second place finish, while **Werner Ferrone, of Homosassa, Fla, earned a \$14,000 scholarship and finished third.** The scholarships account for a small portion of the roughly \$3.5 million in post-secondary scholarships that The American Legion awards annually.

In each round of the weekend competition, orators delivered a rehearsed 8- to 10-minute address and a randomly assigned 3- to 5-minute oration on a constitutional topic, each without the benefit of notes and in front of a live audience, including the judges. The 2.6-million member American Legion developed the contest to encourage young people to improve their communications skills and to study the U.S. Constitution.



★ **ROSTER CHANGES** ★

- Raymond Maya 727-290-8643
- James Troupe 386-697-9150
- Post 63 email alp63wg@embarqmail.com
- Post 389 Mailing address: PO Box 6264, Sun City Center FL 33571
- Meetings changed 1st Monday of the month @ 7:00pm @ Ruskin VFW
- Post 30 Mailing Address: PO Box 86, Sarasota, FL 32430
- Post Commander: Sonny Bywaters 4915 N Lockwood Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34234-3352, 941-321-4934, sonnybywaters@verizon.net
- Post 325 Mailing address: 3420 US Highway 301 North, Ellenton, FL 34222
- Post 117 Mailing address: 189 Veterans dr, Palm Bay, FL 32909



VETERANS EMPLOYMENT NEWS

Dick Mondro

Chairman Veterans Employment

VET JOBS UPDATE

On 17 FEB 09 President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009 (H.R.598). Among its many provisions, Section 1221 of the Act amends and supplements Section 51 of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) to create additional incentives to hire an unemployed veteran. Effective for 2009 and 2010, the Act includes an unemployed veteran as a member of one of the targeted group for purposes of eligibility for the "Work Opportunity Tax Credit" (WOTC). For definition purposes, an *unemployed veteran* is an individual who (i) Has been discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces at any time during the 5-year period ending on the hiring date (the day the veteran is hired by the employer), and; (ii) Is in receipt of unemployment compensation (under State or Federal law) for not less than 4 weeks during the 1-year period ending on the hiring date.

The credit equals 40% (if the veteran performs at least 400 hours of service to the employer) or 25% (if the veteran performs between 120 and 399 hours of service to the employer) of the first \$6,000 in wages (up to a maximum credit per employee of \$2,400) paid to the newly hired veteran. An employer may make the WOTC election at any time during the three (3) year period prescribed by law for filing (without regard to extensions) the federal income tax return. The U.S. Employment Service will notify an eligible employer of their availability for the WOTC. The WOTC will not be available to an employer if the employee had been previously employed by the employer at any time. However, a successor employer will be entitled to the WOTC to the same extent as if they were paid by the predecessor. Veteran who fit this criteria and are seeking employment are advised to make sure prospective employers are aware of the WOTC to enhance their chances of being hired. [Source: Veteran Advocate 15 Apr 09]

VET JOB TRAINING Update

The Veterans Green Jobs Academy in Boulder CO is offering free and low-cost green job training to honorably discharged military veterans. The Academy combines classroom and on-the-job training for military veterans interested in environmental industries, business management or specific job skills such as home energy auditing. The Academy's next programs, which run in June and August, will include home energy audit training (HEAT) and certification, a natural resources conservation course and an introduction to alternative energy. Funded by a grant of nearly \$750,000 from the Wal-Mart Foundation, the group is setting up additional training sites in Louisiana, New Mexico and Washington in 2009. The Academy plans to expand its programs to 15 states in 2010 and all 50 states as soon as possible after that. For additional info on training and job applications refer to Veterans Green Jobs website <http://veteransgreenjobs.org/green-jobs-training-info>. [Source: Military.com Military Report 30 Mar 09]

2008-2009 NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT WINNER SELECTED

Congratulations to Worksource (Southside) Career Center of Jacksonville, for being selected by the Economics Commission as The American Legion 2008-2009 National Winner of the year for the Local Employment Office Category. By assisting veterans in a tremendous manner, The American Legion will recognize them for their role at the 91st. Annual American Legion National Convention in Louisville Kentucky on August 26 with the presentation of a plaque. Thanks for a great job serving our Veterans.

ENDORSEMENTS

Phil Hearlson - Department Commander

Al Porter - Department Vice Commander

Sonny Bywaters - Dept Vice Commander

Fletcher Williams - Dept Vice Commander

Arthur Dudley - Department Chaplain

Robert Meyer - Department Chaplain

Robert Vick - Department Chaplain

Charles Haig - Department Chaplain

Sue Mason - Department Historian

Marie Kraemer - Sergeant-at-Arms

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

Jim Troupe - 3rd District Commander

Jerry Montgomery - 4th District Commander

Greg Lovejoy - 5th District Commander

Keith Holz—7th District Commander

Gregory Putman - 8th District Commander

Joseph Motes - 9th District Commander

Paul Bosco - 11th District Commander

Mark Johnson - 12th District Commander

Carl Schneider- 12th District Commander

Thomas Northcutt - 12th District Commander

Frank Ward - 13th District Commander

John Ebling - 13th District Commander

Larry Faulkner - 15th District Commander

George Paradise - 16th District Commander

Art Schwabe - 17th District Commander



The American Legion
Department of Florida
POW/MIA Poster Contest Application
Due in Department Date 6/1/09
Please Print

Artists Name: _____

Artist Address: _____

Artist Phone #: Home _____ Cell _____

Artist Legion ID # _____ Post # _____

I, _____ give my permission to submit my poster to Defense POW/MIA Office and understand that said poster will become property of The American Legion and will not be returned to me.

Signed

Date



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

We need your help and the help of your family members to call your member of Congress, 800.828.0498, and tell the operator you wish to speak to your Congressman. When you get to his/her office, tell them you are calling as a member of The American Legion and want his/her support for H.R. 1016 and our two senators, tell them to support Senate Bill 423.

Congressional Quarterly
Obama Seeks Two-Year Plan for VA Appropriations
By Matthew M. Johnson

President Obama announced Thursday that he will ask Congress to provide Veterans Affairs funding two years ahead and will push for a system that streamlines the transfer of medical records between the Defense Department and the veterans' health system. Obama's plan would ask Congress to fund the VA for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 when he submits his first official government-wide budget request next month. VA programs are now appropriated one year at a time.

Veterans' advocacy organizations have long pushed the two-year budget to alleviate long waits for treatment, personnel shortages, and construction delays, which they say result when lawmakers fail to pass appropriations bills by the start of each fiscal year on October 1.

Under the plan, Congress would act this year to fund the VA for fiscal year 2010 and 2011. Next year, it would write a bill for fiscal year 2012, and thus stay two years ahead. The Chairmen of both the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees, Bob Filner, D-California and Daniel K. Akaka, D-Hawaii, have sponsored bills (HR 1016, S 423) that would allow Congress to do VA appropriations two year ahead.

Obama also announced that the Defense Department and VA will work to build a joint network that will contain administrative and medical information for active duty personnel and veterans "from the day they first enlist to the day they are laid to rest."

The network is intended to allow military personnel to make a seamless transition from the active duty to the VA, ensuring all health care providers get fast and complete access to records required to deliver quality medical care and avoid medical errors.

Currently, there is no system that allows for a streamlined transition of health records between the defense Department and the VA. Obama also called for multibillion-dollar increases to the VA's budget, including the expansion of education benefits and programs for homeless veterans.



The American Legion
Department of Florida
POW/MIA Poster Contest
Due in Department Date: 6/1/09



Below is the 2008 POW/MIA poster chosen by the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO). This poster is the perfect poster for Memorial Day but not for POW/MIA Remembrance Day; therefore The American Legion, Department of Florida, POW/MIA Program has initiated a poster contest within all posts in the Department. Two outcome of this contest will occur.

All posters will be sent to DPMO for consideration for the 2009 POW/MIA Remembrance Day Poster. All posters will be judged by a former POW. Five posters will be selected, which will be presented to the delegates of the Florida Department Convention in June. The winner of the poster contest will be presented with \$250.00.

Rules:

Permission must be granted to forward your poster to DPMO.

You do not have to be present to win, but it is requested that you do.

All posters become property of the Department of Florida and will not be returned.

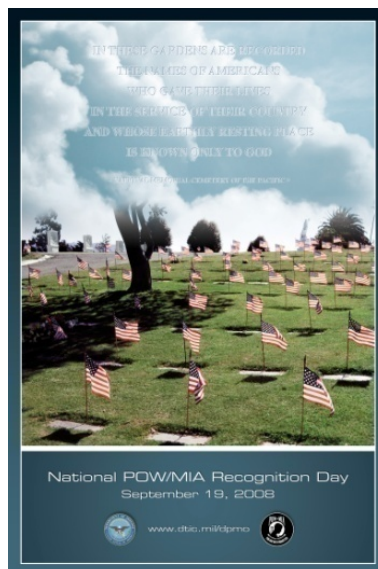
Two copies of posters must be submitted with the signed entrance form.

Posters can be in black & white or in color; hand drawn/painted or computer renditions.

There is no theme for the poster.

Posters can only be submitted by a current Legionnaire.

Show all former POW's and MIA's that you care by submitting your poster.



Department Convention Agenda

Thursday, June 25

8:00am—5:00pm Headquarters Office Caribe VI
8:00am—3:00pm Service Officer School Hibiscus
9:00am—5:00pm History Book Display & Judging Boca 5
1:00pm—2:00pm Internal Affairs Commission Caribe 7
2:00pm—3:00pm Children & Youth Commission Boca 1
2:00pm—3:00pm New District Commander School Boca 2
2:30pm—3:30pm Time and Place Cayman
3:00pm—4:00pm Americanism Commission Boca 6
3:00pm—4:00pm Historians Association Meeting Boca 4
3:00pm—4:30pm Finance Committee Meeting Caribe 7
5:00pm—6:00pm Executive Committee Meeting Caribe 7

Friday, June 26, 2009

8:00am—5:00pm Headquarters Office Caribe VI
8:00am—3:00pm Service Officer School Hibiscus
9:00am—5:00pm History Book Display & Judging Boca 5
Caucuses
7:00am – 8:00am Eastern Antigua 1/2
7:00am – 8:00am Central Antigua 3/4
7:00am – 8:00am Northern Bonaire 1/2
7:00am – 8:00am Southwestern Bonaire 3/4
7:00am – 8:00am Southern Curacao 1/2
7:00am – 8:00am Western Curacao 3/4
8:30am—3:00pm **First General Session** Grand Sierra A/D
Membership in Registration Office closed 12pm – 3pm

Introduction of Distinguished Guests

James Watson, Navy Seal

LeRoy Collins

Department Officer Reports & Awards

Department Area Commander's Report

Department Commander's Report Paul Martel

8:00am—2:30pm **First General Session** Grand Sierra A/D

Commission Reports and Awards

Americanism Commission Mike Addis

Boy Scout Award Stephen Shuga

School Medal Award Helen Gaekle

Children & Youth Commission Thomas Northcutt

Special Olympics Award Jeffrey Druden

Children & Youth Fund John Burroughs

Time & Place Al Porter

Shooting Sports Award/JROTC Loretta Young

Blood Donor Award Fletcher Williams

Internal Affairs Larry Sheets

Legion Riders Mike Amig

12:00pm – 1:00pm **LUNCH BREAK**

1:00pm – 2:00pm Membership Dianne Thibodeau

2:00pm – 2:30pm Committee Reports

Special Rules Terry Nolan

Credentials Committee Robert Koger

Constitution & By-Laws Joseph McNeil

Finance Committee Kenneth Powell

Resolutions Arthur Schwabe

Department Candidates Call

Only candidates with endorsements on file at Department will be allowed to address the delegation.

12:00pm – 1:00pm Area/Dist Commanders' Luncheon

12:00pm—1:30pm Past Dept Commanders' Luncheon

1:00pm—6:00pm Legion Institute Grand Sierra

2:30pm - 3:30pm Division of Alcohol, Beverages & Tobacco Grand Sierra F/G

3:30pm – 4:30pm Legion Riders Antigua 1/2

3:30pm – 4:30pm 20/4 Bivouac Antigua 3/4

3:30pm – 4:30pm Finance Class Curacao 1/2

4:30pm—5:30pm Past Commanders Club Bonaire 1/2

4:30pm—5:30pm FALPA Bonaire 3/4

6:30pm – 10:00pm **Cdr/Pres Banquet** Poolside

Saturday, June 27, 2009

8:00am—5:00pm Headquarters Office Caribe VI

Please note, the office will be closed during election

8:00am—9:30am Registration Caribe VI

8:00am—1:00pm **Second and Final General Session**

Grand Sierra A/D

Intro of Auxiliary, SAL Officers and Distinguished Guests

Prominent Speakers

Clarence Hill, Leading Candidate for National Commander General Cullen

Commission Reports and Awards

VA & R Commission Kelton Sweet

Unsung Hero Award Kelton Sweet

Employment Award Richard Mondro

Law & Order Award Norman Sullivan

Historian Award Sue Mason

Introduction of Youth Champions

Oratorical Winner Debra Roush

Junior Shooting Sports/JROTC scholarship Lorretta Young

General Scholarship Winner Mike Addis

CVSO Association Scholarship

Continuation of Awards Presentation

"Wilson Timmons Memorial Award" Dept. Cdr. Paul Martel

"Department Adjutant Award" Dept. Adj. Mike McDaniel

Pauline Benson 102 yr old member

Final Report of Special Rules Committee Terry Nolan

Sponsorship Announcement

Sweeps Drawing/ Cash Grab

12:00pm – 1:00pm **LUNCH BREAK**

1:00pm **Election of Officers 2008-2009**

Presentation of outgoing Department Commander Announcements

Retirement of Colors

4:00pm—5:00pm Commander Class Antigua 3/4

4:00pm—5:00pm Adjutant Class Antigua 1/2

4:00pm—5:00pm Finance Class Bonaire 1/2

4:00pm—5:00pm Division of Alcohol, Beverages & Tobacco Caribe VII

6:00pm Installation of Officers Hibiscus

7:00pm—8:30pm Reception Caribe VII

Sunday, June 28, 2009

8:00am – 10:00am Headquarters Office Caribe VII

8:00am – 8:30am Joint Religious Service Caribe I/IV

Presented by Auxiliary

9:00am - 11:00am Dept Exec Comm. Mtg. Grand Sierra A

