

The Legion Link

April 2014

Vol. 21 Issue 9



Making a Difference for Veterans Everyday



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Well I survived Fat Tuesday and Legion Birthday and St. Patrick's Day. Now we have Easter to look forward to. It's time to get things in order like, CPR reports, end of the year reports, Law and Order report, Blood Donor report, School Medals etc. Your Post has done a lot of work and spent a lot of money to help Veterans and Children and the Community. Don't drop the ball and not record it. THE JOB'S NOT DONE TILL THE PAPER WORK IS TURNED IN!! Make sure the Post gets credit for all the good deeds that have been accomplished.

This year I am asking all 16th District Commanders to have a Legionnaire of the Year from their District. From those 16 we will choose a Legionnaire of the year for Department. A written report will be required from each District Commander on why this person has been chosen. The written report is to be sent to Department no later than May 1st. (Same date everything else is due in Department.) Go Figure!!

Now is the time to start calling the mem-

bers who haven't paid their dues. Give them a personal call, find out why they haven't paid their dues. The reasons can be many but you will never know if you don't ASK!!!! You can't help what you don't know.

The first Family Homecoming will be held April 12th in Clearwater. It is sold out. I am looking forward to a great time, seeing many people who have made their mark on Veterans over the years. Having fun...HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY! Not sure if the Duck Commander will show up but with me you never know what's going to happen.

For God Country and The American Legion and All Veterans...God Bless



APRIL FOOL'S DAY APRIL 1st

Y	L	L	I	S	B	P	E	L	Z	O	O	B	M	A	B
E	B	E	W	I	L	D	E	R	C	A	P	E	R	W	Q
E	A	S	H	E	N	A	N	I	G	A	N	S	B	U	P
F	R	E	S	I	R	P	R	U	S	G	U	O	D	R	E
A	E	T	U	P	S	L	B	S	E	K	O	J	E	E	E
R	D	T	O	N	D	U	P	E	H	U	F	F	T	K	L
C	U	S	I	M	S	C	L	M	F	D	O	R	Y	A	A
E	L	E	O	I	F	D	P	E	N	S	I	Y	U	Y	Y
A	E	J	N	I	D	O	I	U	T	C	T	G	E	K	L
E	D	E	R	U	P	H	O	E	K	I	H	K	C	I	X
F	S	S	F	R	C	F	R	L	V	T	R	A	R	V	A
S	T	E	A	S	B	O	D	E	E	A	W	P	M	X	O
E	B	N	I	M	U	A	L	R	L	R	A	D	F	Z	H
Y	K	M	U	S	E	Y	P	A	O	B	Y	O	R	J	R
R	R	D	T	C	O	U	M	I	T	E	S	U	M	E	B
E	Y	E	K	N	O	M	K	N	I	W	D	O	O	H	I

APRIL
BAMBOOZLE
BEFUDDLE
BEMUSE
BEWILDER
CAPER
DELUDE
DUMBFOUND
DUPE
FARCE

FIRST
HOAX
HOODWINK
JEST
JOKES
LAUGHTER
LEVITY
MALARKEY
MISCHIEF
MONKEY

BUSINESS
PRANK
PREPOSTEROUS
SHENANIGANS
SILLY
SURPRISE
TOMFOOLERY
TRICK
WACKY



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Department Vice Commander
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Let's remember that April is **Children & Youth Month**. Please support the children in your Community. Invite your Community leaders to your C&Y events to show them what The American Legion is all about!

This past month we spent a few days at the **Boy Scout "CRACKER TRAIL" Camporee** with Chairman Wayne Newland and the 11th District Staff. Also attending was Department Chaplain Steve Newman and Department Military Liaison Jim Ramos.

What an awesome State Oratorical contest. I am glad I wasn't a judge for that one as it was a very hard choice between these contestants. You can see the Oratorical Contest on our website and see what I am talking about: <http://members.floridalegion.org/programs/oratorical>

The American Legion Baseball meeting got off with a BANG on March 15th. We had many American Legion Baseball Representatives, but from only half of the 16 Districts. If you want to know more about one of our greatest programs please contact our American Legion Baseball Chairman Benny Combs at baseball@legionmail.org or call him at 904.210.2236. It is not too late to get a team registered.

I am sure many of you celebrated **The American Legion Birthday**. It is hard to imagine that The American Legion is now 95 years ago! CPR Reports, End of Year Reports have been sent to your Post. Please fill out and send them in as soon as you can as your Post awards are based on them. The Deadline for the CPR Reports are May 1, 2014 so don't delay.

It looks like we will have a few Department of Florida Districts that will qualify for the National **Race-To-The-Top** Awards for Membership. Let's keep those Membership Cards coming in and lets get our Commander Art "Ole" Schwabe to **FLY!**

On Wednesday, March 5th I had the pleasure of attending the Dunnellon Post 58 meeting where every other month they honor Veterans from their local nursing homes (**by the way; ALL are members of Post 58**). An outstanding job was done by the Legion Family of Post 58 with dinner for them and their guests prior to the meeting with the Honor Guard presenting colors. Veterans Nursing Home Chairman Bob Anderson and Commander John Taylor did one outstanding job. **To American Legion Post 58 Commander John Taylor and the Legion 58 Family. BRAVO ZULU!**

- (1) Picture of Local Veterans from area nursing homes at Post 58.
- (2) 5 Photos Boy SCOUT Cracker Trail



Michael McDaniel
Department Adjutant

For many years, we have lost Post homes in Florida. Sadly, in recent years, some were lost to thievery, deceit, treachery, and some to simple mismanagement and bad judgment. In most cases, member apathy played a major part in these tragedies.

Every year, members call the Department and ask, "Why won't the Department fix my Post?" We explain the role of the Department and how its options were sometimes limited to revoking a post charter. One major point of that message was that each post is responsible for its own destiny.

Very shortly, we Legionnaires will have the opportunity to once again influence the destiny of our Posts. Here in America, we enjoy the right to elect our leaders, and that opportunity is coming up. Spring is the time of year when many Posts elect new officers to lead our Posts throughout the upcoming year.

Unfortunately, the majority of Legionnaires do not participate in these elections. A few members routinely make leadership choices for us. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. I would encourage all Legionnaires to make the effort to be active participants in their Post activities, especially on election night. Listen to the candidates, make your choice, and support your elected leaders.

Legionnaires periodically share complaints about Posts officers. In many cases, these complaints come from members who did not participate in the election process. Understandably, some are not able to physically participate while others simply don't think their vote matters. It does matter. To quote a wise past Department Commander, "show up or shut up". It's your Post, be a part of it. Please get involved with your Post or soon it may not exist.

Department Chaplain Steven Newman

Greetings my fellow Legionnaires. Wishing you a happy Easter and springtime season. This is the time of year for being outdoors, enjoying the radiant sunshine, seeing the beautiful flowers, trees and starting your garden. Nature enhances our ability to think clearer, enjoy life more, and lift our spirits. Gardening promotes physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual well-being.

Gardening has to do with "Biophilia", a term created by naturalist Edward O. Wilson to describe our innate connection with nature. You should think of a time when being in nature was able to change your outlook, calm your mind and create space around a challenge. This experience was a biophilic response.

Flowers alone are found in all traditions. Flowers are great sources of energy and inspiration. They are used to express love, sympathy, friendship, and more. The fragrances, herbal qualities, color and imagery serve as powerful sources of energy. The pleasure of gardening will grow on you when you plant a single plant or box of flowers and you start to see a bloom it gives you a sense of triumph shared only by poets. "We should love the Earth and all things that grow and live upon it. We should love the soil and sit upon the ground often - feeling close to its great mothering power, allowing it to strengthen and heal us" - (Nature - Speak)

I hope today you will start to deepen your connection with nature through gardening. Happy Easter enjoy the eggs, flowers, laughter, rabbits, and all the miracles that God created around us with unconditional love. For "God and Country"

**FROM THE DESK OF THE
DEPARTMENT JUDGE ADVOCATE
Larry Sheets**



I want to start by saying thank you to the members of the Florida American Legion Family for the many get well cards I have received in the last 6 weeks. You can't imagine how much I appreciate them. I am now able to get around without a cane or walker, and am getting better every day. Again, Thank you so much.

In the past few months I, along with the Assistant Department Judge Advocate, Larry White, have been able to read and either approve or disapprove many Post Constitution and By-Laws. We have managed to get the turn-around time down to a week to ten days. I want to thank Larry for his help and assistance. He is a tremendous asset as well as a good friend. I have spoken to many Post Commanders, Post Adjutants, and Post Judge Advocates to explain any problems we run across when going through their Constitution and By-Laws.

I think it is important to speak with Post Commanders, Post Adjutants, and Post Judge Advocates and explain why something was not approved in their amended Constitution and By-Laws. This makes it easier to make the needed corrections.

100% Goal

May 7, 2014

Membership Report as of March 31, 2014

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
6	Thomas Biddle	10,741	11,194	104.22
13	John Dollinger	8,782	8,998	102.46
12	Kenneth Wakefield	9,210	9,116	98.98
3	Randall White	1,715	1,693	98.72
5	Thomas Gora	7,810	7,570	96.93
15	Eunice Butts	5,329	5,116	96.00
1	Jimmy Martin	6,288	5,986	95.20
7	Charles Giffin	4,019	3,818	95.00
2	Willie Jackson	1,373	1,300	94.68
16	Sidney Damsgard	12,028	11,383	94.64
8	Joseph Magee	9,771	9,238	94.55
17	Dorothy Moore	4,542	4,248	93.53
4	Charles Ferguson	5,117	4,691	91.67
14	Gary Decker	3,026	2,773	91.64
11	Frank Maitland	4,168	3,793	91.00
9	John Vazquez	4,433	3,917	88.36
Eastern	Robert Kiley	19,951	20,310	101.80
SW	Debra Roush	18,553	18,236	98.29
Western	Verna Joyce	7,661	7,286	95.11
Central	James Burgess	21,376	20,317	95.05
Northern	Michael Wolohan	19,184	18,202	94.88
Southern	William Johnson	11,627	10,483	90.16
Department			94,834	
Post 400		12,067	12,064	99.98
Post 208		3,181	2,983	93.78
Totals		111,525	106,176	95.20

End of Year packets have gone out to all Posts. They are addressed to the Post Commander. The deadline to get materials in for awards is May 1st. To register your delegates at Department Convention you must have turned in your National Consolidated Post Report, the Department Addendum and the Post Officer Report. All reports must be in no later than July 1, 2014.



Welcome To
Spring!

April Fun Facts

- 1, 1778 - The \$ symbol is created by Oliver Pollock
- 3, 1882 - Jesse James was killed
- 5, 1933 - First lung removal operation
- 6, 1930 - Hostess Twinkie invented by James Dewar
- 12, 1853 - First U.S. truancy law - New York
- 13, 1976 - The new U.S. \$2.00 bill is placed in circulation
- 14, 1865 - President Lincoln was shot
- 17, 1964 - Mustang; Fords new sports car is unveiled at the New York Worlds Fair. At a base price of \$2368 it sold an industry record of 417,100 units in its first year
- 19, 1897 - First Boston Marathon
- 24, 1800 Library of Congress was established with the library of Thomas Jefferson
- 25, 1901 - New York becomes the first state to require license plates.

Steve Shuga
Children & Youth Program Chairman
cy@legionmail.org

The American Legion has celebrated "April is Children & Youth Month" for the past 76 years by supporting and promoting its national theme – "Children... Our Most Precious Natural Resource". During this month of celebration, American Legion family members are encouraged to show their local communities the Legion's commitment to young people by hosting youth activities or by becoming involved in programs and organizations that support young people.

For ideas on how to support and promote Children & Youth Month in your community, download a copy of the "**April is Children & Youth Month**" brochure. Legion family members can promote Children & Youth Month awareness through their local newspapers, radio and TV stations, civic groups, schools, social media, and in conversations with other veterans and their families. Communities need to know that American Legion services are available and why young people matter so much to us.

Remember to use the variety of materials provided by and be sure to stamp your Post address, email, and telephone number on the back so parents can contact you or visit the Post. You might just recruit a new member to your Post or The American Legion.

Monthly Program Reminders

Plan you C&Y activities at least two months ahead & order your resources early using the order forms in the current Post Administrative Manual.

Important C&Y Program Dates

Florida Children & Youth Fund Grant applications due to Dept. HQ no later than **May 1, 2014**. Checklist is online under Programs.

Please report all Children & Youth monthly activities. Our goal is a 100% reporting from every post. Everyone benefits from timely submissions. Remember your **Coins for COTA and Children Welfare Foundation –Piggy Banks and /or Cans**. Turn in your monies before May 31st to Department Headquarters.

Important C&Y Program Dates

Children Welfare Foundation – 100% Member Per Capita Banner Program – Every Post, Unit, Squadron, Chapter can support this by providing \$1 per member and submitting this check to Dennis Boland, Child Welfare Foundation. April Holidays
April has several unique and bizarre days. Some of these include: National Humor, International Guitar, Keep America Beautiful, Lawn and Garden, National Poetry, and National Pecan Month.

- 1st April Fool's Day
- 2nd Children's Book Day;
National Peanut Butter and Jelly Day
- 7th Caramel Popcorn Day
- 17th National High Five Day
- 18th Good Friday
- 20th Easter
- 21st Kindergarten Day
Patriot's Day
- 22nd Girl Scout Leader's Day
National Jelly Bean Day
- 26th National Pretzel Day
- 27th Tell a Story Day



Check out the link for more monthly activities and events. (<http://www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/april.htm>)

Steve Barentine
Americanism Chairman

The Legacy Run continues through April 3rd.

Reminder of the Legion and SAL Commanders' and Auxiliary President's Homecoming on Saturday, April 12th at Post 7 in Clearwater.

As we wind down the Legion year I want to take this time to thank ALL of the Area, District, and Post Americanism Chairmen for all of their hard work this year.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Convention in June. For God & Country.

Stanley Gold
Dept. National Legislative Chairman

In a previous article, I wrote about Bill Posey who introduced bill H.R.1726 which requests the Congressional Gold Medal for the veterans of the 65th Infantry Regiment (also known as "The Boriqueneers") originally based on the island of Puerto Rico for their distinguished service during the Korean War. This last month the President awarded one of the members the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in Korea. There was a companion bill introduced in the Senate: bill S1174. My post, Coral Gables Post 98, passed a resolution that the American Legion should support this bill which will be taken up at our Department Convention, where it will hopefully pass and then move on for a vote at the National Convention in August. If accepted, then our National Office can work on this officially. In the meanwhile, I'm glad to say that I've been talking to several members of Congress from Florida, and all of them, in addition to the two senators, cosponsored this bill. We need twelve more members of the Senate to sign on and they too will have enough to bring it to the floor. March 24-28 I will be at the Washington Legislative Conference, and on Wednesday our National Commander will give testimony to the joint House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. He will express the importance of passing Veterans and Department of Defense Bills.

On Tuesday all the Departments in the country will visit their members of Congress, but the Department of Florida will do it a little different: I'm glad to say that the Members of Congress come to us! For the past eight years, our Department had secured a large meeting room at the House building for the purpose of our annual luncheon which we will hold Tuesday from noon to 2 PM. We have received replies from all members that they or their staff members will attend. Thanks to Congressman Jeff Miller for securing us the meeting room with no cost to us- the room is the Gold Room at the Rayburn building. Last year we had 23 House members show up, which was a new record. Those who could not show up, due to scheduling conflicts, we met with later that afternoon or the next day. The purpose of this luncheon is to ensure that Members of Congress clearly understand that veterans' issues are nonpartisan and to briefly discuss key veterans' legislative issues. Included among these issues is the amendment to the Constitution giving Congress power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States (H.J. Res. 47). The veterans of this great nation gave their lives to protect our American way of life, our identity. The American Legion strongly supports this amendment and we request your consideration in co-sponsoring this amendment.

In the past six months, I am very proud to say that Dennis Boland, N.E.C., Michael McDaniel, our Adjutant, and Paul Martel, Dept. State Legislative Chairman, have informed the membership on the websites more about National and State legislation than I've seen in all the 48 years I've been a member of the American Legion. It's really important that those offices that read this report will reprint it in their newsletters, talk about it at their meetings to their members and stress the importance of everyone contacting their Representative in Congress to support the legislative agenda. Those members that have newsletters should all be members of the Florida American Legion Press Association, which can provide assistance on improving your paper.

On March 8, I had the distinct honor, along with three other Veterans from the National Postal Supervisors' Association, to present the wreath at Arlington National Cemetery at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I was proud to wear my Legion cap.



Benny Combs
Baseball Chairmen
baseball@legionmail.org

American Legion Baseball is back into full swing and a lot is going on. First let me give my thanks to Steve Cloud National Asst. Dir. For being at the Baseball meeting in March. Would also like to say thanks to Dept. Vice Commander Jay Conti Asst. Dept. Adj. Jerry Mullenix and Programs Dir. Carol Polk for attending the meeting and all else that they have done for the Baseball program. The meeting was well attended and I thank everyone who attended. Some important deadlines are quickly nearing. The teams should already be registering and coaches obtaining background checks. If anyone is having trouble with doing either feel free to get in touch with me and I am sure we can conquer any problems. Any Post or person wishing to obtain information on starting a American Legion Baseball team whether senior or junior just go to the programs section of Dept website or feel free to send myself an e-mail or call 904-210-2236. Together we can make Baseball the Program it should be. Thank You.

Scam to Army Soldiers

The Defense Department officials say scammers are trying to get information and passwords from Army civilians, soldiers, retirees and family members. The scam involves a website called "My Army Benefits," which is nearly identical to the Army's official website called "MyArmyBenefits."

The primary purpose of the fraudulent site is to collect soldiers' Army Knowledge Online, or AKO, email accounts and passwords, officials said. It also makes the false claim that the U.S. military has granted access to unclaimed and accumulated benefits for active duty soldiers, and that benefits not claimed within the specific period will be available for claims after 60 months, according to information released by the Department of Defense. Soldiers, Army civilians, retirees and family members are strongly cautioned to ignore the website, do not log into the website and to immediately delete suspicious emails without answering them. If you have accessed the website from a government computer or system, you should contact your local information assurance office.

Jack Stanley
Department National Cemetery Chairman

Volunteers are needed to help place approximately 100,000 flags at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, It will take place on Sunday, May 25th at 9:00 A.M. To volunteer you must register at website www.flagsforfallenvets.com and click on the volunteer link.

A common misperception is that the VA places flags on the gravesites in the cemeteries on Memorial Day when, in fact, it's non-profit organizations and volunteers that choose to honor our veterans in this manner. This year is the initial effort at Bushnell and many volunteers are need. Please sign up if you can.



Steve Shuga

Florida American Legion Press Association – FALPA President

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hot off the Press.... **The American Legion Membership Public Relations Guide.**

We as FALPA and NALPA members are the spearhead for the membership team's plan. What we report, how we write, what we express, the pictures we post, the websites we support or create and how we market our American Legion using social media sites, the ability to press a microphone and tell reporters, news crews, etc. is what's heard by many, first! Our impact is so great, so widespread, that we just may interest, be the turning point for Veterans to join the world's largest veteran service organization.

Veterans still need to ask questions and sometimes, we are the ones who gain their interest and may have to pass them to someone who can answer their questions and gain their trust to complete a membership form, secure their monetary commitment and welcome them aboard The American Legion.

We have a very important task to fulfill. To help you understand and achieve this opportunity to serve others, I ask that you go to National American Legion website (www.legion.org) and select media until you discover the resources. There you can either order a free hard copy (suggested) or download a copy from the website (great backup). Once you have secured this resource, read it and apply it.

This resource also encourages us to recruit, renew, and retain our FALPA and NALPA membership because without them, FALPA can't exist. We need to secure our numbers and provide the Florida American Legion family with a special, unique and an effective means to gain Veterans into our ranks.

ROSTER CHANGES RECEIVED UP TO April 1, 2014

Post 57 | Address 2602 SW Main Blvd, Lake City, 32025
Post 90 | Website and Meeting Time www.post90swf.org | 7pm
Post 142 | Address 171 SW 2nd Street, Pomano Beach, 33060
Post 112 | Cmdr. Phone number Commander Billy Dover: 407.383.9455
PDC Frank Reese | Email jreese561@gmail.com
Post 164 | Cmdr. Change Kenneth C. Nichols, 1106 Ocean Dr., Boynton Bch, 33426, H: 561.732.3869,
C: 561.906.6469
Post 30 | Cmdr. Change Donald Trimm | 3223 N. Lockwood Rdg. Rd. Lot 67, Sarasota, 34234 |
H: 941.993.3177
Post 291 | Adj. Change Thomas R. Weaver | H: 352.356.0300
Post 162 | Adj. Change Vacant (Cmdr. Acting Until New Appt.)
Post 336 | Cmdr. Change James K. Tressel
Post 316 | Cmdr. Change Clarence Hill | C: 904.219.7432
Post 274 | Cmdr. Change Daniel Parker | H: 239.850.4589
Post 91 | Cmdr. Change Mark Hall | H: 386.935.6766 | C: 352.221.0657 | F: 352.463.1501
E: markchevallumni1983@msn.com
Post 285 | Cmdr. & Adj. Change Cmdr: Thomas A Coe | Adj: Colleen A. Smith (new contact: H: 386.216.3018)
Post 267 | Cmdr. & Adj. Change Cmdr: Michael Wolohan | Adj: Paul Alexander
Post 45 | Cmdr. Change Charles F. Gauthier | W: 386.336.1083
Post 230 | Adj. Change Frank Womack
Post 19 | Address 5320 Alloway St. Orlando, FL 32810-5510
Post 11 | Adj. & meeting change Arthur Southwell | Second Monday of the Month at 7pm
Post 357 | Post Info Change PO Box 121429, Clermont FL 34712 | Post #: 352.874.6591 | Dues: \$30 | 1st
Tuesday at 7pm | Liquor License: No | Bingo: No | Post Home: No | UPS:
2031 Crestridge Dr. Clermont FL 34711-5121 | Post Service officer: Yes |
Cmdr: Jim Douglas Jr. (H: 352.243.6000 | W:352.874.6591 |
E:dcorvette1981@embarqmail.com)| Adj: Shirley M. Douglas
(H:352.243.6000 | W:352.874.6582 | E:sdouglascmsgt@embarqmail.com)
F: 407.347.9815 | E: americanlegion63@cfl.rr.com
Post 163 | Fax & Email PO Box 174158, Hialeah, FL 33017-4158 | UPS: 18510 NW 86th Ave, Hiale-
Post 144 | Post Info Changes ah, FL 33015-2528 | Post #: 786.942.5700 | E: post144mia-
milakes@gmail.com
Post 403 | Address PO Box 636, Bushnell, FL 33513
Post 405 | Post Info Change Meeting: 1st Monday at 9am | Dues: \$25 | Post Address: 33123 Oil Well Rd.,
Punta Gorda, FL 33955 | Post Meets at Charlotte Correctional Institute| Adj:
Mark Bomia | Cmdr: Gerald Herron
Post 404 | Post Info Change Meeting: 3rd Tuesday at 11:30am | Post #: 239.564.9894 | Post Fax:
239.389.1945 | Dues: \$35 | Address: PO Box 1190, Marco Island, FL 34146 |
Post E: marcoup@aol.com | UPS: 1881 Cascade Ct., Marco Island, FL
34145 | Adj: Ray Rosenberg | Cmdr: Lee Rubinstein

The first of April is the day we remember what
we are the other 364 days of the year.

~ Mark Twain ~

ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports
Loretta Young, Department Chair

The year has quickly passed and we are now approaching the end of this year for our School ROTC/JROTC Year End Awards. All District Chairmen should be contacting their post chairmen to make sure that all posts will be sponsoring the year end medals for all Units. Do not wait for the schools to contact you. Be proactive and reach out to the SAL's and get the names of the recipients for the Military Excellence and the Scholastic Excellence Medals. Please be aware that the High Schools are only permitted to receive the Bronze Medal. The Silver and Gold Medals are only for 2 year college programs and 4 year college/university programs. It is always more rewarding for the cadets to have the presentations made in person by a post representative. Please make yourself available to attend the Assembly or Military Ball and give more meaning to all of their hard work throughout the year.

The Department of Florida would like to congratulate the two winners for the Postal Match that have advanced to Round 2. John Williams from Newsome H.S. competing for the Individual Sporter Category and Malgorzata Mical from the Wyoming Antelope Club competing for the Individual Precision Category. These targets have been mailed and we wish them luck in competing this round to advance to the finals to be held in Colorado Springs. Thanks to all who work hard to promote these programs to our youth.

John Dollinger
13th District Commander

March was a GREAT month. The 13th District Picnic was a huge success. In March the 13th District Posts collectively achieved the 100% membership goal. It is everyone working together, within our Posts and District that makes these goals attainable. We always say, there is no "I" in team, well there is no "I" in success either. Thank you, every Post Membership Team member, every Post Adjutant, every Post First Vice Commander and every Post Commander for their efforts on membership. We still have a ways to go. Let us not forget at 108% our Department Commander jumps out of a perfectly good airplane and at 110% the Department Adjutant will be a participant in the great jump.

May 3rd is the 13th District Constitutional Convention. We will have coffee and donuts beginning at 8:00 am and the meeting will start promptly at 9:00 am. There will be lots of Membership Awards, you will hear from candidates for Department Offices, elect a new District Commander and Vice Commanders and endorse a Southwestern Area Commander candidate. I will briefly talk about the 13th District 2013/2014. Every Post must have representatives at this meeting.

Department Convention will be June 12-15 at the Renaissance SeaWorld in Orlando. Thank you for your continued support.



John Dollinger
POW/MIA Chairman



On February 20th, the Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel ordered the Pentagon to come up with a plan to consolidate all Defense Department POW/MIA assets into a single, more accountable entity that would control the entire personnel accounting community. Hagel directed the Under Secretary of Defense to have a plan prepared in 30 days.

On April 1, Defense Secretary Hagel held a press briefing on proposed changes to the Department of Defense POW/MIA accounting mission. His main recommendations include:

Creating a new, single Department agency that will have full responsibility for carrying out the personnel accounting mission -- JPAC and DPMO will no longer exist in their current iteration. This new agency will be headed by a senior presidential appointee and answer to the Undersecretary Secretary of Defense /Policy.

The new agency will:

- ◆ Realign accounting appropriations into a single budget.
- ◆ Concentrate efforts more directly on investigations with proper controls to make sure resources are utilized properly and documented.
- ◆ Create a centralized database of recovery and archival information.
- ◆ Foster public/private partnerships to leverage new technology to help identify remains.
- ◆ Create a single point of contact where families can access all information.

Undersecretary of Defense Mr. Lumpkin, will be spearheading the implementation.

How the phase in / phase out of DPMO and JPAC will work is yet to be determined along with a timeline to phase in the new agency. This organizational change, over time will eliminate the duplication of services, eliminate some duplication of personnel and the single point of contact will eliminate many of the concerns of the POW/MIA families.

More to follow as additional information becomes available.

Florida American Legion members meet with Congressmen after the National Commander's testimony.

