

# The Legion Link

February 2012

Vol. 19 Issue 7



## AIMING HIGH FOR VETERANS



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**Fletcher Williams, Jr.**  
**Department Commander**  
**[Commander@floridalegion.org](mailto:Commander@floridalegion.org)**  
**407.247.5232**

I hope and pray that each of you and your families had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We finished the year with great success and are looking forward to a more prosperous 2012. However, we cannot realize any success in helping our Veterans, their families, and Communities without you, the dedicated Legionnaires and all the volunteers that assist you. We cannot leave out your families because without them you could not do the things that's required of you during the time that you are away. We still have work to do and I am confident that each of you will do your part to make the Department of Florida proud of each one of you and the contributions that you have made and will continue to make.

**Al "Gunner" Dudley**  
**Department Vice Commander**

We are 1 month into the New Year, so it's time to pick up the pace. We need that final push for membership, only 4 months left! Nominations and elections are right around the corner. If you intend vying for an office, make sure you know the duties of that office and you are prepared to assume them.

I attended the JROTC Commanders Cup match the 14th of January. What a turnout of cadets! Kudos to Loretta Young for an outstanding day!

Now is the time to start preparing your end of the year reports. It will be here before you know it. I will be traveling across the State the next 4 months visiting a lot of Post's. I hope to see you out and about. If anyone needs any help, do not be afraid to ask. Remember, we work for you!

For all incoming Area, District Officer's, and Department Chairmen, the Leadership Retreat will be the 22nd & 23rd of June 2012. Remember "Every day is Veteran's Day".



**Robert "Bob" Scott**  
**Department of Florida**

January has passed, and it is now February. Mark your calendar for February 10th through the 12th for the American Legion Skills Adventure Camporee, "The Cracker Trial". If you are on your way to the Southern Area Ball, stop by and visit us for an hour or two. It will be well worth your while. You will get to see 166 Boy Scouts, divided into 20 patrols striving to be the Best of the Best. This is a challenge for the Scouts. Once the horn sounds the start of the skills competition the Scouts cannot go back to the camp site if they have forgotten anything. They are not allowed to talk to other patrols, nor can they speak to adults that are there. They are on their own to figure out how to do the things that will be required of them.

The Scoutmasters and Scouts that I have talked to are really fired up for this competition. They want to know if we are going to have another one next year.

On Sunday, January 15th, I attended a Dog Show where I saw Boy Scout Troop 446 from Spring Hill, Florida selling popcorn. I went over and bought a bag and I talked to Eric Dalebout their Scoutmaster. He knew of the American Legion Scouting Program but no one had really explained the program to him. His troop is chartered to a religious organization but he showed interest in our Sponsorship Program for the Scouts.

Well by the clock on the wall it's time to break camp and head for the tall timber. I hope to see you at the American Legion Skill Adventure Competition on February 11th. The opening ceremony starts at 8:25am and the Competition starts at 8:45am.

May you have a nice day today and a better day tomorrow - Yours in Scouting - For God and Country



**Dianne Thibodeau**  
**Department Children & Youth Chairman**  
**C&Y@floridalegion.org**



February already – You know what that means, only four months to go till convention. You have a lot of work to do in such a short period of time. February is a good month for working with the schools because February has President's Day as well as Valentine's Day. It also is the American Legion's Americanism Month. Americanism and Children & Youth tend to go hand in hand. The Americanism Division represents one of the four pillars of The American Legion overseeing a wide variety of programs built on community service, citizenship, patriotic values and mentoring young people.

The Southwestern Area has a big Children & Youth Bash planned for February 3rd. I don't have the details yet but I do plan on attending if possible. Has your post scheduled something? If you feel it's too big a project, schedule it with your District or Area. Try and write something for your local newspaper to keep your community informed. Also keep me informed.

This year, again, The Child Welfare Foundation has created a "Don't Do Drugs...Make It Your Rule" six inch ruler/bookmark with the Pledge of Allegiance on the back. As I travel, I will be distributing these to the District Commanders or posts that request them. I will also have a supply at the Department Convention in June.

Remember to keep in mind that April is Children & Youth month. Try and plan a project to interact with children or one that will raise money for a children's charity such as the Child Welfare Foundation or Children's Miracle Network. If you have a project in mind that could use the ruler/bookmark mentioned above, let me know and I will get them to you ahead of time.

Last, but not least, is once again paperwork. Remember our Consolidated Post Report (CPR) that gets filled out at the end of year? IT IS VERY IMPORTANT we report all that we do. In order to report all, you need to keep track on a monthly basis. Encourage your fellow volunteers to turn in their miles and hours on a monthly basis also.

**Loretta Young**  
**Dept. of Florida ROTC/Shooting Sports Chair**

The Annual "Commander's Cup" Marksmanship Event was held on January 14<sup>th</sup> in Titusville. They also held events and gave awards for Academic Knowledge, Pull ups, Sit ups and Pushups. The team participation was very good with teams from: Auburndale H.S., Charlotte H.S., Eastside H.S., Lake Howell H.S., Monarch, H.S, Oviedo H.S., Palm Bay H.S, Piper H.S., Stranahan H.S., Titusville H.S. and Vanguard H.S. The overall marksmanship team winners were: 1st Place Charlotte H.S. scoring 1,029; 2nd Place, Auburndale H.S. scoring 1027; 3rd Place, Stranahan H.S. scoring 1021 and 4th Place, Monarch H.S. scoring 1000. In addition to the many students, parents and guests we were honored to have our Department Vice Commander, Al "Gunner" Dudley, and the Post 1 Commander Edwin Spence in attendance. This event continues to grow and bring in schools from across the state. Hopefully we will be able to get other meets that will afford teams to travel to their neighboring schools to continue to build up the Shooting Sports Program. We had a very small return on the National Postal Marksmanship Targets that were due January 10th. This is something that all of our posts will have to work on to support your local teams. We have gone from the over 50 teams in the past to only a dozen teams for 2012. This is definitely an area we must work on to improve.

Our next deadline to meet for our Department standards will be our Cadet of the Year Application which has been sent out to all of the schools and is due back to Department by March 1st. These are scholarship awards that are available for our

*Continued on page 3*

# 90% Goal

## March 7, 2012

Membership Report as of January 26, 2012

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
6	Robert Kiley	9,710	9,100	93.72
4	Jay Conti	4,065	3,801	93.51
2	Homer Frailey	1,322	1,186	89.71
3	Larry Krull	1,686	1,508	89.44
5	Jerry Brandt	7,405	6,597	89.09
1	William Bingle	6,197	5,470	88.27
17	David Corning	4,188	3,693	88.18
16	James Burgess	11,991	10,536	87.87
9	Richard Davitt	4,390	3,847	87.63
12	Mark Johnson	8,357	7,322	87.61
8	Debra Roush	8,284	7,237	87.36
11	Richard Smith	4,208	3,627	86.19
13	Steven Slachta	8,682	7,451	85.82
15	James Zipler	5,286	4,512	85.36
7	Nancy Thomas	4,002	3,400	84.96
14	Gary Decker	3,171	2,672	84.26
Eastern	William Walsh	18,067	16,422	90.89
Northern	Jim Ramos	17,344	15,599	89.94
Western	Charles Lecroy	7,519	6,656	88.52
Central	Charlie Wing	21,279	18,448	86.70
SW	Gregory Putman	16,966	14,688	86.57
Southern	George Rafajko	11,769	10,146	86.21
<b>Dept</b>			<b>81,959</b>	
<b>Post 400</b>		<b>14,133</b>	<b>10,898</b>	<b>77.11</b>
<b>Post 208</b>		<b>1,697</b>	<b>1,867</b>	<b>110.02</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>108,656</b>	<b>94,724</b>	<b>87.18</b>

**Bob Brewster**  
**Membership Chairman**  
[membership@floridalegion.org](mailto:membership@floridalegion.org)

Membership percentages are good at this time. The majority of our Posts, Districts, and Areas have reached their 80% goals. In fact, a large percentage of them have already reached their February goal of 85%. It would be a wonderful thing if half of our Post members would contact one or two members of their Post who had not renewed for 2012. This would take a big a load off Post membership teams.

Right after I submit this article, the Department of Florida Membership Team will gather together with the PDC's for a two day training session. We are hoping to get a few real good suggestions on how we can continue to grow membership year after year. Believe me, membership does not just happen on its own, especially during these trying times.

Again I want to congratulate all of the District and Area Commanders and the Post membership teams for the great job they are doing this year.

We attended the Martin Luther King ceremonies in Ocoee, Florida, Post 109. They had a very good turnout. Our Department Commander was there with his wife, along with Department staff members, District Commanders, Area Commanders, Post Commanders, SAL members, Riders, and the Department Auxiliary President and her staff.

On Thursday, January 19th, I will be meeting up with PDC Larry White in Tampa, FL to work a Veterans Job Fair. As a whole, we are missing a golden opportunity for membership by not working the job fairs in our local areas.

A special message to all Post Commanders and their staff – when you have a special occasion and you would like me to attend, get me an invite ASAP! If I am not already scheduled, I will put the date on my calendar and attend your event. Remember, if you want my help, I am one phone call away.

Let's all work hard to get the last 17% membership in. For God and Country



**From JROTC page 2.....**

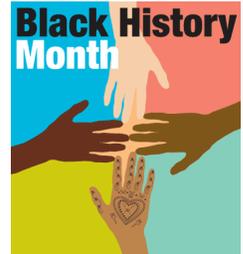
young cadets with the First Place being awarded \$2,500. Let's check with all of your schools and make sure they have the forms. If they are not received, please check with Carol Polk at Department and have a replacement sent. Thank everyone for your hard work and if I can be of help at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Roster Changes up until January 15, 2012**

Post # Title-Name	New Info
254 Commander	Dennis Walsh, 2580 Allegheny Lane, North Port, 34286 (H) 941.240.8789 ( c ) 732.406.6168 <a href="mailto:sinnedw@verizon.net">sinnedw@verizon.net</a>
358 Adjutant	Harland Cady, 5902 Sea Grape Dr. Ft. Pierce, 34982 (h) 772.461.1646 (c ) 772.528.5378 <a href="mailto:harlandcady@yahoo.com">harlandcady@yahoo.com</a>
274 Adjutant	Dan Parker, 305 Dundee Rd, Ft. Myers Beach, 33931 (h) 239.463.3959 ( c ) 239.580.4589 <a href="mailto:dparker305@aol.com">dparker305@aol.com</a>
389 Adjutant	Luther Allen, 1504 Bentwood Dr. Sun City Center, FL 33573 ( h ) 813.634.6850 ( c ) 757.647.8222 <a href="mailto:watman9@gmail.com">watman9@gmail.com</a>
91 Commander	Jesse Crews, 4429 SW CR 344, Bell 32619 (h) 652.463.2061 <a href="mailto:shalocrews@dishmail.net">shalocrews@dishmail.net</a>
91 Adjutant	Nathan Bahrey, 6419 SE 65th Ave, Trenton, FL 32963 (h) 352.463.7599 (c ) 352.463.3188 <a href="mailto:natebahrey@yahoo.com">natebahrey@yahoo.com</a>
356 Adjutant	Franklin Skaggs, 606 Tammy St. Lynn Haven, 32444 (h) 850.265.9214 (c ) 850.271.3558 <a href="mailto:thunder1@knology.net">thunder1@knology.net</a>
Post 395	P.O Box 1871, Crestview, FL 32536 Meeting: 3rd Tuesday
335 Adjutant	Tom Holbrook, <a href="mailto:alpost335@yahoo.com">alpost335@yahoo.com</a>
267 Post Updates	<a href="mailto:post.267@hotmail.com">post.267@hotmail.com</a> AL Riders Chapter: YES Mtgs: 4th Thurs at 1830
373 zip code	32067-2212
382 Mailing/Billing Address	1850 Luneta, Navarre, FL 32566
76 Meeting Time	2nd Friday at 12:00pm
54 Mailing/Billing Address	626 South 3rd Ave, Fernandina Beach, 32034
PDC Moreland Address Change	19312 SW 101st Place Rd. Dunnellon, 34432
333 Mailing/Billing/Phone	2 Seagate Blvd, Key Largo, 33037 305-451-0307
285 Mailing/Billing/Phone	4497 US HWY 1, Edgewater, FL 32141 386.210.4926



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Ps. I'd love to get your newsletter!

Have you ever tried to read a newsletter that has more pictures than words? It's easy to fill space with clipart when there are so many different programs available. But if you aren't careful you'll be sending your members a comic book and not the information they really need.

Before I finish with a newsletter page I reduce it to 50% so I can see the whole thing. I sit back and watch where the text and graphics lead my eyes. Do I have too many graphics? Are the graphics for different stories too close together? Should I replace two smaller graphics with one larger one? If I haven't put any art on the page, do I have room for at least one? Sometimes too many words are as bad as too much art. Making little changes to your newsletter can make a big difference.

Want to be a member? Dues are \$5.00 per year and include a quarterly newsletter filled with tips and suggestions to help you make the most of your talents. We also have a CD available with graphics, fonts, patriotic poems, speeches & articles especially made for the American Legion Family. The National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) dues are \$10.00 per year and also include a quarterly newsletter. You don't have to join NALPA to join FALPA.

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FALPA/NALPA—Membership year is from July 1 to June 30

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Legion/Aux/SAL Member # \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
I am a member of Post/Unit/Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Dist. \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_  
FALPA \$5 \_\_\_\_\_ NALPA \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ New member \_\_\_\_\_ Reinstatement \_\_\_\_\_  
Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ (make check out to FALPA. NALPA dues will be forwarded)



Mail to: Pat Johnson, Treasurer, 5430 Friendly St, Port St John, FL 32927

**Legislative**  
**Stanley Gold, Department Chairman**  
**786.423.2458**

February 28<sup>th</sup> the Department of Florida will host our Sixth Annual Congressional Luncheon at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C. All Florida members of Congress will be invited to attend. We will discuss our legislative goals and thank them for their support. Thanks to Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for securing the Rayburn meeting room at no cost to us.

At my post meeting on January 14<sup>th</sup>, we voted to make our member, Senator Bill Nelson, a PUFL member. We will present his new card in Washington.

**Update on Flag Amendment Bills**

Senator Orrin Hatch's (UT) office continues to solicit additional cosponsors for Senate Joint Resolution (S.J. Res.) 19, a proposed constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration. Its text states simply: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." The cosponsor total for the Senate legislation stands at 29.

To date, J.J. Res. 13 - the House companion to the Senate measure - has accumulated 64 cosponsors. Please contact your representatives' and senators' offices and ask them to become cosponsors of the flag amendment in their respective chambers. If they are already cosponsors, be sure to thank them for their support.

We have nearly 300 resolutions that could be considered our Legislative Issues. If you are looking for a document in that context, the legislative team can send it to you (it's over 70 pages long and merely restates the resolved clauses). However, a number of attendees to the Washington Conference have asked this question in preparation for their attendance in late February. As noted to them, our legislative agenda for 2012 has not been totally finalized but we anticipate the following issues being of some concern in the coming months.

The most important issue that we will be pursuing in the coming three months will be funding related:

- As mentioned in press meetings last week, DoD has changed their defense strategy for the future. This changing strategy, whether predicated by budgetary cuts or true visions of the national defense needs, will dramatically change the military as we know it today. The American Legion is preparing to analyze and counter the FY13 DoD budget proposal. Early indications seem to infer a reduction in Army and Marine Corp and strength and other force changes. Moreover, we anticipate changes in retirement, health care, and other benefits associated with service.

-The VA Budget must be adequate to meet the needs of the nearly 2 million service members who served while continuing to serve the needs of the veterans from other eras. The American Legion is concerned with current proposals and funding levels within the VA and will be carefully scrutinizing and advocating for adequate budgets to meet VA's needs.

- In the coming months, the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act," now Public Law 112-56, will be implemented. This program, a reeducation opportunity for veterans from previous eras, will go a long way towards addressing the nearly 1 million veterans who are currently unemployed. We will remain concerned about the implementation of the program within the states. At the same time several other proposals currently being circulated on Capitol Hill might dramatically impact the VETS program. The American Legion will be mindful of the manner in which those are considered. Finally, we need to make certain the VETS program is adequately funded in FY2013 to curb the jobless rate of veterans.

-During the First Session, at least ten bills relating to veterans were passed by the House and never considered by the Senate. The American Legion will most likely encourage passage and action on those bills by the Senate during our upcoming Washington Conference.

-Although we were successful in extending the VA Home Loan program, the VA Home Loan limit is lower than FHA loan guarantee limits. We will be addressing this injustice in the coming months.

- We will continue to pursue co-sponsors for the Flag Protection Amendment and a few other pieces of legislation that need co-sponsors to move.

Beyond these points, the rest will be evolving in the coming two months as we work with Congressional leadership on their agenda and priorities. With 2012 being an election year, very little in the way of substantive legislation will be accomplished.

*There is a certain enthusiasm in liberty, that makes human  
nature rise above itself, in acts of bravery and heroism*

~ ~ ~ *Alexander Hamilton*