

The Legion Link

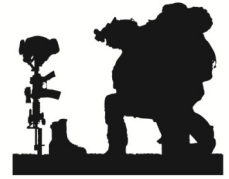
June 2013

Vol. 20 Issue 11



AIMING HIGH FOR VETERANS

FALLEN SOLDIER



NEVER FORGOTTEN

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Al 'Gunner' Dudley
Department Commander
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What a productive month May was! Went to the Spring Meeting in Indianapolis and I want to thank you all for obtaining 100% membership! It shows that the Department of Florida is awesome and we as a whole accomplished that! What a great feeling! All of you should be very proud of this accomplishment!

Visited the 9th and 14th District's, Thank you all for your hospitality, good times and great food! Went to Patrick Air Force Base on the 17th as a guest speaker involving Troops to Teachers, what a great opportunity for our returning Vets who want to become teachers! Also, went to the 1st ALR Inaugural State Rally. Great job by Post 69 & family! Toured the All Children's Hospital in Tampa, what a state of the art medical facility for children! Afterwards, went to Post 252 for a delicious lunch, then onto a dinner hosted by Post 139, another fantastic meal. Thank you! On Memorial Day, I was guest speaker at Manasota Veterans Cemetery in Sarasota/Bradenton area hosted by Post 312. Outstanding ceremony! I thoroughly enjoyed it and the BBQ!

My time as Department Commander is coming to an end and I want to thank all of

you for the ride! It has been with utmost honor and privilege to serve the great Legionnaires of Florida! Thank you for the memories that I will forever cherish! God Bless you, your families, our POW/MIA's and our troops that continue to fight for us every day!

Art Schwabe
Department Vice Commander
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This has been a very rewarding year. You have accomplished a lot both in membership and legion programs. It has not gone unnoticed by others Districts, Department and National. The word is, "How did Florida do such a great job?" It was done by, "Teamwork, Pride and taking responsibility for fellow veterans" and "Making a difference". (You may hear this a lot in the next couple of months)

Thank You for your dedication to serve the Legion and the Department of Florida. I hope to see you at the convention June 6-9 in Orlando. There will be a lot of information, classes and socializing. The installation of Officers will be on June 8th at 6:30 PM. If you have never attended one, give it a try. For God and Country

Steve Shuga
Children & Youth Program Chairman
CY@floridalegion.org

Due to the recent incredible year of support by our American Legion Family, I have been appointed another year as your Department of Florida American Legion Children & Youth Commission Chairman. We will continue to build upon the successes of the past year and increase activities, participation, and support as the premier pillar of the American Legion – Children & Youth!

Every post is being asked to get behind “Quarters for COTA”. Collection canisters will be provided to every Post through their District Commanders. These cans will be used throughout the 1st half of the year to collect much needed funds to help offset the expenses incurred by Florida families who endure child organ transplants. After Fall Conference, these cans will then be used to collect funds to assist with the many projects granted through the Child Welfare Foundation. Please help make these successful fund drives at your post. Many members and guests want to help and here is one way that definitely makes a difference. Posts who support these fundraisers will receive a certificate of appreciation and noteworthy praise in the Florida Legion Link for their total contributions for each event. Remember – this truly “gives every child a square deal”.

June & July consists of summer activities that give a kid a great big grin. There are a variety of events that riddle these months. The best advice to our Children & Youth is to play it safe and be careful. There is a Children & Youth tri-fold resource named “Play It Safe” that raise awareness to our families as the children enjoy their summertime activities. Use this link <http://www.legion.org/publications> to discover a variety of products that you may download to use and pass along to those little hands that seek this information.

June sports National Donut Day – 1st, Fishing Week – 1st week, D-Day WWII – 6th, Flag Day – 14th, Father’s Day – 16th, and Summer Solstice – 21st.

July presents Independence Day – 4th, National Hot Dog Month, National Ice Cream Month.

While the summer air settles in, now is the time to review your Children & Youth Program Plan for 2013-2014. Planning ahead to acquire the products to pass along, is essential to being successful throughout the year. These materials are available at the Annual Convention, Fall Conference, Department Headquarters, National Headquarters, or online through the Department or National web-sites. (see the publications link above)

The 2012-2013 FAL Children & Youth Pin is \$5 and a 2013 FAL Children & Youth Challenge Coin representing The American Legion Family is \$10. Contact Steve Shuga at CY@floridalegion.org to acquire these special keepsakes. All proceeds support the Florida Children and Youth Fund. You’ll be glad you did, I guarantee it!

Monthly Program Reminder

In order to be recognized for your monthly Children & Youth Post participation, “monthly reports “ should be sent to your District CY Chairman. The Semi-Annual Report is due December 16, 2013 and the Annual Report is due May 16, 2014. These forms will be available through your District Commander.

*If we ever forget we are One Nation Under God,
Then we will be a national gone under.*

~ Ronald Reagan ~

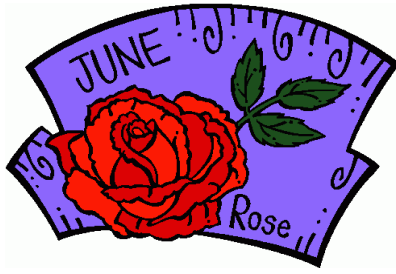
Jay Conti Sr.
Department Sgt-at-Arms

Hi Fellow Legionnaires;

I thank everyone who attended the Sgt-at Arms classes around the State of Florida and to those who I presented Department "BROVO ZULU" Awards to this year! It goes to show you that "We do make a difference!"

With Post Installation time right around the corner, as District SGT-AT- ARMS when you present the newly elected Officers to the Commander you state "Commander, I present to you the newly elected officers of Post ____; whose eligibility in to The American Legion has been duly checked and authenticated". Please assist the District Commander prior to the installations. Keep up the great work for our veterans, children and our communities. It's been a great year and I am very glad that I had a big part of the Department of Florida success and look forward to contributing to the Department of Florida's success in years to come.

BRAVO ZULU! "For God and Country"



Mike (Goat) Kirchoff
Department of Florida
ALR Chairman

WOW and another WOW, for the great turn out at the first Department of Florida American Legion Riders Rally. 221 Riders signed in from 55 different Chapters, Avon Park Post and Chapter 69 did an outstanding job. I can't even begin to start thanking everyone that stood up and made this event happen. There are three people that I must recognize and that is Doug the Commander of Post 69, Rabbit (Johnny), the ALR Director and his lovely wife Flea (Terry), without them and their Legion Family at Post/Unit/Squadron/Chapter 69 this event would never have happened. They set up the vendors, bands and all the food. If you went hungry then it was your problem. Thanks to Department Commander Gunner Dudley and his wife Belinda for being there for the entire weekend, just your being there let everyone know that the Riders are an important part of the Legion Family. Another thanks to Department Vice Commander Art Schwabe and his wife Erna and Department Adjutant Mike McDaniel for your support. Everyone one knows that your being there made a huge difference on the success of the rally.

Now to get serious, End of the Year Reports, we have 106 Chapters in the Department of Florida. Why do I only have 54 End of the Year Reports? Even with only a little over 50% reporting we still have some very impressive numbers. Right at 1,600 Riders, over 1 million miles reported, 122 thousand hours for programs and almost \$351,000 dollars in donations. Just think what the numbers would be if all the Chapters reported!

Department Convention is just a week away when this article comes out. The Legion Riders meeting will be Friday 7 June starting with the District Chairman Meeting at 3 PM followed by the General Membership Meeting at 4:30 PM. Remember all meetings are open to everyone, if you want to attend the District Chairman Meeting you are more than welcome.

This will be my last article as the Department Chairman for the Legion Riders. I want to thank Department Commander Gunner Dudley for the opportunity to serve as Chairman. The Legion Riders are a very important part of the Legion Family and will continue to grow. I know that the new Chairman will do an outstanding job. I will be there to support the Legion Riders 100%.

Thanks to all of the Legion Riders for the support you have given me as your Chairman.

Legislative Issues

Stanley Gold, Department Legislative Chairman

I will not see you at the Department Convention, however I will be at the National Convention.

Veterans Health Care in Jeopardy

Decisive Action by House and Senate Leadership Needed

The American Legion is imploring Congress to take decisive action to resolve a growing veterans' health care access problem harming more than 340,000 veterans in 22 states.

Congress has worked to improve local medical access for veterans by authorizing and supporting more than 800 community-based clinics through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) since the 1990s. These are important facilities for the convenient, cost-effective primary care for millions of veterans.

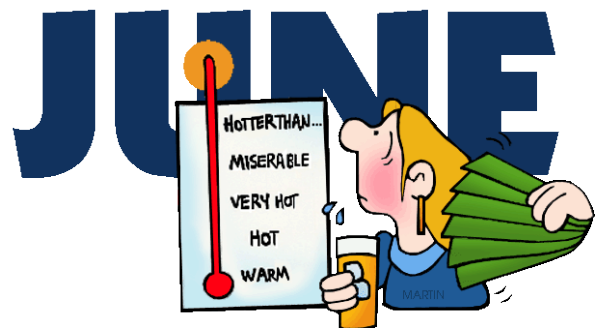
Unfortunately a sudden policy shift by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has put the future Congressional authorization of more than 38 VA leases for major medical facilities on an indefinite hold.

This unexpected challenge won't resolve itself absent a decision from House and Senate leadership on whether Congress will continue to authorize new construction of local VA community-based outpatient clinics and other needed facilities. Without decisive action by House and Senate Leadership, the VA warns existing leases will expire, clinics will close, and costs will increase as veterans travel further and wait longer for needed treatment.

Without an explicit decision on the fate of these promised clinics, the VA cannot adequately plan to meet the unique needs of veterans. Committee leaders with jurisdiction over the VA have pledged to solve this problem but the decision on Congressional budget rules falls on top leadership.

In these times of partisan strife, it's encouraging that Democratic U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu (LA) and Republican U.S. Rep. Charles Boustany (LA) are working together to issue a bipartisan, bicameral letter to House and Senate leadership requesting immediate action from both chambers of Congress to help retain and expand VA clinics around the nation. We need lawmakers from both sides of the aisle to sign on to the letter to send a strong message to leadership.

Please send the prepared message below and tell Congress to set aside political differences and take decisive action to resolve this matter which will affect services to veterans in states across the country. Providing quality, timely and accessible health care should not be a partisan issue. We all can agree that veterans, from World War II vets to recently discharged veterans who served in Iraq, Afghanistan or on the home front, should get the medical services they need and deserve.



100% Goal

May 1, 2013

Membership Report as of May 31, 2013

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
6	Robert Kiley	10,193	10,804	105.99
15	Eunice Butts	5,178	5,377	103.84
5	Henry Combs	7,681	7,832	101.97
1	Verna Joyce	6,256	6,358	101.63
2	Homer Frailey	1,365	1,375	100.73
12	Albert Diaz	8,424	8,479	100.65
17	Michael Wolohan	4,135	4,142	100.17
7	Nancy Thomas	3,863	3,861	99.95
13	William Hauser	8,783	8,737	99.48
11	Richard Smith	4,094	4,054	99.02
16	James Burgess	11,977	11,839	98.85
3	M.E Christians	1,712	1,692	98.83
8	Debra Roush	8,218	8,100	98.56
4	Charles Ferguson	4,160	4,095	98.44
9	William Johnson	4,342	4,229	97.40
14	Gary Decker	3,021	2,909	96.29
Eastern	Mark Johnson	18,617	19,283	103.58
Western	Charles Lecroy	7,621	7,733	101.47
Northern	Robert Brewster	17,688	17,761	100.41
Central	James Zipler	21,018	21,077	100.28
SW	Steven Slachta	17,001	16,837	99.03
Southern	George Rafajko	11,457	11,192	97.69
Dept			93,883	
Post 400		11,977	12,008	100.26
Post 208		2,141	3,161	147.64
Totals		107,775	109,052	101.18

Jim Ramos
Membership Chairman
membership@floridalegion.org

Florida Legionnaires,

Thank you for all your support with the membership plan 2013 and Congratulation to the Department of Florida for getting 100% with membership on May 2, 2013. The Department of Florida can stand strong for the first time in four year and WE did it with Legion PRIDE.

Something WE have done Outstanding:

1. We have met all goals on time as a Department and for National,
2. We won of the Big 12th from National the second time in a roll (In December 2012),
3. We had 10 District did meet the District Christmas Bonus for increase in membership (District 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 17th) and this is just in July – December 2012.
4. We have in 2013 the 6th District (Bob Kiley District Commander) for winning the “Race to the Top” for the second year in a roll in Category 5 and the 15th District (Eunice Butts District Commander) for winning the “Race to the Top” 2nd place in category 4.
5. We have at 100% Districts 6th, 15th, 5th, 1st, 2nd and 12nd as of May 16, 2013.

Thanks, we have 168 Post at 100% or better and Post 9 is on the top with 337% in membership and a new Post home. And all of this as of May 16, 2013 membership report, and We did it with “Legion PRIDE” Go Florida.

“Legion PRIDE” is like this with a Quote from William Hutton “The charity that hastens to proclaim its good deeds, ceases to be charity and is only Pride and ostentation.”

As the American Legion continues its drive to protect and preserve veteran benefit programs - especially in the area of medical care—the numerical strength of the organization is very important. Make sure your Post is doing its part in the nationwide drive to increase the Legion’s position of power. Please keep Going Florida Legionnaires. Thank you for all your support.

Membership in The American Legion is a matter of PRIDE Tradition,

Heritage,

Accomplishment,

Serving and

Belonging

To the National Largest Veteran’s Organization

