



The Legion Link

Full Speed Ahead for Veterans

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Jay Conti Sr.
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BRAVO-ZULU
407.247.5232

FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR VETERANS

Jay Conti Sr.
Department CDR Corner
FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR
VETERANS

I have started my District Visits and I can say that each District I have Visited has been outstanding and the awesome hospitality by every Post has been **Second to None!** Thank You!

The week we returned from National Convention, I attended the Naturalization Ceremony for a Vietnam Veteran who was Drafted in 1967. I year ago when he went to renew his driver's license he was told he cannot as he was NOT a citizen of the United States. He thought that he was especially after serving for 2 years in Vietnam. Later he was told by immigration that he would have to get in the back of

We have over 20 Legionnaires that will be attending the Department Legion College on October 9-12, 2014 at Department Headquarters. I am looking forward in helping train the future leaders of Florida's American Legion. The Department Legion College Chairman PDC Fletcher Williams Jr. has one great Training Agenda lined up.

The Fall Conference is right around the

corner, please remember that the Fall Conference is a Training Conference and will have classes for every Legion officer plus others. Classes will consist of: Commander, Finance Officer, Sgt @ Arms, Historian, Chaplain, Adjutant, Judge Advocate, Membership, Social Media, Post Operations, Homeless Veterans Outreach, Female Veterans Outreach, There will also be a Programs Fair as well as many classes for American Legion Riders (ALR) including Road Captain, Reports, Safety and more.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Fundraiser is on its way. In just a little over a month we have raised well over \$5,000 towards the \$50,000 goal that I had set. We still have more coming in; I want to thank the entire Legion Family for helping to find the **CURE!** If your Post has donations to turn in please write a check to Department of Florida and in the memo of the check state for Breast Cancer Awareness or state so in a letter that accompany the check. If I am there or one of the Department Officer we will gladly accept it and turn it in.

Next month I will be visiting the VA Hospital in Biloxi, MS as the Veterans of 7 of Florida's 67 counties use this VA hospital as their primary means for health care! I had invited Mississippi State Commander Ronnie Bennett and Alabama State Commander Wayne Stacey on this tour so we can ask the questions as a group!

Many of you remember what I am saying, as in the Military you train before you are deployed and then when you are deployed you execute what you were just training on. As you could see during the training sessions, all the officers and I are on the same page and we are all looking forward to working as a "TEAM" and get that big "BRAVO-ZULU" "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY"

Jim Ramos
1st Vice Commander

1stvicecommander@legionmail.org

Florida Legionnaires! Let's do Membership and allow our members to renew today and not tomorrow. We need new members as well as the newer generation too. How can we do this? November has several opportunities to involve potentially new members. It is National Disaster Preparedness month, Veterans Day is the 11th, American Education Week and Family week (Thanksgiving), so celebrate on these occasions to get new members in your Post and remind current members to pay their dues now.

With December following, don't let December 7th go by without an acknowledgment of Pearl Harbor, "a day that will live in infamy" followed by a little Christmas cheer and socialize with the members and have a great time, of course, by reminding them to pay their dues!

Our Department of Florida can be the best in the Nation if we all help with membership! It's a team effort! For three years in a row we were 1st in the Nation so can we make it 4? Of course we can! If you have suggestions with membership that we can use please let us know!

Thank you to all Florida Legionnaires. If you or your Post need's assistance, PLEASE just ask! Jim Ramos (352) 226-4370 or 1stvicecommander@legionmail.org Always with "Legion Pride"!

Joe Magee
2nd Vice Commander

2ndvicecommander@legionmail.org

After returning from the National Convention, time to settle down and get on with Dept. of Florida business.

My schedule had me skipping across the State to West Palm for the 11th District meeting. After I told them about the Florida Legion College and the training sessions at the Fall Conference, a Post Training Program was scheduled for the last weekend in Sept. I will be in attendance.

On September 20 we attended a Roast for Past National Sons of the American Legion Commander Jim Roberts in Tequesta.

During the month, I spent some time at Dept. Headquarters assisting in putting some of the final touches to the Florida Legion College, of which, we now have 21 signed up.

September brought joy and sorrow. I had to change my scheduled visit to the 16th District meeting in lieu of attending a memorial service for Past 8th District Commander, John Gurnavich, a charter member of Post 312, Oneco, Fl. That same day, was a memorial for another friend, "Cotton" from the 13th District.

On the joyous note, on the 18th, Pat & I celebrated our 32nd anniversary, which just happened to coincide with the Commander's 8th District visit. For God and Country

Bob Brewster

Department 3rd Vice Commander
3rdvicecommander@legionmail.org

Well, we completed the Area trainings, and as a team, we have attended numerous District meetings. I, for one, am very impressed by the attitude, enthusiasm, dedication of all the Legion members, Post officers, and District officers who attended these meetings. We were asked some very good questions and heard all types of concerns which we attempted to address. I feel that we must continue to train at the Area, District, and Post levels because that is the only way we will grow our membership. The average member has a limited knowledge of a few programs, but they are eager to learn more, having expressed a great deal of desire to increase their knowledge and share their knowledge with their Post. Personally, I have asked a few basic questions about different programs and found that out of a room full of members, only one or two had any idea about the program. We should have a training team utilizing our PDC's, current and former Department leaders, Area leaders, District leaders, setting up a training team in each District. When members have knowledge of the various programs available, they will become much better at being able to recruit new members, retain current members, and reclaim those who have dropped out due to lack of interest.

By the time you read this, you should have already been in the schools to talk about the Oratorical program, Boy's State, Girl's State, school medals, and ROTC. You should also have talked about our coloring books, and especially the Halloween Safety Book to find out how many copies of these books that each school will need. Please keep in everyone's mind at your Post that the Susan G. Komen Breast Awareness is the Department Commander's charity of choice this year. So let's all give this as much support as we can.

All around the state, there are the large vet job fairs that so few Posts get involved with, however, if you read your local newspapers, there are a lot of small local job fairs that you should have a representative participate in. We all know that we need to get out in the community and be seen because by being seen, we gain new members, without new members, we will disappear. Also get out and visit the recruiters, the politicians, and any other leadership group you can find and this will enable you to have a successful Post. Let them know you will be doing a flag retirement ceremony and that you are helping local vets in the area. Get involved in community projects. Last thing that I want to make very clear, I am here to serve you and work with you in any way you need me or can use me. I am a phone call away - 904-272-1619 or cell: 904-635-4492. For God and our Country.



BRAVO ZULU PIN AWARDS CORNER



The "BRAVO ZULU" award is the Department Commanders Version of the "Billy Award" and is awarded to a Legion Family member for Outstanding Service of Excellence!

In the United States Navy, it is a common practice for the Commodore or Fleet Admiral to signal ships that have performed exceptionally well with the "BRAVO and ZULU" flags. These two flags displayed together mean "Well Done"!

BRAVO ZULU AWARDS to Date:

Larry Sheets, Jim Ramos, Steve Newman, Mike Seidel, Ruth Burgess, Mike McDaniel, Richard Izzy, Tom Gora, Post 238 Family, Bill Hamblin & Rene Stachelrodt Jr.



Shelli Romeu
Department Historian
historian@legionmail.org

I have noticed that some Posts are getting their histories updated on the Centennial Site which is fantastic! District Commanders: I can provide a district level Centennial Training at one of your meetings (before/after/etc.), please contact me to set this up. The training recently held in the 13th District allowed for Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders alike to learn more about the Centennial so they can get more involved. We only have a short 5 year span to get our histories prepared for the 100th Anniversary! There will also be "Historian" training at the Fall Conference which will include some Centennial Site history building, so please attend as it will be worth your time.

Dennis Bruland **Veterans Benefits Chairmain**

It is important to know that there are five parts of a VA Claim. Each part has sub steps that can determine the speed of processing your claim. Ensure that you have a Veteran Service Office to assist in every step of the process.

A. The Veterans Service Officer is responsible for:

1. Duty to assist –To provide guidance and assistance of general information, claims preparation, and claims development and appeals.

B. The veteran is responsible for:

1. His/her own well-rounded claim!
2. Steps 1, 2 and 3 of the five steps below.

STEP 1. Must be service connected:

An injury, disease or illness that occurred or was aggravated while on active duty. (Must have been treated on active duty and records in your medical file.)

Step 2. Must have an existing disability:

You must provide VA medical proof of a diagnosis of an existing disability that was an injury, disease or illness that occurred or was aggravated while on active duty.

STEP 3. Must prove the bridge between Step 1 and Step 2. In-service medical records, DD Form 214, civilian health care records, VA health care records, and or buddy statements (witness) to the event that occurred on active duty.

C. The VA is responsible for Step 4 and 5 of the five Steps to a VA Claim.

STEP 4. VA develops the claim.

- A) Orders files/records
- B) Orders necessary examinations
- C) Follows the law set forth by Congress for claims development.
- D) Requests any additional information from the claimant.

STEP 5. Adjudication of the claim.

- A) Awards benefits
- B) Denies benefits



Paul Martel
State Legislative Chairman
StateLegislative@legionmail.org

As many of you know there is not much happening with our local politics, because of the campaigns. That is one of the areas I wish to address, the average person in our country does not seem to think it is important enough to VOTE. We in the American Legion know better, we gave some part of our lives to America, so we could be free, we could pick who will lead our county, state and nation. It is very important to encourage our friends, neighbors, and family to VOTE, our country is at a cross road, we must do our part to preserve the American way for our children, family and friends. When you do speak to someone, just encourage them to vote, do not try to share your personal thoughts, I believe that the average person knows what is going on and they will do the right thing. Offer them a ride or do what you can to get them to the polls. It is up to you to take the lead.

On the 23rd of September the Governor and the Cabinet will meet to give the final approval for the new nursing home in Port St. Lucie, and the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the nursing home committee which I am a sitting member, will reconvene to look at new sights for our next nursing home shortly after.

This past National convention in Charlotte N.C. was one of the best that I ever went to, and I must say that the attendance from the delegates from Florida were outstanding. They went to their perspective committees and when the convention meetings were open they were there and STAYED, we had 132 delegates and our delegation was one of the largest at all times. Now is the time that all of the delegates speak on what they did and what happen at the convention.

Our Governor, Rick Scott, will be traveling around the state and will have meetings so you, the veteran may receive the Veteran's Medal that he is passing out, places and times and contact person will be on the web site, all you have to do is contact the person in charge, let them know you and your fellow veterans will be there and show up. It is a real nice medal and a great way for the state to say THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Remember, this is your Country, work for it.
For God and Country

The secret of getting ahead is getting started.
-Mark Twain

Steven Newman
Department Chaplain
Chaplain@legionmail.org

Hello and Greetings my fellow legionnaires. I hope you all had a blessed and wonderful September. I know for a lot of you it must have been a pretty busy month. With all the events such as Labor Day, 9/11 memorial, Patriot Day and the list goes on. Hopefully, this month will be just as fruitful, exciting, and rewarding for everyone. This month I want to talk a little bit about prayers. I get asked a lot of questions on this subject. Prayer is talking with God, it is not a speech or mindless rambling, but sincere, enjoyable conversation with God. The aspects of prayer are praise, thanks, and ask. A general pattern for prayer that you can use is: praise and thank God. Ask Him for your spiritual needs (you need to clear your own soul first, in order to pray well for others. Ask Him for your physical needs, praise and thank Him again. Pray to feel God's love so we can love one another. I found many helpful tools when I pray and give prayers. Write your prayers out and memorized them if you can. Keep them in a personal prayer book. Read books about prayers. Know the power that prayers can do for you and others. Be enthused and pray loud. Bring God's presence into the room as you pray. Remember there is no right or wrong way to pray. Even your desire to pray is prayer.

Sometimes when we are dealing with short attention spans, restless body, wandering minds you can read, meditate, and pray the scriptures. Let God believe for you. Believe in His love. His mercies never come to an end.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"
(2Cor.12:9 NIV).

Remember God loves you. God cares about you. God calls you "beautiful", "anointed", and "mine". I truly hope this gives a little bit in the prayer arena. Take care and have a very blessed month. "For God and Country" Department Chaplain Steven Newman.

65% Goal

October 1, 2014

Membership Report as of October 2, 2014

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
4	Sherry Hayes-Luzader	3,924	2,431	61.95
6	Thomas Biddle	11,734	6,784	57.82
9	James Tewes	4,111	2,396	58.28
8	Douglas Deierlein	8,266	4,747	57.43
7	Charles Giffin	3,848	2,269	58.97
15	Jose Romeu	5,509	3,104	56.34
16	Thomas Zbikowski	12,099	6,802	56.22
17	Michael Wolohan	4,113	2,384	57.96
12	Ronald Saxby	8,938	5,363	58.56
2	Willie Jackson	1,416	818	57.77
5	Thomas Gora	8,127	4,567	56.20
13	Andrew Burkett	9,421	5,193	55.41
1	Lawrence Carpenter	6,417	3,479	54.22
14	Gary Decker	3,139	1,626	51.80
3	Randall White	1,797	939	52.25
11	Arie Bruce	4,028	2,162	53.90
Eastern	Albert Diaz	20,672	12,018	58.14
Central	Eunice Butts	21,456	12,175	56.74
Northern	Jerry Brandt	17,961	10,321	57.46
SW	John Dollinger	17,687	9,940	56.36
Western	Verna Joyce	7,833	4,297	54.86
Southern	William Johnson	11,278	6,184	54.92
Dept			54,935	
Post 400		12,067	9,101	75.42
Post 208		3,181	1,845	58.00
Totals		113,101	65,861	58.25

Steve Shuga
 Department Membership Chairman
 membership@legionmail.org

Rise-n-Shine with Membership! Florida has peaked with a few Posts, blazing the trail with over 100 plus % thus far. The next standard of **60%/65%** rapidly approaches us on **October 1, 2014**. Key dates to acquire cash, BZ Ticket chances, Emblem Sales Apparel, and even a special lunch during the Department Conference include October 31st, November 1st, 5th, and 11th. The challenge is on and those behind must feverishly work at it to overcome this awkward plateau. Will your Post meet and exceed the goal? We know you can! Do you need assistance? Don't be afraid - Just Ask!

We have passed out **514 BZ Pins** and we are seeing them appear on Florida American Legion covers and apparel throughout the state. Let's go Florida – **Rise-n-Shine with Membership!** Turn 2 new members into our largest veteran service organization – The American Legion. All standard membership forms are still required to be completed and submitted to Department. The **BZ Ticket Voucher** has been added for the 2014-2015 term used for Posts to identify new members (**list them on the back**), acknowledge various Post activities (**check off the blocks on the front**) that when verified grants the Post the amount of BZ Ticket chances to potentially win cash during designated drawings.

The **BZ Ticket Voucher** will be the only form used for this purpose beginning 1 October 2014. It is also located on the Department Website (floridalegion.org) under membership forms and manuals -references and on this edition of the Legion Link. Get the word out to all Posts please.

Promote the \$25 Gift Membership application! It is now displayed on the new Department Door Knockers, in the Bivouac magazine, online at the Department Website under membership resources, or in the Training Addendum. We have noticed a steady decline in our national position and our total percentage is crawling upward instead of jumping by leaps and bounds. This can only be changed when Florida's Posts meet their designated monthly goals or go beyond. We began like gang busters and then we slowed down. I ask all of you to get back on track, renew your members, reinstate those that have disappeared, regain the few that faded off and are back to engage in The American Legion. Always seek qualifying US Veterans who deserve to be part of The American Legion. **"Just Ask"** them may be enough to encourage them to join. And for those that previously been part of our organization or yet need to renew, **"Ask Again"**. Our combined effort together can accomplish anything!

Rise-n-Shine with Membership!



Jerry Brandt
Children & Youth Program Chairman
CY@floridalegion.org

Legionnaires, how is your planning doing for your programs? At this point the plans should be set in place for Halloween, and your Chairmen should already be looking for candidates for the Oratorical Contest and Boys State Candidates.

Do you have Marines in your Post? Toys for Tots is a great program, go to WWW.toysfortots.org and under FAQ, is a listing of suggestions to assist in gathering toys for kids. Or go to a nearby Marine Recruiter for assistance.

Are you aware that Temporary Financial Assistance program has given \$34,390.07 to Veterans with children that are in need? Or that Gilchrist Fund has given \$10,229.07 to Veterans without children who are in need? Please support both of these funds; they go directly to support our Veterans.

Important dates in September

- 1st - Labor Day
- 3rd- Uncle Sam's Birthday
- 7th- National Grandparents Day
- 11th- Patriot Day
- 15th- American Legion Day
- 18th - US Air Force Birthday
- 18th- National POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 28th - Gold Star Mother's Day

Important Dates in October

- 13th US Continental Navy Birthday
- 13th Columbus Day
- 27th US Navy Birthday (Go Navy)
- 31st Halloween (do you have your Coloring Books -100 for \$20, 500 for \$100)
- See Elizabeth at Department)

Please let me know if you have any Ideas or suggestions to make this year a great year for our program. Yours in Service

Sherry Hayes-Luzader
4th District Commander

Nine of our posts have made their Bravo Zulu goal to date and received Bravo Zulu awards from our department commander Jay Conti, Sr. at our first district meeting of the year. Posts 153,230, 354, 149, 284, and 155 all received their Bravo Zulu certificate for reaching their goal.

Membership is the reason for our growth. The key to membership is communication! Communicate to each and every post what their goal is and what they can do as a post to achieve that goal. Meet and exceed every post goal by going to their post. Meet and greet each and every member that walks through the door. Just a simple hello and a handshake does wonders. Stay abreast of all of your posts projects and fundraisers. Attend all if possible. The more they know you the more they will work for you and their goals!!!

NOW AVAILABLE
HALLOWEEN and PATRIOTIC
COLORING BOOKS

Department has Halloween and Patriotic Coloring Books available for purchase and distribution to the Elementary classrooms in your area. The order form is on page 11 of the Post Administrative Manual. Supplies are limited—get them while they last! The cost remains \$20.00 per 100 books. Send orders to Department Headquarters with attention to Elizabeth Inherst by mail or by email: Linherst@floridalegion.org.

5th District Commander

There are so many events and accomplishments in the 5th District it is sometimes hard to list them all. Recently Post 129 had a "Fancy Pants" fish fry to raise funds for the local USO, there was a BBQ challenge cook-off between Post 233 and 250, ALR Chapter 283 had their big annual poker run to benefit the local veteran's homeless shelter, the "5 Star Center," and all of the District contributed monies, products and sweat for the local Veterans Stand Down. Congratulations to the 5th District "Bravo-Zulu" Posts for the 1st membership goal, Posts 194, 233, 373 and 401! On September 13th Post 233 conducted their annual ceremony and celebration to honor their Law Enforcement and Fire Fighter of the Year. Also on September 20 several representatives of 5th District Posts attended a veteran gathering of all VSOs and the 4 County Veteran Councils located in the 5th District at the Jacksonville Veterans Arena to hear updates and share information. The District is scheduling a Membership revitalization program to be scheduled in the coming weeks. Volunteers will work the phones contacting members who did not renew in 2014 and all those in the District who are members of Post 400. The District is also planning to re-dedicate an eternal flame donated by the District to the city of Jacksonville some 30 years ago which has recently moved from the old county court house to Evergreen Cemetery. This ceremony will take place near Veterans Day during the week-long celebration of Veterans Day sponsored by the city of Jacksonville. Many Posts and ALR Chapters will be involved in up-coming events to sponsor Christmas Wreaths at the Jacksonville National Cemetery, and ALR Chapter 54 is planning their annual Toys for Tots run in partnership with the local detachment of the Marine Corps League. We will have their annual picnic at Post 137 on October 4th and a District fun-cruise is planned for November 29th out of Mayport on a gaming boat.

Nancy L. Thomas
Post Development/Revitalization Chairperson
863-618-6738

Do you know how to approach the podium? And, why we **do not walk between** the American Flag and the Organizational flags, nor do we had things across that invisible line?

Legionnaires, Sons go to the podium on the side of the American Flag, salute and go around the flag to the podium, Auxiliary go to the side of the Organizational Flag(s), place their hands over their hearts as a salute go around that flag and approach the podium. How are the Organizational flags placed? National, Department, District, Post, Auxiliary, S. A. L, Sons, and the American Legion Riders.

Here is why we do not cross between the flags:

This is Hallowed Ground

Between these flags that proudly fly
Let no man dare to stand,
For here our fallen comrades lie;
We call it Hallowed Ground.
A symbol, yes, but mark it well;
Here let use ever humbly pause
In memory of the lad who fell
In fighting for our sacred cause.
On Sea or Land these buddies died.
Some lie beneath a foreign sod
In graves caressed by winds and tide,
In spots unknown to all but God
And so, this place is Hallowed Ground.
And it shall be forever blessed
As tho it were a grassy mound
Beneath which gallant heroes rest.
Be ever watchful, Legionnaire, Auxiliary,
Sons, and Riders,
Of those two flags which signify
That we should guard this spot with care
Where our departed comrades lie.
And, if a man should dare to tread
This spot where lie our gallant brave.
He desecrates those noble dead
As tho he walked upon their grave.

So, as we go about the business of the American Legion, let us not forget those who have died for our Freedom.

Should you need to contact me, my mailing address is P. O. Box 3312, Lake Wales, FL 33869-3312, my e-mail address is: geldsprechens@gmail.com, and my phone number is 863-618-6738. Please leave me a message if I am unable to answer the phone right away.

SCHOOL AWARDS
ANDREW W. NAGY
813-7825-5032

Good job, Department has received from all the District Commanders a list of their school Awards Chairman. So we are off to a great start. Now is the time for the district chairman to be contacting their post to check and see who the post Commanders have assigned to handle the school awards.

Remember to attend your district meetings to talk about the importance of this program. This is one of the programs where we are seen in the communities. This is a great opportunity to put a good light on the American Legion. We are seen by schools, faculties, parents and students.

I am here to help you. I can be reached anytime by either email or phone.



Oratorical
Ron Musselwhite, Department Chairman
oratorical@legionmail.org

Time is really flying by. School is now in session. All Post need to visit your school and get the Oratorical contest ready for your Post. I have a partial list of the when the Area contest will be held., dates are as follows:

Northern: 2/21/15
Central: 2/21/25
Western: 2/21/15
Eastern: 2/21/15
Southern: 2/22/15
S.Western: TBA

Next month I will have a list of when the Districts will be. If any Post need brochures for the Oratorical, please send the request form to Carol at Department Headquarters.

Roy Havekost,
Social Media Chairman
socialmedia@legionmail.org

Mike (Goat) Kirchoff
In State Legacy Ride Chairman

As of this writing, American Legion **Posts** in the Department of Florida have a **40.21%** presence on *Facebook*™. This percentage does not include the Department of Florida pages. In addition to those **Posts** who are already on *Facebook*™, my thanks goes out to those Auxiliary units, SAL squadrons and Riders chapters who are already on *Facebook*™, as this is helping to get recognition for your **Post**. I am asking that those entities reach out to your **Post** Legionnaires and help them to get their presence established online. We need to get this number up, "Full Speed Ahead for Veterans".

This year at the Fall Conference, there will be a Social Media Training Class. If your **District** and or **Post** need to setup a *Facebook*™ presence, you should attend this class. Bring your laptop, notebook, or smart phone and get setup on *Facebook*™ before you leave the conference. Social Media is the way to communicate and interact with all of the Legion Family, not only here in Florida but worldwide.

Once your **Post**, Auxiliary Unit, SAL Squadron or Riders Chapter is established on *Facebook*™, send me an invite to your page so you can be properly registered with Department, receive your official registration graphic, and be entered in the Social Media prize drawing for later in the year.

Here are the current **Post** percentages by District who have a *Facebook*™ presence:

Credit is applied to percentages for all entity pages.

<i>Standing</i>	<i>District #</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1st Place	5	131.58
2nd Place	12	47.83
3rd Place	1	39.13
4th Place	8	31.25
5th Place	4	26.32
6th Place	2, 3, 6, 7, 9 & 14	25.00
7th Place	11	23.81
8th Place	16 & 17	20.00
9th Place	13	15.79
10th Place	15	5.88

If you own a cellphone, then you are experienced enough to create a *Facebook*™ page. For answers to any questions, my home office number is 904-287-6909. Leave a message, I will get back to you.

Legion Family Members:

Mark your calendars! The 3rd Annual Florida in State Legacy Ride is in the planning stages. The Legacy Ride will start on 23 March 2015 at Post 57 in Lake City and finish on 28 March 2015 at Post 155 in Crystal River. As many of you know the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund was started in the aftermath of 9/11 to provide help to the children whose parents have given the ultimate sacrifice to our country. Since 2009 the American Legion Riders have ridden thousands of miles annually raising donations for the Legacy Scholarship Fund. This year Riders from across the country raised over One Million Dollars for the fund which included over \$40,000.00 raised in the State of Florida. With that being said, the In State ride will take riders up north and then into the Western Area stopping at Post in Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4. The final stops are still being worked with the individual Posts to make sure all the stops are coordinated. Additionally Riders from the Southern, Southwestern, Eastern and Central Areas are planning rides from their Areas to meet us at the finish of the ride in Crystal River. More information will be presented at Fall Conference.

Mike (Goat) Kirchoff
 In State Legacy Ride Chairman

UPDATE!

Throw out all old materials.

Communication is the key to keeping our programs active.

Make sure your program chairmen have all the material they need.

Send in the Packet Request forms;

Administrative Manual

pages 12-14.

Andy Burkett
13th District Commander

Hello District 13. We have just got done with all of our installation. We are about to start our visit to each post please start looking for the dates for each post it will be out soon. I will call every post and email them when we will be there. Our first District meeting was Sep. 14th it was a good meeting and a lot of information was put out sorry if you miss it. We the District did not make our goal of 55% but some of our post did Post 38, 90, 303, and 405 one of our new post to them I say thank you. To all of the other stay at it we will make it. I would like to see all post at 100% at the end, remember if you don't ask they can't join so just ask. Thank you for everything if you need anything just call me.

Law and Order
Thomas J. Gora, Chairman
Tom Gora, Department Chairman

On Wednesday, September 10, 2014, I was honored to hold a ceremony to honor the 2013-14 Department Fire Fighter of the Year Leslie B. Williams of the Pensacola Fire Department. Fire Fighter Williams was not able to attend the Department convention to receive the award. The Department Fire Fighter of the Year award was presented by Department Commander Jay Conti at a ceremony held at the Pensacola Fire Department Headquarters also the location of Fire Station #1. Wouldn't you know it that five minutes before the scheduled start of the ceremony the alarms went off and three trucks and fire fighters responded! Upon their return the ceremony was conducted with the Mayor of Pensacola in attendance along with other dignitaries, citizens, and a multitude of fire fighters, as well as media representatives. 1st District Commander Larry Carpenter and members of American Legion Post 193 who submitted the nomination of Fire Fighter Williams were also in attendance.

On September 20, 2010 I attended a ceremony at Post 233 to recognize the St. John's County Law Enforcement Officer and Fire Fighter of the Year as they were presented awards sponsored by Post 233. They were also presented certificates signed by the Department Commander and myself. In the last issue of the 'LINK' I informed all that the Department was exploring the possibility of starting a Youth Law Enforcement Cadet Program in the Department. We are pleased to inform all that the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) has expressed interest in exploring a partnership with us on this program. Now comes the hard work, months of meeting with FHP and working out details on various logistics and resources needed to make such a program a success. So watch for further detail on development of this program. If you would like to know more now, here is a link to the American Legion information pamphlet on this program.....www.legion.org/juniorlaw/resources.

Don't forget, this year's deadline for submission of the Department Annual Law Enforcement and Fire Fighter of the Year Awards is May 7, 2015. You can honor your local police and fire department anytime, and if you do, let me know.



John Dolinger
Department POW/MIA Chairman
POWMIA@legionmail.org

Recently Accounted for:

- **Pfc. Richard N. Bean**, U.S. Army, Company D, 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division, was lost June 15, 1944, in Saipan. He was accounted for Sept. 4, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.
- **1st Lt. William Cook and Sgt. Eric M. Honeyman**, U.S. Army Air Forces, 599th Bombardment Squadron, 397th Bombardment Group, was lost Dec. 23, 1944, in Germany. They were accounted for Aug. 27, Aug. 28, 2014, respectively. They will be buried with full military honors.
- **Sgt. Lee H. Manning**, U.S. Army, Medical Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, was lost Dec. 1, 1950, in North Korea. He was accounted for Aug. 26, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.
- **Pvt. Robert J. McConachie**, U.S. Marine Corps, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marines Division, was lost June 15, 1945 in Okinawa, Japan. He was accounted for Aug. 19, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

Activities: It was great to see the response to POW/MIA Recognition Day events. Thank you for your support for our comrades. Remembering our POW/MIA once a year is not enough. Every Post should follow Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Convention, calls for designating an empty chair at every official American Legion meeting; therefore every Post Meeting should include the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony. In most of our Posts we have a POW/MIA table setting but if you ask most Members the meaning of different items on that table, they have no answers. Holding a POW/MIA Remembrance Service should be a regularly scheduled event so Post, Aux. and SAL members will better understand the meaning of the items on the table.

Jerry Brandt
Northern Area Commander

Fellow Legionnaires,
We have a lot going on within the Area, Re-dedication of Posts and Eternal Frames, District and Post Picnics. Plans for Veterans Day Celebration, (Our Day) with parades and cookouts.

However, I would like to start with congratulating the following Posts in the Northern Area:

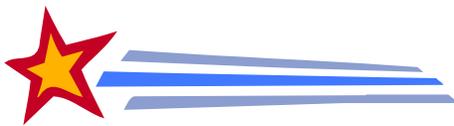
For the BZ Award (60% or higher):

Post 83 MacCenny, 3rd District; Post 96 Perry, 3rd District
Post 354 Ocala, 4th District; Post 153, Lake Butler, 4th District; Post 149, Newberry, 4th District; Post 58, Dunneilon, 4th District; Post 155, Crystal River, 4th District; Post 230, Hawthorne, 4th District; Post 27, Ocala, 4th District; Post 284, Belleview, 4th District; Post 401, Hillard, 5th District; Post 194, St Augustine, 5th District
Post 233, Ponte Vedra Beach, 5th District; Post 373, Orange Park, 5th District; Post 187, Deland, 17th District; Post 293, Interlachen, 17th District; Post 259, Debarry, 17th District; Post 127, Lake Helen, 17th District; Post 270, Port Orange, 17th District

For the Legion Award (Goal of 55%):

Post 225, Floral City, 4th District; Post 77, Inverness, 4th District; Post 372, Jacksonville, 5th District; Post 54, Fernandina Beach, 5th District; Post 137, Jacksonville, 5th District; Post 285, Edgewater, 17th District; Post 120, Holly Hill, 17th District; Post 45, Palatka, 17th District

This is a job well done.! 3rd District now has a Face Book Page, please reach out to them at <https://www.facebook.com/floridadistrict3>



Wayne Newland
Boy Scouts Chairman

Congratulations to Kenneth Nichols, 11th District Boy Scout Chairman. National has approved his "LEGION KNOT" Community Service Award, the twenty-fifth one awarded in The Department of Florida. This is the highest award that The American Legion awards to Scouting Adults.

The next big event for Scouting and The American Legion, is the "Cracker Trail" Competitive Camporee at Camp Tanah Keeta, near Jupiter, FL, on February 27, 28 and March 1. This will be the fourth year at this location and it gets better every year. There were just over 300 youth and adults in camp last year and we expect more this year. In order to keep the entry fees down and get more youth there, we are looking for donations from Posts. Please send what you can to Carol Poke at Department, marked "For Cracker Trail". We can use YOU on Saturday to help run the 15 events.

If you have a Kawasaki Mule, or something like it, we need to borrow (three) for the Camporee weekend. We need one for the First Aid team and two to run supplies around the camp. If you can bring it and help us for the weekend, so much the better. This will help keep down the cost of running this awesome event, otherwise, we have to rent them.

Don't forget, the Eagle Scout of the Year applications have to be in Department by March 1. Last year, we gave four scholarships to Eagles in Florida. Without the support of volunteers, there would be no Scouting. The boys thank you for your support.

Southwestern Area

John Dollinger, Southwestern Area Commander

8th District:

Well September was a GREAT month here in the GREAT EIGHT! We are rolling on Membership and are ahead of the "SORRY SIXTH". We had a GREAT Department Commander's Visit and hoping we successfully locked in the beginning of 2 New Post, One at the Avon Park Correctional Institute and another at South Florida State College, that would bring another 150 new members to the "Great EIGHT". This would not only help us "Race to the Top" I would almost Put us on the Top were the GREAT EIGHT needs to belong. We also had a SUPER, SUPER GREAT EIGHT District Meeting at Post 266 with ALL but One Post Present! I am sure that next District meeting on the 22 Nov at Post 24 all Post will be there. Until next month Please keep getting membership turned in, so that we can "RACE FOR THE TOP" here in the "GREAT EIGHT"
– **Douglas Deierlein, 8th District Commander**

Southwestern Area:

We have some catching up to do in Membership. At the District Meetings, I spoke of our need to chase our non-renewed and Post 400 members because these individuals already know The American Legion and in most cases your local Post. I have provided a template letter to mail to these former members and a phone call script. If you don't have a copy let me know. **Go after them!** Our winter residents are starting to arrive back in Florida. For those Posts checking membership cards at the bar, tell the snowbirds they need to pay the renewal and have a 2015 membership card. **Go after them!** Some reminders; Post Oratorical competitions are usually held in early January, start talking to your High Schools about the program, Posts will need to determine how many Boys State students they will send next year and get their money in before December 20. Membership, Membership, Membership, **Go After them!**

William Rick Johnson
Southern Area Commander

Good day Legion Family from the Southern area. Well we have a few months under our belts and we have numerous Post and Districts doing very well. This past month we roasted Jimmy Roberts our Past National SAL Commander at Post 271 and all had a good time. It is hard to roast a person who does everything right but we still tried. In the 9th District had the 9/11 ceremony in Pompano Bch with a great turnout and a very good program put together. The SAL had a training class at Post 268 and it was very glad to see the family being involved and learning more. We need to make sure that the word is getting out to the post about your meetings and get more involvement within your Districts.

District Commanders, you need to make sure that you are contacting the Post all the time to find out what is going on within your Districts. Just sending an e-mail will not work. A phone call and going by the Post will get you even better results. Lets get all the Post that are not on my Legion.org signed up and help them use the system that is in placed. Post please let your District Commanders know what is going on so we can get the word out. In the 9th District we have a job fair going on in Ft. Lauderdale Oct 5th put on by our Congressman and woman just for the Vets. We will have a table set up to help and hopefully get new younger members.

On the Public Relations side, we still are not using the tools that are out there. We have to continue to think out of the box and get our image out there. A good time is now Veterans Day coming up to get in the schools and let these kids know who we are and Department has the Veterans coloring books on sale. Get with a school, go in and teach them about Americanism and our Nations Flag and what it stands for. Lets not have the Legion be the best kept secret out there. Again to get a member all we have to do is just ask. If that don't work. just ask again. Lets help ourselves and our organization and get out within the community and show our support. That is why we are here since 1919 and we continue to strive to be the best VSO out there. Lets not forget our homeless veterans as the y need help and get the awareness out there. Working together as a Family will only help us in the future. Thank you all for your support and after all LETS HAVE FUN

Legionnaires Insurance Trust (LIT) – Good News!

The good news is that we do have the on-line enrollment capability up and running. In other words, any Legionnaire can go to the LIT web site effective August First and enroll. The internet address is: <http://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare?tab1=Sign%20Up%20Now>



TAPS

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of the following:

- William P. Koser—Past 13th District Commander
- John C. Gurnovich—Past 8th District Commander
- Kenneth Wakefield—Past 12th District Commander

Jesse Figueroa
12th District Adjutant
Adjutant, Post 117

Greetings from the 12th District! We are now starting to improve on membership, but we still need your help. Set up a membership rally at your Posts at community events or at sport venues. Also, we had our 12th District Meeting on 13 September 2014 at Post 40 in Fort Pierce. Great turnout. The 12th District Fall Picnic to support Boys State & Girls State Transportation takes place on 27 September 2014 starting at 11AM at Wickham Park in Melbourne. Please show your support for this great cause as we have raffles, 50/50s, collectibles for auction and entertainment provided by "Bones". We also have a 5K Walk/Run to support the American Flag on 4 October 2014 at 7:30 at Viera High School in Melbourne. The remaining Posts to be installed are Post 332 on 23 September 2014 at 6PM at KARS Park at the Kennedy Space Center, Post 366 on 20 October 2014 at 7PM at the 19th Hole Lounge in Barefoot Bay, the newly chartered Post 406 on 23 October 2014 during the Florida Institute of Technology Homecoming Day with a time TBA. Our Service Officer, James Stewart has set up a veteran's seminar to be held at Post 117 in Palm Bay at 1PM on 27 October 2014 with an attorney for a question and answer session. Any questions, please call (832) 315-7670. Our updated Website is fal12thdistrict.org and our email address is fal12thdistrict@fal12thdistrict.org. All information and media are always available for your leisure. Good luck and have fun for the Legionnaires of the 12th District who will attend the Department Legion College from 9-12 October 2014.

Thank You and GOD bless!
For GOD and Country.

Mike Wolohan
Commander District 17

While watching TV a few days ago in a story about the National Anthem, it occurred to me that this was a REAL AMERICANISM story for a LINK input. The story was about the War of 1812 and the attack buy the British fleet on Ft. McHenry in Baltimore harbor During this attack, Francis Scott Key penned the words to the Star Spangled Banner. Near the end of the show on the Smithsonian Channel the announcer stated that military bands were required to play completely through the anthem once they began playing it. As an example, he used the band playing our anthem on the deck of the USS Arizona while being attacked on Dec. 7th 1941. They completed the song as required. This is the most profound example of Americanism (patriotism) I personally have ever heard. God bless the crew of the USS Arizona.

RL James, Inc. General Contractor Supports Our Veterans

Over 100 golfers gathered at Windermere Country Club on Friday, September 26th to support PROJECT: VetRelief in the Inaugural RL James Charity Golf Tournament.

RL James hosted partners, vendors, and friends to a fun filled day of golf raising **\$17,500 for PROJECT: VetRelief!**

Philanthropy is a way of life for RL James, Inc. Their dedication to train and employ our veterans clearly demonstrates their deep patriotism and passion for our country's heroes.

The American Legion, Department of Florida launched the PROJECT: VetRelief initiative this year as a way to provide additional relief to our service members and their families. We are proud to have found such a dedicated partner in RL James, Inc. and look forward to next year's tournament!

For more information on PROJECT: VetRelief or to learn about employment opportunities with RL James, Inc. contact jflynn@floridalegion.org.



**Boys State Chairman
George Wehrl
DeptBoysState@legionmail.org**

BOYS STATE FEES - \$350.00

Boys State fees have increased to \$350.00 per delegate for 2015 session. Starting October 1, 2014, Department of Florida will accept your money for delegates and over quarto delegates in the form of a post check for delegates and a separate check for over quarto delegates. Please make sure you have ordered your Post Chairman's Guide for Boys State. The Chairman's Guide will have all the updated information.

The Board of Directors of Boys State made a decision to raise the fee per delegate because our reserve money is very low. Each year we have been using some of our reserve money and if the Florida Legislature hadn't given the Boys State Program some money last year we would have been in the red. We thank you for your understanding concerning the fee increase.

Florida Boys State program is one of the best programs in the nation. Our Florida Legislature actually allows the 530 Boys Staters to use the House and Senate Chambers in the capital. Thank you for your continuing support of this great program for the youth of our communities.

Ball/Homecoming Schedule			
Date	Post	Event	
September 20, 2014	271	Roast for SAL Past National CDR, Jimmy Roberts, III	
January 24, 2015	103	Southwestern Area Ball	
February 7, 2015	TBD	Southern Area Ball	
February 21, 2015	1	Eastern Area Ball	
February 28, 2015	TBD	Central Area Ball	
March 7, 2015	TBD	Northern Area Ball	
April 25, 2015	103	Legion Family Homecoming	