



The LEGION LINK

"Lil Leprechaun Fighting For Vets"



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Let's start off by congratulating "YOU", the members of this great Department for making our National Goal of 55% on time. I thank you for your hard work to make this a reality.

Since my last article, so many miles have been logged, and so many events attended. Including an invite to the 14th Annual District Boys and Girls State dinner in Miami. We enjoyed listening to the attendees telling us of their experience. Following that, we continued South to Key West, visiting all Posts in between, Homestead, Key Largo, Marathon and, eventually, Key West. I would like to thank all members of those Posts for their courtesy to myself and Pat.

From Key West the trail led us to Palm Bay Post 117, where Jim and staff treated us to a Golf Tournament for COTA. What a job they did! It would be hard to find words to describe, however, I thank all involved from the bottom of my heart. While in Palm Bay, we also attended the 12th District Picnic and was escorted by the Riders to the venue. I would also like to thank the Riders for their courtesy and participation. During the picnic, I presented the temporary Charter to our newest Post in the Department, Post 410. What a way to highlight attending a District picnic!

We were home for a couple of days and then off to Lady Lake Post 347 for another golf tournament. What a job done by all and, most importantly, the proceeds of this tournament went to COTA. I would like to thank all involved for their time and effort in making this a success.

Lady Lake, thank you for getting behind the Department of Florida

With the golfing behind us, I attended a Finance Committee, a Florida Legion College meeting and then, off to Indy for five long days and short nights, however, I must say this is the first time I have gone to Indy and it did not rain.

I will finish this article with another Golf event, Hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary of Dunedin, Unit 275. Great outing, great time and another congrats to those who made it happen.

Coming up, I will be visiting the Florida Highway Patrol Academy and traveling with the National Commander throughout the Panhandle. I will fill you in on everything in next article.

In the meantime, Thanksgiving is on the horizon, everyone have a good time, but most importantly, stay safe. Keep working hard on that membership, especially renewals. Work hard, play hard and I will see you on the trail.





NOVEMBER 2016	
1	All Saint's Day
2	Dept Membership Goal 70%
5	Dedication of Wall 🍀
6	Daylight Savings Time Ends
8	Election Day 🍀
10	Marine Corps Day
11	Dept Headquarters Closed
11	Veteran's Day
12	9th District Ball 🍀
12	Parade for Wall Dedication 🍀
15	Legion Link Articles Due
18	Renewal Notice Mailing
18-20	Dept Fall Conference 🍀
23	Peeling Potato's 🍀
24	Thanksgiving Day
24-25	Dept Headquarters Closed

🍀 - Commander Joe Magee's Attendance
Events are subject to change.



Steve Shuga
1st Vice Commander

Remember your membership target of 70% or more as of November 2nd. How many will make the cut? I encourage everyone to get the word out and press on with membership

renewal. Our 2016 cards expire December 31st and something to consider is the pending holiday closures that may-might-could affect timely submission, receipt, and credit both at Department and National.

Our National Commander, Charles Schmidt, is visiting NW Florida beginning in November. Get out your walking shoes and join him for his Walk for Veterans. The proceeds will go to his charity, the National Temporary Financial Assistance fund, and then walk on over and cast your vote. This

(1st Vice Commander - Continued)
year carries a big impact on our future for the next four years, requiring our attention. Please get all your members out to vote.

I hope also to see many of our Florida Legionnaires in attendance at our Fall Conference - Nov 18, 19, 20 at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista, Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL. The draft agenda is posted on the Department Website. Rumor has it Leprechauns may visit the Conference so keep your cameras ready and see if you can catch a glimpse of or snap a picture with them. Something about Lucky Charms and Pots of Gold - puzzles me....

I wish all a great month ahead. We can make a difference and it starts with you. May the blessings be upon each and every one of you as we enjoy activities, events, holiday and festive opportunities. Remember our commitments to our veterans and families. Remember the programs that we choose to support on behalf of The American Legion.



Dianne Boland
2nd Vice Commander

Greetings: Last month my article said the Florida Legion College was taking place in October however, the Commander's page had a small two liner stating the Florida Legion College had been

postponed. This is correct and I apologize for my article not having the correct dates. The Florida Legion College is now taking place February 16 - 18, 2017. A \$200.00 registration fee (required for rooms, continental type breakfasts, lunches, and a couple dinners) must accompany the application and they must be at department NLT February 1, 2017. You can find the application form at <http://www.floridalegion.org/news-events/florida-legion-college/>. All members of our Legion Family may attend but preference will be given to Legionnaires.

It is a requirement that anyone taking the Florida Legion College must first either take the American

(2nd Vice Commander - Continued)
Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) Course found on the web at www.legion.org/alei or, attend in person, (during our Fall Conference) the same course. The preference to taking the course on the computer is that you can take it at your own pace. Once you pass, you can return to the course at any time to "refresh" your knowledge.

Please remember that Florida also has The Sons of the American Legion College Leadership Course. You have to go to their website for more information.

Last month my article had a list of manuals that might give some ideas on what type of training you could teach during your post or district meetings. If you need any of the training cards that were started last year, just contact myself and I will send them out. As I visit Posts and Districts, I will try to pass them out to the commanders. When you have three months of training, be sure and send me a list of names and the subjects and I will see to it that a Certificate is printed.

As always, the Florida Department Website www.floridalegion.org and National's Website www.legion.org have a wealth of knowledge about the American Legion, our programs, our history, our people and a whole lot more. When you have the time, you should browse to see what's available.

If you have any comments, questions, concerns, or suggestions I would like to hear from you.



Rick Johnson
3rd Vice Commander

I hope this finds you well. We are in November all ready and time goes so fast when you are having fun. I have travelled around this great state of ours visiting Posts and have met a

lot of great family members out there. I have played in four golf tournaments since Sept and had a great time. We are not only raising money for great causes, but we are raising awareness within these communities. We need to do this all





(3rd Vice Commander - Continued)

the time, in every community, as our preamble states.

We only have one year to get things accomplished and we your need help. Please, let us know who your chairmen are and PLEASE let us know what you are doing out in our communities. We need to let everyone know what the American Legion is about. We have a lot of events going on, but sadly, we don't know until after the fact, so PLEASE let us know if you are having an event or special function so we can attend. Posts 117, 347, and 275 have put on great events with very good turnouts. Let's get the word out and have a great year under our new Commander Joe Magee and, most of all have fun.

November will be a busy month! Our National Commander, Charles Schmidt, is coming to our great state and will be visiting the Western Area. His schedule will come out soon, so if you are around, please stop by and say hello to our new National Commander. There will also be the dedication of the new wall in Punta Gorda on Nov 5th, I will be in Ft. Pierce speaking for the reopening of the memorial park November 11th, with our Governor, and then a parade with Post 110 and 103 on Nov 12th on the west coast.

As everyone should know, the Fall Conference will be Nov. 18-20th. I look forward to seeing everyone there. One last thing, let me help you with your programs to make them the best that they can be. Happy turkey day to everyone and I will be on potato peeling duty in Seminole.

God bless us all and god bless the USA. So, continue having a fun year and let's work together as a family to attain our goals.



Dennis Boland
NEC

Our Flag, our Pledge of Allegiance, our Boy Scouts, our veterans' memorials, our religious history and heritage, our American values can be seen as being under attack. The courts are awarding the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) millions of dollars in taxpayer-paid "attorney fee awards" which are reported to be \$2.9 annually authorized under the Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S. Code Section 1988 (b). Due to the nature of its legal work, the fact that they take cases pro bono, and the fact that the ACLU is usually involved in cases against governmental

(NEC - Continued)

bodies, which are generally protected from severe financial judgments. Towns, states, or federal agencies, however, may be required to change its laws or behave differently, but may not be required to pay monetary damages unless given an explicit statutory waiver. Nonetheless, the ACLU has been awarded significant financial judgments when challenging governmental bodies in specific regards to the separation of church and state.

The American Legion has been opposed to the Civil Rights Act since the early 2000's, and while there are restrictions on how legal fees can be collected, the ACLU still receives substantial monetary awards in the event of favorable legal judgments, and the recovery of legal fees by non-profit advocacy organizations remains common practice across the political spectrum.

1. A Federal Court in Riverside, California allowed the ACLU to pursue a precedent-setting lawsuit to remove a solitary cross from the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial. ACLU attorneys were awarded \$63,000 for this case.
2. The ACLU reaped some \$940,000 in a settlement from the City of San Diego when it surrendered in ACLU's litigation to kick the Boy Scouts out of Balboa Park. The Boys Scouts are appealing. The American Legion has filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the Scouts. This case has been ongoing for close to a decade.
3. The ACLU received some \$500,000 to drive the Ten Commandments out of the courthouse of Alabama's Judge Roy Moore, notwithstanding the fact that the same Ten Commandments are on the massive doors and the wall of the U.S. Supreme Court itself.
4. Portland Public Schools were ordered to pay the ACLU \$108,000 in a case brought for an atheist who objected to the Boys Scouts being allowed to recruit during non-class time. In addition, the school district spent \$232,000 defending this suit. At the time of this writing, Portland is considering a complete ban. This case has also been ongoing for near a decade
5. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors surrendered on a 3-2 vote to the ACLU's demands that it change the county seal because of a tiny cross in one small panel representing the mission period of its history. The ACLU, exposing its hypocrisy as well as fanaticism, did not demand removal of the central religious figure dominating the seal – "Pomona," the Greco-Roman goddess of poma, i.e. fruits. A citizens' initiative petition is ongoing to place the issue on the ballot and overturn the surrender to the ACLU, for the 4th time. The new seal depicts a Native American



(NEC - Continued)

- woman from the Los Angeles basin tribes.
6. The City council of Redlands, California reluctantly surrendered to the ACLU's demand that they change their city logo to remove a cross, for fear of court-ordered attorney fees to the ACLU.

Various judgments awarded to the ACLU and its state chapters have resulted from the undertaking of a wide variety of cases involving, creationism, internet pornography, the separation of church and state, and free speech. Total annual awards have been estimated to reach approximately \$2.9 million. Despite its monetary rewards by taking on highly contentious cases, the ACLU leaves itself significantly vulnerable to potentially damaging judgments if the organization was found to be filing a lawsuit deemed frivolous.



Tom Gora
Sgt-at-Arms

"You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greater possessions, our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship."

In the past two editions of the 'Legion Link' I have reviewed the contents of a new chapter in the Sergeant-at-Arms Manual concerning Color Guard Units. The revised manual will be available in print at the 2016 Fall Conference, and I will also conduct a Sgt.-at-Arms Class at the Conference. I hope you have been able to watch the four Color Guard training videos that are on the Department



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE



(Sgt-at-Arms - Continued)
web site, they provide good information and useful tips for those that may need a refresher course, or those thinking of starting a new Color Guard. I do need to hear from District or Area Commanders who may wish to enter a correctional institution Post Color Guard Unit in competition at the 2017 Department Convention, we will once again have a special category award available for these units. We need to discuss video recording of their performances, length of videos, due dates for submission, etc. I hope see you all at the Fall Conference.

Have you ever wondered when and where the title of "Sergeant-at-Arms" was first used? My research tells me it dates back to the 14th century. In feudal England, a Sgt.-at-Arms was an armed officer of a lord and was often one of a special body required to be in immediate attendance on the king's person, to arrest traitors and other offenders. Through this function, the title of Sgt.-at-Arms eventually came to denote certain court, parliamentary, and city officials with ceremonial functions. (It has been suggested that we place a little humor in our articles so let me say that as Department Sgt.-at-Arms this year, I am not assigned to a "lord," or a "king" as they were in feudal England; I am honored to serve a "little leprechaun.")

It is **SO** hard for me to bite my tongue about these recent athlete protests disrespecting our flag and national anthem. Although these actions offend us, the protesters enjoy freedom of speech and expression as do all Americans, including all of us who love and respect that flag. We in The American Legion are proud to express our

(Sgt-at-Arms - Continued)
freedom of speech when we speak these words on a regular basis: "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE ASSOCIATES OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES, TO UPHOLD AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER, TO FOSTER AND PERPUATE 100% AMERICANISM, **TO INCLUCATE A SENSE OF INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATION TO COMMUNITY, STATE, AND NATION.** (Too bad the protesting athletes don't share that same sense of obligation to their nation as we do in The American Legion!) Those are more than just words to us; they represent our beliefs and core values of this organization. May God continue to bless America!



Steve Newman
Chaplain

Greetings and another big hello my fellow Legionnaires.

Another month has come and gone. You often have to wonder where the time goes, it seems the older you get, the faster time passes you by. It will be soon for the Department of Florida Fall Conference. I plan on teaching my chaplain class for those who would be interested in attending. I will also discuss the Four Chaplain's Ceremony and Post Everlasting procedures. For those who complete and attend my course there is a nice certificate that is given to each attendee. I will also have a small question and answer period, time

(Chaplain- Continued)

permitting. I look forward to meeting and greeting everyone.

In the visitation arena, I visited numerous veterans in our local hospitals during the month. I try to see as many fellow veterans as possible. I know there are many chaplains in our state that do visitations to see fellow veterans that are sick in local hospitals and I personally appreciate their effort, and I am sure the veterans do too.

In our personal time alone communicating with God our Father the following is a prayer for the sick or shut-ins:

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers, mercifully accept our prayers on behalf of our comrades and loved ones who are ill or shut-in. We know not what is best for them, but You know. Grant them patience and endurance, relief from pain and suffering, and, if it be Your will, the blessing of a swift recovery, and that they may dwell with You in life everlasting. Amen

You can never pray enough and there are so many things in this world and in our own country that we can pray about. Believing in God and praying when we can strengthen us and can bring a sense of harmony, compassion, truth, and dignity in our daily lives. God listens to us and guides us when need direction. Every once in a while, when you have a free moment, take a few minutes and communicate with God, I know he will listen to you and would love to hear from you. You would be surprised and will probably be glad you did. With that final thought I wish you God's blessing and a wonderful forthcoming month.



Larry Sheets
Judge Advocate

I have had several calls from Posts asking how to being someone up on charges.

Article X, Section 14 of the Department Constitution explains step by step how to charge someone, and how to conduct a trial. You need to also check the Rules Governing Trials in the Amended Charter of the American Legion Department of Florida. This is found in the back of the Department By-Laws.

Follow the information in those two places and you will be OK. Remember, you must follow the steps outlined explicitly.





(Judge Advocate - Continued)

The National Judge Advocate will chair a two-hour session at the upcoming Fall Conference. This will take place on Friday Nov. 18, from 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. in Salon 1 at the Hilton Walt Disney World, the hotel for the Conference. All Post and District Judge Advocates should attend this session if at all possible.



Jerry Brandt
Membership

We are slightly behind from last year, so we need to start working a little harder. The next National Notice will be going out on October 7th, however, do not

wait for the notices to bring the members in to renew. Have events to bring them in, Halloween is coming up, have something for families to enjoy. Veteran's Day is November 11th, and would also be a great time to have an event at your Post. Now is the time to advertise events and bring them in.

Also, assisting us is the S.A.L., The S.A.L. National Commander, Jeff Frain, has requested each S.A.L. Member to sign up three (3) new Legion Members. Involved the S.A.L. and Auxiliary in your Post with your membership drives, make this a family event for new members.

Please review the National Membership Awards Manuel for has new Awards, You can find all awards from the 2017 National Membership Awards Points Manual under: <http://www.legion.org/publications> and scroll down to Membership.

Comrades,

To start, I hope Hurricane Matthew missed you and that you and your family are safe.

We are still behind from last year, so we need to start working a little harder. The National Renewal notice went out on October 7, so we are hoping for a little bump in membership. If you are holding on to any membership, please send them in. Currently, Florida ranks #47 of the 55 Departments in the American Legion. We are currently at 53%, whereas last year we were at 58%.

70% GOAL
NOVEMBER 2, 2016

(Membership - Continued)

Now is the time to plan your open houses. We have Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas coming up, which opens up many opportunities. You can march in the Veterans Day Parade, and have those pictures put into the local newspapers. You can plan meals for Thanksgiving and Christmas, we have a lot of homeless Veterans out there, share a meal with them, they are Veterans the same as we are. Our Troops overseas should also not be forgotten, this is a good time for Christmas Cards and Care Packages. Get your members involved and ask them to bring in their friends to help. Let me know how many Christmas/Holiday Cards were sent from your Post. I would like to let everyone know.

If you go to <http://www.legion.org/publications> and scroll down to Membership, you can find information about the National awards you may qualify for. This is a very useful for you and your Post

Also, under <http://www.legion.org/membership>, there are videos and other ways to assist you in "Carrying The Legacy Forward."

Congratulations to the following Posts that have reached the 60% Department goal by October 5th:

14th District with 63.97%

The following Posts:

DISTRICT 1					
402	66	121	33	235	379
44					
DISTRICT 2					
272	241	42	84		
DISTRICT 4					
166	236	230	237	58	284
149					
DISTRICT 5					
102	372	202	129	54	
DISTRICT 6					
76	409	112	109	52	53
330	21	101			
DISTRICT 7					
15	23				
DISTRICT 8					
11	320	317	69	266	

DISTRICT 9					
223	209	170	308	220	142
310	222				
DISTRICT 11					
20	141	277	268	371	
DISTRICT 12					
200	177	355	189	163	
DISTRICT 13					
405	397	404			
DISTRICT 14					
145	29	32	144	165	31
133	28				
DISTRICT 15					
5	139	148	111	246	186
334					
DISTRICT 16					
343	125	46			
DISTRICT 17					
187	259	127	293	267	

My upcoming schedule:

- October 15th, 2nd District Meeting at Post 100
- October 22nd, 3rd District Meeting at Post 224
- November 5th, Dedication of the Wall in Punta Gorda
- November 12th, 1st District Meeting, Post 75
- November 18th – 20th, Fall Conference

As always, let me know if there is anything I can do for you.



Sid Damsgard
Central Area Commander

October has seen a couple of different events in the Central Area supporting Legion programs. At the time of writing this, the events planned for this weekend are not included and will be reported on in my next letter. The 15th District is holding their picnic this weekend to benefit Boy's and Girl's state. I apologize to Commander Jay for not reporting that this was being held in the 15th District at Post 138 in my last letter.

Post 8 in the 7th District held a mock Honor Flight for those who were not able to actually go to Washington. There were over 40 WWII and Korean veterans honored at this event. All veterans received certificates, challenge coins



(Central Area Commander - Continued)

and a nice lunch. They were treated to a video highlighting all the war monuments and The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. A group picture was taken and everyone had a good time. I'm always amazed that this is the first time many of these veterans have formally been thanked for their service and the sacrifices they made. It demonstrates what a truly greatest generation they are. We are who we are because of their service to god and country and can only hope that future generations will learn from their example. It is up to us to keep these memories alive.

In the 16th District, The Sons of the American Legion had a casino night held at Post 7 in Clearwater. The event was in support of Kelli Becraft's charity Final Salute benefitting homeless female veterans and their families as well as the Children and Youth program. At last count they raised \$8,000 which will be divided and presented at Convention.

To all, keep the lines of communication open to your Area and District Commanders. We want to attend your events and help where we can. We cannot lead when we don't know where to go. It is up to you to make the family work as one unit our success depends on us working together.



John W. Rose
Northern Area Commander

We are all very thankful for seeing less damage from Hurricane Matthew than predicted. Thanks to all of our Legion family who were part of the effort, from preparation to clean up, to help our communities.

Our Posts are hard at work preparing and implementing our many programs. We continue the hard work in membership and need to continue working with the Legion Family to meet our goals. It has not been easy and some of us are still struggling but I know each of you is committed to meeting our goals. The 4th District is leading the Area. The other Districts have been

(Northern Area Commander - Continued)

challenged and will be giving the 4th District a run for the top. The District leaders are 3rd District Post 234 Monticello with 95.25%, 4th District Post 166 Homosassa with 83.63%, 5th District Post 102 Hastings with 100% and 17th District Post 187 Deland with 91.30%. Again, let's keep working hard.

Continue to use our social media such as Facebook to post events and programs so others know the great work we are doing. If you have an event you would like me to attend, let me know so I can be there. Thanks again for the honor and trust you have placed in me.



Andy Burkett
Southwestern Area Commander
Baseball / Americanism Chair

As your South Western Area Commander, I would like to say thank you to the Posts that are where they need to be in membership.

To the other Posts, we are here to help you with your membership, please call on me. We have people that are very good at this and we would like to help you.

Remember, if you have an event and you would like me to attend please let me know.

As your Baseball and Americanism Chairperson I have been to the National Headquarters for the last two meetings. Our baseball meeting will be at our Fall Conference, and I would like all District and Area Chairpersons to attend. Membership is what we need to keep us strong please help us get new and reinstated members.



Felix Ayala Jr
Eastern Area Commander

Hello Legionnaires, This past month I was on the road again, attending installations in both the 6th and 12th Districts. I also attended

the 6th District meeting at Post 347 in Lady Lake, the 12th District picnic in Wickham Park, Melbourne where our Department Commander presented the members of Post 410 with their Temporary Charter. I want to give a special thank you to my 12th District Commander Bruce Thurber

(Eastern Area Commander - Continued)

for all his diligent work, ensuring this process went without a hitch.

I had the pleasure of attending three Charity Golf Tournaments in support of the Department Children and Youth Program and the Department Commanders' Charity of Choice, COTA (Children's Organ Transplant Association). These tournaments took place in Lehigh Acres, Viera, and The Villages. It was great getting together with other Department Officers and our Department Commander during these charity events.

October brings a few more Installation of Officers, and Post visitations. I am also attending the American Legion Auxiliary Charity Golf Tournament in Dunedin, in support of the Department Presidents' Charity of Choice Final Salute Inc. The mission of Final Salute Inc. is to provide homeless women Veterans with safe and suitable housing.

I look forward to running into more of my fellow legionnaires throughout my travels, as we continue to support the programs of the American Legion and our Veterans.



Sid Damsgard
Children & Youth Chair

At the 98th National Convention the Subcommittee on Children and Youth met to reiterate established American Legion policies concerning children.

There were twelve resolutions considered and found merit to pass on to Congress. Two resolutions dealt with financial assistance to families faced with catastrophic illness and funding for comprehensive health care for children and youth programs. Three resolutions called for funding drug trafficking prevention programs, prevention of child exploitation and opposition to attempts to soften laws concerning distribution of pornographic and obscene materials to minors. Five resolutions addressed missing children, child maltreatment, child safety, teen pregnancy and juvenile justice. There was one call to establish a National Family Week and one to establish a National School Lunch Program. All resolutions passed with no amendments and submitted by the commission chair.

Legacy fund donations have exceeded the one million mark with a final total to follow. Several



Daylight Savings ends Nov 6, 2016

(Children & Youth Chair - Continued)

states donations topped the \$100,000 mark with Florida donating \$79,000 collected during the In-State Legacy Run and donations made at Fall Conference and Summer Convention. To all the riders that rode and supported this important charity, Thank You for your support and we look forward to the next run.

I have received only one notification on Children and Youth events scheduled for the month of October. The 15th District will host a fall picnic to benefit their Boys/Girls State Program on October 15th. Event starts at 11:00 am and goes until 4:00 pm. This is hosted by American Legion Post 138 located at 5535 Prescott, Tampa Fl. 33616. Please make time to attend if possible.

September was a busy month for Children and Youth activities. Our golf tournament was a large success. Hats off to Mike Mason and all the volunteers from Post 323. This continues to be a great event for this program with this year raising \$7,000.00. Once again the course was in fantastic shape and a pleasure to play. Our green team came close to winning but fell short by two strokes. I can honestly say everyone had a great time and look forward to next year. The next weekend we were off to Palm Bay for their event for COTA. This was their first tournament which came off beautifully. The golf course was one of the hardest I have ever played with enough water on it to sink a battle ship. For their first attempt this was a fine time that raised \$3,000 for the Commander's charity. Again, the green team fell short by two strokes. Many thanks to Post 117 and all their staff, Commander Jim Fournier and all the players. Next on the tour was Lady Lake tournament also for COTA. If you have not had the opportunity visit Post 347 I recommend you do so. Their Post easily accommodated over 100 golfers and guests. The golf course was pristine like everything in the Villages and a great time was had by all. The after tournament dinner was prime rib which everyone enjoyed. I did not get the final tally for COTA but I believe it was in excess of \$10,000. Thanks to Tim Tierney and everyone that made this tournament a memorable time. The green team came up short but next year we are coming back for a rematch!

To all Posts, thank you for your hard work and dedication to our youth. If you have an event for the Children and Youth please let me know, I would love to attend. We're always in support in your efforts and will help in any way possible.

(Children & Youth Chair - Continued)

Finally, I'm happy to report our deck has been completed after five years, which everyone seems to like.



Tom Gora
Legion College

The October issue of the Legion Link reported the "Legion College planned for October is postponed." On behalf of the Department, I apologize for any inconvenience the postponement of the October class may have caused those who applied.

As a result of meetings held in Orlando in September and October, the FALC class has been re-scheduled for February 16-18, 2017. As a result of these meetings there is new focus on the future, ensuring the Department has an effective annual FALC. Coming out of the discussions is the belief that the FALC must be an effective leadership training program, done consistently on a year-to-year basis, be based on American Legion principles, "for the good of the Legion." Another outcome of the discussions is a proposal that the FALC may be more stable, more effective, and consistently done if it is planned and monitored by an "FALC Committee." The concept of such a committee, which is suggested to be comprised of five members, is currently being researched by the Department Adjutant for presentation to the Department Executive Committee. The suggested committee would consist of the Department Adjutant, the Department Commander and 2nd Vice Commander who would rotate yearly, and two other members appointed for multi-year terms.

By now every Post should have received a letter and the agenda for the February 2017 class, and it has also been posted on the Department web site. The class content is based on recommended subjects published in The American Legion "Administrator's Guide for Department College." I ask Commanders at all levels to ensure the information gets out to membership. As in the past two FALC classes, each District is asked to try to nominate at least two candidates to attend the class. The \$200 registration fee, per participant, is used to offset housing and meals, still applies. There will be an American Legion Extension Institute class (ALEI) at the Fall Conference so those needing ALEI to qualify for FALC can take it there, or they can also take ALEI on-line at www.legion.org/alei. The FALC class

(Legion College Chair - Continued)

agenda and revised application are now available on the Department web site. Applications for FALC are due NLT February 1, 2017. If you have any further questions, please contact me.



Loretta Young
JROTC/Shooting Sports Chair

My fellow Legionnaires, this National held the 2nd Annual Jr. Shooting Sports Conference at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel in Indianapolis on September

16-18th. The Conference opened with a Joint Session with the Children and Youth Conference to welcome all attendees. We had registration on Saturday morning and received packets and instruction materials for our Conference. The Conference was called to order by Loren Sperry, Match Director, from the State of Washington, then we had the Invocation by Ida Jewel from the Department of Indiana. We started the Conference with the Review of the 2016 3PAR National Championships which were held in Colorado Springs in September. There were several presentations given including, Lawrence Behling presenting Department Spotlight and Best Practices; Terri Dewitt, Midway USA Foundations, explaining fundraising efforts and Shayne Abrams Sr., Assistant Director Americanism Division with explanations on the 2017 Postal and National Finals Planning. The Conference closed on Sunday with a Joint Patriotic Religious Service followed by our Conference Action Items and Staff Follow up.

Our push for the next two months will be the online registration for all teams for the Postal Targets. All Posts are asked to contact the schools in your area to sponsor a team. The teams can register online and the Post can donate the cost of the targets. All teams are required to have filled out a one-time Affiliation Form and have it filed with National. If there are any questions, please get back to me. I thank all our Posts who support our programs that benefit our youth. These programs lead to Scholarship money which support our youth.



Bill McIntyre
Law & Order Chair

We want to recognize the brave people that put their lives in danger everyday they go to work, to protect and serve you. When you watch TV every day you will see where a Police Officer has been





(Law & Order Chair - Continued)
shot at or preyed upon.

Please check pages 46-48 in your Administrative Manual. This will help you in the process of choosing a Law Officer/Firefighter of the year. You should, I hope, have already appointed a Law Officer Chairman to fulfill the duties of this chairmanship. I will be mailing forms for you to bring to your local Police Station and Firehouse asking them to give you their candidate.

What better way to say thank you, than to recognize that we stand behind them and appreciate all they do for us.

Florida won last year and it would be great to do that again this year. It would be great to see every Post choose a candidate.

DARE TO EXCEL



Eunice Butts
Post Development Chair

The past two months have been very challenging, but rewarding. I had the opportunity to assist four Posts. The month of November is also going to be a very busy month, with Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and The Great American Teach In.

Each subject is a tool for recruiting membership. There are teachers and principals who are veterans and qualify for membership. JUST ASK. Posts continue to lose membership to other Posts due to lack of greeting guests attending your Post as well as present members, and personality conflicts. Let us learn to respect one another for the good of the organization. A TEAM in an organization is the same as a FAMILY at home.

If your Post would like to do a revitalization, please contact the membership chairman Jerry Brant. To each Legionnaire, Post, District, Area and Department of Florida officers and staff, I wish you a very happy and Blessed Thanksgiving. Let us remember to also contribute to those who are less fortunate.



David Miller
POW / MIA Chair

Well, legionnaires we are already into the month of November and time is passing quickly. The Pow-Mia program is alive and I have been

(POW/MIA Chair - Continued)

visiting many Post homes as well as community businesses getting them involved in flying both the American Flag and the Pow-Mia Flag over their buildings and homes. Actually, a lot of people don't even know about the Pow-Mia Flag program or our involvement in the Pow issues throughout the world.

Remember to contact me if you have any questions about protocol for flying the Pow-Mia Flag or the Pow-Mia table setup and ceremony. I can be reached either by email or phone 24/7. As we get closer to the holiday seasons, just step back and imagine if you were a prisoner of war away from your family and loved ones how it would affect your life! Only a Pow can relate to these issues and really explain what they have been through. Keep them in your hearts and prayers. And once again please "Let Us Not Forget" Bring Them Home.

Hope everyone has a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

Enjoy your family in our great Country!



Gerald Kaufman
National Security Chair

In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, we have comrades in need up and down the East coast of Florida. Some of the hardest hit areas are in our

Northern counties and I urge all Legionaries, Posts, and Districts to reach out to our brothers and sisters and offer any and all assistance we can.

In recent weeks we have seen some serious attacks on our Navy. The USS Mason, A guided missile destroyer was attacked by 2 guided missiles launched from Yemen. The Mason then fired 3 missiles of their own in defense of itself and the USS Ponce, a floating amphibious dock ship. This escalation of direct attacks on U S Naval vessels could be a sign of more direct attacks on U S soil. Please be vigilant around your Posts, homes, neighborhoods, and throughout our communities, especially with the holidays fast approaching. Protect the children around Halloween.

Stay safe and may God Bless each and every one of you and our great country during this time of turmoil.



Roy Havekost
Social Media Chair

Greetings Legionnaires; I hope that this newsletter finds our Legion Family members safe after the effects of Hurricane Matthew earlier

last month. Although Florida was spared to some degree, there was still much devastation along the eastern seaboard and in particular the northeast area. As I am writing this article, just days after Matthew's passing through, I realize that a full damage assessment still needs to be made not only here in Florida but also in some states to our north. I am thankful at this point that lives were spared, as this storm could have been much worse.

I want to bring some attention to the fact that Facebook played a significant role during the storm. I am speaking about how, here in the 5th District, many members turned to this social media outlet to keep us all informed of the physical status of our members as well as our Posts.

In the 5th District, Matthew came at an inopportune time for us. Many Posts in our District regularly serve meals, offer BINGO and other entertainment from mid week into the weekends. Also, the 5th District annual picnic was scheduled for October 8th and the monthly District Meeting was scheduled for October 9th, which were both cancelled. The safety and well being of our members and guests was of primary concern in that decision to cancel the events.

Social media, namely Facebook, largely contributed to the communication role in the notification process to our members. Post commanders decided early on, to close those Posts that were in the projected path of the storm, and the messages were immediately posted to Facebook, alerting not only our members of our status, but also the community, thereby keeping people from needless travel to our already closed Posts.

Individual members also posted their status, which in turn advised everyone of areas that were without power, water, trees down, etc. Although there were many areas in the 5th District for which mandatory evacuation had been ordered, many opted to hunker down and ride it out. Facebook provided us with a notification system that allowed each and every user to mark their own personal status of being safe after the storm.



(Social Media Chair - Continued)

Many areas in the 5th District experienced the loss of power and in some areas for more than 48 hours. Mobile communications were kept active through generator backup at the cell towers, allowing for social media interaction throughout the storm.

In closing, I would like to say that I was more at ease during the storm knowing that I had instant communication with other family members through my mobile device and social media capabilities, and knowing that they were safe. I can add that if you are not yet linked to social media via Facebook at your Post, it should be a mandatory topic for discussion at your next Post meeting. Clearly social media proves to be a versatile and useful tool, in numerous situations.

Although there will be no social media class scheduled for the upcoming Fall Conference this month, I will be at the conference to answer any question regarding Facebook. If you don't recognize me by my picture, I'll be the guy with the blue and white Facebook "F" on my name badge.

Again, I am very thankful for the safety of those affected by the storm and the minimal damages that were sustained by some of our Posts.



Larry Roberts
VA Entitlements Chair

We are starting to get our part time veterans in for the winter, some of them may have a hard time getting VA treatment, this what they need to keep in mind.

All Information is from the Veterans Health Benefits Guide

Chapter 6

How Does VA Coordinate Care for Veterans Who Are Traveling or Living at Temporary Address?

(VA Entitlements Chair - Continued)

Generally, the VA Primary Care Team is responsible for care for Veterans traveling or temporarily experiencing a change of address – such as living on one state during the winter and another during summer. Any VA provider seen while traveling will share information and coordinate treatment options with the Primary Care Team.

Coordination of Care with Providers Outside the VA Network

(Co – managed/Dual Care)

We strongly encourage enrolled Veterans to receive all their health care through VA. However, if private doctors continue to provide treatment, VA will work with them to meet health care needs and coordinate effective treatment, we call this Co-Managed Care or Dual Care, which means that the VA and private doctors will work together to provide safe, appropriate, and ethical medical care.

VA's Primary Care Team is responsible for managing all aspects of care and services available through the VA system. Under no circumstances can the VA provider simply re-write prescriptions, or order diagnostic tests from an outside provider, without first making a professional assessment that a particular test or drug prescription is medically appropriate. If the VA provider does not follow the recommendations of a private provider, she or he will communicate the reasons for such decisions and may offer alternative treatment recommendations.

Coordination of Care Among VA Facilities

Veterans may receive medical attention in variety of VA settings – clinic, hospital, emergency rooms, Community Living Center (formerly known as VA nursing home), or their own residence. Care will be provided by professionals who offer diverse specialized treatments and services. In order to

(VA Entitlements Chair - Continued)

manage the different aspects of care effectively, the Primary Care Team will use VA's electronic medical record system to ensure the coordination of care.

Specialized Outpatient Care Not Offered at the Local Health Care Facility

If required care is not offered at the local health care facility, the Primary Care Team can arrange care at the VA health care facilities or in the community, as appropriate. Generally, the Primary Care Provider will coordinate the care at both locations.

Disagreements Between VA Providers and Private Providers

VA will work to ensure that health care needs and preference are met. And that there is an understanding of all available. VA providers have the final say about how VA will meet your health care needs. Including whether or not to order tests or write prescriptions.

Wherever you go, VA is there for you.

- Are you planning to travel, either within the U.S. or abroad?
- Are you interested in receiving treatment from private doctors, as well as your VA Primary Care team?
- Do you have questions about your health care benefits?

For answers to these questions and others, contact your local VA medical facility or call **877-222-VETS (8387)**.



Dedication of the Vietnam Wall in Punta Gorda will be held on November 5, 2016.

Parade will be held on November 12, 2016.



Alan Cohen
VA&R Chairman

Greetings, fellow Legionnaires,

I hope this finds everyone well and having escaped any serious damage from Hurricane

Matthew.

I'd like to start by sending out a special "thank you" to Anne Sankowski, Legion Auxiliary member at Post 152 and volunteer at the James A. Haley VA Hospital. When we lost the full time service of our rep at the hospital in Tampa, Anne stepped up, taking on a variety of additional duties to continue to provide these all-important services to our fellow veterans. Heartfelt thanks to you, Anne. As we're all aware, October is Agent Orange Awareness month. To all my fellow Viet Nam veterans, if you haven't already done so, we encourage you to sign up for the Agent Orange Registry. Regardless of other medical benefits you may be receiving, you're entitled to be examined, evaluated and receive treatment for any of the presumptive illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure. Additionally, as you may be aware, there's pending legislation which if passed will extend care, in some cases, to your family.

Along similar lines, if any of you Marines out there spent time stationed at Camp Lejeune between Jan 1957 and December 1987, the VA appears to be very close to making it official that there are several service-connected illnesses attributable to the drinking water.

Medical care and treatment for these conditions isn't just a "freebie". They're a benefit you earned by your service to our country. Avail yourself of them.



Bob Brewster
Youth Law Cadet Chair

I have been receiving numerous emails and phone calls from Posts throughout Florida about the future of this program. I assure you that this program will

continue. If everything goes well, and I am sure that it will, by the time you read this Commander Joe Magee and myself will be having a meeting with the leaders of the Florida Highway Patrol Academy. The main purpose of this meeting is to express to them our appreciation for conducting

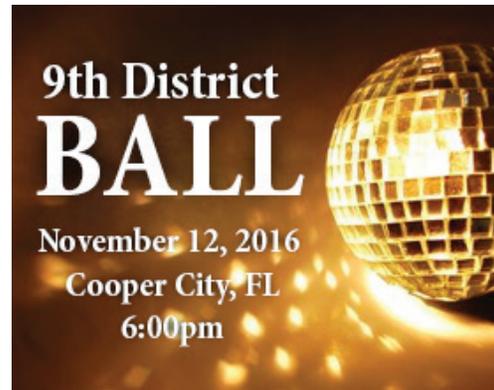
(Youth Law Cadet Chair - Continued)

this training for our Florida youth. We will do this by presenting the Academy with a beautiful plaque from the first graduating class of this program. On this plaque will be the names of the first graduating class, the Academy's instructors, and the names of The American Legion counselors.

At our Fall Conference, we will be announcing the few changes in this year's program. Last year we started the class on July 10th, with graduation on July 15th. This year the class will start on July 9th, and graduation will be on July 14th. We will cap the class at a maximum of 25 cadets, and we are working on new literature and applications.

This is still a very new program, and because of this we have no budget from Department. The American Legion must furnish the literature and the CD's for the Posts to use in selecting their candidates. This week I am heading to the printers to see about the cost of printing the flyers.

At the Fall Conference I will be asking the finance committee for a budget for this program. No matter what happens, we will have this program this year, and you will have everything you need



facebook.com/floridalegion/

Visit your Local Tag Office and get yours today!
Proceeds benefit Veterans and their families in Florida.

