



The LEGION LINK

"Securing the Future for All Veterans"



Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

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Steve Shuga
Department Commander
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Thank you for your confidence and support as your Department Commander.

Our new course has been charted and our challenges are many. We are well underway as we **improvise, adapt, and overcome** all obstacles before us.

Our legacy began July 1st, by **Securing the Future for All Veterans!** We must focus our immediate attention on membership renewal so we can support many other unique programs, activities, and events that will **bridge the gap into the future.**

The Department, Area, and District Officers have been elected by their peers and have taken their oath of office to serve and support. Congratulations! We are well underway with the rapid planning process of making our Florida American Legion a force to be reckoned with once again.

The Department Chairman have been appointed and are in a rapid planning mode to provide Florida with program information and support.

Our Leadership retreat is behind us providing the essential Florida leadership with the tools necessary to meet and exceed the goals ahead! During the recent Annual Convention, several changes were made, discussed, voted upon to move our American Legion into the future.

To ensure that we maintain a fierce momentum as we prepare to end one century and patiently wait for the next to begin, we now have created three statewide zones that each have two areas embedded within. Each zone is assigned to

a Department Vice Commander who has the overarching authority to promote membership, programs, and training within the assigned Areas, Districts, and Posts. This will be accomplished by the Area Commanders, District Commanders, and District Vice Commanders. To ensure that the duties and responsibilities are maintained at all levels, the Zone Vice Commander will conduct a quarterly evaluation of the Area, District and District Vice Commanders. The Department Vice Commanders will receive a quarterly evaluation to ensure that their assigned zones are performing in the fashion expected and that all goals are being achieved per the Department Commander.

Let us gear up our membership renewal and maintain a feverish momentum that will carry us forward. Installations are underway and will be completed soon. We have plenty on our plates that will keep us busy for some time. Let's work together to achieve the success that Florida deserves. We can do this!

In closing, heed this empowering statement: Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It's about **impact, influence, and inspiration.** Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to inspire team – mates and customers. ***Robin S. Sharma*



Commander Steve Shuga and Edwin R Marrero, Chair of Orange County Mayor's Veterans Advisory Council



Leadership Retreat





AUGUST 2017

1	Installation Post 328
2	Invasion of Kuwait
3-6	Baseball Regional Tournaments
4	Coast Guard Birthday
5	Central Area Membership Training
5	Installation Post 40
5	Installation Post 171
5	Installation Post 39
5	Dedication Post 129
6	Installation Post 359
7	Purple Heart Day
10-15	Baseball World Series
12	National Legacy Run
12	Membership Processing Seminar
15	Legion Link Article Deadline
18-24	99th National Convention
19	National Aviation Day
21	Senior Citizens Day
29	Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

 - Commander Steve Shuga's Attendance Tentative Events are subject to change.



Dianne Boland
1st Vice Commander

Greetings: To begin, I want to thank everyone who supported me this year by voting me in office. I look forward to us all working together for the betterment of the American Legion. I also want to congratulate the new incoming officers whether it be post or department level.

As many of you know, at the convention it was voted in to change the duties of the Vice Commanders. As the 1st Vice, it is my duty to help train, disseminate information on our various programs as well as helping with membership in the Eastern and Southern Areas. My plan is to attend as many district meetings as possible and use this as an opportunity to train the members at each meeting. I will still visit throughout the state but the majority of my time will be spent within my own areas.

I began my year by attending a few installations

(1st Vice Commander, Continued)

followed by a week in Tallahassee helping with the Youth Law Cadet program taught at the Highway Patrol Training Center. We had sixteen young adults between the ages of sixteen and eighteen with half being female. Most were either JROTC or Explorer Scouts who are interested in law enforcement. They are learning about apprehending a suspect, putting them in handcuffs, using pepper spray, defensive driving, dog handling and a whole lot more.

Next on the agenda is the Commanders Retreat followed by the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis. I look forward to learning a lot this year and sharing that knowledge.



Jerry Brandt
3rd Vice Commander

Comrades: Thank you for giving me your trust and your vote for the high office of American Legion, Department of Florida, Third Vice Commander. I will not betray that trust. As 3rd Vice Commander, I provide oversight for the Western and Northern Area Commanders and their District Commanders. This means I will assist and guide the District and Area Commanders to render a positive leadership. This does not mean I will take their place, we have good District and Area Commanders in place, they are your first point of contact for your Post, I will assist them as needed.

The Department of Florida strongly believes in training. We are working with the Area and District Commanders to provide that training within the District. We plan to have the initial training completed by the middle of September.

We are also taking applications for Florida, American Legion College in September. NOW is the time to apply. Applications are under 'News and Events' then 'Florida Legion College'.

Events you should be aware of:

- American Legion Regional Baseball Tournaments July 26th to August 6th.
- 91st American Legion Baseball World Series, August 10th to August 15th

(3rd Vice Commander, Continued)

- National Legacy Run, ending in Reno, Nevada, August 12th to August 17th.
- American Legion National Convention, August 18th to 24th.
- Florida American Legion College September 7th to 9th.
- Department Commander 1st District Visit, September 18th to 23rd
- Department Commander 2nd District Visit, September 24th to 30th



Dennis Boland
NEC

A WELL-KEPT SECRET – SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

The Sons of The American Legion was established as a non-political, nonsectarian civilian organization at the 14th National Convention of The American Legion in Portland, Oregon, September 12-15, 1932.

The Sons of The American Legion is a program of The American Legion with over 6,113 Squadrons located throughout the United States, France, and the Philippines with a total membership of over 365,000 plus members.

The major goal of the Sons of The American Legion is support to our nation's veterans and their families as well as support to The American Legion.

The Sons of The American Legion Commander's goal this year was to reach \$1 million in donation from The American Legion family. Although his goal fell short, the family still raised an impressive \$886,637.42. Of that amount the Sons of The American Legion raised \$594,413.91, which is 67.04% of the total donations. Since 1988, the Sons of The American Legion have donated \$7,851,461.23 to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

The Sons of The American Legion annually contributes over 1.6 million dollars in cash and goods to our nation's veterans in VA Home and





(NEC, Continued)

Medical facilities and over 455,000 volunteer hours. They also contribute to Special Olympics, Children Miracle Network hospitals, Fisher House, PROJECT: VetRelief, Operation Comfort Warrior, NEF, Honor Flight and many more programs.

The Sons of The American Legion program is a key component to the Legion family in support of The American Legion and all veterans.



Tom Gora
Sergeant-at-Arms

“...to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness”

Well, here we are in the new American Legion year 2017-18, and I am grateful for this opportunity to serve YOU for another year as the Department Sgt.-at-Arms. Congratulations to our new Department Commander Steve Shuga and other Department, Area, District, and Post officers! As you probably know by now, I believe in training and will continue to do more of that this year. I will do another Sgt.-at-Arm class at our Fall Conference in November, but I will travel anywhere I am needed in the state for training, just contact me to schedule. This year in the Legion Link every month I will highlight questions I receive on Legion Protocol and other pertinent items that I am qualified to respond to. After research, if I can't answer the question I will at least offer some suggestions on how you can find the answer.

You may recognize the bolded words that open my article, they are from the closing sentence of The American Legion Preamble. They may be the last words in the Preamble but that does not detract from their critical importance, especially to all the Sgt.-at-Arms in this Department. Those of us who serve in this office practice “mutual helpfulness,” whether you realize it or not! We help our Commander run orderly meetings, we help with sacred ceremonies of The American Legion, we help new members learn about the traditions and protocols of The American Legion, and we help with countless other things in many ways. My goal is that the Sgt.-at-Arms, at all levels in this department, will be among the best

(Sergeant-at-Arms, Continued)

educated and most respected officers we have. I wish to congratulate all that will take the oath of office for Sgt.-at-Arms, and remember I am here to support you in any way I can, so please contact me when needed.

Congratulations to the participants in the Color Guard Competition at Convention. American Legion Post 331 took 1st place in the Military Class Post and Retrieve, and in the Open Class Pass and Review. American Legion Post 238 took 1st place in the Post and Retrieve Open Class competition. They were presented certificates at the convention and I will soon visit their Posts to present them some beautiful trophies!



Color Guard

Congratulations to Bill Shreve, Sgt.-at-Arms Post 155, for winning the Eddie Hummer Award for best Post Sgt.-at-Arms, and to Dave Brown and Walter Rasco for winning best District Sgt. At Arms, representing the 5th District. During the religious service on Sunday, July 2nd, a Legionnaire in the back of the room caught my eye. This Legionnaire stood at attention with full salute as all the Districts memorialized Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons of the Legion members who passed away this past year. I now publicly salute this Legionnaire, he is Gerald Abbett from American Legion Post 5, Tampa.

I attended the Department Leadership conference in July, and served as a counselor at The American Legion/Florida Highway Patrol Youth Law Cadet Program, also in July. I am scheduled to provide some Central Area training in August and will also attend the National Convention in Reno, Nevada. Then in September I put on my hat as the Florida Legion College Chairman for another class.



2017 Youth Law Cadets

(Sergeant-at-Arms, Continued)

Sgt.-at-Arms featured question of the month: (question received from a 16th District official)

Two years ago, I called National and spoke to the gentleman in charge of Flag protocol, he informed me that the POW flag is always the last flag in a series of flags, the rationale being that the POW-MIA program is not recognized or sponsored by any of the armed forces, veterans' organizations or any States or the Federal government. It is a privately organized program with no association with any of the above-mentioned entities. A ruling on this would be very helpful.

Response: You are correct, the POW-MIA flag is not officially recognized by our government as a national flag, it is considered an organizational flag. However, the POW-MIA flag is an important part of American Legion protocol at our meetings and other events, as required in Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th National Annual Convention. Therefore, we respectfully place the POW-MIA flag on an empty chair, or use the chair back POW-MIA cover. Based on my research of DOD regulations the POW-MIA flag is to be the last of organizational flags when flags are posted or presented in order of precedence. Please consult the United States Flag Manual which can be found on-line, it is an excellent resource for this and other flag questions, and can be found at the following link: <https://www.stlawco.org>



Gerald Kaufman
Historian

It would like to start this by thanking each and every one of you for your vote of confidence in electing me as your Department of Florida Historian.

I have been working diligently on your behalf by obtaining the user name and password for the Centennial website. Mission accomplished.

I know there are many history questionnaires and post photos waiting to be entered into the system and I now have the tools to accomplish that task. In the meantime, I will be sending a letter out





(Historian, Continued)

to all of you concerning this vital endeavor with instructions on what needs to be done to put the Department of Florida at the top of the hill when it comes to the Centennial celebration.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at historian@legionmail.org.



Fred Matthews
Membership Chair

Each One, Bring Five!

This year, the Department will target for assistance those Posts and Districts that need help. The desire by the Department to achieve its 100% goal is real and realistic. It's real in that it's the Life Blood and the future of our organization. It's realistic because the Department, just as on the District and Post level, must relate to the members we serve and the issues they are confronted with and find out what we need to do to get them to join or renew.

In essence, if phone calls need to be made to those members late in renewing, let's get a list and get down to the business of calling them, emailing them, messaging them and texting them.

All memberships gathered during the previous week should be mailed to the Department by Monday of each week.

Each District should conduct a district-wide **Training Day**. This should be done during the **month of August**. This training will serve as a follow-up to the training conducted at the Department convention and a precursor to the Fall Conference. These training sessions will focus on specific help needed at each Post and help develop targeting plans for those Posts in need of outside support.

If your District or Post would like to conduct a Training session for your Officers **AND** members, give me a call, send me an email. We have expert Trainers ready to assist you or conduct the Training session at your next District Meeting or Post meeting and preferably at a Special Training Meeting. If we understand how our American

(Membership, Continued)

Legion Works, we will be better able to tell a potential or renewing member why they should belong!

We're asking District Commanders and Vice Commanders in charge of membership to submit to the Department Commander, their plan to help those Posts in need and what initiatives they will conduct to move their Posts, and thus the Department toward the 100% goal. Training and submission of Plans to reach the goal should be accomplished by October 1.

Lets' conduct a State-wide Membership Rally.

The target reporting date is **September 16th**. For one week, all Posts and Districts will conduct this rally simultaneously. On the final day, each District will report to Department HQ their totals. The top Districts will be awarded prizes based on percentage and actual numeric membership increases over the past year.

This effort can only succeed with the buy-in and participation from all members of the Legion family. The American Legion Auxilliary, the Sons of the American Legion and the Legion Riders all play a role in this effort.

A coordinating effort will be made with each unit of the Legion family to insure that the training and membership efforts are in sync and that publicly the efforts are seen as a Department-wide initiative.

Each One, Bring Five! Who will be the top recruiter this year? Which District, which Post will win the honors and carry the recruitment and retention banner over the finish line? The winner should be you!

Check out the membership plan. Use the tools available and relevant to you. Lets' get the ball rolling as we march toward 100% in membership for your Post, District and the Department of Florida!



Bruce Carl
Children & Youth Chair

Greetings from your new Department Children and Youth Chairman. I am honored to have been chosen by the Department Commander to assume this position. As we progress through the year, I will be planning several events to raise funds for our Children and Youth programs. As this information becomes available, I will make sure it is posted on the calendar.

Remember that there are two different Children and Youth areas you can donate to. The first is the Children and Youth fund. This program is where the money is drawn from to provide our yearly grants. The second is the Children and Youth programs. Monies donated to the programs go directly to our programs here in the State of Florida, and are used to provide extra funds to any programs that may be lacking needed monies to operate effectively.

When you send your checks to Department, please remember to distinguish which area you want the donation to go to, by writing where you would like it to go in the Memo area.

Living in Florida provides us the unique opportunity of being able to do outside activities year round. As each Post, District, and Area plans your Children and Youth events, please remember to keep a record of them, so you can get the credit deserved. It is important that each Post Children and Youth Post Chair report monthly to the District Chair, and the District Chair reports to the Area Chair. I would appreciate receiving a monthly report from each Area chairman, rather than waiting until the end of the year, and relying on the CPR for the numbers. It is much easier to track monthly and you will not forget anything, besides making it much easier to do your CPR at the end of the year. You will want to track all fundraisers, donations given out to groups or individuals, etc. Anything you do to support Children and Youth counts!

There are awards available on the Post and District levels for Children and Youth. The biggest thing is filling out the paperwork. Please E-mail your report monthly to CY@floridalegion.org. More information on the programs, awards, etc. will be





(Children & Youth Chair, Continued)

available in the Children and Youth Manual, which will be coming out in September. In the meantime, everyone should be concentrating on collecting funds and school supplies as the start of school is just around the corner. You should also start planning your projects and events for the next few months. Examples are Patriot Day, American Legion Day, Halloween Safety, and Children's Miracle Network. There are many brochures available at no charge to you, that can assist you with your planning and can be passed out to our youth. Please contact the Department for these.

Planning events for children and youth serves a two-fold purpose. Not only are we providing education and assistance to them, but it is also a great way to increase your membership throughout the Legion Family, by trying to recruit the eligible parents of those children. If you have any questions, need help, or would like me to come to an event, please E-mail me at CY@floridalegion.org.



Bill Hoppner
Disaster Preparedness Chair

I would like to thank Department Commander Shuga for the opportunity to serve as your Disaster Preparedness Chairman for 2017-2018.

We all know that every disaster is a crisis may it be floods, tornadoes, or hurricanes, and each year between June 1st and November 30th is designated as hurricane season.

The questions we should be asking ourselves are: am I prepared and do I have everything in place before, during, and after a storm. The answer should be yes, if not this is the time to prepare. It's never too early to prepare.

There's that word again: **PREPARE** it is vital to have everything in place to make the transition through the 3 stages of a storm as easy and comfortable as possible.

I will be sending emails to all Area and District Commanders in the hopes of compiling a roster of

(Disaster Preparedness Chair, Continued)

names, addresses, and telephone numbers for the Chairmen in their areas. This will help in getting aid to those in your respective Area or District should the need arise.

Each month I will also be sending out information on how to prepare.

You may email me at Gonepost@aol.com, I may also be reached at 305-968-7979.

Remember the key word **PREPAREDNESS**.



Tom Gora
Florida Legion College Chair

Sign up for the next class, it is scheduled for **September 7-9, 2017**. Applications by now should be on the Department web site. We work the College on a limited budget so there is a cost of \$200 to attend that is used to offset the cost of lodging, lunches and snacks. Lodging will be at a reputable hotel selected by the Department, and the classes will be held at the Department offices.

The agenda from the last class is being "tweaked" to meet our current needs, and we MAY have one of the staff from the National American Legion College on board as an instructor this year. As the Chairman of the FALC Committee, appointed to a multi-year term, my responsibility is to strive to make this class better every time we conduct the college.

The "winds of change" are gusting near tropical storm levels in this Department stressing the importance of training programs such as the Legion Extension Institute, and FALC.

These are critical courses you will want to complete when seeking office at the Post, District, Area and Department levels.



Jim Ramos
Military Liaison Chair

What is my job as Military Liaison? To work closely with **BOTH The American Legion Posts, the Military Base Commander** and/or other **designated Base Liaisons**. The Military Liaison Chairman provides enhanced quality of life services for those serving in the United States Armed Forces Active, Guard and Reserve.

The program is designed to work with Military Liaison as representative between, Base liaison and a Post (who are willing to work with military base's) also Department and military installations to help them know (**who we are?**) And provide a list of programs that will assist our military service men and women and their families.

How does it work:

We are Granted Access to "Assisting Troops with Transition and Benefits"

DoD policy allows Veteran and Military Service Organizations Greater Access to shape the policy to increase the presence of service officers at installations and to create greater troop and military family awareness of American Legion support programs, such as Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW), transition assistance, career support and more.

Opportunities for the Legion to connect with service members with:

Reconnecting, Informational event, Fundraising and more.

With Access Granted: We must get a request to access, to work or do anything on base.

We have a check list to obtaining access and sample of letter to get access.

Please contact me at MilitaryLiaison@legionmail.org or jramos149@bellsouth.net.

Please let the Zone Leadership, Area and District Commanders know what your Post want to do first so they know first-hand. Thank you and lets make this year a great one.



FLORIDA LEGION COLLEGE
September 7-10, 2017
www.floridalegion.org





Bob Brewster
Youth Law Cadet Chair

I am literally writing this article for the August 2017 Legion Link from the Florida Highway Patrol Academy, during our 2nd year of the Youth Law Cadet Program, being held July 9-14. This year we have 16 cadets participating in the program with an even split of 8 males and 8 females. Besides myself other Legionnaire counselors here this week are Dianne Boland, Tom Gora, and Ed Krass.

As you know, this program is done with the full cooperation of the Florida Highway Patrol at their 1,400+ acre site in Havana, Florida, just outside Tallahassee. Cadets reported on Sunday, July 9th and were greeted by their team of three FHP instructors. As you may recall from your basic training days and the greeting you received from drill instructors, the first meeting between cadets and instructors is very intense and focuses on discipline, formations, proper etiquette, a "few" warm-up pushups, and marching. Every morning the cadets must arrive for their PE class at 0540, eat breakfast at 0645, and after a shower and change into uniform hit the classrooms at 0815. Classes are concluded at 1700 hours every day, followed by dinner. Yes, this is almost a 12-hour day; this is intended to be a working and learning camp, not a recreational camp, but you can still have fun and learn at the same time. Cadets are in uniform all week and are issued a police belt, cuffs, a simulated firearm, and Taser (without probes) to wear all week.

On Monday, we visited the FHP dispatch/telecommunications center in Tallahassee that provides service to 18 counties, and toured the Capital which included a stop at the Florida Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. That afternoon we watched a demonstration by two K9s and their handlers. These two dogs are called 'bite dogs,' because that's what they do! No matter the situation once the handler releases the dog, the person pursued will get bit, and that is why they are warned to stop and surrender. Fire in the hole! Wednesday, it was off to a firearms safety class and the range at which the cadets fired simulated 45 Glocks. Other classes during the week included an automobile roll-over simulator with dummies thrown from the vehicle to illustrate

(Youth Law Cadet Chair, Continued)
what happens when you don't wear seat belts, a self-defense tactics class, proper application of handcuffs, use of batons, use of a Taser (each cadet discharged a taser into a practice target), use of pepper spray, and each cadet got to use vehicle simulator, and ride in real cruisers with FHP troopers on practice vehicle chases on their driving course. On Friday, July 14th we held a graduation ceremony for the cadets at which each cadet is awarded certificates from The American Legion and FHP.

I do have the FHP proposed dates for the 2018 Youth Law Cadet program but I must clear that with the Department before the dates can be announced. I hope this program becomes a long-standing tradition between the Department of Florida and the Florida Highway Patrol. At the November 2017 Fall Conference, I plan to have the brochures for the 2018 program prepared to distribute, and I also plan to speak on this program. I have worn many hats all my years in The American Legion and I have never been more excited about a program as I am this program! A great opportunity for high school kids who may be thinking of a career in law enforcement. I will speak more on the program and provide some "cadet in training" photos in future Legion Link articles.



The American Legion/Florida Highway Patrol Youth Law Cadet Class Graduation Ceremony July 15, 2017



Larry Sheets
Judge Advocate



I have disapproved several Post Constitution and By-Laws because they indicate that the Post Executive Board/Committee has the final say in Post operations. This just is not true!

The Department Constitution Article X, section 18, Each Post shall use and follow the American Legion Post Officer Guide in conducting its meetings.

On page 47 of the American Legion Post Officers Guide it lists the order of business for Post meetings. Item d. on that list is for committee reports. This item allows Post committees to report and make their suggestions, and these suggestions are either approved or rejected by the membership. The minutes of the Executive Committee or Executive Board would be read and either approved or rejected by the membership.

If the membership or a member would like to approve the minutes with the exception of a specific item or items, the motion would be: " I move that the minutes of the Executive Board be approved with the exception of item #?. The minutes can be approved and the item that was an exception will be debated separately.

The important thing to remember is the Post belongs to all of its members, not just the Executive Board/Committee.

Did you attend the 2017 Florida Department Convention?
If so, we want to hear from you.
Please take a moment and leave us feedback.
floridalegion.org/dcfeedback



Rick Johnson
2nd Vice Commander

Well Legion family, another year is starting and we have to get busy. We can't wait until next year to identify any Posts out there that are in need help. As most of you know, the Vice Commanders were zoned to an area; I have Zone 2 which includes



(2nd Vice Commander, Continued)

15th, 16th, 7th, 8th and the 13th Districts. I look forward to working together as a team to get things done. Jay and Dennis, the two Area Commanders have an aggressive attitude towards making things happen, so let's give them the support that they need.

We have the Dept. Legion College in September, all the info is on the website, so sign up and learn more about our great organization and take it back to your Post.

We have three training dates already set up for Zone 2, Central Area will be August 5th at Post 152. Registration is at 0800 and classes will start at 0900. The 8th District will be August 12th at Post 24, registration is at 0800 and classes begin at 0900. The 13th District will be at Post 103 August 13th registration is at 0900 and classes will begin at 1000.

Please try to send at least one person from each Post and PLEASE pass the information on. Thank you for electing me your 2nd Vice Commander and I promise I will not let you down.

Let's start the year off right and have a great year.

**July 20, 2017
50% Target Report**

4	Victoria VanBuren	12.54%
11	Donna Artola	12.28%
16	Raymond Perez	9.53%
3	Frederick Hutto	9.16%
15	Richard Little	9.02%
5	Troy Horsley	8.57%
9	Donald Schwiesow	8.51%
1	Raymond Olsen	6.96%
6	Michael Seidel	6.03%
17	Michael Wolohan	5.64%
13	Michael Raymond	5.28%
14	Gary Decker	4.31%
12	Bruce Thurber	4.15%
8	Jerry Faught	3.94%
7	David Tucker	3.78%
2	John Folsom	2.27%
Northern	Jeffrey Durden	8.81%
Southern	James Tewes	8.46%
Central	Jay Allen	8.11%
Western	James Brennan	6.10%
Eastern	Daryl Bass	5.22%
Southwestern	Dennis Walsh	4.68%



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From health to auto, we offer valuable insurance products designed to fit the specific needs of Legionnaires.



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Your valued status as a Legionnaire makes you eligible for LegionCare, up to \$5,000.00 in NO COST to you benefits.



Cancer Care Insurance Plan

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust products and services are there when you need them most. Listen to how others have benefited from services like our Cancer Care Insurance Plan.

- Cash benefits sent to Legionnaire members diagnosed with cancer
- We send you money – even if you don't have cancer

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AWARD WINNERS

2017 Wilson Timmons - Best All Around Post for the year
Pensacola Post 240

2017 Legionnaire of the Year
Jim "Dusty" Douglas, Post 357

2017 Post Adjutant of the Year
Tony Hammerling, Post 240

Tracy Taylor - Most Outstanding Post Service Officer
David Salcito, Post 284

Best Post Four Chaplains Program
Post Orange, Post 270

Best District Four Chaplains Program
9th District

Best Post Religious Emphasis Program
Hawthorne, Post 230

Best Post Boy Scout Program (Chartering Post)
New Port Richey, Post 79

Best Post Boy Scout Program (Non-Chartering Post)
Sebastian, Post 189

Best Post School Medals Program
Winter Haven, Post 8

Best District Sgt-at-Arms Program
David Brown & Walter Rasco, 5th District

Best Post Sgt-at-Arms Program
William Shreve, Post 155

Best Post Blood Donor Program
Fernandina Beach, Post 54

Best Post ROTC Program
Cape Coral, Post 90

Best History Yearbook
Remona Knight, Post 8

Best History Book – Open Contest
Robert Stoughton, Post 240

Best American Legion Riders History Yearbook
Betty Gabbard, Chapter 16

Most outstanding District video presentation on Facebook
5th District

Most outstanding Post presence on Facebook
Madeira Beach, Post 273

Most outstanding Post presence on Facebook
Satellite Beach, Post 200

Want to win an award at our next Department Convention?

All award descriptions and rules are located in the Post Administrative Manual.

The information will also be mailed out to all Posts in March along with the Consolidated Post Reports and end of year forms.





"Your organization is so important, because it provides a support network for veterans."
 -Elizabeth Ricci, Immigration Attorney (pictured above)

2017 CONVENTION RECAP:

Wow - What a successful time PROJECT: VetRelief had during the Annual American Legion, Department of Florida Convention. Here are just a few highlights:

- A *new* resolution passed during the Legion General Session to make PROJECT: VetRelief an **official program** to the American Legion, Department of Florida
- Received **\$14,841.55** in donations from the Legion Family
- Trained **102** VetRelief Advocates, and received 100% positive feedback from a class survey
- Awarded **36 Posts** and **25 Squadrons** with their PVR Challenge awards and ribbons
- Sold **ALL** PVR polos in Legion's Emblem Sales
- Distributed **4,000+** brochures to Legion Family members to take back to their Posts*

If you missed the chance to attend an Advocate Training, don't worry! Additional classes will be held at the Department Fall Conference this November. **Stay tuned for more details.**

* For promotional items, such as brochures or fliers, contact Jennifer Cooper by sending an email to jcooper@floridalegion.org or call 407-295-2631



COMMANDER'S FUNDRAISING PROJECT:

Every year the Florida Legion Department Commander encourages Legion Posts to raise money for a specific charity, or charities, for their Fundraising Project. Steve Shuga, the newly elected Department Commander, has chosen PROJECT: VetRelief as his primary charity of choice.



Department Commander (2017-2018)
Steve Shuga

Commander Shuga has set a goal to collect a total of \$50,000 during his one-year term as Department Commander. The Legion Posts are asked to make a one-time donation or hold fundraising event(s) to help him reach his goal.

Once the goal of \$50,000 has been met, he has decided that any additional donations submitted will go towards other Florida Legion Programs. However, the Legion Family can still contribute to PVR by making donations directly payable to PROJECT: VetRelief.

As an added bonus, any donations that are submitted through the Commander's Fundraising Project will also count towards the PVR Challenge. The Challenge details are still the same as last year where Posts are encouraged to donate \$1.00 per member of their Post. However, the Challenge incentives will be different than last year, and will be announced during the Fall Conference in November. Be sure you don't miss out on this great opportunity!

SUPPORT CASES: YEAR END TOTALS	
Year 2 <small>(July 2015-June 2016)</small>	Year 3 <small>(July 2016-June 2017)</small>
57 <i>families helped</i>	102 <i>families helped</i>
\$37,812.34 <i>amount distributed</i>	\$86,882.43 <i>amount distributed</i>
<small>*Numbers reflect PROJECT: VetRelief Cases ONLY</small>	

UPCOMING EVENTS: MARK YOUR CALENDARS	
4th Annual RL James Charity Golf Tournament When: Friday, September 8, 2017 Where: Tranquilo Golf Club at Four Seasons Resort, Orlando Time: Registration - 7:00AM Shotgun - 8:30AM Cost: \$150 - Individual Player \$600 - Foursome Host: RL James General Contractor Join us for day of golf, great food, fun contests and chances to win cool prizes!	2nd Annual ALR Coral Head Music Fest When: Saturday, February 17, 2018 Where: Marathon, FL Time: 11:00AM - 11:00PM Tickets: \$30 - Early Bird Special \$40 - At the Gate Host: Legion Riders Chapter 154 Bands: Great White, Slaughter, Atlanta Rhythm Section, Lazy Bonez, and many more! Sponsorship Opportunities Available!



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

FLORIDA PURPLE HEART DAY

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart, originally known as the Badge of Military Merit, is an American decoration, the oldest military decoration in the United States still given; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart was established by General George Washington at Newburgh, New York on August 7, 1782, during the Revolutionary War, as an award for members of the Continental Army; and

WHEREAS, it was the first award made available to the common soldier to recognize outstanding valor or merit; and

WHEREAS, following nearly 150 years of disuse, the Purple Heart was reestablished by the President of the United States per War Department General Order No. 3, dated February 22, 1932; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is a combat decoration awarded to a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who has been wounded or killed; and

WHEREAS, recipients of the Purple Heart know the meaning of sacrifice in the preservation of the United States of America and national interests at home and abroad; and

WHEREAS, there are approximately 1.7 million Purple Heart recipients in our nation's history; and

WHEREAS, to perpetually honor our State's Purple Heart recipients, the State of Florida has designated August 7th of each year as Florida Purple Heart Day;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Scott, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing August 7, 2017, as *Florida Purple Heart Day*.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 20th day of July, in the year two thousand seventeen.

A blue ink signature of Rick Scott, written over a horizontal line.
Governor