



The LEGION LINK

"Securing the Future for All Veterans"



Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

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From Your Department Commander Steve Shuga

commander@floridalegion.org



Rapidly preparing to begin the official district visitations around the state. First up are Districts 1 and 2 (Western Area) Zone 3.

Just returned from the 99th National American Legion Convention in Reno, Nevada. Directly supported the National American Legion Rider 2017 Legacy Run with a contingent of Florida American Legion Riders. What an awesome experience!

Florida branding and marketing of our American Legion family provided us an exciting opportunity to recruit new members into The American Legion.

American Legion Baseball almost had a team make it into the world series but were outpaced during the final regional game when they were defeated by North Carolina 15 – 4. Thank you, Department Baseball Chairman Andrew Burkett, for supporting the teams.

Membership Training was launched around the state. It was a rough start but we will improvise, adapt, and overcome those obstacles before us. Have we renewed our membership cards yet? I hope Florida surprises itself and renews their membership early.

The first monthly Department Commander podcast was released on You Tube early August. Legionnaires can access the latest podcast via the Department website. The podcast provides a recap of our past successes and our planned activities ahead. Take a few minutes to review the taping at your leisure.

The Department Commander's official calendar is posted on the Department website. Please refer to it to often learn where I am expected to be. Always double check with Department Executive Secretary to ensure that the schedule has not changed. Will do our best to support as many activities/events as possible. Please send invitations to Department as early as possible. If the schedule permits the invitation, a return response will be sent to either accept or pass.

The past 2 months has been a fast and fierce ramping up on a variety of issues from around the state. Your Department staff are doing all we can to provide timely responses. Please be patient.



Commander Steve Shuga and wife, Leonor, leaving to join Legacy Run to Reno and National Convention.





SEPTEMBER 2017

2	VJ Day
2	District 15 - Exec Board Meeting
4	Labor Day (HQ Closed)
4	District 12 - Clam Bake
6	Membership Goal 55%
7-9	Florida Legion College 📍
8	RL James Golf Tournament (PVR)
8	Special Olympics Golf
9	District 12 Boys State Dinner
9	Installation Post 108
10	Grandparents' Day
11	Patriot Day
11	District 12 Patriots Day Festivities
15	District 12 POW/MIA Rededication
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15	POW / MIA Recognition Day
15-17	National Children & Youth Conf
15-17	Junior Shooting Sports Conf
16	District 13 Golf Tournament
16	Special Olympics Surfing
16	District 15 Meeting
17	Citizenship Day
17-23	Employ the Older Worker Week
17-23	Dept Commander - District 1 Visits 📍
18	Air Force Birthday
18	Installation Post 248
19	Installation Post 334
22	First Day of Fall
22	Installation Post 256
22-24	National Americanism Conf
24	Gold Start Mothers' and Family's Day
24-30	Dept Commander - District 2 Visits 📍
26	Installation Post 332
26	Post 163 Open House Membership Drive
30	District 12 Meeting

National Makes a Few Changes

Dianne Boland, 1st Vice Commander
1stvice@legionmail.org

Greetings: My how the year has started to fly by quickly! We just returned from the National Membership Retreat held in Indianapolis. A lot of information was learned and a lot of new initiatives are taking place. Now we're off to the National Convention in Reno.

To start, I want to inform you about the new American Legion Training Newsletter that started April 2017, it is published by Internal Affairs. This periodic, Legionnaire-driven newsletter (sent by email) will highlight training that other departments and individuals are conducting in The American Legion. Focus will be given to best practices, ideas, and creative thinking. Subscribe @ www.legion.org/newsletters. Ideas on best practices, ideas, and creative thinking can be sent to train@legion.org.

Another change is The American Legion Extension Institute Course (ALEI) has been rebranded to American Legion Education Institute (still ALEI). The content, which is the history of The American Legion plus our Four Pillars, has been refreshed and starting September 1st, it will be **FREE**

to current Legion Family members. More training will be added in the future as well as training resources.

Another new feature is members are now allowed to renew their dues on-line. You can also set up on-line automatic annual dues renewal. Our Membership Chairman should have more information on these features.

The last new feature I will mention for now is about Mylegion.org. National has added a new feature that allows you to get a listing of all new members who joined DMS. They are listed in a report a day or two after they were processed by National, making them available to you right away. Take the time to go look and start contacting right away. Whether in person or by phone, email or letter; start now to get them transferred in locally. Find out their interests and get them involved so they will be interested in staying. Find out if they would be interested in the ALEI course. Let them learn about our history, who we are and what we do. Remember, membership is all our responsibility.



Stay Involved, Be Seen

Rick Johnson, 2nd Vice Commander
2ndvice@legionmail.org



Well Legion family, our first full month has passed and a lot of classes and meetings have happened throughout the state.

In Zone 2 we had the Central area training at

Post 152 and had a great turnout. It was a very diverse crowd with the whole family being there. A lot of great information was passed out and a lot of great information was learned by all.

The following weekend had the southwest area training at Post 24 and then on Sunday at Post 103. The 8th District had a great turnout and I was very proud of the whole family being there.

The 13th District had only 10 Legionaries show

up and we were disappointed, but we will be working on correcting any issues.

I want to thank Tom Gora, Bob Brewster, John Dollinger, Larry Roberts and Eunice Butts for being part of the training team as they have many years of experience within the organization.

My two Area Commanders, Jay Allen and Dennis Walsh are doing a great job in getting the communication channels opened and getting calendars done.

By the time this comes out we will have attended the National convention in Reno and the new leadership will take over on the National level. I want to send Bob Vick congratulations on being selected as our National Chaplain. Bob has been so dedicated in his mission and continues to do so with his lovely wife, Marion, by his side.

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📍 - Commander Steve Shuga's Attendance Tentative.
 Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at www.floridalegion.org. We share the information we are provided, please contact Program, Area, District and Posts for additional details and events.

If you have a special, program, area or district event you would like to share, send details to ckolze@floridalegion.org.





Stay Involved, Be Seen

(Continued from Page 2)

Rick Johnson, 2nd Vice Commander

We must get the word out within our communities to let them know who we are. Your charter is for a specific community, and if you are not involved in your community, then you're failing in our mission. Let's just do a better job throughout the state and be SEEN.

There is a strong possibility the Florida Legion College will be postponed to a later date as they are only three applicants paid as of 8/15. Please follow us on [facebook.com/floridalegion](https://www.facebook.com/floridalegion) and on the Department website, floridalegion.org for updates. *(*Update: Legion College has been postponed until January 11-13, 2018)*

We want everyone to have a great year and **HAVE FUN**, we are all volunteers. With that being said, see you next month.

Encouraging Training & Growth

Jerry Brandt, 3rd Vice Commander
3rdvice@legionmail.org



Zone 1 is in the process of training until the end of September. As of the 12th of August, the following Districts have completed their training, the 1st District on August 5th, and the 17th District on August 12th, with

the remaining Districts scheduled. We would like to see all Legionnaires and Family turn up on these training classes, Please come to one of the following classes:

- 5th District, Post 283 on August 26th at 10am
- 4th District, Post 230, on September 2nd, after District Meeting
- 3rd District, Post 107, on September 16th, after District Meeting
- 2nd District, Post 100, on September 16th, after District Meeting

This year we will encourage membership by giving out a Zone wide Traveling Trophy to the leading Districts. This membership award is based on percentage within the District, please work on

your membership. I am encouraging all District Commanders to have a traveling trophy within their District as well for their Posts. This trophy will be presented to the leading District on the following dates:

- Friday, November 3rd, at the Fall Conference
- Friday, January 5th
- Saturday, March 2nd at the Northern Area Ball And at the Convention.

The Department Commander will start his District Visits on September 17th with District 1, and then travel to District 2 on the 24th of September. The District Commanders, Area Commanders and I will be traveling with the Commander as well. When we visit your Posts please come out and greet the Department Commander and the team with him. We are here to learn about your District, your Post and any challenges you are having so we can help.

Commanders, please look at your Post's Membership. By now, installations should be almost completed, so why do we have Posts with Membership of '0%', '1%' or '2%'? Contact them and let us get them to turn in their membership. Please remember, the 55% goal is September 6th, we can make this goal.



U.S. Mint Commemorative Coin

Dennis Boland, National Executive Committeeman
nec@legionmail.org



To celebrate 100 years of service to community, state and nation, The American Legion is working with the U.S. Mint and the U.S. Congress to produce limited-edition, exquisitely crafted

commemorative coins. Authorized by Congress, commemorative coins celebrate and honor people, places, events and institutions in American society.

Unique among U.S. Mint products, these coins help raise money for important causes as well as

commemorate important aspects of American history and culture. Proceeds from the sale of the coins would support the programs and services offered under the Four Pillars of our organizations: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Children and Youth, and Americanism.

The American Legion begins its centennial recognition at the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, site of the 1st American Legion National Convention, in August 2018, In March 2019 the organization will celebrate its 100th birthday in Paris, and Sept. 16, 2019, will mark the 100th anniversary of the organization's congressional charter.

If authorized by Congress, coins minted would be issued only during the one-year period

beginning on Jan. 1st, 2019.

The American Legion is honored that the authorizing is being sponsored on a bipartisan, bicameral basis by Sens. Todd Yourn, R-Ind., and Joe Donnelly, D-Ind., and Reps Phil Roe, R-Tenn., and Tim Walz, D-Minn.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

Sign on as a co-sponsor or vote in favor of H.R. 2519 or S. 1182 The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act, allowing the U.S. Mint to strike a limited-edition American legion centennial commemorative coin with proceeds from sales dedicated to the organization's four pillars of service.

FALL CONFERENCE

NOV 2 - 5, 2017 floridalegion.org





Proper Wearing of the Legion Cover

*Tom Gora, Sergeant-at-Arms
sgt-at-arms@legionmail.org*

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

August was a busy month! I participated in two training sessions in the Southwest Area, one for the 8th District at Post 24 in Bradenton, and another for the 13th District at Post 103 in Punta Gorda. I then attended the National Convention in Reno, Nevada, and worked the floor as an Assistant National Sgt.-at-Arms. This was my first time in Reno, what a nice town! The day after I returned to Florida I attended a meeting at Post 54, Fernandina Beach, with a representative of Senator Rubio’s office as the guest speaker to discuss veterans’ issues. Then on to another training class for the 5th District at Post 283 in Jacksonville on August 26.

Coming up in September are planned trips to Posts 331 and 238 to award trophies for the 2017 Color Guard Competition at the Department Convention. Post 331 won the Post and Retrieve in the Military Class, and Pass-in-Review, Military Class. Post 238 won the competition for Post and Retrieve, Military Open Class. Congratulations to both dedicated teams! If any Post wants me to provide training or anything else I can do, please contact me.

One of the basic issues I review every year in the Legion Link is the appropriate wearing of the Legion cover. A Legionnaire is considered in

uniform when wearing the Legion cover. Our most problematic issue that we seem to forget is wearing the cover during meals. For meals, the cover is off for males, females can eat while wearing their cover. Same applies for prayer, males cover off, females cover on. When you take your cover off, male or female, it is proper to lay it down with The American Legion emblem up. All pins, medals and title lettering are placed on the side of the cover opposite the Legion emblem, the right side; nothing can go on the emblem side of the cover with one exception; a cross that is given to you ONLY by the National Chaplain.

Now, something about Legion covers I wish I didn’t have to speak about. At recent Department events, some among our ranks choose to have “fun” by playing a prank called snatch Legion covers when the owner is not looking. The “prankster” then holds onto the cover until the end of the event and returns it in some way so they can’t be identified.

This accomplishes nothing but to perhaps embarrass the Legionnaire whose cover was taken. Be reminded your cover is your property, you paid for it, and taking it without your permission constitutes theft (which is a crime and not just a mere prank). Please, during an official Legion function, act professionally as an adult, and as a LEGIONNAIRE. Have your fun after the function in places like the hospitality suites, around the hotel pool, etc.



Preparing for Centennial

*Gerry Kaufman, Historian
historian@legionmail.org*



Comrades, I have sent out a letter and flyer to every post and all officers in the Department of Florida asking for you to fill out the centennial worksheet and add a post picture to it and send it back to me ASAP. I have completed several

who had nothing posted on the site and I would

like to complete the other 166 before the holiday season.

If you do not have a post home I would like to talk to you specifically so that I can set a time and date to come visit you and take some pictures of your membership.

I have also started the planning for our Centennial celebration parade and festivities. As you know this is a massive endeavor and I am asking that the area and district centennial chairman get their contact information to me soon so that we can get the plans finalized and

bring those plans to fruition. If you would like to be a part of the planning committee send your information and abilities to historian@legionmail.org.

As your posts have events throughout the year please send brief write ups and pictures to the above email address so that we can document this year’s events under Commander Shuga. One month in and we are already documenting a great year. Thank you to everyone in our legion family.

A Busy August

*Jay Allen, Central Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org*

This past month has been a busy one, with Installations completed and visitations on the way to the posts in the Central Area. We also conducted our first Central Area Training session, hosted by the 15th District, American Legion Town and Country Memorial Post 152, with a good turn out. We attended 7th District meeting and it was a very good training for the 7th District. The District Commander Dave Tucker did an outstanding job doing a training session for his officers and chairmen.

The Central Area Posts were quite receptive to the Challenge of the Dollar per member for the Project Vet Relief and did their best to meet and exceed the

membership goals.

Working alongside the Zone Two leader is a new and great experience. We are happy to have Department 2nd Vice Commander Rick Johnson as our leader. The Central Area is looking forward to a great year!

Now the challenge is get and keep Central Area on top, and help the Department of Florida American Legion be on top of all other Departments. We can do it, and with the hard work that makes Central Area great will flow both up as well as down the change to make it happen. Looking forward to having a bigger article next month, with exciting news from here in the Central Area.





Many Thanks

Jeff Durden, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org



First, let me say how humbled and honored I am to be elected your Northern Area Commander for 2017-2018 year. You elected me to serve you and I will do my best to accomplish that duty.

We have started the Area training as of August 12th in the 17th District and on August 26th in the 5th District. On September 2nd, we will be training in the 4th District and on September 16th in the 3rd District. A BIG thank you to all the PDC's and Department Officers and Chairmen who attended and helped train the members of the Northern Area.

Membership is always a priority for success, but knowledge of our Posts and programs help to inform new and potential members as to who we are and what we are about.

I would like to give a BIG thank you to the American Legion Riders from the 5th District that took time out of their weekend to ride to Post 224, Cherry Lake, in the 3rd District for their installation. That kind of comradery has shown what the Legion is about and it also may have started two more chapters in the 3rd District.

September's membership goal is 55%. Send in your renewals in a timely manner. District Commanders, if a Post is still at zero renewals, call them and assist them in getting the membership for their officers to Department as soon as possible.

The Florida Legion College will be held September 7th thru the 9th. Get the applications in as soon as possible. Happy Birthday to the United States Air Force Sept. 18th. Until next month, stay the course for The American Legion.

District 11, Noteworthy Events

Donna Artola, District 11 Commander
11thdistrict@legionmail.org



We are at the start of a new year, and I want to thank those who gave me their support. This year we are going to work on getting District 11 back on the map. So far, we are almost done with Post installations.

On that note, I would like to thank my Vice Commanders, Past District Commanders Paul Bosco and Frank Maitland. They both stepped up to the plate while I was having my knee replacement done. Thanks, guys you rock.

Let's keep the membership coming in. We are

doing a great job so far. Let's keep it up. We will be having a few events this year so far, we have planned our **Annual Roast of PDC Art Schwabe** Oct. 21st at American Legion Post 64 Okeechobee, tickets are \$15 per person. A hotel has been set up for Hampton Inn for \$89 per night, you can contact them at 863-824-0003. Social hour will be at 1700, dinner will be at 1800, and the Roast will be at 1900. Please reserve your tickets by October 10th.

In April, we will be having a **Family Fun Day**, which is also Children and Youth month. There will be fun for all including games, raffles, food and of course great peeps. The date is TBA, the location will be Okeechobee Post 64. It will be open to all.

For more information on Distinct 11, give me a call or send me an email. Let's make it happen and have a great year.

District 12, Exciting Things Coming

Bruce Thurber, District 12 Commander
12thdistrict@legionmail.org

As we begin the 99th year the 12th District has a lot of plans. Sept 4th (Labor Day) Post 126 is hosting a Clam Bake, Sept 9th is the Commanders Dinner for Boys State Transportation at Post 117, Sept 11th is Patriot's Day Festivities throughout the District, Sept 15th is POW/MIA Day. I am hoping everyone rededicates their Pow/Mia table during the festivities of the day. Sept 29th/30th & Oct 1st Post 163 is hosting a Weekend Open House and Membership Drive. Sept 30th, we will have our first District meeting at Post 1 in Titusville. Registration is 9am and the meeting at 10am. Oct 14th there is a District Revitalization at Post 81. Oct 15th is the 2nd Annual Swings and Giggles Golf Tournament with the proceeds going to Project VetRelief. This is just a start, we have many more things to come.

I have challenged every 12th District Family member to donate one dollar (\$1) to Project VetRelief. This comes to \$14,000 and I asked that all other Commanders to challenge their District Family to do the same.

The 2017 year was rough on membership, we had a large number of transfers to Post Everlasting. This year we need to work on finding new members to carry on the great traditions of the American Legion Family.

One of the things we can do is find programs that interest the Gulf War Veterans and their families. Many times we stay with the traditional programs however, times are changing and we need to move to the future. I ask that as you try new things please share those that work as well as those that don't. I would love to see us excel in membership this year.



TRIVIA

answer on page 16

1. Which branch of service was in charge of exploring and mapping America?





Each One Bring Five

*Fred Matthews, Membership Chair
membership@legionmail.org*



The first leg of our march toward 100% in membership is underway! Districts 1, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, and 17 have gathered or are scheduled to share information about the American Legion, its programs and, of course, how to improve in membership recruitment.

Visits to individual Posts are also taking place. Post 27, in Ocala is a well run and organized Post, but came up a bit short last year in membership. They've begun using the kind of targeting we've talked about in the Department Training sessions. Here's what Post Membership Chairman Brian Voge wrote recently to his members:

"I had the Florida Department send me a list of Post 400 members who live in Ocala Zip codes who are members, but not assigned to a local post ... we need to call them as well ...

I suggest that we have another session and sit around with our cellphones and call these people (69 pages with about 16 people on each page) ... some are current (we should call them first) ... even if they don't want to come to meetings, at least some of their dues will stay in the local area to help Ocala veterans."

Right on, Brian! His effort will bear fruit in the coming Legion year. The efforts of calling those Legion members now in 0400 could spur them to link up with other veterans who could benefit from the camaraderie that your local Post could provide. Brian's efforts could also provide information to veterans and family members on the benefits that can be obtained through Legion

membership: education on their VA Benefits, scholarship opportunities for their children, summer programs for their High School students and more.

We've embarked on Training for the month of August, which is the real start of the Legion year here in Florida, in an effort to share information about how the Legion works and your part in it. Better trained officers and members equals a better informed membership in general, which means we will all be able to explain "Why we belong" and why any veteran should be a member.

If you would like the Department Training team to come to your Area, District or Post, email me or give me a call. This is about sharing information about our Legion, specifically our Department, to help us all become better recruiters. This will benefit your Post.

Next up? The Department-wide Membership Rally. Plan an event for Membership in September. Our target and reporting day is Saturday, September 16th. The month of September should see Florida at 50%. This is an important benchmark for your District and your Post. Here's what we know: come November and December, membership retention gets tougher. Right now we have the advantage of National support in mail outs and Public relations to our existing members and to the veteran community in general. Let's take advantage of this and make a push toward 50% in September.

Need help? Need a plan for your Post or District? Send me an email. Give me a call. Let's take a look at what your Post and District needs as we march toward 100%.

Each One, Bring Five!



Art Schwabe Training



L-R: James Brennan, Jim Ramos, Jim Roberts, Raymond Olsen, Jerry Brandt



Rick Johnson Training



Eunice Butts Training

Just 10 Minutes to Save Lives

*Donna Artola, Blood Donor Chair
blooddonor@legionmail.org*

As we start out our new Legion Year, I want to focus on the Blood Donor program. It is far from a new program and it needs to keep growing. You will never know when you, or one of your loved ones will need blood. It only takes 10 mins to give the gift of life. Remember, donating just one pint saves three lives.

If your Post has a Blood Chairman, please send their info to usndma@aol.com. If you do not have a chair, let's get one, it can be a Legion, SAL or Auxiliary member. If you have an event, contact your local blood bank and get the bus there to help out the community. Or go to www.oneblood.org or www.redcrossblood.org.

38% of the population can donate blood, but of that less than 10% actually do. Blood CANNOT be manufactured, it can only come from you, the

donor. If every donor gave just ONE MORE time each year, there would be no blood shortage. In a few months, we will be having a statewide blood drive. Let us rock Florida and get the blood donated and stop the shortage.

If your Post is having an event and needs help getting the blood bus there, let me know I am more than happy to help you out and I will be there to support your drive.





Schools Back in Session

*Bruce Carl, Children & Youth Chair
cy@legionmail.org*



Schools are back in session here in Florida, and now is a great time to reach out to the schools in your area to introduce all the programs The American Legion has to offer!

Child welfare and safety deals with the many concerns that can endanger a child. These may include drowning, firearms, poisoning, accidents, substance abuse, etc. Youth Suicide is a major problem in our country, especially with all the bullying in the schools and on social media.

It is time to start your planning for a Halloween Safety night, if you choose to do so. There are

pamphlets available from Department that you can obtain and hand.

Many of our communities have a First Night Out event, or some other type of community programs. I suggest reaching out to your local police, community leaders, etc., to find out when these are being held. Ask for permission to set up a table and pass out the materials.

We are entering the prime hurricane season, so please keep in mind that we have the TFA program and the Project Vet Relief available for those who may need them. Also, there is the National Emergency Fund, which is there to assist displaced veteran's in the event of a natural disaster.

There are several important dates in September that you will want to keep in mind as you do your planning. The first Monday is Labor Day (plan

a picnic at your Post and invite the community.) Sept. 11th is Patriot day (have a ceremony and invite the public.) Sept. 16th is American Legion Day (what a great time to host an open house and let everyone know what the American Legion is all about!)

In addition to all the monthly events, the American Legion also has Annual Programs, which you can donate to monthly or yearly. These include, but are not limited to the Children's Miracle Network, Children Welfare Foundation, COTA, Operation Military Kids, and Special Olympics.

In closing, I will be attending the National Children and Youth Commission in Indianapolis from Sept 15th-17th. I look forward to meeting representatives from all the Legion Departments, and bringing back more suggestions for the Department of Florida.

Grants Available

*John Burroughs, Children & Youth Fund Chair
cyfund@legionmail.org*



The C&Y Fund Committee for the year 2016/2017 met on Thursday June 29, 2017 at the Orlando Marriott World Center. We had a total of 7 applications for grants. The committee approved 2 grants which totaled \$6,000.00 dollars.

The remaining applications were rejected for one reason or another.

With as many Posts, Units, Squadrons, and ALR that we have in the state, I don't see why we do not have more requests for grants. We have more money and would like to put it to good use. I know we have more organizations that could use some help. It is up to the Chairman of the program to help. The application and grant guidelines are on the web site, let's use them. I will see you at the Fall Conference and hope to have something to tell you for the C&Y Youth Fund.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to call or email me.

Tour Planned

*Diana Hook, Florida National Cemeteries Chair
floridationalcemetery@legionmail.org*



First of all, I'd like to say thank you, Commander Stephen Shuga, for appointing me to chair this committee. It's an honor and a privilege for me to have this opportunity. I will try my best not to disappoint .

I will be traveling the state to visit as many of the 9 Florida Cemeteries as possible. Hopefully, I will get to meet the 2 new cemetery directors in our state recently graduated from the Cemetery Director Intern Class of 2017 and assigned to Barrancas National Cemetery in Pensacola and South Florida National Cemetery in Lake Worth, FL. I have been to my personal favorite, Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, FL, and will be attending their regular meetings beginning in September. Maybe, I will have some new or at least interesting information to share.

If anyone has any information to share, or questions to ask, please e-mail me at FloridaNationalCemetery@legionmail.org and I will get back to you as quickly as I can.

Great Resource

*Kathryn Bower, POW/MIA Chair
powmia@legionmail.org*



Hey, have you got a few minutes??? DOD has a website you should go to: www.doaa.mil.

There is SO Much information available on POW-MIA's.

1. Searchable MIA list and map where they went missing
2. Recently accounted for
3. Facts Sheets
4. MIA family meetings
5. Service personnel not recovered
6. POW-MIA Posters ordering
7. Much more.

You'll find yourself spending a lot of time on this website, I know I do!



Immigrants Have Served Proudly in the U.S. Military

Gene Smith, Immigration Chair
immigration@legionmail.org



Approximately 511,000 foreign born veterans of the US Armed Forces resided in the United States in 2016. More than 100 immigrants have been granted posthumous citizenship after dying in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. One-in-five Medal of Honor recipients is an immigrant. Notable immigrant veterans: Alfred Rascon, who served in Vietnam, and was awarded the Medal of Honor and later became the Director of the Selective Service System; John Shalikashvili, the former

Chairman of the joint Chiefs of Staff; and Lance Corporal Jose Gutierrez, from Guatemala was one of the first soldiers to give his life in Iraq (granted citizenship posthumously).

Immigrants have served proudly in our military since the birth of our Nation. About 20% of the 1.5 million members in the Union Army during this country's Civil War were immigrants. Foreign born represent half of all military recruiting in the 1840's. In recent years, foreign-born individuals serving in the US Armed Forces represent about 8 percent of the active duty personnel. Roughly 12.66 percent of those immigrants on active duty were not U.S. Citizens. The exact number of immigrant veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces and are not naturalized citizens is not known. I believe the

number is staggering based on the available data to me.

Those who work in Immigration mostly agree the primary reason for so many non-citizens to serve is the belief that having served in the United States Armed Forces they automatically became a citizen. This is not so. Consequently, they are not surfacing to look for assistance. It is up to you and me to identify these individuals and direct them to the appropriate legal experts who can assist them. Unfortunately, records show many who have been deported are U.S. Armed Forces veterans.

Your neighbor or fellow church member, if a veteran, may be in jeopardy if they are foreign born and not a naturalized citizen. According to Elizabeth Ricci, Esq., of the law firm Rambana & Ricci, PLLC, Tallahassee (Immigration Attorneys), simply ask them, "Were you born in the US?" If not, ask them if they have proof of US citizenship like a US Passport or Naturalization Certificate? If not, "Why?" Follow up with "are you a Lawful Permanent Resident?" Ms Ricci states that if they answer is "yes" to the Lawful Permanent Resident question, then they can most likely "naturalize depending on how long they've been a resident and assuming there's no serious criminal history". Ms Ricci further states if they're not a resident, then ask them "did you serve during a designated period of hostility?" "If so, they can go straight to Naturalization". If they are not a resident, then Ms. Ricci "suggest(s) an attorney get involved to explore other options". For further information or assistance, please contact me at (386) 445-5346 or oesmith@earthlink.net.

Florida Champions

Loretta Young, JROTC/Jr Shooting Sports Chair
jrotc@legionmail.org



The 27th National Annual 3 Position Air Rifle Championship Tournament was held at the USA Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs from July 18-23. This was the final round, which started on Nov. 1, 2016 with a Postal Match throughout the country. The second round, which ended on Feb. 1, 2017 had the final 30 shooters who advanced to the final match of 15 Precision Category and 15 Sporter Category Shooters.

The Dept. of Florida had one State Champion, Jessica Montcrieff, from the Oveido NJROTC Program and sponsored by American Legion Post 243 in Oveido who placed 3rd in the final competition. Jessica was presented a \$500 Scholarship and Plaque at the Department Convention in Orlando and advanced to the final competition, an all-expense paid trip along with the coach and chaperone to the National Competition Event. Jessica placed 3rd in the nation in the Sporter Category and had an outstanding score of 2311.8. She was an example of focus and concentration to watch as she advanced to the final round.

The National Competition was a full 5 days of events arranged and directed by the Legion National Tournament Director, Shayne Abrahams, Sr. He was assisted by National Staff Member, Nettie and volunteers selected as Staff

Members to assist with the Shooting Range under the direction of Loren "Bud" Sperry, of Washington State and Ida Mae Jewell, of Indiana. There was a dinner sponsored at Post 209 in Colorado Springs to host all the athletes, chaperones, coaches and staff to kick off the week's events. Also in attendance was the National Auxiliary President, Mary Davis, the Dept. of Colorado Commander, Terri Clinton and staff, Past National Cmdr. Tom Bock and other dignitaries from the Legion, Auxiliary and the Sons of the Legion. All athletes, coaches and staff had an Orientation prior to the event to review and instruct all participants in conduct and procedures for the event and stay at the USA Olympic Training Center prior to obtaining ID's and credentials for entry to the compound.

The Legion National Cmdr. Charles Schmidt arrived to share in the week's events on Wednesday, July 19. Athletes and staff were given lunch at the Dining Facility and were in direct contact with athletes training there for the summer. On Friday night, the athletes were treated to a Pizza Party and the Chaperones and Coaches were hosted at a Reception in the hotel. The 8 Finalists in each category had the final competition of 10 shots, standing on Saturday morning. We had the pleasure of having Cmdr. Charles Schmidt attend and give the final scores for the final 16 competitors. On Saturday evening, everyone was in attendance for the Awards Ceremony and dinner hosted in the hotel by our National Tournament Director and Staff. Awards, plaques and ribbons were given to top winners in all categories and presented by our National Cmdr. Schmidt and a host of other dignitaries. The First Place Winners, Emily Stith, Precision, CO and Hailey Smith,

Continued on Page 9 >>





Florida Champions

(Continued from Page 8)

Loretta Young, JROTC/Jr Shooting Sports Chair

Sporter, IL each received a \$5,000 Scholarship Award on behalf of the Legion and the Sons of the Legion. The Second Place Winners, Rebecca Lamb, Precision, VA and Alexey Levi Carlson, Sporter, SC each received a \$1,000 Scholarship from the Auxiliary. The First Place Winners were both invited to the National Convention in Reno for an all-expense paid trip to participate with the other Youth Champions in August.

I thank all Posts who support our Youth Programs and look forward to more participation this coming year. I want also to thank Cmdr. Steve Shuga for selecting me to serve this year for the Department of Florida and our ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports Chairman.



Jessica Montcrief



L-R: Hailey Smith, Alexey Levi Carlson, Jessica Montcrief

Form Changes

TC Biddle, Law & Order Chair
laworder@legionmail.org

I would first like to introduce myself, I'm TC Biddle the new Law & Order Chairman. I would like to start by saying congratulations to all the newly elected Officers, and a special thanks to all the staff at Department. Thank you for all you do, you're the back bone of our Department.

Next, I would like to ask all District Commanders if you would please send me a list of all your Posts that have a Law & Order Chairmen along with their names & e-mail addresses. I also need a list of the Posts that don't have a Law & Order Chairmen, and I will take it from there.

I believe this year a lot of Districts are going to find you will get more participation with your

local Law Enforcement agencies, due to the fact we have taken all personal information out of the application forms. My understanding, from talking with a lot of Post Commanders, is a lot of agencies did not want to participate due to the personal info on the application.

To those of you who may have tried to reach to me by e-mail I apologize my e-mail was down but that has been taken care of as of 08/07/2017.

If you would like to reach me, my e-mail address is tcbiddle@embarqmail.com, or my phone # 352-551-9474. Thank you for your assistance, if there is anything I can do to help please feel free to contact me.



Legion College Coming Up

Tom Gora, Legion College Chair
deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org



Applications for the Florida American Legion College class scheduled for September 7-9, 2017 have been trickling in, very slowly; we have received only five. The FALC Committee may decide to re-schedule the class for a later date,

as was done last year, due to the low number of applications. Perhaps holding the FALC at this time of the Legion year may be just too busy a time for Legionnaires to attend. *(*Update: Legion College has been postponed until January 11-13, 2018)*

We are all fresh out of Convention and elections and installations, we are working hard at the Post level on membership to meet that first goal of 55%, and setting up our programs. Legionnaires are very busy in September! So maybe making this a permanent change to a later date is the way to go this year and the future. Last year the same thing happened and we moved FALC to February and had the largest class (#28) in years.

By the time this newsletter comes out a decision will have been made by the FALC Committee

and all Department Vice, Area and District Commanders will be informed by e-mail of the decision, as well as those who have already applied.

To qualify for FALC applicant must have completed The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) as a precursor to attending college. You can do this on-line or by taking the off-line course offered at the Fall Conference and Convention.

I recently read in The American Legion Training Bulletin that in the future the ALEI course will be called "American Legion Basic Training," this change is being made by National. I think this is a wise decision, this course should be taken by every Legionnaire, the course focuses on the history of the organization, provides information on all the Commissions and Councils, and detailed information on what the Four Pillars are, how they were developed, and how they work. So, at the Fall Conference coming in November, register for The American Legion Basic Training course, (formerly known as ALEI).

FACT

The Air Force's F-117 fighter uses aerodynamics discovered during research into how bumblebees fly.





Define: Military Liaison

Jim Ramos, Military Liaison Chair
militaryliaison@legionmail.org



Job Description for Military Liaison Chairperson is as follow:

This person will work closely with both American Legion Posts, the Military Base Commander and/ or other designated Base

Liaison. The Military Liaison chairperson provides enhanced quality of life services for those serving in the United States Armed Forces Active, Guard and Reserve.

The program is designed to have a "One Call Does It All". The Military Liaison will be a representative to handle military related requests from the Military Base Commanders or the other appointed liaison.

The MLP acts as the representative between Post, Department and the military installation to resolve problems that arise from military service.

The type of assistance available through the Military Liaison Program is only limited by the requests themselves. The following list contains a few examples of some of the services available the MLP: Family Assistance, Temporary Financial Aids, Service Officer Assistance, and Retired Military Benefits.

Make sure you contact your Zone Commander, they are the Key for all your needs such as:

Membership training, any other training you may need, and for ALL programs needs you have for this year 2017-2018. They know it ALL... But start with your District Commander and next your Area Commander and work your way up to the Zone Commander.

For the "Access Granted" booklet go to Legion.org (search Publications or Brochure Access Granted, is also under National Security, and is a free download) Please check it out and see How you can increase your Post membership.

With Access Granted: We must get a requesting 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 let make this year a great one.

Time to Revitalize

Eunice Butts, Post Development Chair
postdevelopment@legionmail.org

Thank you to the Department Commander for selecting me as the Post Development and Post Revitalization Chair. The Revitalization is two parts, membership revitalization and Post revitalization.

The job description for the Post Development Chair is as follows:

Purpose: To aid in the running of all Posts by assisting with programs, membership and provide support as needed; to promote the ideas of the American Legion, Department of Florida. Be knowledgeable of all matters concerning the

chairmanship. Communicate regularly with the Department Commander, Department Adjutant, Executive Assistant and District Commanders regarding Post problems/needs; communicate with any and all Department/District Chairman who can help Posts; Be available at least by phone to any Post; Communicate with Internal Affairs Commission Chairman.

When it comes to Revitalization, most think this refers to membership only. Sometimes a Post needs to be revitalized on several levels. For example, membership is slow, the Post is not as active as it used to be. The question becomes What can we do? Think outside of the box, or call a Chairman to share ideas.

Do not be ashamed or embarrassed to ask for help. The is why we are here; to help guide and assist you to the best of our abilities, to work with you as a team.

For those Posts, District or Areas who could like to do a Revitalization on membership, please contact your District or Area Commanders and they will notify the Department. You may also contact me with any questions at 813-247-4267. I have an open-door policy, you do not need an appointment.



A Strong National Defense

Taz Gehling, National Security Commission Chair
security@legionmail.org



First, I would like to thank Commander Shuga for the allowing me to serve this year as your National Security Commission Chairman. I look forward to this opportunity and hope to serve

you in the best possible manner by working with the other chairman to ensure that our programs are being worked.

Secondly, I would like to remind everyone as stated by the Legion.org website: <https://www.legion.org/security/legionpolicy> "The American Legion believes national security must be maintained to fulfill the mandate for a strong national defense. As stated in the Preamble, "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY WE

ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES: *To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America... To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy."*

The Legion is an organization of veterans who fought for freedoms, which they are dedicated to keeping and preserving. As one of the Four Pillars

Continued on Page 11 >>





A Strong National Defense

(Continued from Page 10)

Taz Gehling, National Security Commission Chair

it was founded on, the Legion believes national security is upheld by keeping a well-funded Department of Defense, a good quality of life for troops and a sensible transition between service and separation."

Please do not hesitate to contact your senators and representatives to show support those issues that affect our troops and our veterans. Each and every voice matters in these issues.

Special Olympics Gearing Up

*Jamie Grinis, Special Olympics
specialolympics@legionmail.org*



So far, this year I have had the privilege of attending many Installations and District Meetings in the 8th, 9th, 11th and 14th Districts and plan branch out to attend many more activities throughout the state. I did have the honor to be a

delegate and attend the American Legion National Convention in Reno, Nevada. I met many of my counterparts throughout the Nation that were in attendance. What a great Legion Family we have nation-wide.

We are going to have a great year as we increase in membership and gear towards fundraising for our Legion Family Programs. As you establish

your 2017-2018 Calendar of events for your Post Home, and you need a program activity to support this year, I urge you to adopt the Special Olympics with funding staying in your local community. Your support is needed now more now than ever, as our athletes plan to attend National Olympian Summer Games being held in Los Angeles, California.

I ask you for help by sending me an email of your planned activities at your Posts, with time, place, and location of your event. We don't know if you don't tell us about your event. A simple message will do to keep everyone informed. A tally of your actions will be kept with the results presented at our State Department Convention next summer.

Not everyone is able to coach or volunteer with Special Olympics in Florida, and that's ok! Watch your mail box in the next month or so as I prepare a package for your Post to use a guideline of how to contribute.

New Ideas and New Action

*Art Schwabe, State Legislative Chair
statelegislative@legionmail.org*



Let us start a New Legion Year with new ideas and new action.

What Distinct are you in regarding Florida State Offices of House of Representatives? Who is

your House Representative? Who's your State Senator? Have ever contacted them regarding veterans' issues? Would you be willing to contact them to help veterans? I'm not asking for you to spend hours but minutes. Simply a phone call regarding a bill or issues we would like their help to pass or support. The Florida Legion has a better chance getting things done on a State Level compared to the National Level, only if we have the right message.

What are the issues? Let me know what issues we should be talking about. Send me an E-Mail of what you think should be discussed. I have a meeting Aug 14th in Tallahassee to discuss FDVA and Legion issues. This is just a start, but we need input from you and follow up to make it happen. I plan another meeting in September. We are going to have another MARCH ON TALLAHASSEE (Date will be set at Fall Conference by YOU!!)

I am planning a State Legislative Meeting at Fall Conference. This will not be the normal meeting but it will be fun and informative. Please make a difference..... Be Part of The Difference! I am eagerly awaiting your reply.

Off To A Great Start

*Alan Cohen, VA&R Chair
var@legionmail.org*



Beginning the day after our June Convention, everyone once again hit the ground running with a sense of renewed energy. As with us all, this has been true of myself and all the dedicated people with whom I associate. No small

example of this is that within just a very short period of time we've been presented with several new American Legion VAVS volunteers, 3 of whom will be taking their place at the James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa.

Please join me in welcoming Vernon Creese, Carlos Gill and Kathryn Boyer. Special thanks to Jay Allen, Central Area Commander, for the heavy lifting he did to facilitate this. Additionally, we have a new Deputy VAVS volunteer, Gail Dupuis, at the Miami VA Hospital whose hard

work and dedication has already made a difference to our fellow veterans.

It is with a great sense of pride I invite you to read Susi Martinez's first Legion Link contribution. We can have no doubt that women veterans in the State of Florida will have a strong voice on their behalf in Susi as well as the other 2 members of the Women Veterans Chair committee, Celeste Elich and Joanne Hirst.

As always, American Legion Service Officers continue to advocate for our brother and sister Vets and their families. Their ongoing contribution is immeasurable as is their value to every veteran they assist with benefits claims. Believe it or not, it's time to start thinking in terms of the next Service Officer class, to be held at the upcoming Fall Conference. I encourage every Post to send a dedicated individual to this next class.

In closing, I continue to look forward to the year ahead and taking advantage of every opportunity to serve our veteran community.

“ No matter which way you have to march, its always uphill. ”



Benefits You May Not Know About

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair
veteransbenefits@legionmail.org



10 Veterans Benefits You May Not Know About by MilitaryBenefits

Many veterans know about the basic health care and education benefits available to them through the Department of Veterans Affairs: Tricare and the GI Bill. While these benefits alone are substantial, numerous other programs help provide more benefits to veterans and their families.

Even within the health care and education programs are little-known benefits to improve the lives of veterans and help ease the financial burden of medical care or other expenses. Here are 10 veterans benefits you haven't heard about that all veterans should see if they qualify for.

1. Long-term Care

Long-term care is expensive, but often necessary to provide care for aging relatives. Through the Aid and Attendance program, many veterans are eligible to receive money to cover the cost of nursing homes, assisted living programs and other long-term care options. With the ability for couples to receive up to \$25,020 a year, the Aid & Attendance benefit will help take care of a significant portion of long-term care costs. Surviving spouses of veterans are also eligible to receive up to \$13,560 a year to cover their long-term care costs.

2. Caregiver Support

Should you choose to take care of an ailing Veteran at home, the Department of Veterans Affairs offers a caregiver support program. While this program does not offer any monetary support to caregivers, they are provided with a free support line and a caregiver support coordinator to help navigate military benefits and the stress of care giving.

3. Death Benefits

When a veteran dies, families have a few unique benefits available to them. A U.S. flag may be requested to drape over the casket and families may request a Presidential Memorial Certificate to honor the deceased loved ones service. The Department of Veterans Affairs also provides free headstones or grave markers.

4. Certification Programs

In addition to receiving credits to use toward a college degree, the GI Bill offers up to \$2,000 to help cover the cost of certification courses or other vocational training programs. This benefit will work well for veterans who wish to change careers or pursue a career path that does not require a college degree.

5. Transferring GI Bill Credits

Unused credits through the GI Bill may be transferred to spouses and dependents of veterans. There are service limits required to transfer the benefits.

6. Free Tax Preparation

Veterans and their family have access to free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance offices on military bases. The individuals who work in the offices have expertise working with the complicated nature of military-related tax issues.

7. Life Insurance

Many veterans have trouble obtaining traditional life insurance, particularly if they sustained an injury during their time of service. Through the Servicemembers' and Veterans' Group Life Insurance program, veterans may receive up to \$400,000 in life insurance. This program also offers competitive premium rates.

8. Mortgage Help

Veterans having trouble making their mortgage payments are eligible for repayment assistance through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Options for help include special repayment plans, loan forbearance and loan modification programs. Additional benefits are available for veterans with VA loans and for homeless veterans.

9. VA Foreclosures

The VA maintains a list of homes serviced by VA loans that have gone into foreclosures. Veterans have the ability to search the list of VA acquired properties and purchase homes at a discount. You do not have to be a veteran to search the properties, but all properties qualify for VA financing.

10. American Corporate Partners

American Corporate Partners connects veterans with top companies to help them obtain a job after their time of service. Along with being connected to job opportunities, veterans have the opportunity to receive one-on-one mentoring and other career development services.





Women Veterans

Susi Martinez, Women Veterans Chair
womenveterans@legionmail.org



Sadly, Women Veterans are often overlooked in our nation even though they now comprise 10 percent of all US Veterans. The Department of Veteran Affairs reported the total US Veteran population was 21,368,156 as of September

30, 2016 with Women Veterans numbering 2,051,484. The Sunshine State ranks third in the nation with 154,820 Women Veterans calling Florida home.

A study performed by the Disabled American Veterans reported that the organizations and government agencies in charge of providing support for female veterans usually fail to understand the unique needs that women may have after being in the service and going through deployments. According to the National Veteran

Foundation, the current support system for veterans was designed by and is still dominated by men. The mental, physical, and military service needs of women are often very different from those of male veterans. Homelessness is another area where our Women Veterans struggle more than males. Since 2006, the number of women veterans who are homeless has more than doubled. Often these veterans are single parents with children who are negatively impacted by the lack of available services for women. Women Veterans also face a tendency for higher rates of unemployment than male veterans and even higher rates than women who have not served in the military. Many Women Veterans are still unaware they are eligible for the full range of federal and state benefits, to include special programs for women.

Our Women Veterans deserve much better options while they serve in our military as well as after they come home. They deserve equal treatment opportunities and care that is gender specific. The current practice of trying to adapt medical and mental health treatments designed

for men to work with women is no longer an option. New practices must be created so that Women Veterans are properly cared for in every aspect, with gender specific treatment options and devices. It is necessary to increase access to support groups specifically designed for women facing issues with, PTSD and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and homelessness.

Those who choose not to be part of the solution become part of the problem. Your Department of Florida Women Veterans Chairman will be a motivating influence for these government and community based systems to adapt to the needs of our Women Veteran population; and actively ensure adequate services and timely information regarding programs and benefits for Women Veterans become readily available. The American Legion, Department of Florida will be an active voice in making a positive impact in our communities to overcome disparities while inspiring changes still necessary to accomplish the vital mission of properly caring for women who serve. Contact by email: womenveterans@legionmail.org or phone: 813-842-4460.

Youth Law Cadets

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet Chair
youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



In the August 2017 Legion Link, I provided a good general description of all the activities the cadets are involved in during the program at the Florida Highway Patrol Academy.

I have established tentative dates for the program next summer and those dates are July 8-13, 2018.

These dates must be approved by the Department before becoming official but I hope to finalize that soon so we can distribute information literature at the 2017 Fall Conference.

If you would like me to visit your Post to discuss the program, please contact me. This program is

for high school or home-schooled students age 16-18, both male and female. So, for now, let me share some "action" photos of cadets at this past year's program.

YOUTH LAW CADETS





We Take Your Feedback Seriously

Department of Florida

Your concerns about the 2017 Department Convention at Marriott's Orlando World Center have been heard. Since convention ended, there have been several meetings held between hotel management, Department & Auxiliary staff, Auxiliary's Legion Liaison, and members of the Time & Place Committee to address these concerns. Per the five-year contract, we are obligated to address all concerns with the hotel and allow them to address the issues.

The World Center has agreed to attempt to house all Legionnaires in the East and South towers (two towers closest to the lobby), add handicap parking spaces, add additional food options to include "grab and go" concession in the convention area, and add (and advertise) food specials within the hotel to accommodate Legionnaires. The largest complaint by far was the distance to the convention area. This has been addressed by hotel management by moving the convention hall from previous location to the first and closest convention area located just off of the lobby at the bottom of the escalators. In order to make this happen, the convention dates for 2018 would need to be adjusted by one week and would take place from July 5th through July 8th. Department is awaiting receipt of the contract addendum to be provided by hotel management and this information will be provided to the Time and Place Committee for consideration and presentation to the Executive Committee at Fall Conference.

The information contained in this letter is not official until all contracts have been reviewed and executed and the information has been presented to the Executive Committee for approval.



Fall Conference Coming Up

Department of Florida

Fall Conference is coming up quick. This year's Conference will be held at the Renaissance SeaWorld Orlando, November 3 - 5, 2017.

The Fall Conference is an all-inclusive training opportunity, through dynamic lecture series and distinguished guest speakers invited to general session.

Deadline to book your room at our special rate is October 2, 2017. Be sure to mention "American Legion". You can call the hotel directly at **407-351-5555** or toll free **800-468-3571**.

***Please note:** Hospitality parlors are not in our room block, please contact the hotel if you would like one; The Renaissance will be charging the first night's deposit when making a reservation; You will be charged a Resort Fee when making your reservation, but that will come off at check-in.*

We're still working on all the details, so sign up for our online newsletter for the latest updates at floridalegion.org.

LSS Awarded Grant

Post 197

The State's Largest Veterans Service Organization unveiled its support to one of the City of Jacksonville's premier Community Service organizations on Tuesday morning. Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida was awarded \$5,000.00 from the American Legion of Florida. The grant was in support of the "Backpack Program."

This program provides food to low-income children when free school meals are not available. Hunger is detrimental to a child's physical and emotional health, and puts them at a disadvantage in the classroom, making it a community need.

The program will be housed at American Legion Jacksonville Post 197 on Jacksonville's Northwest side. Post 197 is located in zip code 32209, an area of town where the lowest family



LSS CEO Mary Strickland (center) accepts the check from Vice Commander Jerry Brandt. Also pictured (L-R) Anna Matthews, American Legion Auxiliary, Heather Vaughan, LSS Director of Human Services, Wanda Brandt, Vice President Florida American Legion Auxiliary, John Burroughs, Florida American Legion Children and Youth Chairman, Molly Main, American Legion 5th District President, Mike Clark, Commander, Post 197 and Fred Matthews, American Legion of Florida Membership Chairman.

income rates can be found. More than 80% of the students attending the four elementary schools, 3 middle schools and 2 High Schools within 2 miles of the Post are on free or reduced lunch. Many of these students come home after school to a single parent or no parents.



Passenger Golf Cart Donated

Ted Costello

A 10 passenger golf cart was recently donated to the new Fisher House, underway at Lake Nona in Orlando, FL. The 10 passenger golf cart was not utilized by the Gainesville VA Hospital and Alan Cohen, our VA&R Chairman reached out to Ted Costello, VAVS Representative for the Orlando VA Medical Center, to see if the new VA Hospital at Lake Nona, would have use for it.

Adelina Sowell, Chief of Voluntary Services, felt the golf cart was too large for their use but suggested the new Fisher House, currently under construction, could utilize it to transport families to and from the hospital to visit loved ones under hospital care. The golf cart was overhauled for safety and Costello made delivery arrangements with PDC Larry White.

A presentation was made at the Veterans Memorial between the Domiciliary and CLC Nursing Home the morning of July 27, 2017. Afterwards, attendees visited CLC Nursing Home, for good company and provided residents with small gifts. Afterwards, attendees and representatives headed over to the VA Facility for lunch before departing.



SNAPSHOTS



Youth Law Cadets



Junior Shooting Sports Competition



2017 National Legacy Ride to Reno, NV



2017 National Legacy Ride to Reno, NV





**August 24, 2017
55% Target Report**

6	Michael Seidel	46.73%
16	Raymond Perez	45.16%
4	Victoria VanBuren	44.35%
11	Donna Artola	43.81%
15	Richard Little	43.37%
2	John Folsom	42.86%
17	Michael Wolohan	40.80%
12	Bruce Thurber	40.52%
7	David Tucker	40.11%
13	Michael Raymond	39.77%
8	Jerry Faught	39.31%
5	Troy Horsley	38.55%
9	Donald Schwiesow	37.58%
1	Raymond Olsen	36.65%
14	Gary Decker	34.98%
3	Frederick Hutto	32.62%
Eastern	Daryl Bass	44.05%
Central	Jay Allen	43.83%
Northern	Jeffrey Durden	39.62%
Southwestern	Dennis Walsh	39.56%
Southern	James Tewes	38.85%
Western	James Brennan	37.79%
Post 400		50.88%
Post 208		48.72%



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A crisis can strike at any moment. Learn how we can help you prepare for the unexpected and get assistance when you need it most.



Insurance Coverage

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



No Cost Protection

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 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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OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF:



2016 RL James Charity Golf Tournament
 "[Raising money] is my way of showing respect and patriotism for those who served our country."
 - RL "Bob" James, PVR Board Vice-President & President of RL James General Contractor (pictured above)

FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

We are so thrilled to learn about all of the upcoming fundraising events through the Legion Family.

Remember, the Legion's Department Commander, Steve Shuga, chose PROJECT: VetRelief as his primary charity of choice. He would like for the Legion Family to help him reach his goal of \$50,000.

Here's how the Commander has chosen for the donations to be processed:

Any donation turned in and marked as "Commander's Project" will count towards his goal and deposited into the Legion bank account. During the Department Convention in June 2018, one large check, or donation, will be issued to PROJECT: VetRelief.

Donations written directly to PROJECT: VetRelief will be deposited into the PVR account and funds will be used automatically for financial assistance cases. These donations will not count towards the Commander's goal.

However, both forms of donations will 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. Challenge incentives will be announced during the Fall Conference in November.

If you are planning an event, we would like to hear all about it so we can promote in our monthly newsletters, on the PROJECT: VetRelief website and Facebook page. We also have promotional materials that we can send for your events. Contact Jennifer Cooper by sending an email to jcooper@floridalegion.org with all of the details!

RL JAMES CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT:

On Friday, September 8th at approximately 8:30AM, the shotgun for the 4th Annual RL James Charity Golf Tournament will take place. The tournament is PROJECT: VetRelief's largest fundraising event and has brought in almost \$100,000 in just 3 years!

This year, nearly 130 golfers will enjoy a premier experience at the Tranquilo Golf Club at Four Seasons, located on Walt Disney World property. Golfers should expect a day filled with fun, and many chances to win cool prizes like \$25,000 in cash, or a brand new car!



During the awards banquet and luncheon, there will be a silent auction featuring an impressive list of more than 40 items for attendees to bid on. Not to mention the tasty buffet with an "On the Barbie" menu selection.

In attendance, several Legion Family members have RSVP'd to participate as golfers or volunteers. We are thankful for the tremendous support for the Department's newest program!



SUPPORT CASES:
JULY 2017 TOTALS

families helped	amount distributed
7	\$5,655.43

*Numbers reflect PROJECT: VetRelief Cases ONLY

UPCOMING EVENTS: MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SEPT
8 4th Annual RL James
 Charity Golf Tournament
 Lake Buena Vista, FL
 Cost: \$150/person
 \$600/foursome

SEPT
9 Challenge 22
 5K "Ruck" Walk
 Winter Garden, FL
 Cost: \$20/adults
 \$5/children-under 17

OCT
15 Swing & Giggle Golf
 Tournament
 Viera, FL
 Cost: \$50/person

FEB
17 ALR Coral Head
 Music Fest
 Marathon, FL
 Cost: \$30 - Early Special
 \$40 - At Gate

Check out the **PROJECT:VetRelief** website for more event details!

For more information visit our website: www.ProjectVetRelief.org



Hampton Inn
863-824-0003
1200 State Road 70 E
Okeechobee \$89

Pork Roast Potatoes,
Green Beans, Salad Cake

Social hour 1700
Dinner 1800
Roast 1900

District 11 Annual Roast

PDC Art Schwabe

October 21, 2017

American Legion

Post 64 Okeechobee

\$15.00 Per Person RSVP by 10/10/2017





Licensing for Military Members and Spouses

www.flhealthsource.gov/valor

To All Military Members and Families,

The Florida Department of Health is committed to serving members of the United States Armed Forces, veterans and their families. It is important that we recognize and honor their service to our nation. The Department is proud that over 1.5 million veterans call Florida home and our continued goal is to help make Florida the most veteran-friendly state in the nation.

The Department offers several licensure support services to qualified military families. One of the many services the Department offers is the Florida Veterans Application for Licensure Online Response (VALOR) system, which provides an expedited licensing process for honorably discharged veterans with an active license in another state. Additionally, military veterans who apply through the VALOR system are granted a waiver for most licensing fees. During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, veterans who used the VALOR system saved more than \$120,000 in licensure fees and we are committed to increasing this number in the coming years.

The Department offers additional armed forces licensure support including an opportunity to receive a temporary certificate to practice in areas of critical need, licensure fee waivers, renewal exemptions and professional examination fee reimbursements. Through these programs, we are committed to creating a veteran-friendly regulatory environment that encourages veterans and their spouses to choose Florida for their health care practice after active duty.

I encourage you to review the Department's licensure support services and the Florida Veteran Health Heroes, a publication in which we recognize Floridians who protected the health of others while serving our great nation. Thank you for your honorable service to the people of Florida and the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C. Philip'.

Celeste Philip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General and Secretary



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State Surgeon General and Secretary

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