



The LEGION LINK

"Securing the Future for All Veterans"



Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

E-mail: mail@floridalegion.org

In This Edition....

- Commander
Page 1
- Disaster Preparedness Chair
Page 3
- Calendar, 1st Vice, 3rd Vice
Page 4
- NEC, Sgt-at-Arms
Page 5
- Chaplain, Historian, Membership
Page 6
- 11th District, Blood Donation, Children & Youth
Page 7
- Legion College, JROTC/JR Shooting Sports
Page 8
- Legion Riders, POW/MIA
Page 9
- School Medals, Social Media, Fall Raffle
Page 10
- PROJECT: VetRelief
Page 11
- VA Entitlements
Page 12
- Snapshots
Page 13
- Membership Report, LIT
Page 15
- President & Commander's Banquet
Page 16
- Halloween Coloring Books
Page 17

From Your Department Commander Steve Shuga

commander@floridalegion.org



Mother nature had a different agenda that altered many plans, events, and activities for the month of September. Before I collect my thoughts and provide a shotgun overview, I salute all who endured and provided support. It was through your blood, sweat, and tears, that various forms donations, were able to be shuffled around the state. It was with your precious time and physical efforts to unload, separate, and deliver the donations to our American Legion Family, our communities, and to many of the 67 counties of the state of Florida. The goals and activities scheduled for the month had to be cancelled when the weather service began to provide situational awareness of something bigger than many of us have ever seen, let alone endured.

As the monster storm known as Hurricane Irma grew into a potential category 5, preparations began for many of us with a sudden sense of urgency and even a call for some to evacuate.

When the early predictions and suspected tracks looked as though the hurricane was going to make a direct on Florida, I had a sixth sense to suspend my official visits to the Western Area – 1st and 2nd Districts and begin to rapidly establish an emergency management team at the Department Headquarters.

The Disaster Preparedness Chairman William Hoppner was notified and immediately sprung into action. Department Vice Commanders were instructed to prepare the Area and District Commanders to provide initial assessments of all Posts after the storm passed.



Department of Indiana presents check for \$16,057 for hurricane relief efforts.

Department Creative Services added a webpage update so others could go directly to the who, what, when, where, and how to support the daunting efforts underway regarding hurricane relief.

Distribution Centers (American Legion Posts) close to major highways for easy access by trucks of all sizes where sought and a list was created to activate as required.

The American Legion National office sent a team of three media personnel to take video, still photos, and write stories for immediate publication through the National Office. This team remained on station for six days and were shuttled from one end of the state to the other



Department Legion and Auxiliary staff work without power to sort donations for immediate disbursement.





collecting as much data as they could.

Reports of severe damage, isolation, and loss of life from the Keys began to trickle in. Our American Legion Posts along the Keys were all severely affected, and once we received notification that access was cleared into Key Largo, a hasty disaster relief team was formed including, the Department Commander, the Disaster Preparedness Chairman, and the Department Chaplain using pickup trucks, trailers, and access to a variety of resources. All the vehicles were loaded up and headed down to Homestead, Post 43 to stage the supplies. After our initial assessment of Key Largo, we realized that more supplies and manpower would be necessary to support the effort in the coming days.



On Sunday Sept. 17th, we learned that access into Marathon was open. Another hasty disaster relief team, this time to include the Department Detachment SAL Commander, was formed to quickly courier relief aid into Marathon, Post 154. There were three trailers, four pickups, and a semi-tractor trailer were loaded and caravanned into Marathon. Post 154 became a distribution point once the water and damage was cleared from the Post. They worked feverishly to get the Post reopened to serve their Legion/veteran family and community. An alternate distribution point about a mile up the road was established and was quickly inundated with relief supplies pouring in by the truck load for hours each day. The work force began to thin out and the few that remained, along with the hasty Department relief team met the call and completed the mission.



As Area assessments trickled in of those initially hit hard by the force of the hurricane, relief aid began to flow into the state from many American Legion and Private organizations that desired to help Florida. Many of these provisions, once unloaded were divided and driven to those areas where reporting was received.

Many areas that were not accessible due to flooded roads, blocked highways, etc. caused a logistical nightmare, but we quickly discovered alternative resources (air - fixed wing/helo, and boat) to get relief supplies into many of those affected areas.

We quickly learned that several American Legion Posts took action themselves, and used personal contacts outside the state to request relief aid, many of these external resourced groups rendered immediate assistance. Postings on social media spiked with the amount of aid arriving throughout the state from different platforms.

As power slowly returned, and water is deemed safe to consume, the needed support of hydration and nutrition is shifting to cleaning, construction, and refuse disposal. There are still support items that could be collected to assist with the cleaning and rebuilding effort, but funds are now being sought that can be used to purchase the items needed that are not being provided by others.

We have expressed through social media how someone can contribute monetarily. National Emergency Fund (NEF) has been expressed with links, including an explanation of the program and how anyone can donate online. Project Vet Relief (PVR) has been expressed in the same fashion. We have appealed for people to send checks to the Dept. HQ marked for Hurricane Relief. Those funds will be used specifically to support/purchase necessary items that are directly infused into the hurricane aid effort.

While continued efforts underway are supported by those still enduring harsh conditions, we are attempting to regain an edge and return to the business at-hand around the state. We have been challenged and I truly believe we have overcome much of the adversity dished out. Some daily business was pushed aside but it will be addressed in the coming weeks. Thank you all for your endurance and understanding of the statewide impact experienced by us all. Congratulations on your effort and a job well done by our Legionnaires Family!

An after-action assessment of pre- and post-hurricane efforts will be compiled and a contingency plan will be crafted to provide us with a guide to use when we endure the next and proceeding natural disasters in the future.

The monthly Department Podcast will resume shortly. Per the current calendar schedule, visitations of Districts, Posts, and special events are on track and will commence in October.



FALL CONFERENCE
November 3-5, 2017

★ SERVICE OFFICER SCHOOL ★ FOOD HANDLING CLASS

★ AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING

REGISTER NOW
floridalegion.org



National Emergency Fund and Temporary Financial Assistance

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness Chair
disasterprep@legionmail.org



I hope that all our fellow Legionnaires and family are safe following the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. We want you to be aware of The American Legion programs that are available to assist you during this time of recovery.

The American Legion's National Emergency Fund (NEF) provides immediate financial assistance to Legion Family members and posts affected by Hurricane Irma. The fund provides up to \$3,000 for qualified members and up to \$10,000 for posts.

NEF grants do not cover costs of items which should be covered by insurance. It is strictly for

emergency, out of pocket, living expenses.

In order to qualify for an NEF grant, an applicant must:

- Have been displaced from his or her primary residence due to a declared natural disaster.
- Provide copies of receipts of items required to meet immediate needs, such as temporary housing, food, water, clothing, diapers, etc.
- Membership must be active at time of disaster and the time of application
- Post grants must derive from a declared natural disaster and substantiating documentation must provide that The American Legion post will cease to perform the duties and activities in the community due to losses sustained.

While the NEF provides immediate assistance to Legion and SAL members, qualified children of Legion-eligible veterans may receive assistance through the Legion's Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program.

The TFA grants do not cover costs of items which should be covered by insurance. It is strictly for temporary food, shelter, utilities, and clothing. Payout from the funds are currently capped at \$2,500 per veteran with minor children (17 years or younger) living at home. Legion membership is not required.

For more information or to apply for NEF and TFA, contact Department Headquarters at 407-295-2631, or visit www.floridalegion.org.





OCTOBER 2017

1	Child Health Day
1-31	ALR Round Robin
2	Disability/Employment Awareness Month
4	Membership Goal 60%
7	NVHS Stand Down for Homeless Vets
8	Ms. Veteran America Pageant
9	Columbus Day
9	National Fall Meetings
13	Navy Birthday
14	12 District Revitalization, Post 81
14	15th District Fall Picnic
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15-21	Dept Commander Visits District 3
15	Swing and Giggle Golf Tournament
16	Boss' Day
19	Employment Awards
21	Car Show and Swap Meet, Post 91
21	PDC Art Schwabe Roast
22	Dept Commander Visits District 4
23	Beirut Bombing (1983)
25	Grenada Invasion (1983)
26	National Day of the Deployed
27	National Boy Scout Chair Conference
28-3	National Legion College
28	University of Miami Veterans Career Fair
29	Kids without Christmas, 12th District
29	Ray Rosen Memorial Biker Meet and Greet
31	Halloween
11/1	Membership Goal 70%
11/2-5	Florida Fall Conference
11/5	Daylight Saving Time Ends

Always Plan Ahead

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

I am writing this just before hurricane Irma so I can get my article to Department on time (may not have power after). I pray that the hurricane will pass us by with very little damage, but if not – remember we are a Legion family. Thanks to our Disaster Preparedness Chairman, Bill Hoppner, who is working hard in coordination with Department Staff and Department Chaplain, Barry Roberts to help plan in case of such an emergency. Don't forget National's Emergency Fund which helps Posts and Legionnaires, it is specifically set up for the survivors of natural disasters. I hope you helped your Legion family as well as your regular family. What about the old couple next door or the veteran down the street? The single mom or dad with several children? I hope you checked on all of them. That's what being a Legionnaire is all about.

My section of the state has been busy doing installations, meetings, and training. We have a couple more training sessions to go. I want to shout a big "Thanks" to District 12 Commander, Bruce Thurber for helping me out. Currently we have Training scheduled at Post 92 on September 17, September 23rd for the 6th District and September 24th for the 11th District. Dates,

places, and times are always subject to change so please contact your Area or District Commander or myself for the latest and greatest. If your Post has a specific training need, please go thru your District Commander to request it.



Did you remember we were having a Department-wide membership rally in September? Each Post should have put together a team (members of the Post) to help call members that owe dues. Work on retention. Work on new DMS members (check MyLegion.org for information). Create a newsletter or just a letter, letting members know what the Post has been doing. Let the members know why they should maintain their membership.

Your Post Program Chairman List was due at Department by September 1st. If you haven't sent it in yet, hurry and send yours in. Also, your Halloween Coloring Book order should be sent in soon. It's due at Department by October 18th. You should be contacting schools and daycare centers now about participating. The books contain Halloween safety tips for parents and children to consider.

Delays

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



I hope you are all safe after the visit by Hurricane Irma. Our thoughts and prayers are with all who were affected by this visit.

During the weeks prior to Irma, I was showed how the American Legion is supporting those in Texas. A great example is Post 58, a small Post in Dunnellon. They are working with a church group and within a week is sending a 3rd semi-truck of goods to Houston. Thank you.

We are currently wrapping up our training. We have the 2nd and 3rd District left to complete. This training has been delayed by the arrival of Irma.

As you know, the American Legion College has been delayed, we are currently taking applications for January 11 – 13. Now is the time to apply. Applications are under 'News and Events' then 'Florida Legion College'.

Here are Northern and Western Area Events you should be aware of:

- Oct. 1, Open House Membership Drive
- Oct. 4, 60% Membership Goal
- Oct. 13, Navy Birthday
- Oct. 15, Dept. Commander's 3rd District Visits
- Oct. 15, Swing and Giggle Golf Tournament
- Oct. 21, PDC Art Schwabe Roast at Post 64
- Oct. 22, Dept. Commander's visit to 4th District
- Oct. 23, Beirut Bombing
- Oct. 25, Grenada Invasion
- Oct. 31, Halloween
- Nov. 1, 70% Goal
- Nov. 2-5, Fall Conference

 - 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.

Do you have a special, program, area or district event you would like to share?

Send details to kolze@floridalegion.org.





Operation Comfort Warriors

*Dennis Boland, National Executive Committeeman
nec@legionmail.org*



Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) is a program dedicated to meeting the needs of wounded, injured, and ill military personnel by providing recreational, rehabilitative/therapeutic and comfort items not usually provided by the government.

OCW also provides wounded warriors items that offer some entertainment and distraction and possibly some enjoyment during their recovery.

OCW also provides outings such as dinner, sporting events and trips to amusement parks for the service person and their family. Family is always invited to join their service member as part of the event.

100% of all donations go to the program. All overhead costs related to administration and marketing of the program are paid by the general fund of The American Legion.

OCW serves wounded warriors in federal DoD

and VA medical facilities, clinics and hospitals, and wounded warrior regiments, battalions and units, and soldier and family assistance centers.

Since the program was created in 2006 more than \$2.8 million dollars have been raised. Here a just a couple of grants that were granted from OCW.

The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program recently awarded its largest grant to a VA medical facility in nearly two years. The \$10,000 grant was provided to the New Mexico VA Health Care System in Albuquerque on March 3 to help meet the needs of its veterans.

The American Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program donated more than \$5,000 worth of comfort items and necessities to the voluntary service office at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center in Walla Walla, Wash.

Another OCW grant will fund five veterans' one-week visit to the Warrior Retreat at Bull Run in Haymarket, Va. The Legion will sponsor a room for five consecutive weeks, allowing five veterans and their families to stay at the facility for no cost.

The \$10,000 provided through OCW covers food,

lodging and events at Warrior Retreat at Bull Run, an 11,000-square foot, five-bedroom home on 37 acres in the historic and picturesque Virginia countryside in Prince William County. The retreat, operated by the nonprofit organization Serve Our Willing Warriors, provides activities, special events and camaraderie for its guests.

Over the past several years, American Legion Riders from Chapter 374 in Omaha, Neb., have raised thousands of dollars during their annual poker run for the Legion's Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) program. In preparation for this year's event, the Riders wanted to highlight a Nebraska veteran who has benefited from an OCW grant. However, when Department of Nebraska Adjutant and Legion Rider Dave Salak called National Headquarters, he learned an OCW grant has never been requested from the department.

Well a \$8,000 grant was presented to the Omaha VA on March 14, which included health and hygiene items, kayaks, fishing poles, ping pong table, dart boards and a Bowflex machine. Tax-deductible donations can be mailed to: Operation Comfort Warriors, The American Legion, P.O. Box 361656, Indianapolis, IN 46236

After Irma

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

"...to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness"

I hope that all in this American Legion Family made it through Hurricane Irma healthy and safe. Keep our family members, especially those in the Keys in your prayers. Homes, vehicles, and other physical possessions can be replaced; you or your loved ones can't be replaced, so please heed the advice offered by the experts in such events.

A Sgt.-at-Arms, just like other members of our Posts, will be busy helping in clean-up and other relief efforts. Many times, we learn lessons from disasters such as this one. Keeping important Post documents and paper work safe so they are not lost should be at the top of the list. Currently, the scanning of documents is probably the best thing to do, and if you can't do that store them sealed in plastic in a safe deposit box at your Post's bank. Protect Old Glory; the flag code says we should not fly the American flag

outdoors in inclement weather, especially when sustained winds and gusts are so high knowing the wind will damage flags. After the storm passes and that flag goes back up it sends a chill through your body because those stars and stripes serve as a symbol that this is a strong nation and when working as one we can overcome anything.

Despite the storm and its' aftermath, I hope many Posts were able to conduct a ceremony on National POW-MIA Remembrance Day which is declared annually by the President on the 3rd Friday of September.

A couple of corrections from my September article. Although I volunteered to serve as an Assistant National Sgt.-at-Arms on the floor of the National Convention I was not able to do so due to symptoms of high altitude sickness. Due to the after effects of Irma I was not able to make a couple of planned Post visits to Post 238 and 331, and I will re-schedule those visits.





God Is With Us

Barry Roberts, Chaplain
chaplain@legionmail.org



We have been working very hard in our disaster recovery efforts after Hurricane Irma paid Florida an unwelcome visit. Traveling our great state, I have observed different responses. Our Legion Family has responded with a great positive attitude of "we have this! We will help

to restore and rebuild!" I have also met some that appear to be suffering from Post Irma Stress Disorder.

I would like to bring forth some encouragement in the midst of many recent events of Hurricane Harvey, Hurricane Irma and the 7.1 Earthquake in Mexico. The Bible warns us of many signs of the end times.

In Mathew 24 the Bible tells us that in the end times there will be wars and rumors of wars. Nations will rise against nations and kingdom against kingdom.

There will be famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. God wants us to seek Him in all aspects of our daily lives through the good times and the bad. Many only seek Him in times of trials. Matthew 6:33 tells us "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." This is an amazing promise from God telling us that His plan for our lives is much better than our own plan and all we have to do is seek His desire first!

God is with us every second of every day through the good and the bad. He has given us His Word on this:

Deuteronomy 31:6, Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; "He will never leave you nor forsake you."

Deuteronomy 31:8, The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you. "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Psalms 37:28, For the LORD loves the just and will

not forsake his faithful ones. "They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;"

Psalms 94:14 "For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance."

John 16:33, These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Did you pray during the storm? God has already overcome and was with you, ready and available to love you, support you and encourage you through in all things. God will never leave us. No matter how frightening the situation, no matter how alone or scared you are, God will never leave you! His promises are true. His word is above all!

It is my prayer that you seek a closer relationship with God. His plan for your life is better than yours! I hope you are not missing out.

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to ask. I am here to serve you in any way I can.

A Historical Month

Gerry Kaufman, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



It has been a busy month for us history keepers. The National Convention in Reno saw us elect our first Female National Commander, Welcome aboard Denise Rohan, and it also saw hurricanes in

Texas and Florida of epic proportions. Please do not forget to document what your post, district, or area was doing to help out our comrades when we had to turn our attention to our own state.

These are historically valuable events for the legion when we look at our Patriotism and Americanism programs along with National Security. Now is the time to start (If you haven't already) putting your history books together. If you need some direction please send me an email and I will get you going.

The centennial is coming along but I have a question for all of you. How many of you know that you can download your own information into the Centennial website? You do not have to go through me. If you are interested in doing that please send me an email and I will send you the user name and password. The information I send you cannot be changed and should be safeguarded to protect the integrity of the National website.

Half-Way There, Keep Pushing

Fred Matthews, Membership Chair
membership@legionmail.org



It has been quite a month for all of us in Florida. The preparations we made for our homes, families and Posts hopefully paid off as the storm ran up the state. For our friends and families in the Keys, we extend to them our prayers and resources

available for a speedy recovery. Which brings us to why we should support the

Commander's Charity of Choice: Project:Vet Relief. The funds from this charity go directly to support Veterans and their families in Florida. If assistance is needed check out this link <http://www.projectvetrelief.org/> or call 407-295-2631. Everyone should have a donation bottle in their Post. Please fill it up and ask for another!

We have crossed the midpoint in membership for the 2017-2018 Legion year in Florida! And although many of us are still in recovery of our homes, businesses and Posts, it may also serve as one of the best membership tools we have: Service to our Community.

12 of our 16 districts reached the Department goal of 50% or better. 5 of the 6 Areas of the state reached the Department goal of 50% or better. Congratulations are in order for the top post in the State: Post 239- Groveland, 6th District at 144% of their goal!

Always to be noted with 6,200+ members is Lady Lake Post 347 already at 57% of their goal. And just as Clarence Hill, a Past National Commander is still the de facto Membership Chairman for Post 316 in Jacksonville, so it is that Past Department Commander Warren Post serves as Adjutant of Post 219, they now stand at 74% of their goal.

Continued on Page 6 >>

Half-Way There, Keep Pushing

(Continued from Page 5)

Fred Matthews, Membership Chair

This time last year the Post was at 55%, a 19% increase.

Next up, lets concentrate on converting those members from the Post 0400 listing, marked "AD." These Legion members, once converted to your local Post, will count as new members THIS YEAR. You should use the DMS script provided in the Membership Manual or check with your membership chairperson in the Post or District for assistance. Hold a "Calling Party" with several members armed with their cell phones. And remember, this doesn't have to take place in the Post, these calls can be made from anywhere.

Don't forget to take a look at your Post Calendar and set out a table at each event with materials that tell the Legion story and "Why they should Join or Renew."

A final note: Memberships are due in each week to the Department, Even if it's just one! Thanks for all you do!

District Roast Coming Up

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



restored a lot quicker than other hurricanes we have had in the past.

While we were all affected by hurricane Irma (she was a BIG BAD GIRL!) I have to say my District was spared, no members suffered major damage.

Mostly trees down, power outages, and screen damage. With that being said, power is getting

We need to continue working together as a TEAM and get the state back together as one, and I can see that we are doing just that.

Let's not forget about the District Roast on October 21st at Legion Post 64 Okeechobee of Past Commander Art Schwabe. Please see attached flyer with all information on the roast. It will be a good time for all.

We as a District are doing really well on our membership. So far this year we have been in the top five every week. GREAT JOB!!! Let's keep it up.

Statewide Blood Drive Coming Up

Donna Artola, Blood Donor Chair
blooddonor@legionmail.org

We have entered a new month with our state still recovering from hurricane Irma. The blood banks are running short on blood, and whereas I know people are giving blood in this time of need, if the people that give when there is an emergency gave regularly we would not have a shortage of blood. Let us keep this in mind we never know when there will be a shortage of blood.

We are having a statewide blood drive this year November 23rd to 30th. Let's get at least one blood mobile at your Post during this week of the statewide blood drive. Please contact me that you have had a blood mobile at your Post. Let's make a difference. Contact me at 11thdistrict@legion.org.

If you are having an event, please call your local blood bank and have a bus there to allow people to give blood. By giving one pint, you can save the life of 3. Let's make the Florida American Legion make a difference.

Children & Youth Coins

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



As I sit here writing this article, Hurricane Harvey has flooded Texas, and Hurricane Irma has her eyes set on Florida, followed by Jose. My thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected by these storms! It is

times like these where we are fortunate to have programs out there to give those affected some assistance. I am referring to the Temporary Financial Assistance program, which is for veterans with children under the age of 18, Project Vet Relief for all veterans who may or may not have children, and the National Emergency Fund. I have seen too many people that feel too proud to ask for help, but please

take advantage of these programs! The only way to know if you qualify, is to put in a request. There is no harm in filling out the paperwork that is necessary, especially if you need the assistance.

Due to some personal issues, I was not able to get as much accomplished as I had hoped to by this time. That is all behind me now, and it is time to move forward. I plan on visiting several Districts, but would appreciate the dates of when each District has their meetings and where. With the exception of only three Districts, I have not seen any of the information posted on the calendar yet.

The biggest news I have for this edition of Legion Link is that the coins have arrived for Children and Youth. They are available for \$10.00 each, and the proceeds will go towards the Children and Youth Programs. I always have them with me, so when I visit your Post or District, you can be rest assured that I will be asking your members to

purchase them. You can expect to see me a lot at Fall Conference! If any Post or District would be interested in purchasing a bulk amount to sell themselves, please let me know.

I would like to have two golf tournaments between now and the end of April to benefit the Department Children and Youth Programs. I have sent e-mails to several Posts to see if they would be interested in holding a tournament, but have not heard anything back. If there are any Posts, Districts, or Areas that would be interested in hosting a tournament, please contact me at cy@legionmail.org. Planning for these usually takes a couple of months, so please get back to me as soon as possible.

Some suggestions for your November planning may include holding an event for Veteran's Day and attending Fall Conference. If possible, coordinate with your local schools and

Continued on Page 7 >>





Children & Youth Coins

(Continued from Page 6)

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

community to discuss issues dealing with teen suicide, gateway drugs, and the warning signs of Drug and Alcohol. Brochures are available from Department to assist you with planning, and to hand out. Also, there is Thanksgiving, which falls during National Family Week, Nov.19th-25th. Plan on giving out baskets, holding a dinner, or some other type of event for the holiday.

Contact Local High Schools

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



Now that the school semester is back in session after the summer break, it is time for all District Chairmen/Commanders to get in touch with the Posts in your area to make sure that they are reaching out to all the school Senior and

Assistant Instructors to introduce themselves. They are vital to getting the word out about our JROTC Marksmanship programs, not only to schools but also to private Shooting Sports Clubs regarding the timelines, which are strict and come up very quickly through the year.

It is the Post Chairman's responsibility to contact the units in the high schools and in their local area. Have them make an appointment with the instructors, in order to establish a working relationship. If they have a brochure, great, take it along to answer any questions. If not, most questions can be answered on the Department website: <http://www.floridalegion.org/> Questions for the Jr. Shooting Sports Program about timelines are posted on the National website: www.legion.org Some of the schools begin the semester with the Marksmanship Program and are already shooting for the CMP Program.

The National Marksmanship Postal Match is listed on the National website beginning Nov. 1st with a closing date of Jan. 2018 and all Postal Targets must be returned to National by Feb. 1st, 2018.

Legion College Rescheduled

*Tom Gora, Legion College Chair
deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org*



I apologize for any inconvenience caused by the re-scheduling of FALC that was scheduled for September 7-9, and has now been re-scheduled for January 11-13, 2018. Although the class was re-scheduled due to a low number of applicants at the time, the class could not possibly have been held due to the approaching Hurricane Irma.

The FALC Committee proposes all future FALC classes be held in the second half of the membership year for several good reasons. The first half of the membership year (July to December) is a very busy time for Legionnaires working hard on membership, establishing local programs and events, celebrating five significant national holidays, and all the other things we all do to serve veterans and our local communities. By the second half of the year things in general

slow down a bit, allowing more time to attend the FALC. The annual hurricane season is also over by then. You can register for the January 11-13, 2018 class on-line at the Department web site.

To qualify for FALC applicants must have completed The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI). You simply must have the basic knowledge provided in this course to apply to what you will learn at FALC. What we previously knew as ALEI is now called **"Basic Training,"** which I confirmed on the National American Legion web site. This course should be taken by every Legionnaire, as it 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. I have contacted National to determine if there is a new presentation and if we will still be allowed to teach the course off-line at our Annual Fall Conference and Convention. Stay tuned for further information and the availability of **"Basic Training"** at the Fall Conference in November.

The team must register online and their Post will reimburse the cost. Each target is \$12.50 and the top 4 shooters would make a team. While there is no limit to the number of shooters, all teams will be comprised of 4 shooters and any competitors over 4 will be individual shooters.

It is essential that the team is sponsored by an American Legion Post and that a one-time Affiliation Form is sent to National either by mail or email. This form can be found on the National website. Individuals and teams that qualify in the first round will be advised by National to advance to the Second Round Qualifications. The Final top 30 State Winners will advance to the National Shoulder to Shoulder Competition in Colorado Springs at the USA Shooting Training Complex August 24-28, 2018 for the National Competition Tournament. This is the Final Match with each winner in the Precision and Sporter Category winning a \$5,000 Scholarship and a trip to the National Convention. I urge all District Chairmen to get back to me with the names of all teams and the sponsoring Posts as National is updating the

master list.

The Department of Florida sponsors the Cadet of the Year Program and the application is due March 1st, 2018. This is also the responsibility of the Post Chairmen to follow up with the High Schools and advise them that we have this contest for the best JROTC Cadet in the state. This is a \$2500 Scholarship that is awarded to the top Cadet. There can be only one entry for each school. The selection is made by the Senior Instructor and is sent directly to Department Headquarters. The winning Cadet will be the guest of the Department of Florida at the State Convention along with the chaperone/coach.

I welcome all the new Chairmen and the returning Chairmen who aide so much with promoting this most worthwhile program for our youth. Much success to you and your team.

THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
LEGION COLLEGE

JANUARY 11-13, 2018
Department Headquarters, Orlando, FL
floridalegion.org



Round Robin Month

Jim Day, American Legion Riders Chair
legionriders@legionmail.org



First, let me start with how proud I am to be a member of the Florida American Legion Family. The Florida Legion Riders have been busy holding fundraisers/rides and volunteering tirelessly. We have many

events coming up and a travelling trophy that will be up for "earning" in the month of October.

This past few weeks have been trying on all of us and we as Legion Family banded together to help others impacted by hurricane Irma. From communication to trailer loads of supplies, we have pitched and helped when needed. Saturday following the storm, I had the opportunity to help Department Commander Shuga, and Disaster Preparedness Chairman Bill Hoppner unload supplies in Jacksonville received from the Department of Maine and local residents.

Sunday, we loaded up with supplies and FEMA meal kits donated by NVHS George Taylor and PDC Dudley. Commander Shuga, Bill Hoppner, Jennifer Day, Dorothy Walsh and myself delivered supplies to Arcadia Post 11. The Post made it through Irma only to be flooded by the rising river waters. Only the POW/MIA table remained untouched by the water's intrusion. Post 392 in Panama City teamed up with Veteran business owners Vince and Cindy Greiner of Patches Pub & Grill to raise over \$2,500 for Post 11 in Arcadia. Several of the ALR members (Danny, Mike aka Goat, Kirk and Lamar) will be riding down to Arcadia from Panama City to present a check on October 2nd, 2017.

Chapter 318 collected donations of supplies and sent trailer loads to Post 154 in Marathon. Chapter 69 organized a trailer delivery from Ohio with supplies for impacted residents. Post 129 Beaches in Jacksonville opened their doors and organized supplies for those impacted in the northern areas. Several Posts have become hubs to get supplies out to those in need. Please contact either the Department Commander Steve Shuga or the Disaster Preparedness Chairman Bill Hoppner

with questions.

October is the Round Robin month and the travelling trophy will be transferred (or maintained) by the winning District at Fall Conference in Orlando, November 2017. The ride sheets are revamped and much easier to fill out. The rules have also been changed slightly to include a "UNITY" ride bonus. Information/Ride Sheets/Forms will be up online at Floridalegion.org under Legion Riders and Round Robin. This year we will be requesting the funds raised be utilized to help those impacted by hurricane Irma.

At the Fall Conference, we will have a few classes primarily focused on reporting and SOP help. Classes and meeting times are determined by the Department of Florida and will be posted on the webpage on the agenda for Fall Conference. 2018 ALR Summit will be Jan 18-21. We have reserved the entire hotel in Cocoa (International Palms Resort) for this year's ALR Summit. Booking information is available @ <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/legionriders/1st-alr-summit/>

Watch for a final list of classes and activities coming soon.

Good news for our past FALR Vice Chairman Manny Ayala. He has been released from the hospital in is home recovering. It's been a long and at times scary road. Thank you all for the continued support. He is a fighter and will be back up on 2.

Finally, I recently had the opportunity to conduct a pre-run for the 2018 Florida ALR Legacy/Unity Ride. Notice the ride is changing from solely contributing the funds to the National Legacy Scholarship Fund. This shift by no means insinuates we will not be supporting the Legacy Fund. The money raised will be divided between the National Legacy Scholarship Fund and programs in the state of Florida. The 2018 ride will start in Florida and end in Florida. We will visit Posts/Memorials/Veteran Parks in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Jim Bowers, Jim Wineland and Jennifer Day have been working very hard to pin down the routes, overnights, Posts, and stops. The dates are: April 7th-14th, 2018.

Directors, if you have not reported your new officers, please do so immediately. If you do not update the Florida ALR Leadership team cannot get updates emailed to you or your members. <https://www.floridalegion.org/alr-officer-report/>

DPAA

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



To our Family Group, Veteran Service Organization, and Military Service Organization Partners,

I am humbled and honored to have been entrusted to lead

the dedicated DPAA team in dutifully and attentively serving this sacred humanitarian mission.

I'm also privileged to again be able to partner with you and your organizations.

In my first message to the DPAA team, I reinforced that accountability to the families of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and are missing must guide our words and actions. To abide as such, my teammates and I must apply a personal sense of responsibility and be resolute in accomplishing our duties.

The resources and will the Department of Defense devotes to this vital mission is the result of a moral imperative that also defines us as Americans. I pledge to you to be a servant-leader of consequence and to strive to make a difference to the DPAA team, this mission, to you, and most importantly, to the families. I look forward to reconnecting with you at next Friday's POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony, or our Oct 6th update to all of you.





Recognize Our Youth

Troy Horsley, School Medals Chair
schoolmedals@legionmail.org



Commanders and Comrades of the state of Florida, my name is Troy Horsley and I am currently serving as Department of Florida Chairman for School Medals.

It is a program that is near and dear to me and

I am asking for your assistance in getting the information out to your local schools. Try and get one of your Legionnaires from your Post who can

get out to the elementary, junior and senior high schools and colleges in your area. Talk to the principals or guidance counselors and tell them about the School Medal program.

Let them know we want to recognize a girl and boy student who best demonstrates all the desired qualities of Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service from their school. School Medals and certificates are provided free to participating schools. All the school's responsibility is to select the boy and girl to be awarded the School Medal. School medals are normally presented by a Legionnaire at the school's end of year awards program in

recognition of their great achievements.

When having the discussion with the school representative, you can discuss the activities that your Post can provide support along with other Children and Youth activities.

It is up to us as Legionnaires to go out and recognize our youth who are about supporting our core values and have the courage to stand up and be proud to do so. If you need assistance or have never done this at your Post, don't hesitate to contact me and I will gladly help. There are resources available on the Department web site or I can send you a starter package. I hope to hear from you soon.

Get the Word Out

Bob Colbert, Social Media Chair
socialmedia@legionmail.org



WOW! What a storm! I am sure that each of us could tell stories for hours about our individual experiences, but did you keep your Post, Squadron, Unit and Chapter members up to date?

Here is where you have to do some serious thinking about how to GET THE WORD OUT!

During the actual storm, many members did

not have access to the internet, so unless they are using a smartphone, they were unreachable and probably didn't think about checking email, anyway. However, the younger generation and some of the "older" generation have become accustomed and/or addicted to using FACEBOOK, TWITTER and other "instant messaging" formats. Does your arm of the Legion Family have either a Facebook FAN page or a TWITTER account? This is the best way to reach your members to either offer help, seek help or just keep them informed on the status of the Post Family.

Many of us were without power or a computer for upwards of a week, so we were using smartphones or tablets - anything that could last

a while on battery. I know that I posted on FB for my Post. Another Post put out the word that they needed a clean-up crew, still others announced events related to the storm.

Keep in mind that FB and TWITTER are not the only means for getting the word out, but they have a very important place in keeping you members informed.

I truly hope that everyone weathered the storm with little or no damage.

Until next month, remember your organization cannot grow if we don't tell anyone that we exist.



WIN UP TO \$10,000

FALL RAFFLE

THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

BUY TICKETS AT DEPT FALL CONFERENCE, NOV 3-5, 2017
OR CALL 407-295-2631





Mr. & Mrs. Allan Nash
 "Without your help, my husband and I would be out on the street. I thank God for you."
 - Mrs. Allan Nash, Wife of WWII Army Veteran (pictured above)

2017 FALL CONFERENCE

The American Legion, Department of Florida Fall Conference is just around the corner. The event will be held from November 3-5, 2017 at the Renaissance at Sea World in Orlando, FL.

Check out all the opportunities you will have this year to learn more about the newest program to the Department and Commander Steve Shuga's fundraising project.

ACTIVITIES:

Friday, November 4

- 8:00AM - Service Officer Presentation
Room: Atlantis
- 9:15 - 9:45AM - Introduction to Post Leadership
Room: Labrid B
- 4:30 - 5:30 PM - Advocate Training
Room: Nomeus

The PROJECT: VetRelief Team will also have a table in the vendor area. Please stop by to meet them, collect any materials to take back with you to your Post, or ask any questions you might have.

Calling all trained Advocates - We will be holding a special event for all trained VetRelief Advocates. If you are interested in learning more information and have already taken our Training course, please contact Jennifer Cooper, jcooper@floridalegion.org, for the details.

We are looking forward to seeing each and every one of you there!

**Times and room locations are subject to change.*

AND THE RESULTS ARE IN...

The 4th Annual Charity Golf Tournament was held on Tuesday, September 26th. Our original event date was delayed due to Hurricane Irma. However, mother nature could not stop our sponsors and golfers from wanting to make an impact on the lives of our service members!

At approximately 8:30AM, the shotgun went off sending 115 golfers on their way as they were serenaded by Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA".

PVR Board Vice-President, Bob James, hosted corporate partners, vendors and friends to a fun filled day of golf. The event raised a record setting, \$41,889!



The following Legion Family members came to show their support by either playing golf or volunteering: Commander, Steve Shuga; 1st Vice Commander, Dianne Boland; NEC, Dennis Boland; NECA, Art Schwabe; Adjutant, Michael McDaniel; Asst. Adjutant, Bruce Comer; Judge Advocate, Larry Sheets; Baseball Chairman, Andy Burkett; Legion Riders Chairman and Adjutant, Jim and Jennifer Day; VA Entitlement Chairman, Larry Roberts; PVR Board President, John Dollinger; Legionnaires, Michael Beaven, Sid Damsgard, Dave Fox, Richard Izzi; and Auxiliary Members, Marika Ciancio, and Donna Roberts.

Our appreciation goes out to all of the sponsors, players, and volunteers for their **continued** support of Florida's veterans!



SUPPORT CASES:
 JULY-AUG 2017 TOTALS

families helped	amount distributed
25	\$20,214.27

**Numbers reflect PROJECT: VetRelief Cases ONLY*

UPCOMING EVENTS: MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

NOV
3-5 American Legion, Dept Fall Conference
 Orlando, FL
 Classes and networking opportunity for Advocates

NOV
18 Challenge 22
 5K "Ruck" Walk
 Winter Garden, FL
 Cost: \$20/adults
 \$5/kids under 17

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



Benefits You May Not Know About

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair
veteransbenefits@legionmail.org



September is Suicide Awareness Month I would like to say thank you to the Department Chaplin and the Service Officers that attended the Bay Pines VA Hospital Mental Health Summit. We were the only Veteran Organization that Participated in this event. We learned a lot and we got more point of contacts to help our veterans. I would also like to say thank you to all the American Legion Posts that held a Suicide Awareness Events. (Challenge 22)

All Information from: Suicide Prevention Life Line. Org



SuicidePreventionLifeline.org

Learn to Recognize the Signs

Many Veterans may not show any signs of intent to harm themselves before doing so, but some actions can be a sign that a Veteran needs help. Veterans in crisis may show behaviors that indicate a risk of harming themselves.

- Veterans who are considering suicide often show signs of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and/or hopelessness, such as:
- Appearing sad or depressed most of the time
- Clinical depression: deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating—that doesn't go away or continues to get worse
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep
- Neglecting personal welfare, deteriorating physical appearance

- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society, or sleeping all the time
- Losing interest in hobbies, work, school, or other things one used to care about
- Frequent and dramatic mood changes
- Expressing feelings of excessive guilt or shame
- Feelings of failure or decreased performance
- Feeling that life is not worth living, having no sense of purpose in life
- Talk about feeling trapped—like there is no way out of a situation
- Having feelings of desperation, and saying that there's no solution to their problems
- Their behavior may be dramatically different from their normal behavior, or they may appear to be actively contemplating or preparing for a suicidal act through behaviors such as:
- Performing poorly at work or school
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities—seemingly without thinking
- Showing violent behavior such as punching holes in walls, getting into fights or self-destructive violence; feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
- Looking as though one has a "death wish," tempting fate by taking risks that could lead to death, such as driving fast or running red lights
- Giving away prized possessions
- Putting affairs in order, tying up loose ends, and/or making out a will
- Seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means of harming oneself If you are a Veteran or know a Veteran who is showing any of the above warning signs, please call the Veterans Crisis Line, chat online, or send a text message today.
- 1-800-273-8255 Press 1

LEARN MORE floridalegion.org

**DEPARTMENT
FALL CONFERENCE**

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2017

Renaissance SeaWorld Orlando
Orlando, Florida



SNAPSHOTS



Dept of IN, sends semi of supplies and \$16,057 for hurricane relief.



Dept Adjutant, Mike McDaniel, unloading supplies.



Auxiliary Secretary, Patty MacDonald sorting supplies.



Disaster Prep, Bill Hoppner unloading supplies.



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Convoy of supplies led by Commander Steve Shuga.



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Marathon Hurricane Damage



Shuga Bear and Friend





SNAPSHOTS



Key Largo Hurricane Damage



Arcadia Hurricane Damage



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Arcadia Hurricane Damage



Key Largo Hurricane Damage



Key Largo Post 333



Marathon Hurricane Relief Efforts



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Homestead Hurricane Relief Efforts



Hurricane Relief Efforts



Homestead Hurricane Relief Efforts



Delivering supplies from Maine.





**September 21, 2017
60% Target Report**

District 4	Victoria VanBuren	61.74%
District 11	Donna Artola	59.16%
District 6	Michael Seidel	58.86%
District 2	John Folsom	56.84%
District 15	Richard Little	56.17%
District 16	Raymond Perez	54.80%
District 1	Raymond Olsen	54.15%
District 17	Michael Wolohan	54.02%
District 9	Donald Schwiesow	53.06%
District 7	David Tucker	52.62%
District 12	Bruce Thurber	52.20%
District 5	Roy Horsley	51.36%
District 13	Michael Raymond	50.62%
District 14	Gary Decker	49.76%
District 8	Jerry Faught	48.39%
District 3	Frederick Hutto	43.52%
Eastern	Daryl Bass	55.99%
Central	Jay Allen	54.75%
Western	James Brennan	54.64%
Southern	James Tewes	54.08%
Northern	Jeffrey Durden	53.27%
Southwestern	Dennis Walsh	49.61%
Post 400		60.66%
Post 208		58.05%



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

Call Now: 1-800-235-6943
Monday - Friday 8AM - 7PM (EST)




**DEPARTMENT TRUSTED.
LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.**

We provide a wide range of benefits designed to protect you, your family and your health.

From Your American Legion Department

We are committed to serving the unique insurance needs of LIT members and their families.



Emergency and Accident

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 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

60% MEMBERSHIP GOAL
10/4/2017

www.thelit.com



The American Legion Auxiliary & American Legion formally invites you to attend the President & Commander's Banquet



Saturday, November 4th, 2017
6:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Discovery Ballroom

Theme is "Sock Hop"
Entertainment: Patrick Gibson



Menu:

- Soup of the Day
- Chopped Romaine Hearts, Parmesan Cheese, and Herb Croutons
- Pan Seared All Natural Chicken Breast, Chef's Roasted Mushrooms, Saltimbocca Sauce
- Roasted Market Fish Piccata, Lemon and Capers
- Cheese Tortellini, Blistered Tomato, Spinach, and Pesto Cream
- Broccoli with Olive Oil and Lemon
- Roma Pesto Focaccia
- Chocolate Cream Cannoli
- Ricotta Chocolate Chip Tart

Limited 150 people
Before October 20, 2017 - \$35.00
Before November 1, 2017 - \$40.00
At Fall Conference - \$50.00

**Costume Contest so
come dressed in
your Sock Hop
Best!!**

Complete and Return to: American Legion Auxiliary, P.O. Box 547917, Orlando, FL 32854

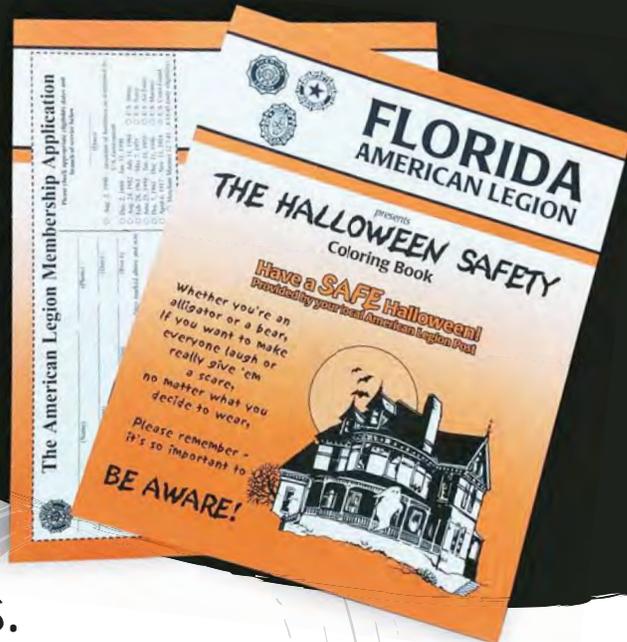
Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Post/Unit _____ Enclosed Check Amount \$ _____ For _____ Tickets

HALLOWEEN COLORING BOOKS



Once again we are offering the hugely successful Halloween Coloring Books to our posts.

The coloring book's new look has proven popular with kids and this year we are offering it again!

The book contains Halloween Season safety tips for parents and children to consider. Also included is a message describing many facets of The American Legion, what we stand for and what we do. A membership application has been included on the back cover next to the space reserved for your individual post number and address. **BE SURE TO PUT YOUR POST INFORMATION IN THE SPACE PROVIDED SO THE PARENTS ARE AWARE OF WHICH POST HAS THEIR CHILDREN'S SAFETY IN MIND.**

We strongly urge your post to contact schools and daycare centers for their participation. We are asking that your order be received at Department Headquarters by October 15th. We will ship your coloring book orders as we receive them but payment must be included. We sincerely hope your Auxiliary will also participate in this program.

Order online www.floridalegion.org

\$20
PER 100

How many would you like? _____ Post # _____

Attention to: _____

Shipping Address: _____
(No PO Boxes)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Payment: Our Check # _____ in the amount of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Please bill my credit card in the amount of \$ _____.

Credit Card Type: Visa Mastercard American Express Discover

Credit Card #: _____

Expiration: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____ Cardholder Name: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to: The American Legion, Dept of Florida; Attn: Emblem Sales; P.O. Box 547859; Orlando, FL 32854-7859