



The LEGION LINK

"Securing the Future for All Veterans"



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In This Edition....

- Page 1 - Commander
- Page 2 - 1st Vice, 2nd Vice
- Page 3 - COTA Florida Allocations
- Page 4 - 3rd Vice, NEC
- Page 5 - NECA, Judge Advocate, Sgt-at-Arms, Historian
- Page 6 - Membership, 17th District, Florida National Cemetery
- Page 7 - Legion Riders, Children & Youth, VA Entitlements
- Page 8 - JROTC/Jr Shooting Sports, Oratorical
- Page 9 - Legion College
- Page 10 - Social Media, Youth Law Cadet
- Page 11 - Membership Reports, LIT
- Page 12 - 2018 Convention Voting Guide
- Page 13 - Proper Use of Emblem
- Page 14 - PROJECT: VetRelief

From Your Department Commander Steve Shuga

commander@floridalegion.org



January was a very busy month for our Florida American Legion family. With the festive holiday period behind us, we are now engaged in our American Legion Programs that directly impact our communities and state, such as the 2018 Florida American Legion College Class and the second Florida American Legion Riders Summit. Our National Commander, Denise Rohan, toured our state. She visited Posts, participated in the Southern Area Ball, and attended a Four Chaplains Service at the US Coast Guard Station, Dania Beach before departing on her travels to another American Legion Department.

Posts are encouraged to conduct only those programs that assure a successful outcome. It's not about quantity but quality. If your efforts are effective with your target audience, it will enhance your community and be regarded as a program of excellence.

Your American Legion Programs should be planned out for the next three to five months. If not, get moving on this as it will guide your membership to provide the support that interests them to be part of our organization. This will also draw membership into your Post.

Retention is extremely important for all American Legion Posts. About 2/3rds of our Posts throughout the state are doing their best to retain their members but we have 1/3rd that need special attention and we know they can do this. Florida has a golden opportunity to return to 100+% membership success and it will take all of us to do our part; so, let's kick it into high gear, retain our current membership, seek our new members who qualify to be part of our family, and transfer members into our Posts from outside Florida. Which Florida District is going to win National's Race to the Top? We have several who will qualify soon and make others around the nation nervous. The target cutoff date for all Districts to be above 100% is March 31, 2018. Come on Florida – we have several Districts that can give others a run for their money and win national recognition.

Also, a special training session was held for a select group of Legionnaires at the Department HQ to address and determine the best course of actions dealing with a variety of unique Post problems and issues plaguing Departments over the past several years.

As we draw closer to meeting, and exceeding the needs of our American Legion, I want to thank all of you for your efforts thus far. Florida is a force to be reckoned with. Now is the time to come to the aid of your Florida American Legion.

For God & Country!



FEBRUARY 2018

1	National Freedom Day
2	Groundhog Day
3	Poker Run for Special Olympics
3	The Four Chaplains Service - Post 112
4	Four Chaplains Service
4 - 10	Dept Commander Visits District 8 
7	Members Goal 90%
10	District 5 Oratorical Contest
10	Southwestern Area Ball 
11	District Oratorical Contest Deadline
11 - 17	Dept Commander Visits District 13 
12	Lincoln's Birthday
14	Valentine Day
15	Legion Link Articles Due
17	2nd Annual Coral Head Music Fest
17	Post 69's 2nd Annual Challenge 22
18	15th District Dinner and Auction
19	Presidents' Day (HQ Closed)
24	Northern Area Oratorical Contest
25 - 28	National American Legion Conference

EVERY ONE Counts!

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



Greetings: February already! Happy Valentine's Day! My how fast the year has gone by. I hope you've been keeping up with your documentation. That will make it so easy to fill out your CPR's at the end of the year. These are very important.

That's why if you've done the work – why not take the credit. It all counts when the National Commander goes to Washington to address Congress about veteran's issues and concerns.

Membership is also just as important if not more. With our dwindling membership, we have less money to support our four pillars; VA&R, National Security, C&Y and Americanism. Our voice in Congress has less and less volume. Step up, speak out, grab the phone and start traveling. Retention is the key to success here.

I want to take a moment here to applaud the top two District commanders (both females!!) who have been going at it almost since the beginning. They have both been doing an excellent job at membership staying in the top or second place

position all year long. My 11th District Commander, Donna (Artola) Wallace, happens to be in 1st place today but the 4th District Commander, Vicky Van Buren, has been in first place for most of the year. To both of you, Congratulations for a job well done.

Do you have an interest in becoming a Department Chairman? Where are your interests? The Commander next year has to start looking now at filling the positions with Legionnaires who have a passion and the time for the job. Whomever is chosen for commander cannot read minds. We need help. I need your help now. The following URL will take you to a one-page form – to be filled out by you. Print it out, fill it out and mail it to department.

https://www.floridalegion.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/05/Dept_Chair_Interest_Flyer.pdf

Dates you need to be aware of for this month are: District Oratorical Contest deadline is February 11th and Area Oratorical Contest deadline is February 25th.

Remember your "Basic Training". It is still being taught at the Convention and Fall Conference plus you can still take it online thru National (www.legion.org). It is now FREE – no charge.

 - 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.

Time to Step Up

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



This has been a very busy month in the state for sure. By the time this is out the FALC 2018 took place and attendance was high. See Tom Gora's article for more information. We were also graced by the visit from our

National Commander. She stands behind her motto "Family First" and we all should follow her lead. We have a very busy schedule this month and a lot of events going on around the state.

Our Dept. Commander will continue his quest

and at the end of the month, a few delegates will be traveling to Washington D.C. to carry our message to the House and Senate on where we stand together to protect our rights and continue to fight for the rights of all Veterans and families. Our National Commander will testify in front of the House and carry our message on her back. It is very important for all of us to contact your local politicians and inform them on our bullet points and stand behind the Florida Veterans.

Membership has slowed down to a crawl and as always, it is the time to step up and send letters out and contact those who have not renewed. The team is there and hopefully that membership team will start visiting and helping the Districts who need help NOW and not later. I sent a 12 week plan out to all the Districts and hopefully it was shared with

everyone down to the Post level. If anyone has a great way to retain membership, please let us know what you are doing and what would work for us in Florida.

Thank you to all (volunteers) which is you for what you do and continue to do. Let's continue to work strong as one for the same goal, our Four Pillars. Also, I will attach the numbers for 2017 for COTA monies donated to the Florida families and that needed help during this trying time on their family. Remember, the monies that we have raised stay in Florida as we are Miracle Makers for sure. I am very proud of the Florida Family as we get stuff done and I am very proud to be part of this special family. So, till next month, Happy Valentine's Day to all the special ladies and will see you out there.



2017 COTA FLORIDA ALLOCATIONS

Patient	Age	City	Amount:
Schiffhauer, Abel	11	Center Hill	\$10,554.68
Surrency, Allison	10	Bryceville	\$2,500.00
Brown-Blake, Sophie	10	Tallahassee	\$500.00
Novak, Chloe	7	Tallahassee	\$2,446.49
Ranieri, Evan	6	Riverview	\$1,000.00
VanSciver, Annarose	13	Gainesville	\$2,651.62
Cervoni, Mia	4	Largo	\$2,500.00
Bunker, Kyan	10	Bradenton	\$100.00
Luque, Casey	10	Naples	\$4,500.00
Dolan, James	8	St. Petersburg	\$3,389.98
McFadden, Hai'lee	1	Tampa	\$1,120.80
Ward, Jude	2	Coral Springs	\$4,500.00
Hyde, Skylar	17	Orlando	\$1,953.73
Thompson, CJ	4	Tampa	\$3,205
Eavenson, Corrie	4	Land O'Lakes	\$1,675
Mootispaw, Charles	11	Naples	\$1,000
Anselmo, Savannah	10	Miramar	\$1,500
Walker, Josef	14	New Smyrna Beach	\$1,000
Stark, JD	8	Lynn Haven	\$1,000
Arsenault, Mya	4	Tampa	\$1,500
Keene, Oliver	3	Jacksonville	\$100
Ocampo, Valeria	9 months	Oviedo	\$1,500
Smith, Antonio	4	Pensacola	\$4,141.74
Cosme-Freytes, Ian	6	Orlando	\$4,162.13
Lambe, Damien	6	Panama City	\$2,998.15
Page, Angela	18	Ocala	\$182.98
Totals:			\$61,682.20





Race to the Top

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



Comrades, We are getting close to the Race to The Top with only February and March to go, we need to start reaching out to the members to get them in. Let us work on this.

Membership, March 31st is coming up for the Race to the

Top, these are the results as of January 11th We are comparing them to the December 7th report, and there is a big Jump in numbers. It's been a great month.

1st District jumped up 10% this month. They were at 73.45%, now 83.45%. They only need 975 renewals for 100%, and have already renewed 4,916 members.

2nd District also jumped by 10%. There were at 72.79%, now at 82.24% needing only 235 renewals for 100%. They have already renewed 1191 members.

3rd District jumped by 13%. They were at 61.38%,

now 76.83%. They need only 402 renewals for 100%, and have already renewed 1562 members. 4th District jumped by 9%. They were at 80.46%, now at 89.67%. They need only 351 renewals for 100%, they have already renewed 3,058 members. 5th District jumped up 11%. They were at 71.68%, they are now at 82.34%. They need only 1,348 renewals for 100%, and have already renewed 6,872 members.

17th District jumped up 10%. They were at 72.51%, and are now at 82.40%. They need only 635 renewals for 100%, and they have already renewed 3,247 members.

The good news is that we have a lot of excitement coming soon in Zone 3, especially in April. Department Commander will be visiting the 1st and 2nd Districts, PLUS he will be riding with the American Legion Riders on the 1st Unity Ride, which is starting in Jacksonville FL, going thru Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana and then back to Panama City FL. Not only is our Department Commander going, but other Department Commanders will join in route.

Commanders, now is the time to start pushing awards. It is nice to be able to come up to the stage at the Convention to receive your awards.

The following are some of the awards you should be looking for:

- Post Excellence Award
- 100% Post Award
- Employer of the year
- Firefighter and Policeman of the year award
- Color Guard Award
- Membership Awards, (Gold and Silver Brigade)

Please visit Awards and Recognition at www.legion.org for more details.

For Northern and Western Area, these are the following dates you need to be aware of for February and March:

- February 1-2, Finishing the Department Commander's visit to 17th District
- February 7th, 90% Membership Goal Date
- February 10th, 1st District Meeting at Post 356
- February 13th, Fat Tuesday
- February 14th, Valentine's Day
- February 17th, 2nd District meeting at Post 100
- February 24th, Northern Area Oratorical Contest
- March 3rd, Northern Area Ball at Post 129
- March 10th, Department Oratorical Contest
- March 17th, Post 402, Western Area Conference

Helpful Information

Dennis Boland, National Executive Committeeman
nec@legionmail.org



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DISCHARGE UPGRADE AND CORRECTION BOARDS

The American Legion is the only Veterans Service Organization that assists former services members in trying to upgrade their discharge or correct their official military record. The American Legion also makes an appearance with any Veteran who asks for representation at a discharge or correction board.

This is a valuable service and due to our

representation veterans can qualify for many Department of Veteran Affairs benefits.

The American Legion does outreach programs and assists other VSO's with training with discharge upgrades or correction of military records to establish the best practice with helping Veterans.

Other VSO's contact The American Legion as a reference as we maintain an up to date data base of forms, resources and other information on a consistent basis.

There have been several partnerships established as a direct result from training other VSO's and community outreach organizations systemically around the country as The American Legion has become the recognized VSO for discharge upgrades and military corrections of records.

DEBT MANAGEMENT AND VA LIFE INSURANCE

The American Legion employs three debt management representatives that act on the veteran's best interest when an overpayment is created and a veterans benefits are in danger of being garnished.

The representative assists by filing the appropriate application to create a payment plan or get VA to grant a waiver so as not to create a financial hardship to the veteran.

The American Legions insurance representative handled the following claims during the last calendar year. Disability insurance applications-2,804, death-447 and opened over 5,000 new insurance accounts.





Florida Legislature

Art Schwabe, NECA
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The Florida legislature has completed the first week of the 2018 Session. As the next few weeks come, we will be able to shrink the list as it becomes clear which bills have the best chance of passing. The list contains 14 Veteran related bills on the Florida House of Representatives side and 14 on the Senate side. We will keep you informed on what bills you will be asked to support.

Power of Words

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



We are now in the Oratorical Contest time of our membership year, and I have learned a great deal about the power of words from the 2017 Department of Florida Constitutional Oratorical Contest

winner. That champion, Madison Moore, was sponsored by my home Post 54, and I had the opportunity to listen to several of her presentations on freedom of speech over a three-year period. Freedom of speech is something we hear a lot about these days. I learned from this talented young high school student that words are much more than just words we utter, words have meaning and intent; words can inspire, words can hurt, words can heal. We say many "words" in daily life but do we stop and think about what the words we speak mean?

"For God, and Country; I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America; for the good of the Legion." These are all words familiar to us, we say these words many times, but do we believe in them, or just say them? Let's look at the words that make up the Pledge of Allegiance and their meaning,

Proper Procedures

Larry Sheets, Judge Advocate
judgeadvocate@legionmail.org



I have attended several regular membership meetings of nearby Posts, and have discovered that very few of them follow the Post Officers Guide in conducting their meetings.

At a regular Post meeting the proper procedure is as follows: Salute the Colors if they are pre posted, and advance the colors if they are not. Opening prayer by the Post Chaplain, POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony, recite the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

The order of business is listed in the Post Officers Guide, and Posts should follow that outline in conducting its meetings. Another thing most Posts

do not do is give a real Finance Report. Most of them simply say what was spent, and what the income was.

I would advise all Posts to get out their copy of the Post Officers Guide and become familiar with the proper way to conduct a meeting.

At the Florida American Legion Riders Summit there were some questions regarding membership. If the American Legion Post you belong to has an ALR Chapter, and you wish to join the ALR, you must join the chapter at your Post. If the Post you belong to does not have an ALR Chapter, you are free to join a Chapter at another Post. It would be a good idea to let the Post Commanders know what you are doing and why.

Another thing, since the American Legion Riders are a program of the American Legion, the Post Finance Officer should be a signee on the Riders bank accounts.

words we all should BELIEVE IN and not just recite.

"I pledge allegiance
(I promise to be faithful)

To the flag
(the symbol of our country)

Of the United States of America
(the union of 50 states that make up our country)

And to the Republic
(our nation in which supreme power rest with the people)

For which is stands
(the flag represents the United States)

One nation
(this country alone)

Under God
(the people believe in a Supreme Being)

Indivisible
(the country cannot be split into parts)

With liberty and justice
(with freedom and fairness)

For all"
(for each and every person on the country)

Words do have meaning, and when you believe in the words you say, they are powerful, they have value, they mean something! When you

just recite them, they're nothing but words with no value. When we say the Pledge, think about the words and what they mean, think of the sacrifices made to protect the meaning of those words and to protect our freedom to speak them. "I pledge allegiance (promise to be faithful) to the flag of the United States of America," those are some of the most powerful words we ever speak, they have meaning, they have value.

Centennial Website Neglected

Gerry Kaufman, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



Hello Legionaries, Auxiliary and Sons, I would like to remind all of you that the Centennial celebration for the American Legion begins at this year's National Convention. With that being said, I know all of you have been busy with the holidays

and meeting our membership goals. However, there is one big item that we have been neglecting and that is our Centennial website.

I have published the user name and password over the past 2 months and have not had a single Post place any information on the website. There

Continued on Page 6





Historian continued from Page 5

are currently one hundred and forty-six Posts that have no picture representation on the website and the majority of those have no information what so ever. This is our chance to shine and let the world know about your Post. It is and should be looked upon as an honor to be able to publish the history of your Post. By publishing the user name and password I am enabling you to be able to immediately access and download all that you wish to publish.

As in the past, if you need assistance please feel free to contact me at 407-218-9139. I look forward to seeing all your hard work on the Centennial website.

The user name is: 100thannvdept@legionmail.org
and password is: melanie1969

A Boycott

Mike Wolohan, 17th District Commander
 17thdistrict@legionmail.org



I would like to congratulate all the Posts and canteens who have successfully boycotted the NFL and NBA this season. If we stand together we will succeed.

The best way to defeat the non-patriotic actions of the players in both of these leagues is to hit them in the wallet. We have succeeded! Revenues are down, ratings are down and in reality they are feeling it big time. NBC has even stated that the will broadcast the entire Super Bowl game, including the National Anthem. We have not watched a single game in our Post (267) this year. We actually voted to do just that during a general membership meeting.

Please keep up the good and Patriotic work we have done this year.

In Striking Distance

Fred Matthews, Membership Chair
 membership@legionmail.org



It's been Four years since the Department of Florida reached 100% in membership and equally as long since National has reached its goal. We have reached that point in the year where the going can get a bit tough to reach that magic number. But

this year will be different!

As you read this, the Department of Florida is within striking distance of that 100 percent goal! The number of Posts reaching the 100% mark is increasing each week. Those in the 90 percentile are pushing ahead to take themselves across the finishing line on time. Note to all Post and District Membership Chairpersons: Don't take your foot off the gas! We are now working on the programs that make our organization the most well-known in the Veteran Service Community. Those programs; Boys State, Oratorical, Boy Scouts, VAVS, Women's Veterans assistance, Homeless Veterans Assistance, Vets Relief, Post-based Veteran Service Officers, and applications for Youth Law Cadet Program,

Legion Riders, Junior Shooting Sports, Special Olympics and the many programs specific to your Post should now be in full effect.

Promote these programs as reasons for Membership Renewal and for joining The Nation's Largest and most influential Veteran Service Organization. Get your Boys State interviews and Oratorical Contest Winners posted on social media and your website.

Make sure your website and social media page is up to date with the latest calendar and pictorial information about Post activities.

Our attention at this point is turned to those members on our rolls who have not renewed. Let's make a check of the membership roster for those members who have not renewed. Direct contact them and bring them onboard.

The same process we practiced for transferring members from the DMS listing should now be used to gather contact information on those who have not renewed their membership. myLegion.org has the listing for your Post of those non-renewed members. Let's download that listing, get the membership team together and get to calling, emailing, and visiting them!

Each One, Bring Five!

Flag Placement and Removal

Diana Hook, Florida National Cemetery Chair
 floridanationalcemetery@legionmail.org



Good Day, everyone! I recently received this information from Mike McDaniel, Adjutant, Dept. of Florida. It's about the Florida National Cemetery (in Bushnell) Memorial Day Flag Placement and Removal.

Flag placement is May 27, 2018, and removal is May 27, 2018. (Thanks Mike)

There have been many changes at Florida

National since last year, including a new Columbarium added in the 600 section, and the new office building that is almost finished. Tony Thomas, Marine Retired, and FNC Executive Director, has been keeping very busy with many projects, repairs, additions, and much, much, more since he arrived last summer. He would like us to help him organize a volunteer group to man the reception area for the event. Dan McCarthy is heading that project and will be sharing details in the next few weeks.

Flags for Fallen Vets has designed uniquely shaped 2018 Challenge Coins that may be obtained on the website, www.flagsforfallenvets.com for a donation of \$20.



facebook.com/floridalegion





Legacy / Unity Ride Coming Up

Jim Day, American Legion Riders
legionriders@legionmail.org



Where has the time gone... it's almost spring and time for the 2018 Legacy/Unity Ride. This year we will be venturing out to other states and spreading that Florida ALR energy. Post 54 has graciously offered to hold the Kick-Off party on Friday April 6th, 2018. We have an aggressive and fun ride planned and will be starting on Saturday April 7th, 2018 headed to Americus, GA and Andersonville for the first and second nights. After GA we will be headed to Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and back into Florida. We have several stops planned at military museums/memorials

and some fun for us stops as well. The hotel list is available online or by contacting Jennifer Day at ALRAdjutant@legionmail.org.

Special THANK YOU to Jim Wineland and Jim Bowers for the countless hours of planning for this year's ride. If you noticed, the name of the ride has changed. This year we will still be dividing funds between the National Legacy Scholarship Fund and Florida American Legion programs. We as ALR's support a great many things and do so with 110% plus, with that being said, we have many programs here in our own state that can use our help and money.

Many changes were in the works for myself and family for the past month and the next few months. I have been appointed and accepted the position of National ALR Committee Member Southern Area. This position will take some of my time and I will be

relying heavily on our ALR Vice Chairman, Jim Wineland. Jim has already stepped up to help organize the 2018 ALR Summit and the 2018 Florida ALR Legacy/Unity Ride. In addition to the appointment, we have relocated to North Florida. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding while we focus on moving and getting settled in. Please keep posting events and information on the Florida American Legion Riders Facebook page. Sharing information and communication is the only way to keep our momentum rolling and support each other's events.



Support Our Children & Youth

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



Greetings and salutations to all from your Children and Youth Chairman! The first month of 2018 has come and gone, and it has been a rather chilly one for us Floridians. The next class of Florida Legion College has graduated and the ALR has had the 2nd Annual Summit in Cocoa Beach.

The final flyers have been put together for both

the C&Y Picnic in Palm Bay, and the C&Y Golf Tournament in Lady Lakes. Please check the links on the Children and Youth page or the Department Calendar for the registration forms, sign up for golfing, and sponsorship forms. We are looking for monetary donations, donations of raffle items, bottles of alcohol, and whatever else you would like to donate for both events. All proceeds from these two events go directly to C&Y programs. If you are able, please help sponsor these two programs, and make plans to attend them. The flyers have all the details on them for dates, times, where to send donations and signing up for the events. Both events are always well represented and do quite well raising money for our youth programs, and I am expecting the same again this year.

This is the last month to get your applications together for JROTC Cadet of the Year, Eagle Scout of the Year, and General Scholarships. The March 1st deadline is fast approaching, and all applications must be in by then to qualify.

I still have plenty of the 2017-2018 C&Y challenge coins available for a \$10.00 donation. I find it interesting that with over 100,000 Legion members in our state, that I still have so many left. All proceeds from the coin also go to C&Y. I will be out and about trying to get you to purchase one. I have them wherever I go! If your Post or District would like to purchase a larger amount to sell locally, please contact me!

Until next month, thank you for continuing to support our Fourth Pillar, and safe travels.

Mythbuster

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair
veteransbenefits@legionmail.org



A lot of veterans believe that because they are a veteran, they can get free Emergency Room health care, this not true.

All information is from FDVA Training and Reference Guide.

Eligibility and how to file an authorized private hospital claim

- A. Must be an emergency.
- B. Must notify the Department of Veterans Affairs within 72 hours of admission. Notification of such Emergency may be made by telephone, telegram or letter.
- C. Condition must be an emergency service-connected disability or Veteran must be 100% permanently and totally disabled. It cannot be an elective or scheduled admission.

- D. Female Veterans any emergency condition. (only provision).
- E. Must be an emergency condition while on active Vocational Rehabilitation participant. Service connected, or non-service connected.
- F. VA facilities are not available.
- G. Payment is only to date of stabilization. Veteran must accept transfer to a VA medical facility.
- H. Preferred method of transfer is having treating physician call VAMC doctor.





Boomer Times Expo

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



The Holidays have taken up most of this past month so with the schools closed, there was little activity that I was advised of involving our Cadet Programs. The Boomer Times Expo for seniors and our veterans was held this month. It is very informative for our seniors/veterans, giving them information on healthy living, travel, home health care, money management and many other services valuable to enhancing a better quality of life. The event was held at the Seminole Coconut Creek Casino and was an all-day event. We had the privilege of having the Monarch JROTC Color Guard present the Colors for the

Opening Ceremony. They gave an outstanding performance and remained for the medley of patriotic songs and tribute to the veterans. There were special drawings for the Veterans who registered for the event. Ten \$100 in Silver Dollars Cash Drawing in addition to all Veterans got a Silver Dollar when registering at the door. There were other prizes, cruises, a TV and \$25 in Silver Dollars given throughout the day. These events in our community are an excellent way to have our Cadets participate in and assist our veterans, all while getting community service points.

The National Postal Marksmanship Target Orders have come to a close. All targets must be fired and returned to National by Feb. 01. All posts please follow up with your teams to make sure the deadline is met. Time is not extended for late returns. I wish all our teams much success and many thanks for your participation.



Monarch JROTC Color Guard presentation of Colors for Boomer Times event

More Than One Way to Skin a Cat

Meri West, Oratorical Chair
 oratorical@legionmail.org

For those that have worked on the Oratorical Contest, you know how challenging it can be to get students to compete and how much work putting a contest together really is. It is difficult and a lot.

My Dad, an Army Sergeant First Class and biologist would say..."Meri, there is more than one way to skin a cat." Not the gymnastic move and not an actual cat, as it turns out. In the south, the idiom is an abbreviated reference to cat fish, not felines. Whew!

Post 37 in St. Augustine was struggling to find enough volunteers to get the Oratorical program on solid footing but the Auxiliary President, Nancy Birchall, offered to organize the contest for the Post. With the blessing of the Department Program Director and the Post Commander, Birchall did exactly that.

On Jan. 7th at Flagler College, the Post and Auxiliary held the Oratorical contest with seven students competing from four different schools! What a great turnout.

The contest was held at the historic Flagler

College in St. Augustine. It is a luxurious setting, steeped in history and tradition. The Student Government President gave the opening remarks and other Flagler students helped escort the audience members in. Jim Cruthfield, Post 37 Oratorical Chair emceed the contest.

Without the help of the Auxiliary, this contest would not have happened. Taking a cue from our National Commander, Denise Rohan, we demonstrated how the American Legion Family gets things done--by working together, thinking outside the box and a willingness to try something new or different to accomplish the goal for the greater good.

Mission accomplished.

Nancy Birchall was the driving force behind this effort. She was the 1962 State Delegate to Florida Girls State in St. Augustine. She is a member of Post 37 and the current Auxiliary President. In 2012 she co-founded Forward March, Inc., a non-profit organization founded to promote military awareness and support in St. Johns County. For four years, its main project was to raise funds to renovate Post 37. Nancy serves on the board of St. Augustine Board of Young Life, and for Youth Leadership St. Johns. She is also the coordinator for the St. Augustine Youth in Government and serves as the Girls State Coordinator for Post 37.

Each year she teaches a class on the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens and she was a Toastmaster for 15 years, reaching the designation of Advanced Toastmaster Gold.

Next year, we will encourage more Auxiliaries to work with Posts that need help in hosting an Oratorical Contest proving that yes, there is "more than one way to skin a cat."





Class of 2018 a History Maker

Tom Gora, Legion College Chair
deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org



THE FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE CLASS OF 2018 – MAKES HISTORY!

The Florida American Legion College was in session January 11-13, 2018. This year's class was comprised of 27 participants, the first FALC ever to have participants from the entire American Legion Family graduate from FALC! Among this year's graduates are the President of the Department of Florida ALA, and the Detachment Commander of the Sons of the Legion. The 2018 FALC Class motto selected by participants is: "GET 'ER DONE!"

Thank you to all participants and faculty for making this another successful Florida America Legion College class. Past National Commander Clarence Hill provided participants with his unique experiences as a National Commander discussing the relationship between the National-Department-Post levels of The American Legion, and providing detailed structure critique of the Resolutions written by the class. Department Commander Steve Shuga spoke about his role and relationship with the Areas, Districts, and Posts. Commander Shuga also spoke extensively about leadership. We missed having 2nd Vice Commander Rick Johnson with us, and we wish his wife a speedy recovery. Elizabeth Douglas gave Rick's class on Programs focusing on what we can do, and then on awards Legionnaires can earn

for their hard work. Barry and Larry Roberts, our Department Chaplain and VA Entitlements Chairman, spoke about the many pitfalls veterans can fall into, such as the veteran suicide rate, and what could be done to help. There was focused discussion on the office of Post Adjutant, and who could possibly fill that role if a qualified Legionnaire were not available.

As part of the class, participants learn the importance of writing Resolutions, and they are tasked to write and present Resolutions to the class, the Commander, and faculty before graduation. This year the class was assigned one Resolution Subject concerning how we at the Department, District, and Post levels can implement the National Executive Committee Resolution #1 passed by the NEC in October 2017, "Reaffirmation for a strong America." Then each District selected a subject to write their own Resolution. These Resolutions are critiqued,

and then passed on to Department leadership. Participants were then allowed to choose a topic of their own to write another Resolution. There was much discussion on Resolutions on how to bring the male spouses of female Legionnaires into the Legion family if they do not qualify for membership. Some unique ideas on that subject I have not heard before came up in discussion, and my observation is that this FALC Class is dedicated to coming up to a solution, and will continue to work on their ideas.

As FALC Chairman, I congratulate these FALC graduates and I now challenge you to put what you learned to work for "the good of the Legion" at your post, in your district, or department. Use what you learned to help ensure what we all believe; Florida is the best darn Department in The American Legion!



The Florida American Legion College Class of 2018

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How will you "Tell the World"?

Bob Colbert, Social Media Chair
socialmedia@legionmail.org



Wow! A new year! 2018 is here! And now the Legion Family is starting fresh! I bet your Legion Family is planning all sorts of things – Valentine’s Day Dance, Picnics, Four Chaplain’s Ceremonies, and lots more! All of the planning

in the world will only be as good as your PLANS TO TELL THE WORLD that you are having these events. Both Facebook Groups and Facebook Fan Pages can be a help for you and THEY ARE

FREE! The Facebook Group gets the word to your existing members and the Facebook Fan Page tells the rest of the world about what’s going on. And, let’s not forget the WEB page as well as your newsletter’s calendar AND send the notices to your local TV and radio stations! You can have a SUPER activity ONLY if people SHOW UP. And, they can’t show up if they don’t know about it.

TV and Radio stations like to know about planned events 45-60 days in advance, but if this is the first time that you have thought about it, send it anyway. Be sure that your “Press Release” has all of the necessary information in a condensed format. Don’t be too wordy in a Press Release or the TV and Radio folks, may not read it. Half a page is

good (8-½ x 11 - double spaced) but NEVER more than a page! Include the “Who, What, Why, When, Where and How” in your press release to get their interest. It’s no guarantee that they will show up, but at least you have a shot.

Emails and FB notices should be kept to no more than one a day AND skip a couple of days between reminders, otherwise people will “tune you out.”

Here’s hoping for a FANTASTIC SPRING and SUMMER for your Legion Family.

Until next month

Recruit Your Cadets

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



I hope that all of you had as good of a holiday season as we have had up here. Now is the time to recruit your cadets for the Florida Highway Patrol/American Legion Cadet Program. All

information and all the forms that you need for each cadet is on Department’s website. We have a 25 cadet limit, and all I can say is, “first come, first serve.” All applications for each cadet, plus a check for \$350.00

made out to the American Legion Department of Florida, should be mailed to my home address. Once we receive them, Tom Gora and I will go over applications to make sure that everything is OK. If there is anything wrong, we will return the applications to the Post who submitted them with an explanation. If everything is OK, we will then forward all the information and checks to the Department, asap.

Florida was the 17th Department to initiate this program. Three years ago was our first year, and we had only 8 cadets for the first class. Last year we had 17 cadets sign up, with 1 not attending. From the feedback we are receiving all over the state, I am sure we will have a full class this year.

Our Post 373 sent 2 cadets last year. A few months ago, these 2 cadets came to our Post meeting and explained to our members just how great this program was and what it meant to them. We got these cadets from the Clay County Explorers Program. This is a great place to recruit your cadets. If you do not have access to this program, talk to your local sheriff and/or your local police. Let’s make this a great year for this program! If I can be of any help, please do not hesitate to contact me at 904-272-1619. Home address: 2872 Circle Ridge Drive, Orange Park, FL 32065.

July 5-8, 2018
Department Convention
 Marriott Orlando World Center
 Orlando, FL

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January 25, 2018 90% Target Report (Currently 86.28%)		
11	Donna Artola	93.29%
4	Victoria VanBuren	92.08%
7	David Tucker	91.25%
6	Michael Seidel	89.50%
16	Raymond Perez	89.33%
8	Jerry Faught	87.49%
15	Richard Little	87.32%
1	Raymond Olsen	86.45%
17	Michael Wolohan	86.22%
5	Troy Horsley	85.92%
12	Bruce Thurber	85.70%
13	Michael Raymond	85.23%
2	John Folsom	83.07%
9	Donald Schwiesow	81.51%
3	Frederick Hutto	79.14%
14	Gary Decker	74.78%
Central	Jay Allen	89.17%
Eastern	Daryl Bass	87.86%
Northern	Jeffrey Durden	86.55%
Southwestern	Dennis Walsh	86.25%
Western	James Brennan	85.83%
Southern	James Tewes	83.36%
Post 400		87.55%
Post 208		81.73%



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2018 CONVENTION VOTING GUIDE

During the 2017 Department Convention, the membership voted to adopt a new method for voting for Department Officers. All voting for Department Officers will now take place via ballots and scanned with electronic tabulation machines. This will provide a private setting in which to cast secret ballots and expedite the voting process. This guide will provide some pertinent information for the voting process at your 2018 Department Convention.

The annual election of Department officers shall be by special order of business, the results of which should be announced at 1:00 P.M., or as soon as practical thereafter, on the day set for adjournment of the Convention or at the call of the Chair.

Voting for all elected Department Officers shall be by official ballot provided upon registration to any Posts so registered based on paid delegate strength. All official ballots are the responsibility of the acting chairman of each delegation and shall not be replaced for any reason under any circumstances.

How does Department come up with delegate strength? Each Post shall be entitled to two (2) delegates and two (2) alternates and to one (1) additional delegate and alternate for each additional (100) one hundred members provided that the per capita tax is paid fifteen (15) days prior to the Department Convention.

Additionally, according to Section 6, Article 5 of the Department Constitution, a member of the Department Executive Committee shall be a delegate. Therefore, the Post that they are a member of will receive one additional vote.

Each Post will receive one (1) official ballot for every paid delegate at the time of registration with the exception of the Past Department Commander's ballot, which will be provided on the floor at the time of voting as detailed in Section 6, Article V of the Department Constitution. Ballots may either be voted collectively by the acting chairman of each delegation or individually by Post delegates to the Convention. The vote of any delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the delegates present from the Post.

Those candidates having an endorsement on file at Department by May 30, 2018, will be pre-printed on the ballot. The ballots shall provide for a write-in candidate for each office, should one be nominated off the Convention floor without prior endorsement by their respective Post.

Nominations for Department Officers shall be from the floor of the Convention. Nominating speeches shall be limited to five (5) minutes each. No more than two (2) seconding speeches shall be made for each candidate, each of which shall not exceed two (2) minutes.

Immediately following nominations, ballot voting shall begin on electronic scanning equipment provided by the Orange County Supervisor of Elections. All ballot voting shall be completed by 1:00 p.m. except Posts still in line to vote at that time. Once all the votes have been scanned the election is closed and tally begins.

A team of election officials will oversee the election process. These officials shall consist of an employee of the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office, the Assistant Department Adjutant, and the Department Assistant Judge Advocate or a representative appointed by the Department Commander in his/her absence.

The election officials will examine any ballot rejections to determine the intent of the ballot. If a ballot reflects votes for two (2) candidates for the same office that ballot will have that one (1) office's vote cancelled and the balance of the ballot cast as presented. Should duplicate ballots be presented, the scanners will reject the votes from both ballots.

The election officials will supervise the vote tally collected by the scanners. The candidate for each office that receives the most votes shall be declared the winner. The results will be placed in an envelope which will be presented to the Secretary of the Convention (Department Adjutant) on the Convention stage to be announced.

In cases of a tie vote, a roll call of Posts for the purpose of casting their votes for the tied candidates shall continue until one candidate receives the majority of votes cast, the roll call is complete or until there shall be only one candidate for a particular Department office.

All official ballots will be retained as permanent record of the Department for a period of two (2) years.

PROPER USE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION EMBLEM



Below is important information regarding the proper use of THE AMERICAN LEGION word mark and emblem. Please adhere strictly to these guidelines when creating any materials, publications or merchandise. You can download or request a copy of the emblem here: <https://www.legion.org/emblem/download>.

The American Legion branding and names are all federally protected. Not adhering to these rules, is a violation of federal law and could incur a fine or even potential jail time.

If ever in question about their use, please do not hesitate to ask. These rules apply at ALL times and are governed by our National Headquarters.

General emblem and word mark use:

1. When used as a word mark to describe a program or service, THE AMERICAN LEGION should appear in all capital letters.
Also, AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY AND SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
2. When used as a corporate or trade name, it may appear as THE AMERICAN LEGION or The American Legion.
Also, AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY or American Legion Auxiliary; SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION or Sons of The American Legion
3. **ANY use of The American Legion emblem must obtain prior approval from National!**
With the exceptions of: stationary, publications, notices, posters or ordinary routine communication of legitimate department business.
4. No changes may be made to The American Legion Emblem.

Emblem Sales and The American Legion Merchandise:

5. **Any** items/merchandise printed with The American Legion emblem, including use of the department emblem, **must be approved by Department and National.** You must submit exact product, color and quantity, how the item will be used and manufacturer information. Go here to download a permission form: https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/emblem_req_form.pdf.
6. **Re-orders** or **additional quantities**, must go through the entire approval process again.
7. Preference to American manufacturers with respect to quality and pricing should be given always.
8. Anything bearing the American Flag used by our organization, must be made in America.

Resources:

1. Emblem Use FAQ - <https://www.legion.org/emblem/faq>
2. Request to Use emblem - <https://www.legion.org/emblem/request>
3. Nationally approved licensees (must still gain approval for emblem use from National) - http://emblem.legion.org/approved_licensees.asp





- Department Adjutant, Mike McDaniel and wife Cathy, Marine Veteran

"Our job is to provide Veterans a hand up and get them where they need to be by giving them support."
 - Department Adjutant, Mike McDaniel and wife Cathy, Marine Veteran (pictured above)

LEGION FAMILY Spotlight: Department Commander's Charity of Choice



Department Commander (2017-2018)
Steve Shuga

This year, the American Legion, Department of Florida's Commander, Steve Shuga, chose PROJECT: VetRelief as his primary charity of choice. He indicated that the first \$50,000 raised during his year will be earmarked for our program. Anything after that, will go towards the remaining Florida Legion programs, unless donations are marked specifically for PROJECT: VetRelief.

So far, the total amount raised this year is \$32,153.00; *that's \$17,847 short. We want to make sure that we help him reach his goal of \$50,000!*

Commander Shuga is in the middle of his District visits. While he's making his rounds, present your donation to him and he will turn them into the Department Headquarters Office. *And remember*, any Post that donates through the Commander's Charity will also be eligible for the PVR Challenge and receive awards during the Department Convention in July.

We'd like to **thank the following Posts and Squadron** who have already submitted their donations (order is listed by date received, not by amount given):

328	74	389	157
378	66	69	222
270	16	252	79
172	155	230	
107	SQ 183	129	
58	119	243	

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Upcoming Events

FEB 17-18 **ALR Coral Head Music Fest Marathon, FL**
 2 Day Pass: \$45-Before event | \$60-At Gate*
 Come rock out during a *two-day* concert event. Featured bands include: Great White, Slaughter, and much more!
 *Single day passes are available for \$30 in advance or \$40 at the gate.

MAY 11 **Post 409 Golf Tournament Orlando, FL**
 Individual Player - \$125 | Foursome - \$400
 Enjoy a day filled of fun, contests, raffles, and prizes. *Sponsorship Opportunities Available!*

Don't forget to tell us about your PROJECT: VetRelief fundraising events!

GET WELL SOON, MICHAEL BEAVEN!

As many of you know, our Case Worker, Michael Beaven, kicked off 2018 with an extensive cardiovascular surgery. This procedure was something he had been waiting for since 2012. The surgery went very well and he has already started to feel a difference during his recovery process. After spending two weeks in the ICU, he was *finally* able to go home and sleep in his own bed!

Michael would like for us to pass along that he is very thankful for the thoughts and prayers from his Legion Family. Although we are anxiously waiting for him to return, we hope that he takes the necessary time to heal.



Michael Beaven in the ICU recovering from surgery.



SUPPORT CASES
 JULY-DEC 2017 TOTALS

families helped	amount distributed
68	\$64,384.39

*Numbers reflect PROJECT: VetRelief Cases ONLY

WE ARE GROWING - More cases equals more funding!



As you can see from the chart on the left, PROJECT: VetRelief has been able to increase the number of military families we help through our financial assistance program. Already, we have helped **11 more families** and given out an **additional \$17,630.54** than we did at this time last year. This is something we are very proud of!

All the support that we provide derives from funds donated from the Legion Family, corporations, and individuals who believe in the good work we do! We are so grateful for those who contribute to our organization. But, as the amount of financial cases increase, the demand for additional funding increases, as well.

You can help us continue supporting our service members by donating through the Legion Family Challenge, Commander's charity or Post fundraising events.

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