



THE LEGION LINK



MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

★ SERVICE
★ HONOR
★ SACRIFICE



DECEMBER 2019

COMMANDER WILLIAM "RICK" JOHNSON

VOLUME 28 ISSUE V

IN THIS EDITION

Officers

- 1 Commander
- 4 1st Vice Commander
- 4 2nd Vice Commander
- 5 3rd Vice Commander
- 5 NEC
- 7 Judge Advocate
- 8 Historian

Area Commanders

- 6 Central Area
- 6 Northern Area
- 6 Southern Area

Membership

- 8 Northern Membership
- 9 Southern Membership
- 19 Membership Reports

Chairs

- 9 Americanism
- 10 Children & Youth
- 11 Employment
- 11 Shooting Sports/JROTC
- 12 Legion College
- 13 Law & Order
- 13 Legion Riders
- 14 Oratorical
- 14 Post Development
- 15 PROJECT: VetRelief
- 16 PVR: Suicide Prevention
- 16 VA&R
- 17 Scouting
- 17 VA Entitlement
- 17 SAL Advisory
- 18 Youth Law Cadet
- 18 Women Veterans

Department

- 18 Programs Director

From your Department Commander Rick Johnson

Rick Johnson, Commander
commander@floridalegion.org



Start the New Year Off Right

Hello family members I hope that everyone had a great Veterans Day and turkey day as the jolly old man is upon us. First, I want to THANK YOU all for such a great

Fall Conference and such a good time. The classes went very well, and all were full with members participating. The haircut event on stage was such a great event with fun had by all for COTA and thank you for the COTA family being there.

December will be a very busy month for all of us as it is the time to give back within your communities. Talking about communities, we need more posts to adopt a highway. Just a few out of 392 have done this so far. Please contact your

county DOT and let's get this moving forward.

Let's not forget Pearl Harbor Day, Wreaths Across America and the fun day Christmas. A lot of posts have special events going on this month especially for the kids to enjoy, so let's get the word out and let us know what happened during this special time.

The membership teams are out there strong and willing to help anyone who will ask for it. Don't let this go on too long without asking for help and begin the New Year off right.

I want to say Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone. God bless you all and safe travels as we bring in 2020 and move forward. It is such a great pleasure to represent you and seven more months left as we will have fun doing this together.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all

Tank Out



November 5, 2019

To: Members of The American Legion Department of Florida



On Friday June 28, 2019 at the American Legion Department of Florida Convention a motion was made to form a committee for National Commissions/Committee Appointments and Call-in selections from the Department of Florida.

The committee consists of the National Executive Committee Member (NEC), Department Commander, Department Adjutant, a Past Department Commander appointed by the National Executive Committee Member Alternate (NECA) and a member appointed by the Department Commander. The motion was seconded and passed by the Department of Florida membership.

Below you will find a document entitled Appointments to National Commissions and Committees. You will see two (2) columns one titled "Committee Selection" which represents the work of the committee, you, the Department membership created by the above motion. The second column defined as "NEC Selection" defines the individuals appointed to the committee. NEC Boland submitted his list ignoring the list you, the membership demanded. The National Executive Committee Member (NEC) Dennis Boland states he has nothing to do with appointments.

Seems Past National Commander Jake Comer disagrees. In his message to our Alternate National Executive Committee member Art Schwabe, PNC Mr. Comer states "Disappointing to realize that you as ALT. NEC would not get up and remind the "haters of the national constitution" regarding **NEC recommendations** to the natl. cmdr (National Commander) who is the only one eligible to make appointments. Why is PNC Jake Comer involved? What position does he hold?

Long and the short of it, 72% of your Committee for National Commissions/Committee Appointments and Call-in selections were ignored by your National Executive Committee Member Mr. Boland. This is just to let you know how much your collective opinion means to NEC member Boland.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED

William "Rick" Johnson

Commander

American Legion Department of Florida

Service ★ Honor ★ Sacrifice

<i>Appointments to National Commissions and Committees</i>	
Committee Selection	NEC Selection
Les M. Martin	Committee on Children & Youth
	Sidney Damsgard
	Americanism Council
Jerry Brandt	Bruce Carl
Kurt Gies	Andrew Burkett / Wayne Mulligan
Jim Ramos	Brian Holeyfield
Anthony J. Torregrossa	Charles Rousseau
Omer Smith	Omer Smith
Jeffrey Durden	Bruce Thurber
Charles Weber	Charles Weber
Cherie Korn	Les Martin
	Convention Commission
Art Schwabe	Dianne Boland
	Internal Affairs Commission
Lawrence White	Lena Heredia-Perez
	Constitution & By-Laws Committee
John Dollinger	Jeff Durden
	National Convention Resolutions Assignment Committee
Richard Mondro	David Pleasanton
	Legislative Commission
Paul Martel	Paul Martel
	Media & Communications Council
Edward Lewis	Henry Mangels
	Conventional Armed Forces Committee
Jerry Faught	Dennis Mallon
	Law and Order & Homeland Security Committee
George Wehrli	George Wehrli
	National Guard & Reserve Forces Committee
Raymond Perez	Wayne Schorr

National Security Council	
Robert Bober	Jay L. Allen
Robert Brewster	Robert Brewster
Paul Bosco, Jr.	Jerry Faught
Troy Horsley	Troy Horsley
Lamar Carroll	Johnny Castro
Angelo Felicita, Jr.	David Klug
Raymond Kruse	Angelo Felicita, Jr.
Henry Mangels	Robert D. Miller, Jr.
Joan Suelter	Brian Taz Gehling
Raymond Olsen	Raymond Olsen
Arthur Barber	Joseph Motes
Ellen M. Tierney	Steven Newman
Jill A. Harvell	John Rauh
Deborah Wheeler	Deborah Wheeler
Loretta Young	Loretta Young
	National Cemetery Committee
Jack Stanley	Jack Stanley
	Veterans Benefits Committee
Michael Beaven	David Sweeney
	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Council
Alfred E. Varrone	Daryl Bass
Eunice Butts	Jimmy E. Bowers, Jr.
James N. Bowers	James Douglas
Rick Orzechowski	Shirley Douglas
Arthur Dudley	Arthur Dudley
Oliver Kennedy	Oliver Kennedy
John M. Edens, Sr.	James E. Burk
Larry Roberts	Larry Roberts
Stuart Scott	Samuel Heredia-Perez
Thomas J. Gora	David Miller
	Veterans Employment & Education Commission
Randall McNabb	Joseph Magee

Buddy Checks, CPRs, and Membership

Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



First off, I would like to thank our Department Commander, Rick Johnson, for giving me an opportunity to cut my hair. Now I know what I will look like in 20 years when my hair falls out. Really, if you were not at the Fall Conference, you missed a lot of fun. Again, thank you Commander.

Currently we all should be finishing up a "Buddy Check", reaching out to the members who have not visited the Posts in a while. Ensure they are doing ok and invite them down to your Post. We all know Thanksgiving and Christmas is coming up and ask them to join the celebration. In January/February a 2nd check should take place; this is where you ask about the dues as well as how they are doing.

Everyone should have received the notice on the Consolidated Post Reports now

being available online. Commanders should start documenting their accomplishments and the online CPR's is a way for them to keep track of what you do within your Post.

As for membership in Zone 1, we currently have 4 or 5 Districts in the top 6 positions within the Department of Florida, well done. We have a POSITIVE membership total up from last year, in fact, we are up 1,184 Legionnaires from last year in Zone 1 as of the 8th of November. Please keep up the good work.

By the way, 6th District won the traveling trophy this quarter for being the highest in membership percentage in zone 1. So, if you want to win the trophy, reach the top in Zone 1 and you may win it. Next quarter is here.

The Department needs members to step up, if you want to be Chairperson for a program, please fill out the form listed in www.floridalegion.org > Resources > Legion Post Documents > Forms > Dept Chair Interest. The forms will be reviewed starting January, so don't delay.

30. I also attended the Centennial Celebration at post 7, Clearwater, Fl and was Invited to speak to students at Edison and DeSota Elementary schools for "The Great American Teach-In".

Congratulations to Les Martin on receiving The Manatee County Veteran of The Year Award. For Thanksgiving I will be passing out food baskets and turkeys from my home with post 167 and Auxiliary.

Thanks to the post who made their 65% and above membership goal. Department membership chairman, Area commanders, District commanders and DISTRICT MEMBERSHIP chairman please help those post who are under 65%. Sometimes they will say they are ok and you know that they need your help. SUGGESTION: "Lets pull up 400's in a 5 to 10 mile radius of the post. Now,

DECEMBER 2019

1	Civil Air Patrol (USAF Aux) Birthday
2	Cyber Monday (floridalegionstore.org)
3	#Giving Tuesday
3	Oratorical Information Due
3	Special Olympics Basketball Competition
6-9	District 5 Visit ☆
7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
7-8	District 5 Pearl Harbor Ceremony ☆
7	Special Olympics Basketball Competition
7	District 2 Meeting
11	National Membership Goal 75% ★
13	U.S. National Guard Birthday
13	Special Olympics Christmas Dinner/Dance
14	Wreaths Across America
14	Homeless Veterans Outreach Award
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15	Jr Shooting Sports Target Deadline
19	Employment Awards Due
20	Operation Just Cause (1989)
21	First Day of Winter
22	Hanukkah Begins
24	Headquarters Closed
25	Christmas Day
24-1	Headquarters Closed
30	Hanukkah Ends

☆ - Commander Rick Johnson's Attendance Tentative.

★ - National Event

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.

For more details and updates visit www.floridalegion.org.

I will help you call and hopefully transfer some members into your post. Give a membership as a Christmas gift to those you know that qualify, etc.

Think outside of the box. Remember, the 2nd vice commander of zone 2 will be giving \$100.00 to all post who make 100% in membership at 12:00 midnight December 31, 2019. For more information contact Your district commander.

I wish each of you and your families a very blessed Christmas and a very prosperous, and successful New Year.

The Gift of Membership

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



It was great seeing so many of you at the Fall conference. There were many informational classes. On November 8, 2019 I had the honor of being invited to "the Veterans Court" in Tampa, Fl. It is classified as one of the best "Veterans Court" in the state of Florida. The judge is a veteran and he is really for the success of the veterans and their wellbeing.

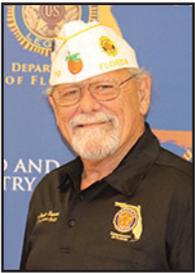
I was invited to participate in the Veterans Day Parade by post 266, Sarasota, Fl and had dinner at post



The Good, The Bad and the Ugly

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



Normally I don't wait till the last minute to submit my article for the Link, but I really had to think this one out. I saw a post on Facebook this morning from our Dept. Commander that said we must surround ourselves not only with people who always agree with us, but people who sometimes have a difference of opinion. Ladies and gentlemen, these are words to live by!

I'd like to talk about our last Dept. Conference which I affectionately call the good, the bad and the ugly! First the good. A great Conference by anyone's standards. Very well attended, utilization of training classes was outstanding with almost every class filled. Awesome logistics

with a very diverse and well-planned sponsor list. Plenty of vendors. And even rewards to visit our vendors which was an outstanding idea. Also, the District Commander meeting was a great idea and, in my opinion, should be a standard at every Conference/Convention.

Now the bad. There was a big problem with overlapping classes. This has always been an issue but very hard to fix without extending the hours which could interfere with our socializing. There's an issue with the utilization of very qualified instructors. We have so many good, qualified people with teaching/training experience that we just don't use. Our past Dept. Commanders have so much experience to share and are so well respected that it is a shame we don't utilize this goldmine of information. We could find a way to have people submit requests with resume's somehow. Food and drink prices have always been a problem, but I guess we're at the mercy of the venue for this issue. And of course,

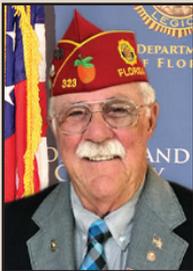
thanks to our District Commanders, we've resolved the issue of Hotel cost reimbursement. Thank you for that.

Now the ugly. Without going into detail, I'd like to say that I was very uncomfortable with the whole trial issue especially the Executive Committee fiasco. There must be a better way to handle our internal issues without it becoming a circus. Lock the concerned parties in a room till they can come up with an agreeable resolution. If not, just like in our own government, there will be an election coming up. One thing I do strongly believe is that we are an organization by the Veterans, for the Veterans and no one has a higher pay grade than the other. We must enforce all resolutions by the membership and ensure consequences will result if not followed. Now I will get off my soapbox and get back to work. Thank you Legion family for all you do, also for the love you've shared during my recent loss. From the bottom of my heart, Thank You.

Support for Gold Star Families

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



First, Dianne and I, would like to wish you and your family a very MERRY CHRISTMAS from our house to yours.

Servicemembers do not serve alone. Their spouses, children and other loved ones also sacrifice. While every servicemember raises his or her hand and swears an oath to die, if necessary, to defend the nation, a disconnect often exists between the military community and surviving family members.

The American Legion recently created a full-time staff position at its national headquarters to advocate for Gold Star families.

Surviving families should receive the highest level of support as they face heart-wrenching decisions immediately upon being notified. Every branch of service should have an effective Gold Star program that ensures the families have all the support they need from the moment they are informed of their loved one's sacrifice. Reports have also surfaced of surviving parents and siblings not having access to graves of their loved ones who died while in the service because the grave site is located on a military installation. In many cases, family members may be unaware of the services offered by local Gold Star coordinators, who can ensure access and assistance.

What Can Congress Do?

- Establish a program within the Department of Defense that ensures Gold Star families receive the benefits and support they have earned.
- Ensure that Gold Star families are

provided access to appropriate installations in order to visit the graves of loved ones.

On November 21, 1864 President Abraham Lincoln's letter to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, who lost two sons in the Civil War read:

"I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom".



Thank You Legion Family

Sid Damsgard, Central Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org

I would like to thank commander Johnson for the confidence in me to assume the Central Area Commander post. Commander Allen was advised by his doctors that his health would be in jeopardy if he continued in the position, so he reluctantly had to resign. I thank Jay for his excellent service to the area and only

hope to fill in for him adequately.

As I finalize the calendar for the remainder of the year, I intend to honor most of the commitments made by Commander Allen but expect there will be conflicts due to my position as Post 275 Commander. The District Commanders are helping me, and we are making the transition as smooth as possible. Rick, Bruce and Randal have been supportive, and I thank them for that.

To date I have been able to attend the 7th District meeting and several events representing the Legion and our mission. Madeira Beach boat parade was a great success once again. To see all those boats decorated in patriotic themes was quite a scene. Post 238 had a great Veterans Day celebration at their marina with a good attendance by the local population.

I would like to wish the Legion Family a safe and happy holiday season.

Northern Area News

Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org



Congratulations to the Posts that have attained their 75% membership goal!! The next goal date is 80% before 08 Jan 2020.

My goal for all the Districts in the

Northern Area, is 100% by St. Patrick's Day. This is due to the Race to the Top deadline being set at 31 Mar 2020. This Award is a National Membership Award, that recognizes the top District Commander in five membership categories. More information on Race to the Top can be found on pages 37-38 of the Department Membership Manual.

Does your Post have members that have not renewed for 2019 (last year)? Call them. Are there Post 400 Members & DMS Members in your area? Use MyLegion.org to find out, then call them.

Is your Post going to be hosting a Children's Christmas Party? Look around your Post for a Proper Santa. Beard & Belly are a plus, but the most important quality of a Santa, is Love of Children. While the Party is on, look at the Parents for indications that they are eligible for the American Legion, (such as a hat, belt buckle, necklace, earrings, tattoo, etc.) and ask them to join.

Here are a few reminders and other important dates:

- 1) Boys State Delegate fee - \$450 per Delegate - is due 22 Dec.
- 2) Post Level Oratorical Contests must be completed NLT 19 Jan 2020. That means

you should be conducting and finishing your candidate selection process this month, if you have not already done so.

3) American Legion Baseball Team Registration starts 01 Jan 2020.

4) Now is the time to start planning a Four Chaplains Memorial Service. This Honors Four Army Chaplains that gave up their lives on 03 Feb 1943, when the U.S.A.T. Dorchester sank.

5) Spring is coming. That means Shooting Sports, School Medals, and the ALR Summit.

The Northern Area Ball will be held on 21 Mar 2020, at American Legion Post 155 in Crystal River. See Flyer for details.

Regardless which Religious Holiday you celebrate, Have a Happy & Safe Holiday Season.

December Festivities

Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander
southernarea@legionmail.org



December is upon us. The Civil Air Patrol, the Auxiliary of the United States Air Force, is having its Birth day on the 1st of December. Do you know of a Unit in your area? Look it up, go visit, and introduce yourself.

December 7th, 1939 marked the beginning of WWII. The United States entered the war in 1941 after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

We still have many WWII members in our Posts. Let's not forget them, and what they accomplished in their lifetime.

On the 11th of December your membership should be over 75%. To receive recognition for your Posts membership from the Department you need to be at 100% by the end of the year or December 31st. For those of you who have small Posts, and have less than 10 members who have not renewed, call them or go to their homes and find out why. I want to thank all the Posts in the three Districts and District Commands for keeping the Southern Area on top. Remember Head Quarters will be closed from the 24th of December thru January

1st New year's day, Don't forget about the following: **December 13** the US National Guard will be having their Birthday.

- **December 14** don't forget about Wreaths Across America
- **December 22nd** Boy States Delegate fees are due, and it also begins Hanukkah.

Keep this date open, January 25, 2020, this will be the Southern Area Ball held at American Legion Post 142 Pompano Beach Fl. They graciously stepped up and volunteered to host our event. The cost is \$20 dollars.

Have a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and Happy Kwanzaa.



*What are the duties of the chair?***Dick Mondo, Judge Advocate**

judgeadvocate@legionmail.org



I keep hearing people say that the commander of my post runs the post and its meetings and can do whatever he/she wants. WRONG!

Under Robert's Rules of Order, the chair of a meeting has 11 duties.

Open meeting: To open the meeting at the appointed time by taking the chair (sitting in the seat reserved for the presiding officer), after finding that a quorum is present, and calling the meeting to order.

Announce next activity: To announce in proper sequence the next activity before the group in accordance with the prescribed order of business.

Recognize members: To recognize group members who are entitled to the floor (who have the exclusive right to be heard at that time).

State questions and put to vote: To state and put to vote all questions that legitimately come before the group as motions or that otherwise arise in the course of proceedings, and to announce the result of each vote; or, if a motion that is not in order is made, to rule it out of order.

Refuse to recognize dilatory motions: To protect the group from obviously dilatory (time-wasting or obstructive) motions by refusing to recognize them.

Enforce order and decorum: Enforce order and decorum to enforce the rules relating to debate and those relating to order and decorum within the group.

Expedite business: To expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of

group members and the group rules.

Decide all questions of order: To decide all questions of order subject to appeal—unless, when in doubt, the chair prefers initially to submit such a question to the group for decision.

Respond to inquiries: To respond to inquiries of group members relating to parliamentary procedure or factual information bearing on the business of the group.

Authenticate documents: To authenticate by signature, when necessary, all acts, orders and proceedings of the group.

Close meeting: To declare the meeting adjourned when the group so votes or—where applicable—at the time prescribed in the agenda, or at any time in the event of a sudden emergency affecting the safety of those present.

These duties are listed in *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, 11th edition*, the only official and current version of Robert's Rules, on pages 449-450.

THE MEETING may be that of a nonprofit board, a professional society, a homeowners' association, a fraternal order or any group that is organized as a "voluntary association" (that is, not a hierarchical organization such as the workplace with its "boss.")

THE CHAIR (the person running the meeting) may be called chair, president, presiding officer, commander or something else.

Duties of chair do not include making the decision

Note that these duties are all about procedure—running the meeting well. The duties DO NOT INCLUDE lecturing or criticizing group members to make them vote the way you want, trying to convince people that you are right and they are wrong, or exercising your leadership position to determine the outcome of

the vote. During the meeting, you are not responsible for the decision the group makes. You are the facilitator and the servant of the group.

Duties of chair in small groups

It is important to note that in large groups, the chair does not make motions, debate them, or vote (except by ballot). Robert has special rules for small boards (up to about 12 people). In small boards, unless state law, regulations, or the group's bylaws say otherwise, the chair may debate, make motions and vote. Even so, the chair must exercise restraint. In order to achieve this, We recommend that on a small board, the chair should speak and vote last.

Different duties of chair outside the meeting

OUTSIDE THE MEETING the chair has other duties which may involve giving orders, making decisions, managing affairs and setting a direction. We encourage all chairs of nonprofit boards and leaders in local government to keep this distinction clear. Outside the meeting, exercise all your proper powers. During the meeting, be the servant of the group, and always remember that you are not responsible for the decision the group makes. The group is responsible, and **the group is the final authority.**



Break the Mold

Edward Lewis, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



As I sit in my home office, sweating a deadline for an article that I had been putting off for well, basically a month, I realized I should talk about deadlines and how it relates to Legion Historians and Legion history books.

To any Legion Historians that are taking the time to read this screed, I must say, "stop reading and get to work on your History books!" To any Legion commanders that are reading this, "stop reading and get on your Historians about their history books!" You see, I truly believe in the power of the Historian. Whether it be a Legion historian, museum historian or even the very important History teacher, it is

important to study our past, and it is vitally important we learn from it. Philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who cannot remember the past (or History) are condemned to repeat it." Those words should strike a very familiar chord with Legionnaires. When I ran for Post Commander, I said my least favorite saying was (and still is) "well, that's the way we've always done it."

The Legion has seen declining membership numbers for many years now. However, since October 7th, 2001 we have been at war. Yet, our membership hasn't reflected that sobering statistic. Why is that, and what is your Post doing to welcome our latest warriors? Because the numbers do not lie, if we keep doing it the way we've always done it, OUR numbers will continue to decline, even with the passage of the LEGION act.

What does this have to do with Historians?

We had some amazing classes at this year's Fall conference, and if I don't mind saying, I thought the Historian's class went very well. Ideas were exchanged, and people learned from each other. I, however, did have to give advice on how to create a yearbook using paper, instead of welcoming the new electronic media that is available to us. "Why paper instead of using the newest technology?" was the biggest question I received during class. After taking Department historian's class at National headquarters last month, the only answer I could muster was "because that's how we've always done it."

People are averse to change. I get it. But, if we don't change with the times; and welcome new technologies, new ideas, new leadership, and stop using the same tired crutch of "this is how we've always done it," we will be condemned to declining membership and failing Posts. This is a new century for the American Legion, let's embrace it!

Do Not Stop Membership

Jim Ramos, Northern Membership
teamramos@legionmail.org



Happy Holidays! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2020 celebrate BIG and safe - I want to see all of you in 2020 so we can continue celebrating our Legion history.

First, thank you for working so hard with membership. As we move on to the holidays please DO NOT STOP getting new members, renewing members and members that for some season stop paying their dues. Contact those members and ask them to come back and welcome them back.

Second, thank you to 6th, 4th, 17th, 1st, 5th, 2nd and 3rd District for doing a great job on membership so far, but we can do better just let me know and we will

continue to work together.

The next Big Goal is December 4, 2019. Please do NOT STOP doing membership and every opportunity you get JUST ASK are you a member of the American Legion if NOT (why not?). Go and check out Page 13 Dept. Membership Plan and Awards Manual.

We are still CELEBRATING our 100th Birthday Please do something and do it BIG.

1. Open House with all the Legion Family, your local Veterans and their family.
2. A 100 years Birthday Party for all the Legion family, all local Veterans and their family and the Community leaders.
3. 100th Anniversary Dinner for all the Legion Family, your local Veterans and their family and Community leaders.
4. We have Thanksgiving Day come up

and Christmas and New Year; Day that we can do something to increase membership.

A Great time to do a BUDDY CHECK:

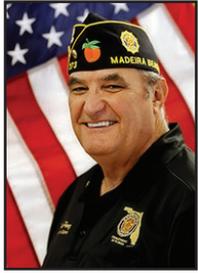
I ask you and your Post membership team to check on your members reach out and see how they are doing or need some help this is the time of year some of US need someone just to talk to. We all know some of our Veteran's just need someone to relate to - it doesn't show in their face because it is inside. Please make a BUDDY CHECK.

If you or your Post needs ideas Please check out the Department of Florida Membership Plan and Awards Manual, your District Commander, Vice Commanders and/or Jim Ramos My email is jramos149@bellsouth.net or Call me at 352-226-4370 Please if you are NOT in my contact list PLEASE leave a message and I will get back with you as soon as I can. Thank You



Southern Area Membership

Ray Perez, Southern Membership
teamperez@legionmail.org



TRAINING! The word is catching on and leaders are realizing, it directly relates to membership. Everything we do from Post to National levels is hinged on the knowledge of our leaders. We have

to continue to improve the method and courseware of classes. Omer Smith mentioned it during the Sunday Department Executive Committee meeting. How we use to train together with new ideas should form the basis of the training of our officers. All of the classes I noticed were jam packed with standing room only. That is what I call a successful conference.

During the few training sessions we've conducted, I learned from the attendees as much as they learned from me. They

are enthusiastic about learning about MyLegion.org, the New DMS Transfer System and ideas about how to recruit young OEF/OIF Veterans. This was also identified by District Commanders and Vice Commanders during a meeting with Cherie Korn at the Fall Conference.

We had a great training session at the Central Area Training held at Post 4 in Lakeland and the 14th District Training held at Post 154 in Marathon. While the attendance is somewhat low, as PDC Ramos always says, it's just that many more that know MyLegion.org. The membership team of the North and South are tailoring the training to what the Zone, Area, District and Post Commanders want. The classes are interactive where the attendees can provide their input of how they do things so that we all can learn. Your way isn't always the only way to achieve the same results. PDC Ramos and I won't always have the answer so our promise to them is what I call a "Due-out"; meaning we'll come back with an answer.

Last, we need to be smart about who receives the training in hopes that we can educate a subject matter expert at every level in the chain of command. This gives the Commanders a go-to person that is local and available within that chain of command. It's the ole "Train the Trainer" concept. All Posts in the Southern Region are seeing signs of an average of 2% growth weekly. Here are the Posts that made the 65% November Goal: (By District and highest to lowest percentage order)

- 7th:** Posts 34, 15, 23, 8
 - 8th:** Posts 413, 317, 30, 11, 2, 320, 74, 69, 266, 309
 - 9th:** Posts 223, 209, 321, 142, 308, 310, 220, 304, 385
 - 11th:** Posts 268, 367, 20, 62, 277, 47, 199, 164
 - 12th:** Posts 328, 358, 189, 81, 39, 22, 181, 366, 163, 1, 344, 332, 40, 117, 200
 - 13th:** Posts 192, 404, 411, 274
 - 14th:** Posts 145, 144, 168, 32, 98, 31
 - 15th:** Posts 147, 99, 186, 111, 5, 278, 108, 246, 148
 - 16th:** Posts 252, 275, 238, 119, 104, 273, 305
- Districts 9, 11, 12 and 15 all made the 65% November Goal!!**

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!!

Americanism Bulletin

Kurt Gies, Americanism
americanism@legionmail.org



Wow! One of the most descriptive words I can come up with for the response to the training conducted at the 2019 Dept Fall Conference. Every class was jam packed, with standing room

only in many.

In our preparation for the Americanism Commission class, we should've found a bigger room, because our fellow legionnaires were lined up across the back of the room without a seat to sit in. What they got to participate in was an overview of the Americanism Commission and the great work that we are doing in the Dept of Florida with plenty of conversations across the room.

Whether it's discussing the school medals program, our upcoming oratorical contest and the increase in scholarship money, hosting a Four Chaplains ceremony in February, conducting a blood drive and how easy but impactful of that can be, working with your JROTC commanders to gain access to your schools so that kids can know what's available to them, leveraging your relationship with your boys state delegates keeping them involved year round, collecting the grommets from the flag retirement ceremonies (more on this project next month), Boys Scouts, Youth Law Cadet or get out and vote campaigns and celebrating the flag or any other related program, it is apparent that the Florida Department Americanism Commission programs are doing an outstanding job.

There were great back and forth conversations and training tools provided

that are readily available for each and every district and post to use. A free text messaging service called Remind.com, a phone calling system called Calling Post which allows one phone call to be sent to an entire membership with a press of a button, Joining the Americanism Facebook page and sharing ideas, the creation of an Americanism section to the Florida Department webpage, plus much more.

The commitment was made to our Department Commander to bring home the best Americanism Commission program in the nation. We are doing everything we need to win, but the one area that we are falling back on is actually reporting what we're doing. The CPR's and end of year submissions to Department for awards are critical to accomplishing this goal. Please do your part and document everything you're

Continued on Page 10



Americanism - Continued from page 9

doing. If you did something Americanism related, post to our Facebook group. You can also send your input to me whenever you have a big event, so we can keep a central database of the great things the Florida department of American Legion is doing.

And as a side note from the Commission chairman: training is about learning, but more importantly implementing

what we learned. At the Fall Conference, I too learned something important. An outside group had dropped off some commemorative stars from retired US flags that they took a lot time, energy and goodwill to create. These were passed out to each individual that attended the training class as a memento to remind people about our flag and what it means to us. Unfortunately I was unaware that this is a practice that shouldn't be followed. And though the actions of these outside non-

profit organizations that provided them to us are well intended, it is apparently something we are not supposed to be doing nor supporting. Therefore I ask that everyone that received a star properly dispose of it by burning or burial.

See in the true spirit of the Fall Conference where training and then implementing what you learned is the main objective; we take the next step to correct this practice. God Bless!



Children & Youth Cannisters & Scholarships

Les Martin, Children & Youth
cy@legionmail.org



The holidays are fast approaching. It's time for us all to continue our efforts in supporting the Children and Youth Programs and the kids these programs are meant for. I would

also like everyone to remember the three main objectives of the Fourth Pillar of the American Legion: to strengthen the family unit; work with quality organizations that provide services for children; and provide communities with well-rounded programs that meet the needs of young people. It's up to our local Posts to provide what's needed for the third objective. Put on a Holiday children's program at your Post and invite the public in. Who knows, you might even pick up a few new members in the process.

For many of you, you have had the Children & Youth Canisters for several

months now. It's time to check on them and see how much you have raised so far. Remember, we are looking to collect between \$100 and \$200 per canister. If you have them in your Post or canteen, you will not get the exposure and donations that you would if they were in a luncheonette, deli or other business that gets a lot of traffic at their cash registers. Your Post and canteen, normally will see the same people every day and limit the amount you can collect. Some of the districts and Posts will not be getting the canisters. I have been asked to not visit all of the districts due to budget constraints. But you can still help our programs by sending a check for any amount your Post can afford to the Department, made out to American Legion Dept. of Florida with "Children & Youth Canisters" in the note field. Any amount would be appreciated.

Now is the time for all our Posts to start thinking about some of our awards. Our general scholarship, ROTC Cadet of the Year and Eagle Scout of the Year applications are all due into Department Headquarters by February 29th. Start working with your Post chairman for Children & Youth and

seek out applicants from your local High Schools. Remember our Best Post Children & Youth Program award. The deadline for the submittal for this award is May 13, 2020. The teacher of the year award deadline is April 15, 2020. The applications for both of these awards are available on the Department Website.

I would like to thank Dee Bell (Aux) and Tom Soeder (Sons) for their help at the Department Fall Conference. Special Thanks to Dee for selling 100 of our Children & Youth pins in 4 hours. Job well done.

Several Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) applications have been returned recently. Remember, if you are applying for TFA, you MUST complete the application completely and the application MUST be submitted to the Department. Do Not send them to National. By making sure your application is completely filled out, you will avoid any delay in the process and receive the funds quicker.

I have had the pleasure of visiting many

Continued on Page 11



Children & Youth - Continued from page 10

Districts and meeting a great bunch of Legionnaires during my travels in October and November. In October, I attended the District 12 picnic, what a great group of folks over in that District. I visited District 7's Meeting held at Post 4, another group of great folks. I attended the Great 8 District Picnic (My District) and District 17 meeting

at Post 127, this day started out with a very nice breakfast, put on by Unit 127, the meeting was very informative but the day didn't end well for me. In November, I attended the District meeting of District 1 at Post 221 in Niceville. I have been visiting some parts of our fine state that I have not been to before and enjoying it very much, especially meeting all these great people.

Until next month's issue of the Legion Link, please enjoy your holidays and stay safe.



Importance of December 19, 2019

Dusty Douglas, Employment
employment@legionmail.org

December 19, 2019 is the deadline for the below Employment Programs Awards packages must be submitted to the Florida Department Headquarters by this date.

- NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AWARDS
- THE EMPLOYER OF VETERANS AWARD
 - o Small (50 or fewer employees)
 - o Medium (51 – 200 employees)
 - o Large (201 or more employees)
- EMPLOYER OF OLDER WORKERS AWARD

- EMPLOYER OF THE DISABLED AWARD

Recognizing a local employer or employment service office for these awards is a good way to promote your Post, let the community know you recognize your community's support of Veterans.

Submit your awards packages by mail to:

American Legion, Dept. of Florida
 Attn: Programs Director
 P.O. Box 547859
 Orlando, FL 32854 or

Fax: to 407-299-0901

For information on the awards and the forms needed for the nomination

packages go to floridalegion.org. Click on PROGRAMS & SERVICES then click on EMPLOYER AWARD to find the required forms and information.

Remember what is NEEDED is facts, figures and an interesting narrative that tells what makes this nominee special. What activities does this candidate do to develop employment opportunities for Veterans?

What is NOT NEEDED are binders, report covers, page protectors, photographs or logs of how many people are seen each day.

JROTC Shooting Sports Florida State Qualifier

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



The Dept. of Florida was honored to have one of our State Qualifiers, Sara Maggard, a senior at Summerlin Academy attend our Dept. Conference to receive a Plaque and a \$500 Scholarship Award.

She was sponsored by Post 3, Bartow and was one of the 15 Finalists in the Sporter Category to attend the National 29th Annual Legion Junior Shooting Sports Three Position Air Rifle Championship Meet at the USA Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs in July. Sara and her mother, a USAF Veteran, were the honored

guests of the Department and we were pleased to hear her as she spoke to our assembly and thanked the veterans for their support. Our other State Qualifier in the Precision Category, Trinity Gomez was a student at Sarasota Military Academy was also in the 15 Finalists to compete in the Meet and was 7th in the top Finals. Trinity was sponsored by Post 266 however we were unable to reach her as she graduated and entered the University of Nebraska.

We wish them both success in their future. The JSSP Postal Targets are now online to order as of 01 November. The deadline is 15 December and the cost is \$15 each. The Post Affiliation Form and payment must all be done and completed online prior to the targets being sent to the team. Since the time is much shorter this year, early ordering and returning the fired targets is

very important. This is a Scholarship Award that is \$5,000 each category for the First Place Winner and \$1,000 for the Second Place Winner. Please go on: (legion.org) for all the information and to order the targets. If there are any questions, please contact me. Thanks to all the Posts that support our Youth Programs



Sara Maggard and Post 3 Finance Officer



FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION COLLEGE

January 23-25, 2020



Where? Department Headquarters in Orlando

Hotel Accommodations at the Altamonte Springs-Orlando Hilton Hotel, about 2 miles from Department HQ

Who Can Attend? Any current member of The American Legion Family

- Must complete American Legion Basic Training Course prior to the college within past 3 years. This is offered on-line by The American Legion.
 - Complete an application which you can find on-line at - <https://www.floridalegion.org/news-events/florida-legion-college>
- There is a \$200 fee to attend to offset hotel, meal, and refreshment expenses. Continental style breakfasts and lunch provided Friday and Saturday, with refreshments and snacks available during breaks. Each FALC graduate receives a graduation certificate, a graduate pin, an FALC polo shirt and an FALC challenge coin.

What subjects are Covered?

The Legion Act; History of The American Legion; Introduction to Resolution Writing; The Department Commander's 10 Point Success Plan; Relationship between National, Department, and Post; State Legislative Priorities; Membership; Programs and Public Relations; Fund Raising for a Non-Profit Organization; Internal Affairs and Department Complaint Process; Post/District Meetings and Elections; Department Program Awards; Veteran's Entitlement Programs; Consolidated Post Reports, Electronic Membership Processing

SPACE IS LIMITED, GET YOUR APPLICATION IN EARLY!

Tom Gora, FALC Chairman - DeptLegionCollege@legionmail.org (904) 583-4597

Suicide and First Responders

Daryl Bass, Law & Order
laworder@legionmail.org



On November 16 I attended the 3rd annual Challenge 22 event held in Winter Garden and organized by the American Legion Department of Florida Americanism Chairman Kurt

Gies. Challenge 22 is a program of the American Legion aimed toward bringing awareness to the fact that 22 of our Military veterans commit suicide each day throughout our Nation. I find this to be tragic. Then I considered that First responders, (Police, Fire, Paramedics) are also known to have a high suicide rate. From my research below I found information that the 22 that Challenge 22 represents may be a low estimate due to unreported deaths as suicides.

March 19, 2017
 Ref: The Pittsburgh Tribune Review
 A survey of more than 4,000 first

responders found that 6.6% attempted suicide which is more than 10 times the rate of the general population, according to a 2015 article published in the Journal of Emergency Medical Services. First responder suicides are sometimes compared to those among military veterans, many of whom have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. Military veterans deployed from 2001 to 2007 had a 41% higher suicide risk than the general population, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

But the first-responder suicide deaths have received less attention. Why? Because, in the Line of Duty deaths, receive continued benefits for families. Suicides do not. So, for the benefit of the families many are not reported as suicide. Making the actual number of suicides higher that reported.

First Responder (as well as Military) training doesn't prepare trainees for the mental impact of what they will see. "They never told us all of the things we'll keep in our minds-the images, the brain deprivation, that cultural brain wash of being strong, keep things to yourself, don't ask for help". said former Chicago area fire chief Jeff Dill.

Suicide is preventable. Reach out to our First Responders as well as our Veterans and active Military. If you know someone who you think may be considering suicide look for changes in that person personality and attitude.

In 2011 just before I retired one of my fellow Officers committed suicide. As a trained Police Officer, I should've seen the signs. She had lost her teenage son at the same time her Mother passed away. She went from being quiet and reserved and very professional to being happy, talkative, and cutting up. One time at briefing I complimented her on her watch. She tried to give it to me. That is a big sign. A person considering suicide (in some cases) will have that change of personality. Psychologists believe this is due to the feeling that suicide will solve all of their problems. So, they do not have any more worries or need to hold onto their personal property.

Suicide is a National tragedy. Look for the signs. Help your brother and sister veterans and first responders prevent suicide.

Upcoming Program and Events

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
legionriders@legionmail.org



We have the Conference behind us and now on to the Summit, Iceman Tailgate, Unity Rides, and the Rally. Just received good news tonight, Orlando Harley Davidson South will

host the Rally. Thank you, Jeff Hawk, for all your hard work securing the location for our Rally. More to come.

To update everyone on our Fall Conference numbers, between the Central Area Ride In, the participation of seven districts in the chase for the MGR Trophy, and miscellanies

donations, we raised just over \$25,000 for the month. The donations went to the Children and Youth, COTA, and Project Vet Relief/SPI.

Now, who won the trophy, District 1, but not by much. District 15 needed one more ride to take the trophy. District 6 put up a good fight but came in third. Our participation increased by one district this year.

People have questioned why we swapped the months between the MGR and Round Robin. April is Children and Youth Month. When we ran the MGR in April, we were always a year behind. Now that we swapped the months, we now have the funds to support the picnic this coming April. This change also allows the ALR Leadership to allocate all donations

collected during its term.

A statement was made "We always have our hand out, and we've turned Fun into Fund." Not that I'm picking on the person that said that, but the phrase clearly expresses the concern.

The ALR Department has four fundraisers a year, the Merry-go-Round, Round Robin, Unity Ride, and Rally. The donations are allocated to Children & Youth and Project Vet Relief/SPI.

Now, if we consider the out-of-pocket expense that comes with being an ALR participant and tie the Department and the local activities together, yes, each rider is faced with choices they have to make, and it becomes costly if you try to participate in

Continued on Page 14



Legion Riders - Continued from page 13

every activity.

Your ALR team is continually looking for ways to reduce the cost of participating in these events. An example is the "Unity Ride" we've cut one day out of the route, and we try to keep the hotel expenses to average under \$90 per night, have posts provide lunches, and we had dinners lined up, but by the end of the day the majority of the riders go straight to the hotel. We'll keep our eye on every expense and make it cost-effective for all.

Please keep your eye on our Website; we will be updating over the next few weeks. Some dates to save for 2020: Summit will be at the same location from February 6th through the 8th. Here is the link to book your room, American Legion Riders - Book Your Discounted Rate Here! We are reviewing the agenda now and modifying it to include your ideas, as noted in the Summit Survey.

We have the two routes posted on the Web for the Unity Ride. The meet and greet will be on April 26th at Post 154 in Marathon, and Post 340 in the Panhandle.

The actual Unity Ride will start on Monday, April 27th, and end on May 1st, followed by our Rally on Saturday in the Kissimmee area. Net proceeds will go to PVR as always, and the "Round Robin" will be extended to include May 2. FYI, hotel in Marathon for Sunday Night April 26th, Blackfin, call Chris at 407 314 7181, it's \$135 a night for any room. It's the cheapest we could find. Once again, Thank You for what you do, and I am proud to be the Chairman of such a great group!

"For the Cause, not the applause."

Oratorical

Cherie' Korn, Oratorical
oratorical@legionmail.org



It is my honor to be the Department of Florida Oratorical Chair for 2020. It is that time of year again and the Oratorical Scholarship Program is getting ready to be in full swing for the new school year. The topics are Amendment 8, Amendment 20, Amendment 24, and Amendment 27. The dates are as follows:

Post Contests must be completed by January 19, 2020; District Contests must be completed by February 9, 2020; Area Contests must be completed by February 23, 2020; and the State Contest will be on March 13, 2020.

The Department of Florida has issued me a zip drive with all the information your post may need to be successful in recruiting and conducting your contests. Send me your email information and so I can share all this information.

Please let me know who your Chairman

is at your Post so I can get all the information to them to prepare for a great year. I would like to attend one of your district meetings and let you know what the program has to offer and how the Department of Florida Oratorical Scholarship Program can help you to reach out to your local high schools.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (941)468-2168 or cheriekorn@gmail.com.

Happy Holiday and keep Developing your Post and Training

Jim Ramos, Post Development
postdevelopment@legionmail.org



Hello Florida Legionnaires: Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2020. Please be safe as we go around with friends and family in our holidays; because I want to see ALL of you in 2020 so we can continue to celebrate our Legion history.

Development is Training:

1. Your Post members and Post Officers to do a great Job for your Post and its

- members.
2. To develop a good working relationship with the Legion family to make the work better and easier to do, help and volunteer.
3. ALL Thanks our Volunteer and helper they DO NOT get paid.
4. Always have a membership table in all Post events
 With the following: Membership Application, Member Data Form and Brochure
 - a. "Why You Should Belong to The American Legion"
 - b. "Membership Benefits"
 - c. "Legislative Articles on VA care, GI Bill and some History about The American Legion in the last 100 years"
 - d. Have all the Legion Family there to assist the Post

I'm here to assist you and make this year better for all the Legion Family.

"The good Post will know the needs of the Community. It will know them by the simple process of planned contact by representative Post members with city official, educators, community leaders and with other civic and fraternal group."

SERVICE our community, state and Nation to marked better

HONOR we service all our Veterans and their Family

SACRIFICE our time to service all our Veterans all year

Please let me know how I can assist you. Call me at 352-226-4370 or email me at PostDevelopment@logionmail.org





PROJECT: VETRELIEF

UPCOMING EVENTS MARK YOUR CALENDARS

All of our financial support comes from the generosity of individuals and corporations who believe in what we do. Join us at one of our next events, or hold your own fundraiser. Please contact 407-295-2631 or jcooper@floridalegion.org for more information.

FEB 15

Challenge 22 Event - Post 69
Avon Park, FL



FEB 15

Coral Head MusicFest 2020
Marathon, FL

MAR 28

ALR Night - Icemen Hockey
Tailgate Party
Jacksonville, FL



APR 26 - MAY 1

ALR Unity Rides
Two Routes (North & South)
Entire State of Florida



MAY 2

ALR State Rally
Kissimmee, FL



YOUR EVENT HERE

Planning a fundraising event?
We want to promote it! Tell us
all about it.



FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS • WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Thanks to you PROJECT: VetRelief was able to provide financial assistance to nearly 150 families this past year. On behalf of them, thank you for saving their lives and their dignity.

We recently helped a disabled female veteran who served in the United States Navy, a single mother of two children, by providing financial assistance for her rent. By providing her the support, we were able to keep her and her children from being evicted. Without your help, this veteran and her children would be out on the street. Today, they are safe, warm and self-sufficient.

Every day, your support makes stories like this disabled female veteran's possible.

Today, we're launching a campaign to increase the number of families we are able to provide support in 2020. Our goal for next year is to be able to help an additional 50 active duty military, veterans, and their families as they transition into civilian lives. You see, even though we helped nearly 100 families this year, there are still over 106,000 veterans who are in-need and living below federal poverty levels across the state.

In order to reach our goal, we will need to raise an approximate additional \$50,000. If we raise that amount, we'll be able to provide food, shelter and utilities for 50 additional service members and their families this year than last year. We need your help to make it happen.

Would you be willing to make a special tax-deductible year-end donation of \$25, \$50, \$100 or whatever you can afford to help us meet our goal and provide 50 more families assistance?

Donations can be made online (www.projectvetrelief.org/donate), mailed into the Department Headquarters, or given through the **Commander's Charity**. We simply can not increase our level of support without you!

FALL CONFERENCE WRAP UP

Thank you to everyone who took advantage of the many PROJECT: VetRelief opportunities during the American Legion, Department of Florida Fall Conference last month. Take a look at all of the exciting things that happened:

- Held our **very first** Suicide Prevention Initiative Class with approximately 40 attendees
- Trained nearly **20 BRAND NEW** VetRelief Advocates
- Hosted a **Networking Event** for trained Advocates with key topics of discussion
- **Presented** during the Service Officer School, and the Legion and SAL General Sessions
- Distributed **marketing materials** at the PVR Booth



SUPPORT CASES

*Numbers reflect PVR Cases ONLY

JULY - OCT 2019

53 families helped

\$62,596.39 amount distributed

Mission Accomplished

Kurt Gies, PROJECT: VetRelief - Suicide Prevention
americanism@legionmail.org



On Saturday, November 16 at Central Florida area 3rd annual Challenge 22 event was hosted by Post 63 in Winter Garden. What an amazing event!

Someone asked me to define what would be considered success. I will go into details down below about the number of participants, the amount of money raised, and the media impact for the American Legion in Central Florida and across the state, and the fact that we're starting a nationwide movement to Stop Veteran Suicide. But for me, "Success" is defined by allowing us to reduce that

number from 22. With that said, I'm absolutely convinced both in my heart and from the conversations that I had with the people who attended, that the

MISSION WAS ACCOMPLISHED!!!

In the presence and over 1000 people from the Central Florida communities, the 3rd annual American Legion Challenge 22 event was a raging success! As a result of the efforts of our amazing team, which included community volunteers who had no affiliation with the American Legion, who met almost every week for the past year, what transpired on Saturday, November 16 in Winter Garden Florida was a spectacle for all to experience, which included the mobile Vietnam and GWOT walls provided by the Patriot Guard Riders.

Led by our Department Commander,

Rick Johnson, Congresswoman Val Demings, State Representative David Smith, Robbie Merrill bass guitarist from Godsmack, former National American Legion Riders Chairman, Bob Sussan, and our own 98-year-old WWII veteran, Gilbert Waganheim, the American Legion took over downtown Winter Garden. And though our fundraising efforts will continue until December 31, 2019, we are well on our way to reaching our goal and have already exceeded the totals from the past two years. Additionally we more than doubled the amount of walkers from last year with estimates ranging from 800 to 1000 people walking/attending the event. This was all accomplished by first "building it", then by getting the word out so they "will come". Many thanks to the 7-10 different media outlets (ranging from TV, radio, Podcasts, newspapers and social media) who helped spread the word.



Volunteers Appreciated and Needed

Alan Cohen, VA&R
var@legionmail.org

Greetings, fellow Legionnaires. With yet another activity-filled Fall Conference recently passed I'm happy to announce that along with our partner/instructors from the Florida Department of Veteran's Affairs we graduated a class of 53 new and returning Post Service Officers. Their contributions to our fellow veterans are immeasurable and we thank them every day.

It is with no small sense of pride that I can inform you that an initiative begun originally last year to reach out to homeless veterans was energized by

participation from the Legion Auxiliary driven by Jane Hardacre, 2nd Vice President, whose enthusiasm took this project to a new level. Special recognition to Monica Hoyland from Unit 252 for her out of the box thinking, using social media and garnering donations from some of the most unexpected sources. Our deepest gratitude to all the Units for their overwhelming participation.

As always, our VAVS hospital volunteers seem to find ways to go above and beyond. Johnny Castro, our Rep at the West Palm Beach VA hospital persisted and ultimately worked with the Facilities folks to build a "Tree of Life"-shaped garden of substantial enough size that hospitalized veterans can grow flowers and enjoy it's aesthetics. Along

with being our hospital Rep Johnny is also 11th District Commander and it seems he never runs out of time or ways to help our brother and sister veterans.

Beginning shortly after the first of the new year, I along with Dept leadership will begin traditional visits to the VA Hospitals in the State. They do great work and we look forward to meeting with the Administrators and Clinicians.

In line with that and in closing I find myself once again reaching out for volunteer help at the Lake Nona VA hospital. I know that somewhere in our Legion Family there is someone who willing and able to volunteer 4-8 hrs a week. Reach out to me either directly or via department.



Adult Scout Leaders

Chuck Weber, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



Just like running a good Post, a Scout unit requires good adult volunteer leaders to make its mission a success. However, the requirements and characteristics of a Scout leader are much more stringent. This difference comes mostly because of the involvement with children.

Most often, leaders for Scout units come from the parents of the youth involved. Sometimes they come from Legion family members who were Scouts themselves as youth. Occasionally, they come from outside both those worlds. Regardless where the leaders are found, the Post alone is responsible for the vetting and selection of leaders for its Scout units.

When a leader prospect is identified and fills out the BSA registration form it starts an investigative process of the individual. BSA will perform a credit check of the individual,

an FBI criminal background investigation, a name match will several lists of prohibited persons, a driving record check and other safeguards to protect the youth in its programs. But those checks will not tell the Post if it has selected good leaders.

Each year in the Fall, Scout units start back up and recruit new members, both youth and adult. Not just anybody who wants to be an adult leader should be. Your Scout unit's Committee Chair may recommend adults for Scouting positions, but the Post Charter Organization Rep (COR) is the only individual who decides whether to accept them. It is the COR's signature on the registration application that seals the deal. The Post's COR must be involved with all the adult selections.

Don't be trapped in the notion that it is better to have someone than no one. It's not. Each applicant for adult leadership should go through at least one personal interview with the COR before they are accepted. You may want to have them additionally interviewed first by the Committee Chair as well. Here are some considerations for the interviews:

- Does the applicant have a positive attitude about their role? Or are they just

- caving in to pressure to help out?
- Does the applicant present a role model appearance and demeanor for the youth?
- Did the applicant complete mandatory BSA Youth Protection Training beforehand?
- Did the applicant complete mandatory BSA Position Specific Training beforehand?
- Does the applicant have enough time in their personal schedule to perform the job?
- Does the applicant refrain from using alcohol, tobacco and drugs in their personal life? (All are prohibited everywhere all the time in Scouting.)
- Does the applicant refrain from using coarse, vulgar and discriminatory language? (Never tolerated.)
- Does the applicant have any Scouting background?

Your Scout unit reflects your Post and its leaders are a reflection of you. Be sure to take the time and care in selecting them. The best question to always ask your self is this: Would I trust this person to take my children or grandchildren out in the woods on a camping trip?

Hunting and Fishing License

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements
veteransbenefits@legionmail.org

As the VA Entitlements Chairman my job is to inform veterans about their benefits and here is one state benefit that most veterans don't know about.

Hunting and Fishing

The Military Gold Sportsman's License is available for reduced fee of \$20 to any resident who is an active or retired member of the U.S. Armed Forces, U.S. Armed Forces Reserve or National guard upon submission of current military ID card. For more information, visit myfwc.com/license/recreational/military-gold. The license is available through an online verification process at www.GoOutdoorsFlorida.com.

The license may also be obtained at Florida tax collectors' office with proof of residency and current military identification card.

State hunting and fishing licenses and permits shall be issued without fees for five years to any veteran who is a Florida resident, certified or determined to be 100% totally and permanently disabled by the VA or the U.S. Armed Forces, or who has been issued a valid disabled veteran ID card by FDVA. For more information, visit myfwc.com. (FS 379.353

This information is from the Florida *Veterans Benefits Guide* 2019 page 14.

Happy Holidays

Richard Smith, SAL Advisory
sal@legionmail.org

WOW! Already December.

The SAL has been working hard this year for all your posts and community.

I look forward to 2020 and all the thing the SAL will be doing in your posts. I hope that a representative from the post and squadron are attending each other's meetings and keeping the lines of communication open.

I wish everyone a safe and Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas.



FHP / AMERICAN LEGION CADET PROGRAM

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet
youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



I AM VERY HAPPY TO INFORM YOU THAT THIS PROGRAM IS A "GO" FOR 2020. This year our Youth Law Cadet Program will be held on July 12 – July 17, 2020. The fee for each boy or girl attending this program will remain the same as previous years - \$350.00 per each cadet. It will be

paid by the Post sponsoring the cadets. Our new brochure will be available by the time you read this article. I will try to get Department to mail out a copy of the brochure to every Post in the Department of Florida.

One of the main reasons of this program is to demonstrate to the youth of today that the police are their friends, and they should be extended all courtesies. If you have any questions you can call me. My home phone number is 904-272-1619. My cell phone number is 904-635-4492.

I was not given an opportunity to speak on this program at the Fall Conference, so I hope the District Commanders/Area Commanders/Membership Chairmen will highlight this program at all meetings they attend. At this month's 5th District meeting, I could speak about this program, and several Post members came up after the meeting and took some of our program brochures. This is the most exciting new program to come to the Department of Florida since the Rider Program was started.

Buddy Checks & Homeless

Deb Wheeler, Women Veterans
womenveterans@legionmail.org

Happy Holidays - It is with great pride to wish everyone a very happy Holiday season!

I want to remind you of conducting buddy checks this time of the year, this is so important because of loneliness, isolation and depression! Look after each other because we maybe all they have!

This time of the year we also need to

remember our homeless. Our women veterans with children are looking for help, day to day they are fine. However - toys, holiday food, etc. are always in demand. Keep your heart open and help our sisters in our community!

Programs Bulletin

Bekki Tibbs, Programs Director
programs@floridalegion.org



Hello Area, District, and Post Program Chairman. All but one program packet has been sent out at this time. If your Post has not turned in the Post Program Chairman form and you'd like to participate in one of The American Legion's great programs, ask your Commander to complete it and send it in to Headquarters.

District and Area Oratorical Chairman will need to report their Oratorical Contest information (date, location, time, etc.) to Headquarters by December 3rd. Currently, only Districts 7, 8, and 12 have reported in. Department Oratorical manuals and brochures have been updated to reflect the increase in scholarship money for the

National level winners that was announced in mid-October. If you would like any of these updated materials email programs@floridalegion.org with your request.

ROTC & Shooting Sports chairman should note the recent changes in registration procedures and deadline dates made by National. The deadline for ordering official targets has been moved forward to December 15th. Online Registration and Target Set Orders can be found on National's website <https://www.legion.org/shooting/resources>, where you can also find the latest program materials and training resources.

Employment Chairman, please keep an eye out for those businesses in your local area that would fit the bill for the Employer of Older Worker, Employer of Veterans, and Employment Services Awards as the deadline to submit nominations to Department Headquarters in December

19th.

As of November 15, fourteen Legion Posts have sent in their Boys State registration fee for the 77th Session, reserving thirty-six delegate (plus two over quota) spots out of the 530 quota. The registration fee is \$450.00 per delegate and can be paid by Post check.

Make checks payable to:

Florida American Legion Boys State, Inc.

Mail to:

The American Legion, Dept of FL
 Attn: Programs
 P.O. Box 547859
 Orlando, FL 32854-7859

Make sure tin include the Boys State Post Registration Form.



November 21, 2019 75% Target Report (Currently 68.57%)		
6	Robert Suelter	76.16%
4	Cherie Korn	72.99%
17	Hank Mangels	71.46%
11	Johnny Castro	71.11%
9	Arthur Barber	70.70%
12	Chris Hamrick	69.99%
16	Randall McNabb	69.33%
8	Skip Felicita	69.21%
1	Lamar Carroll	69.19%
15	Bruce Carl	68.42%
7	Rick Orzechewski	67.00%
5	Troy Horsley	65.84%
13	Brian Gehling	63.99%
14	Rocco LaPace	62.21%
2	Roger Hewitt	61.76%
3	Stuart Scott	61.58%
Eastern	Timothy Tierney	73.47%
Central	Sid Damsgard	68.71%
Southern	Paul Bosco	68.45%
Northern	Marie Conti	68.20%
Western	John Edens	67.87%
Southwestern	Jerry Faught	66.37%
Post 400		64.74%
Post 208		63.78%



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



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 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

NEXT MEMBERSHIP GOAL
75% 12/11/2019

www.thelit.com





The American Legion



NORTHERN AREA BALL COMMANDER

MARIE K. CONTI

Saturday, March 21, 2020

**Legion Blue & Gold or
Military Theme**

American Legion Post #155 Crystal River

Tickets: \$25.00 per person

Dinner: Beef Tips & Noodles, Chicken, Mixed Veggies,
Dinner Roll, Salad and American Legion Birthday Cake!

DRESS: Formal / Semi-Formal Social hour 5:00-6:00,
5:45 Salad, 6pm Dinner.

Hotel is less than 5 minutes from the Post at a very reasonable rate of \$96.00 per night Rooms can be reserved through Hotel (Please call Hampton Inn @ 352-564-6464 for Reservations & mention The American Legion (Military Rate).



The American Legion



NORTHERN AREA BALL COMMANDER MARIE K. CONTI

Where: American Legion Post #155

6585 W. Gulf To Lake HWY
Crystal River, FL 34429

Post Number: 352-795-6526

FRIDAY: American Legion Post #155
FULL RACK of **"BABY-BACK Ribs"**
Dinner \$15 includes one "Bar Drink"
Ticket if paid ahead. Dinner 5-6:30pm,
followed by Entertainment and
Northern Area CDR's Pre-Ball Social
in the Lounge!

_____ \$15 per ticket (**Includes FREE
Bar Drink Ticket**) Advanced Price.

SATURDAY: NA BALL 5PM-?

_____ \$25.00 per person (Limited
Seating)

Program Ads:

_____ 1/4 Page \$20

_____ 1/2 Page \$25

_____ Full Page \$40

Deadline for Ads March 11, 2020

Email Ads in Word or JPG Format

Email to Jconti3547@gmail.com or mail
clean copy!

Hotel:

Hampton Inn

1103 N US HWY 19 (Suncoast BLVD)
Crystal River, FL 34429

ROOMS (\$96 per night)

All Rooms are either One King Bed or 2 Queen
Beds and come equipped with a Microwave,
MINI Fridge, Coffee and very nice Pool!

Call Hotel directly for Reservations at 352-564-
6464 and mention The American Legion for
the Military Rate.

Event Coordinator

Please contact PDC Jay Conti Sr.
352-287-1400 or mail payment (s)
with attached form to

(Sorry NO Credit Cards):

Jay Conti Sr.

7130 N. Grackle Pt
Hernando, FL 34442

Make Check (s) payable to:

Jay Conti Sr.

Email: Jconti3547@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!!!

APRIL 18, 2020

COMMANDER'S Homecoming and Luau



Post 273, Madeira Beach



Party begins at 1600...or 4:00pm for you civilians!!!

Tickets are \$35.00 per person

All Proceeds benefit Commander's Charities...

email - 16history@gmail.com for more info...



Win a New Cadillac XT5

Longest Drive Contest
Hole-in-One Contest
Closest to Pin Contest

\$75.00 per golfer, includes
box lunch, 2 drinks on course
and early dinner.

9:00 AM Shotgun Start
Scramble Play



BENEFITTING The Programs and
Charities of the Florida American Legion
Children & Youth Commission

Early dinner, awards, raffles, 50/50
at American Legion Post 24
2000 75th St. W., Bradenton, FL 34209



CHILDREN & YOUTH CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

APRIL 25, 2020
IMG ACADEMY GOLF CLUB
4350 El Conquistador Pkwy
Bradenton, Florida



Sponsorship Opportunities

HOLE or TEE (Silver): \$100

HOLE or TEE (Gold): \$250

BEVERAGE CART: \$500

LUNCH: \$500

DINNER: \$1,000

TOURNAMENT: \$2,000

DONATE A RAFFLE GIFT

**Cut-off date for sponsorships &
gift submission April 15, 2020**

Checks made payable to:
Sons of The American Legion Squadron 24
2000 75th St. W., Bradenton, Florida 34209
Attn: C&Y Golf Tournament

Hotel: Lantern Inn & Suites, 7251 N. Tamiami Trail (14th St. W)

Sarasota, FL 34243, 941.355.7747



FREE ADMISSION

**THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA**

Children & Youth **PICNIC**

Learn Live Dream

FOOD

Cotton Candy
BBQ Chicken
Hot Dogs
Hamburgers

SATURDAY, APRIL 4, 2020

12:00 PM - 6:00PM

www.floridalegion.org

ACTIVITIES

Carnival Games
Vendors
Chinese Auction
50/50 Raffle
Dunk Tank
Riders' Ride-In



Join Us at:

American Legion Post 1
1281 N Washington Ave
Titusville, FL 32796

Questions? Dept, Les Martin, 941-201-7293 | SAL, Tom Soeder, 410-707-2331