



# THE LEGION LINK

★ SERVICE  
★ HONOR  
★ SACRIFICE



JANUARY 2020

COMMANDER WILLIAM "RICK" JOHNSON

VOLUME 28 ISSUE VI

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### From your Department Commander Rick Johnson

**Rick Johnson, Commander**

[commander@floridalegion.org](mailto:commander@floridalegion.org)



#### HAPPY NEW YEAR

I hope that you received everything that you asked for from Santa. December was a very busy month as I visited and attended many events around the state. Thank you for all

the hospitality that you gave me during these visits. I think my best one was when I visited the Pearl Harbor survivors in Mandarin, FL. The five survivors including two nurses was very humbling for me as one of the nurses starting crying as I talked with her and thanking me for what I do but in return I was thanking all of them for what they have done and continue to do.

January will be another busy month as I have numerous visits planned around the state including some VA Hospitals. The end of the month our National Commander will be visiting Florida. I have not been given the opportunity to get involved in the visit

or provide input. Our NEC has decided to keep me out of the loop. Hopefully the schedule will be put out soon so YOU the legionaries can get involved in his visit and ask any questions you might have for him.

This is the month I want to really start to push more on membership. I have some District Commanders that will not plan any training in their area, so we have the teams put together to assist in that. It will be a lot tougher to get new membership as the months progress. The Adopt a Highway program needs to be kicked up in high gear. Also, there are numerous rest areas out there that are also looking for sponsors. This is a no cost program and a great way to market the Legion Family.

I want to thank EVERYONE who has been giving 100% to our great organization every day and continue to serve our great Nation. Let's start 2020 off with a great start and continue to help or communities and children within to a better life.

Happy New Year again and thank you for letting me represent you around the state.



# 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](mailto:16history@gmail.com) for more info...

# DEPARTMENT COMMANDER'S HOMECOMING PROGRAM

## PAGE ADVERTISEMENTS AND CORPORATE SPONSOR'S DONATION PRICES

Here is an opportunity for Candidates, Posts, Districts and businesses to advertise at a low rate. Each person that buys a ticket for the Homecoming will receive a free program.

Program Advertisement Prices: Adds are due NLT March 15, 2020

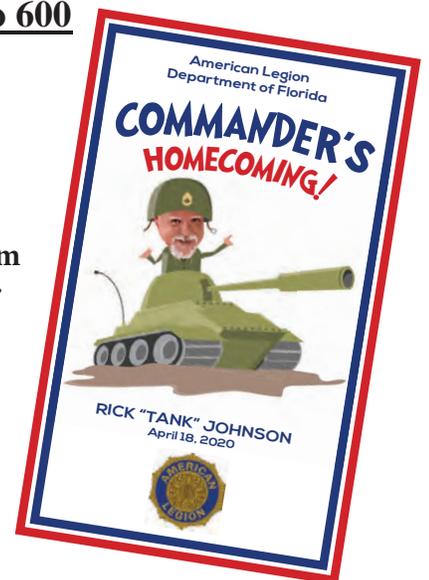
1/4 Page \$20.00; 1/2 Page \$30.00; 3/4 Page \$40.00; Full Page: \$50.00

Corporate Sponsors: Red: \$400.00 (Incl a full page add); White: \$300.00 (Incl a half page add); Blue: \$200.00 (Incl a 1/4 page add)

Photo proof copies for ads are required i.e. JPG, BMP, PDF format, preferred PDF format.

Make checks payable to Post 273, ATTN: Ray Perez and send to 600 American Legion Drive, Madeira Beach, FL 33708

Program  
Cover



*Training & Upcoming Events*

**Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice Commander**

[1stvice@legionmail.org](mailto:1stvice@legionmail.org)



A Happy New Year, I hope life finds you well. The Department of Florida is doing great this year. We are close to 5,000 members higher than last year. And Zone 1, which consist of the, 6th, 9th, 11th, 12th and 14th Districts is over 2,000 members higher than last year. Well done.

Now is time to think about training. In a few months we will bring in new Officers into the Posts and Districts. Let us not fall backwards, but let us move ahead, let us give a hand to these potential new officers by having a training class to assist them to understand the American Legion. I would like to see training classes held in the March/April time frame.

A lot is going on in January and February. Besides the District meeting, you have:

- American Legion Baseball Registration Opens on January 1st. If you want an American Legion Baseball team, now is the time get a team together.
- Oratorical Post Contest ends on January 19th.
- FL American Legion College, January 23rd to January 25th.
- National Commander's visit will be in the 6th and 12th Districts, starting on January 6th to February 2nd. On February 3rd is the Four Chaplain's Remembrance Day.
- February 6-8 is ALR Summit in Cocoa Beach, FL.
- February 9th, District Oratorical Contest Deadline.

A number of Legionnaires ask me about Chairmanship, if you want me to look at you as a Chairman, please use the Florida Legion Website, at [floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Dept\\_Chair\\_Interest\\_Flyer\\_20.21](http://floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Dept_Chair_Interest_Flyer_20.21), this is the best way for me to choose new Chair for the various communities.

As always, let me know what I can do to assist you, your Post, your District.

JANUARY 2020	
1	Baseball Team Registration Opens ★
1	Kwanzaa Ends
1	New Year's Day
1	Headquarters Closed
2	Groundhog Day
6	District 15 Visitation - Post 389 ☆
8	Boys' State Delegate Fees Due
11	District 15 Visitation - Post 108 ☆
11	District 7 Meeting
15	Shooting Sports Target Deadline ★
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15	National Membership Goal - 80% ★
15	Bay Pines VA Hospital Visit ☆
19	Oratorical Post Contests Deadline
20	Headquarters Closed
20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
23-25	Florida Legion College ☆
25	Southern Area Commander's Ball
27	Vietnam Cease Fire (1973)
31	District 15 Visitation - Post 246 ☆

☆ - Commander Rick Johnson's Attendance Tentative.

★ - National Event

Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org). We share the information we are provided, please contact Program, Area, District and Posts for additional details and events.

*Keep up the Good Work*

**Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander**

[2ndvice@legionmail.org](mailto:2ndvice@legionmail.org)



It is with a grateful heart that I wish you a very healthy, happy, successful and blessed New Year. Zone 2 had a very awarding end of year with many post participating in Veterans day programs and parades, The Great American Teach In, Thanksgiving dinners to our homeless and veterans hospital ambulatory patients, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, Wreaths Across America, Christmas gifts and dinners to the youth and homeless and

the list goes on. For those posts who invited me to their activities and being in the parade I thank you. Your hospitality was wonderful.

Membership improved greatly on December 12, 2019, Central Area is in second place and Southwestern Area is in third place. CONGRATULATIONS. 8th district placed forth, 16th district placed Seventh, 15th district placed tenth, 7th district placed eleventh, and 13th district placed 12th. Keep up the good work. If each member would bring in one member that would increase your membership. Remember, membership is everyone's responsibility. I would love to see each post make at least 100% by March 2020. I know that you can do it.

The first of the year will consist of visiting the posts I have not visited yet. If you would like for me to attend any of your post functions or membership drives, please contact me by email or phone.

If you need or would like for me to assist you with your membership, just let me know. I am a working commander who enjoys helping others to accomplish their goals. I will be processing the Checks for all post that made 100% by 12 midnight December 31, 2019 On January 2, 2020.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of each post that I visited in 2019.



*Halfway There*

**Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander**

[3rdvice@legionmail.org](mailto:3rdvice@legionmail.org)



Greetings Legionnaires! We are now six months into our 101st year and It's looking like it's going to be a very good year for the Dept. of Florida.

So far this year I've traveled thousands of miles and visited many Posts. I've concluded that we have some of the hardest working and dedicated folks any organization could ask for. As I review the latest membership reports it seems most of us are doing what's required of us to achieve the goals that were set for us at the beginning of the year. It seems to me that the District

and individual Post training is doing exactly what it was designed to do. Our membership folks are the best in the Legion and are there for you whenever and wherever they are needed. All you must do is ask!

I went to a District meeting recently and was blown away by one Post in particular. At this meeting the Posts' are asked to give a report on what they've accomplished in the previous month. One thing they did is something we call "Buddy Checks".

They pulled 150 cards out of the box and made the calls. Three people called fifty members each, not to get them to renew, but just to ask how they were and if we could help them in any way. Out of those 150 people they got 48 renewals! That was mind blowing to me! The Commander and Membership team at Post 129 are

doing what they need to do to continue their success! "Buddy Checks" are a required action you must take to ensure all members are personally contacted and feel they are a part of our great organization.

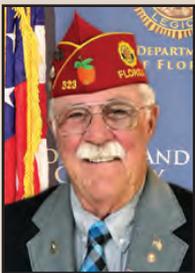
Our good friend Bob Brewster makes several calls just about every day which I am sure is the main reason he has been at or above 100% for many years! And he doesn't even have a Post home!

Remember, we are here to assist you in any way possible. We're halfway there and we can't slow down! If you need help, please contact your District Staff or you can call me personally. I will sit with you and help make calls if that's what it takes. Have a great Christmas a let's have a Super New Year!

*Women Veterans*

**Dennis Boland, NEC**

[nec@legionmail.org](mailto:nec@legionmail.org)



Since the American Revolution women have volunteered to serve in the U.S. Military. In fact, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the female veteran population accounts for 10 percent of U.S. military veterans and that number is expected to grow to 15 percent by 2030.

In 2018, The American Legion donated \$50,000 to the Department of Veteran Affairs during the Legion Spring Meeting to help supply new-baby welcome kits to women veterans at 60 VA medical centers nationwide. The VA has been 1,000 kits short until The Legion stepped in to fulfill the need. Each kit included a diaper bag, toiletries, hairbrush, comb, layette, blanket and hat.

In 2016, The American Legion's National Executive Committee passed Resolution 14, which calls for the VA to ensure that all women veterans receive gender-specific

quality healthcare.

In 2013, The American Legion System Worth Saving Task Force turned their attention to women veterans' healthcare and identified a number of challenges women veterans face when receiving VA healthcare such as women veterans not identifying as a veteran, not understanding the benefits they are entitled to receive from the VA, and highlighting the time it takes for women veterans to receive results from their mammogram screening.

*This Month in History*

**Barry Roberts, Chaplain**

[chaplain@legionmail.org](mailto:chaplain@legionmail.org)

It is hard to believe another year has gone by so quickly. We have many things to honor and celebrate in the month of January. Other than New Years Day we have Three Kings Day on January 6th. For many Christians in Spain and Latin America, the holiday season officially ends on January 6, which is the 12th day

of Christmas known as the Feast of the Epiphany, or Three Kings' Day. The holiday celebrates the biblical story in which the Three Kings, or Three Wise Men, visit baby Jesus after his birth. January 9th is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. January 15th is Martin Luther King's Birthday. January 20th is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

January 27 (1973) Paris Peace Accords, In May 1972, President Nixon made a

major concession, announcing that the U.S. would begin removing troops from South Vietnam without requiring North Vietnam to do the same. This ended the deadlock and allowed the talks to progress in the coming months. Then, after much debate, Nixon announced on January 15, 1973, that the U.S. was suspending actions against North Vietnam. American, South, and North Vietnamese delegates met at the Hotel Majestic in Paris on January 27 to

*Continued on Page 6*



Chaplain - Continued from page 5

sign the agreement.

Though the last Americans left on March 29, 1973, North and South continued to fight. The South Vietnamese Army was not able to hold back the communists

attacking from both the North and within their own country. Two years later, South Vietnam's capital, Saigon, fell and the government surrendered. Vietnam was reunited as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976.

A big welcome home to all our Vietnam Veterans! I pray Gods many blessings and peace be over all of you and that we have a very blessed year in 2020!

*Judge Advocate*

**Dick Mondro, Judge Advocate**  
[judgeadvocate@legionmail.org](mailto:judgeadvocate@legionmail.org)



**Role of a Post Constitution**

Recently, I have been to several Posts where the membership is not aware of nor seen the Post Constitution or By-Laws. This is unacceptable. The membership is the ultimate authority in a Post but can not understand their responsibilities to the Post without understanding the Post Constitution or By-Laws.

Every Post should have a copy of their Post Constitution or By-Laws (C&BL) posted in a conspicuous location in the Post such that every member can see it. Every member is also entitled to a copy of the C&BL should they request one.

The C&BL defines who can be a member of the Post, what the role of the Executive Committee should be in the Post, how

you hold your elections, descriptions of the roles each Officer in your Post, what committees the Post may have and how they are appointed. There should also be statements on the relationship between the Post and the programs Sons of The American Legion, The American Legion Riders. The American Legion Auxiliary are also part of your Post. Discipline of Post members is clearly defined, as is the method to amend your C&BL. In an overall view the C&BL defines the operation of your Post. Any Post member who deliberately violates any section of your Constitution and By-Laws can be subject to disciplinary action.

**Social Quarters**

Over the last several years you may have heard that the Social Quarters is not part of The American Legion or your Post. If your Post operates a bar, nothing can be further from the truth. Look at your liquor license, it must be in the name of your Post. The bills you get from your liquor distributors come in the name of the Post. The Post has complete liability for everything that goes on in your social quarters. If the Post operates a bar, the Post should be carrying liquor liability insurance to protect the Post

and Post members.

**Post Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies**

Every Post Commander should have a copy of this 160-page book. The book was provided in the package with your membership cards, so whomever picked up the cards look to them for the book. It is also available on the Department website under Resources then Documents then on the left side of the page is publications which will take you to the National Publications page where you will find it. The booklet has many areas including a section Post Operations for the Commander, a section for Ceremonies which has most of the roles that support each ceremony. The Appendix has everything from the National Charter, thru the National Constitution and Bylaws. It also includes areas on Parliamentary Procedure, uses of the American Legion emblem, U.S. Flag Code and a current topic on Service Animals and Posts. I strongly suggest that any Post Commander have a readily available copy.

*Thoughtful Social Media Sharing*

**Edward Lewis, Historian**  
[historian@legionmail.org](mailto:historian@legionmail.org)



*As I was sitting at my desk, basking in the glow of a Navy win, wondering what this month's topic should be...*

By the time you read this, the holidays will be complete, and we will be two decades into the new Millennium. So Historically where

do we go from here?

First, I hope that everyone will have had a very nice Holiday season. Ironically enough I will know that before you read this as well. I am sort of like Santa that way, knowing who has been naughty or nice. Who deserves a plethora of gifts, or who deserves a stocking full of coal? I will know where you went on Holiday vacation, who you had over for dinner. I will know basically everything you did this Holiday. Not because I have special powers or following you around everywhere. One thing for certain is, I am not a STALKER (too

much work!). It is simply because we are friends on social media.

Social media is a great thing. It can be used to improve membership, increase post attendance advertise special events, et cetera. However, it is so important to watch what we Post on social media, and who we accept as friends or who is following us. Even on a Post level it is important to monitor what other people are writing on your Post's site.

*Continued on Page 7*



*Historian - Continued from page 6*

For instance, I posted a “simple” joke on my personal Facebook page prior to the Army – Navy game. I thought it was all in jest. Unfortunately, it went viral. Not “flu-like” viral, but viral enough.

What does that have to do with the American Legion? It is important to realize there are eyes everywhere and while you might post something on your page you might feel is a harmless joke, there might be someone who will feel differently.

So, when posting, just be prepared for backlash and remember... “No one wins a fight on social media.”

Oops, I went of on a rant there..., Here is the link to the history book training: <https://www.legion.org/nadhal/training>

*Looking Ahead*

**Sid Damsgard, Central Area Commander**  
[centralarea@legionmail.org](mailto:centralarea@legionmail.org)

December was a busy year for the Legon with many holiday events around the department. Several posts participated in Wreaths Across America ceremonies throughout the state. The ceremony in Dunedin honored all veterans interred at Curlew Hills cemetery. Post 275 donated 1500 wreaths and placed them on every veteran’s grave. Post 5 in Tampa also had their ceremony at the cemetery on their property. As far as I know they are the only post that has this feature. If you visit Tampa it well worth visiting them.

I would like to wish Post 5’s Commander Bill Hamlin a speedy recovery. He has had a rough time lately and could use our prayers. Central Area Riders

Director Wayne Wooten took a spill on his motorcycle but is recovering well. He’s a little sore but alright and expects to be at the rider’s summit in February. It is with a heavy heart that I must report the passing of 16th District Vice Commander James Ostrander our condolences go out to his family.

Any article from the commanders would not be complete without talking about membership. I’m happy to report that the Central Area is now in second place in the department. Hopefully after the first of the year we will reach our 100% goal. The membership team is doing a great job and I want to thank Randy Holyfield for all the effort he puts in. Now that our winter members are starting to return, I expect a surge in membership the fact that their cards are expiring and access to the canteen is suspended does help a little. It

is amazing how much motivation that is to renew.

February looks to be a very busy time in the Department with the summit being held Feb. 6th to the 8th. Details may be located on the department web site. Make your reservations soon as rooms may fill up quick for this event. Also, in February Post 138 in the 15th District will be hosting a revitalization event beginning at 1000hrs. All members are welcome, and we hope to see many of you there.

Lastly, I know it is early, but I would like to remind everyone that April is Children & Youth month it is never too late make your reservations for the picnic and golf tournament. Les Martin has been working very hard to make these two events the best.

*Hold onto Your Seats*

**Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander**  
[northernarea@legionmail.org](mailto:northernarea@legionmail.org)



Congratulations to everyone that has met or exceeded the 80% goal. The next membership goal is 85% before 05 FEB.

On 06 - 08 Dec 2019, I traveled with

Department Commander Rick Johnson, as he visited the Fifth District. This included the Pearl Harbor Ceremony at Fleet Reserve Association 290, Mayport on 07 Dec 2019. I also had a chance to visit all of my Brothers & Sisters who were inpatients at

the Gainesville VA Hospital (as Mrs. Claus) who were being hospitalized during the holidays; it was my hope to bring a smile to their faces and it sure did.

With the new year started most are turning the page of the past year. BUT! Not So Fast! There is still work to be accomplished for the 2019-2020 Legion Year. I suggest that you look where your Post is at this point of the year, see if you need to catch up in membership (ask for help if you need it!). Remember, anyone without a 2020 card cannot attend meetings and should not be served in the lounge.

Oratorical contests are fast approaching. Stay tuned for details about the Northern Area Oratorical Contest. POC is Doug

Hockenberry, Northern Area Oratorical Chairman.

The Northern Area Ball will be held on 21 Mar 2020, at American Legion Post 155, Crystal River. See flyer for details. Please contact PDC Jay Conti Sr. at 352-287-1400, for more information.

Now is the time get an early start on the end of year CPR Reports. Also, don’t forget Awards for Boy Scouts, JROTC & Shooting Sports, School Medals, Americanism, Children & Youth Month (C & Y April) and many other Programs that we have. With some Posts starting nominations next month let’s finish what we started last year and go out with a BANG!



[facebook.com/floridalegion](https://facebook.com/floridalegion)





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

*Upcoming Events & Membership*

**Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander**

[southernarea@legionmail.org](mailto:southernarea@legionmail.org)



We are now in the roaring 20's. It was a time of prosperity in the 1900's. People were dancing, partying, drinking, and just having a grand old time. Speaking of

a grand old time, we are having the Southern Area Ball on January 25 at Legion Post 142 in Pompano Beach. The day before the Four Chaplains on the 26th.

January 15th your membership should be at 80%. The holidays are over and it's time to get back into the groove. I don't want to see the Southern Area back on the bottom. We are much better than that. The Department gave you the tools and trained you in its application, lets show them that

we can do this.

- **January 19th** is the Oratorical Post deadline.
- **January 25th** remember the Southern Area Ball.
- **January 27th** 1973 was the Vietnams Cease Fire.

So, let's get out and do this.

*Ready to get back to work membership*

**Jim Ramos, Northern Membership**

[teamramos@legionmail.org](mailto:teamramos@legionmail.org)



**Happy New Year 2020** to all members of the North (FL) Membership Team, I hope everyone is safe and ready to go back to work on Membership.

**First let me say Congratulations to the following Districts: 6th, 4th, 17th, 1st, 5th, 2nd and 3rd for doing a great job. Thanks, but we can still need to work some more for the year 2019-2020.**

**Now** is the time to start working again on membership, how would you say? This is how let review the Department Membership Plan & Awards Manual 2019-2020 pages as follows:

- Page 12, Increasing your Post membership 10 proven step to use for success
- Page 13, Top five reason Veterans and their families join the American Legion
- Pages 14-16, Need help in recruiting and retention Frequently asked question
- Page 17, Membership ideas
- Page 21-28 Process membership ([mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org))
- And please continue to read some more of the Membership Plan and we can make 103% goal.

**Second is how do we do the next 3 months starting with:**

- **January**, we need to start back with getting membership teams running again (making phone calls and doing the Buddy Check with members) also plan a membership drive at the Post.
- **February** make something happen

at the Post, Four Chaplains program, Valentine's Day event, President Day event and/or a Legion event for ideas let me know call me. But whatever you do make it BIG.

- **March, oh now we need to do a lot of membership to help your District win the "RACE To The TOP" if the District is 100% +1% they will have a chance to WIN a National Competition and help the Department make that 103% Goal. Let's GO Florida we can do it. Please do it before the 15th of March 2020.**

**Also, in March is the Legion Birthday will be 101 years of service to our Country make it BIG let everybody know who we are The American Legion.**

For more information on membership just call Jim at 322-226-4370 or email at [jramos149@bellsouth.net](mailto:jramos149@bellsouth.net)

*Southern Membership Team Bulletin*

**Ray Perez, Southern Membership**

[teamperez@legionmail.org](mailto:teamperez@legionmail.org)



Let's start by mentioning the 75% goal makers: 11th District, 12th District and 16th District.

- 7th: Posts 34, 15, 23, 8, 339
- 8th: Posts 413,

317, 11, 30, 2, 74, 320, 69, 309, 266, 312 (Posts 413 and 317 are over 103%)

- 8th: (61% in the District made goal)
- 9th: Posts 223, 321, 310, 209, 142, 304, 157, 385, 220, 308 (55% in the District made goal)
- 11th: Posts 268, 199, 367, 62, 258, 188, 47, 164, 277, 20 (Posts 268 and 199 are over 103%)
- 12th: Posts 328, 358, 189, 22, 332, 81, 181, 39, 163, 126, 1, 117, 344, 40 (58% in the District made goal)

- 13th: Posts 192, 404, 38, 411
- 14th: Posts 145, 144, 168, 32, 98, 333, 31
- 15th: Posts 147, 99, 186, 26, 108, 111, 5
- 16th: Posts 275, 119, 252, 273, 104, 158, 305

**CONGRATULATIONS to all! Next goal is January 8th for 80%**

In a three month review we still have 40-100% of the same Posts within our Districts in the bottom five categories. We still have

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*Southern Membership - Continued from page 10*

35 Posts in the Southern Membership Area that are not on the new transmittal system. At our training sessions we offer this instruction on a priority basis. There are still many misconceptions at our Posts

about this system. Since September we have improved from over 90 Post in the entire Department to now 77 Posts still not automated.

Continue to push the Post 400/400AD

Transfer System and if you need assistance please call. Remember the Department Commander's Goal; we must "Stop the Downward Slide in our Membership". Your goal should be 103%, together as a team we can do it!!!

**American Legion Riders**

**Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders**  
[legionriders@legionmail.org](mailto:legionriders@legionmail.org)



I hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas Holidays with their family and friends. From your ALR team we also wish everyone a healthy and prosperous New Year.

The next six months are going to be very busy for the riders. We have the Summit, the Iceman Hockey game, two Unity Rides and POW/MIA Remembrance in the 5th District. There's lots going on. Please keep your eye on our Website; we will be updating it over the next few weeks.

Looks like the Summit is going to break another record. As of December 15th, we have over 500 room nights booked. We are ahead of last years bookings.

We have a few new topics for the Summit this year. We will have a safety program tentatively scheduled for Friday

presented by "Ride Smart", from University of South Florida. They will be bringing their ride simulator for us to measure our reaction times and basic skills, should be very interesting.

You've asked for our own Scrapbook Competition; your request has been granted. Our Department Historian will be teaching the class at the Summit, thanks Ed Lewis, better known as "Snappy".

We will also have information about the new treatments for "PTSD"; Suicide Prevention. It's based on the reclassification of phase one drugs by VA and the State of Florida approval of medical marijuana. Our next project will be putting together Iceman's Hockey Team game on March 28th. This will be the last home game before the playoffs. As ticket sales increase, it will unlock added benefits to the event. This is all new to us and at first, we thought it would be more of a local event, but the Iceman organization wants to reach out to Lady Lakes and include all veterans with a donation going to PVR/SPI.

Some dates to save for 2020: Summit will be at the same location with a Meet

& Greet Wednesday night February 5th, with classes starting on February 6th through the 8th. To book your discounted room and purchase ALR Summit Merchandise, go to [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org), then programs, then legion riders! 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 May 2 at Orlando Harley South. 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!

**Boys State and Oratorical Contest Deadlines**

**Kurt Gies, Americanism**  
[americanism@legionmail.org](mailto:americanism@legionmail.org)



**American Legion Boys State: Personal story** - In 1981 as a junior Atlantic High School in Delray Bch FL, my sister told me I should apply to go to Boys State. You see, she had gone to Girls State a few years prior and she said it was worth doing. Even though I didn't know

what this was, I applied thru my school and was invited to attend an interview at a local "veteran's hall". After being asked a bunch questions that I didn't know the answers to by these three "old guys", I was told "Congratulations, you're going to Boys State!". Still with no idea what this was all about, I was officially a Delegate. Four months later I got off the bus in Tallahassee FL only to discover that 6 days later this experience "CHANGED MY LIFE!".

Because of Boys State, I joined the military. Because of Boys State, I was offered a full

ride to the University of Florida on a Navy ROTC scholarship serving for a total of 25 years. Because of Boys State, I have always been an active member of the many communities I lived in. Because of Boys State, I have always had a developed a passion for what America is all about. But unfortunately, though it may have been mentioned during the process once or twice, I never recognized that it was the American Legion that sent me to this life changing experience. It wasn't until after I retired from the US Navy that I

*Continued on Page 12*



*Americanism - Continued from page 11*

joined the American Legion and connected the dots.

I tell you this story because it is a real life example of a small post taking the initiative to invest in a young man, who had no clue what our system of government was about nor what it meant to serve my country and community. But the Delray Beach post held fundraisers and did whatever it took to generate the funds needed to sponsor me and get me to Tallahassee. Is your post sending a delegate this year? Can you honestly say that \$450 is too much to change a young man's life for the better? The deadline to pay your fees and select your Delegates is NOW! Send in your money ASAP and reserve your quotas. The cost of Boys State to the Legion is basically the same whether we fill it up or send 85% of what we are allowed (which has been the case the past couple of years). If you have money to send more than your quota, please request extra quotas, as we probably have space for them. But act now and be part of something that changes

lives. Oh and make sure you tell the boys constantly that they will be attending the AMERICAN LEGION Boys State! You want to make sure they never forget who sent them.

If you have any questions, please contact your Post, District American Legion Boys State Chairman for more details.

American Legion Oratorical Contests: The deadlines for the post-level Oratorical Contests are rapidly approaching, if they haven't already passed. Over the years, we've noticed that most posts have elected not to host these competitions. But my guess is that it's because many don't recognize what this contest is all about and how easy it is to host one. All you need is 2-3 contestants, 4-5 volunteers and a place to hold it. The booklet guides you through the rest.

By not hosting one, you are potentially denying a local high school student from your community the chance to collect over \$23,000 in scholarship money by winning

at all the levels on their way to becoming the national champion. Some child, from some community, representing some American Legion post will be walk across that stage at the National Convention to be honored. Wouldn't it be cool if they represented your post?

If you are planning to host an event, tell your other posts in your District so they can come out, watch or possibly even help, but also direct kids from their areas who are interested in competing. If you're not holding a contest this year, find out who is (post, District or Area-level) and volunteer to help them. This way, you can see what it all about and be ready to host one next year. We promise it will be an amazing experience for you and the kids and potentially be the first step to giving one of your local kids a chance at "Greatness" and some significant scholarship money!

If you have any questions, please contact your Post, District American Legion Oratorical Chairman for more details.

*American Legion Baseball*

**Terry Phillips, Baseball**  
baseball@legionmail.org

As the newly appointed Department Baseball Chairman in replacement of my friend Andy Burkett (rest in peace) I would like to assure you that myself and the Area Commissioners / Executive Baseball Committee will continue to move forward in serving the kids and families that are a part of our program.

The American Legion Baseball Program began in 1925 and will turn 95 years old this summer.

Throughout the history of Legion Baseball, hundreds of thousands of

young players have received college scholarships with the opportunity to play next level baseball. Also, thousands of players have been given the opportunity to play professional Major League Baseball as a career.

Many of our young players have went on to serve our country in a branch of our military forces.

When you help support this very important program remember it is not just about playing a game of baseball - you are touching and changing lives, investing in the future of these kids.

We keep the kids off the streets and out of trouble, in the eight years I have been back

in Legion Baseball (I played American Legion Baseball in my high school days and it kept me out of trouble for sure) not once have there been any of our players involved in gang violence, drug arrests, gun violence or any negative media issues - that really means something in these troubled times.

Thank you to all that believe and help this program, but we need all in, so please open your hearts and help us help these kids.

In 2020 we are starting Girls Softball ages 8 to 19 and adding ages 8 to 15 baseball which is another first as we continue to lead the way of the future in the Department of Florida.



**REGISTER NOW**

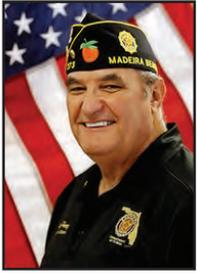
<https://www.floridalegion.org/news-events/florida-legion-college/>

January 23 - 25, 2020  
Orlando, FL



*Donate Blood and Make a Difference*

**Ray Perez, Blood Donor**  
[blooddonor@legionmail.org](mailto:blooddonor@legionmail.org)



**ATTENTION ALL COMMANDERS!**  
 The window for the Consolidated Post Reports (CPRs) is open in MyLegion.org. Start looking at the number of pints at each event and tally them into your CPR. Also look at the awards manual for submitting your Post for Blood Donor Awards and pins!

Today I'm reaching out to all of you, asking you to work with your Post Commanders

in setting up a Blood Drive ASAP, if you had one at least 8 weeks ago it's time for another. There is a blood drive shortage across the country, but with the latest shootings in Pensacola the blood banks in Florida have responded to those urgent needs, leaving their shelves in need of restocking badly.

Rhonda Bailey-Mauer, the American Legion Auxiliary National Security Chairman and I are working together to bring more awareness of the needs we have in our state for donors. Remember it's not a matter of "if" a disaster will happen, it's a matter of "when" it will happen, will we be ready?! The blood used in an emergency is already on the shelves before an event happens, they are our first responders!

Let's help to keep those shelves stocked.

**Facts:**

One in every seven people entering a hospital will need a blood transfusion. A single car accident victim can require up to 100 pints of blood. The number one reason donors give blood is because they want to help others.

Please contact One Blood this week and set up your Blood Drive soon. 1.888.9.DONATE (936.6283)

Thank You! My number and email again are 727-412-5356  
[blooddonor@legionmail.org](mailto:blooddonor@legionmail.org).



*Upcoming Picnic & Golf Tournament*

**Les Martin, Children & Youth**  
[cy@legionmail.org](mailto:cy@legionmail.org)



December was a busy month. I traveled from Palmetto to the 14th and 9th Districts for their District meetings. I thank District Commanders Rocco LaPace and Art Barber for their hospitality. Their meetings were very informative, and I got to meet some great Legionnaires. I also visited several Posts on my travels in these two Districts. During the weekend of December 7th, I visited with Commander Richards and Finance Officer Marion at Post 321 in Cooper City. I also met with Vice Commander Tom at Post 133 in Palmetto Bay and 2nd Vice Commander/VSO Mike Bennett at Post 43 in Homestead.

I also visited with District 13 on December 8th at Post 323 in Lehigh Acres. Thank You Commander Brian "Taz" Gehling, SON's Commander Christian Rapp and Riders Director Jessica Moore, for your hospitality. During the weekend of December 14th, I visited the 9th District. I again met with Commander Judith Richards at Post 321 and watched the Army-NAVY football game there with her, 9th District Commander Arthur Barber, Dept. Membership Chair Ray Perez, and Mr. & Mrs. Julio from Post 275 in District 16 and several members of Post 321. I also stopped in at Post 36 and Post 304. On Sunday, the 15th, I attended the 9th District meeting at Post 180. Boy, do we have a great bunch of hard-working veterans around our state.

Now that the holidays are behind us, it's time to start the push for our two Children & Youth Fundraisers. Remember, the Children & Youth Picnic is scheduled for

April 4th, at Titusville Post 1. Things are starting to look up for this event. The Children & Youth Golf Tournament is set for April 25th at the IMG Academy Golf Club in Bradenton. Please, don't miss these events. We need as many Legionnaires attending as possible. I met with Manatee County Sheriff, Rick Wells to discuss the possibility of working with the Florida Sheriff's Association for some of our Children & Youth Programs and activities. Sheriff Wells with also be promoting our Golf Tournament and I have also asked PDC Al "Gunner" Dudley to meet with the Brevard County Sheriff, Wayne Ivy, to see if they could bring some K-9 units or SWAT over to the picnic for some demonstrations. We are looking to make this year a very kid friendly picnic, so bring your kids and grandkids.



*Happy New Year*

**Richard Smith, SAL Advisory**  
[sal@legionmail.org](mailto:sal@legionmail.org)

I want to take this opportunity to wish each one of you a happy and prosperous

new year. Now is the time to check with your squadron and make sure they are on track for their membership. Offer your assistance if they need it. The second half of the year will fly by and we will be looking for end of year reports soon.

Stress upon your squadron officers how important it is to complete these reports and get them in on time.





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

**Hotel: Lantern Inn & Suites, 7251 N. Tamiami Trail (14th St. W)  
Sarasota, Fl. 34243 941-355-7747  
\$89 King, \$99 - 2 Queen - Ask for American Legion Rate  
Reservation Cut-off - 4-10-2020**



# 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



**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](http://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

*Constitution & By-Laws Committee*

**John Dollinger, Constitution & ByLaws**  
[cbl@legionmail.org](mailto:cbl@legionmail.org)



I have started processing the revisions as submitted. Over the holidays I will make a big dent in the backlog. There is a sample Constitution and By-Laws on the

Department website for your use. It is a guideline and I understand some Posts have some changes that are important to their Post. If those changes comply with Department and National Constitutions, the U.S. Code that created the American Legion and Federal/State laws the Judge Advocate may allow it.

As you submit your changes please also supply the meeting minutes where the amendments were approved by the Post

Membership. I will also be making the automatic change to the Preamble from "the Great Wars" to "all Wars". For the Post Constitutions that still breakout the dates for eligibility, these will be automatically changed to state "Eligibility to membership in this Post shall be as prescribed by the National Constitution of The American Legion, Article IV, Section 1." These changes are required to bring every Post into compliance to the National Constitution.

*JROTC / Shooting Sports*

**Loretta Young, ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports**  
[jrotc@legionmail.org](mailto:jrotc@legionmail.org)



The JSSP Postal Match Targets deadline is past as of 15 Dec. It has been so far a very low number of target orders compared to past years. In part this is due to the short time to get targets

ordered and the new process of online ordering with the Affiliation Form now due each year in addition to the payment must be all done online. In the past, the deadline has been the end of January but this year it has been reduced to half the time to order the targets. I've had several inquiries as to joining a Marksmanship Team. Information and instructions are on the Department/National websites under programs. To join a team already formed in your area there are several websites that have clubs listed and going on Google to learn of some in your local area, would be a good start. To follow the teams that are entered into the competition the names and firing records can be found on the (CMP) website listed under the American Legion National Air Rifle Match for the 1st Round Qualification.

There are many ways the JROTC Cadet Program can benefit the posts and the community. I attended several events recently where the cadets performed

for the posts/districts and the community. The 9th District Ball had cadets from Nova HS., NJROTC serve the meal and assist the veterans and they did an outstanding job. The Ball was held at Post 321, Cooper City and all cadets were in uniform and served the meal, dessert, cleared the tables and at the end were rewarded with a \$400 donation from the attending guests. Kudos to all the cadets and their team leader who all stayed to the end of the Ball and earned community credits as well as the very nice donation for their program.

Many thanks to the Hallandale Beach HS, JROTC Color Guard for their performance for the opening of the 19th Annual South Florida Leader's Luncheon Benefiting UNCF held at the Harbor Beach Hotel in Fort Lauderdale. The Cadets had an outstanding performance and later we had the honor of them sharing our table for the luncheon. They were given a standing ovation by Keynote Speaker, Vincent Viola, Owner of the Florida Panthers and a West Point Graduate.

Another example of Cadet involvement in the community were the Seminole Ridge HS, JROTC Sabre Team who participated at the Wreaths Across America Service at the South Florida National Cemetery at Lake Worth. The Cadets were in formation for the procession for the Ceremonial Wreaths and the escorts. They are captured here after they completed their duty as they left the staging area. There were other JROTC Units assisting as well as CAP, Sea Cadets,

Boy and Girl Scout Troops.

These are just a few of the examples of the Youth Programs that are available that your posts can support. Our JROTC Cadet of the Year Program is due on 01 March 2020. This is another scholarship program that offers a First Place Award of \$2,500. All posts should contact the school in your area and make sure they have the application. It can be found on the Department website and only one recipient per school to be chosen by the Senior Instructor and submitted to the Department of Florida. As always, I thank all the posts that support our Youth Programs, they are our future.



Hallendale Beach HS - JROTC Color Guard



Seminole Ridge JROTC Sabre Rifle Color Guard



*National Police Week*

**Daryl Bass, Law & Order**  
laworder@legionmail.org



National Police Week starts this year on May 11th. This week is when we - as Americans who support our Police and first responders - recognize their good works and show them

our appreciation. 2019 was not a good year for law enforcement having to endure with so many killed in the Line of Duty. Therefore, it is imperative to help them whenever and wherever the need should arise.

Having talked to some of our Law & Order Chairmen, it is my understanding that some Posts hold their Police Officer and First Responder Award Ceremony during National Police Week. This is all well and

good but remember the Application and Information of your Officer and Paramedic/Firefighter must be into Department by April 22, 2019. Submit to Programs Director Becki Tibbs.

Please keep me informed regarding your status. Send me a brief story about your chosen Heroes. You can contact me at my Email bassman1278@hotmail.com or call me at (407) 738-3357 (Cell).

*Post Development*

**Jim Ramos, Post Development**  
postdevelopment@legionmail.org



**Hello Florida Legionnaires: Happy New Year 2020. I hope we are ALL Ok, safe and ready to get back to helping our Veterans, our Friends and our Legion Family. Because we need to do some**

**Post development and Training so we can continue to Celebrate our Legion History.**

**Post Development and Post Training is to Help your Post Leaders:**

All members should know the History of The American Legion is founded in Paris by members of the American Expeditionary Force in March 16-17, 1919 and was chartered by Congress

(September 16, 1919) as a patriotic Veterans Organization and our four Pillars:

1. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
2. National Security
3. Americanism
4. Children and Youth

Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation's veterans, its servicemembers, their families, the youth of American and ordinary citizens. These programs make a difference in hundreds of thousands of lives each year.

A little bit of Legion History:

\*First National Convention on Nov 10-12, 1919 of the American Legion was Minneapolis, MN and the first program of the Legion was the Boys Scout of American.

\*First "Flag Code" is drafted during conference (June 15, 1923) called by the American Legion and Congress adopted

the code in 1942.

\*In Dec. 15, 1943 Past National Commander Harry W. Colmery writes in long hand on hotel stationery the first draft of what will become the "G.I. Bill of Right" and President Franklin Roosevelt sing The GI Bill into Law in June 22, 1944.

Post Officer training on how to be a Good Post Commander as by Post Officer's Guide 2019.

Making your Post better with programs, civic group, adaptive youth clubs and local media within the Post. Also set up good Post meeting, creating good contact roster for all members and new members. Have members volunteers and work together on program and event with the Legion family.

Need help or ideas call Jim at 352-266-4370 or email at [jramos149@bellsouth.net](mailto:jramos149@bellsouth.net)

*Special Olympics Donations*

**Diane Schmidt, Special Olympics**  
specialolympics@legionmail.org

Special Olympics is the gift that just keeps on giving. Start the year off with a generous donation to this phenomenal opportunity to transform lives through the love of sports. For a limited time, a partner of Special Olympics, "Finish Line" will **TRIPLE** your donation. Today, Florida Special Olympics serves **50,926 athletes**

with intellectual disabilities. Just send your donation to:

Special Olympics Florida  
1915 Don Wickham Drive  
Clermont, FL 34711

Make sure you write your Post # clearly on your check and notify me by email so that you can be considered for the Department Awards for Donating to Florida Special Olympics.

Special Olympics empowers youth and leaders to be "Partners in Change." Show your support of this unique program that just keeps on giving.

**In addition, there are many ways to volunteer for this program; go to [SpecialOlympicsFlorida.org](http://SpecialOlympicsFlorida.org) and select the city and day you want to volunteer; any questions, text me 321-217 6699.**



# HAPPY NEW YEAR!



## UPCOMING EVENTS MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us at one of our next events, or hold your own fundraiser. Please contact 407-295-2631 or [jcooper@floridalegion.org](mailto:jcooper@floridalegion.org) for more information.

### JANUARY (ENTIRE MONTH)

Post 359 Fundraisers  
Titusville, FL

### 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



### MAY 2

Post 69/74 Golf Tournament  
Sebring, FL



## SPOT LIGHT • POST 359 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

During January, the Legion Family from Post 359 are dedicating their entire fundraising efforts to benefit PROJECT: VetRelief. They have many events planned over the course of the month including a variety of dinners, motorcycle rides and movie nights.

We are grateful for the support of all those involved in planning for these events and are truly honored they chose our program to receive the funds generated. The full listing of events are below. **Please be sure to head to Titusville and support them in one or all of their fun activities.**

<b>WED, JAN 1</b>	Brunch Buffet (10am - Noon)	<b>SAT, JAN 18</b>	Rib Day 2-Gone Movie Night (6:30pm) <i>Blazing Saddles</i>
<b>SAT, JAN 4</b>	Bike Day (1-5pm) <i>Live Music by Changes</i>	<b>SUN, JAN 19</b>	Poker Run (KSU 10am)
<b>MON, JAN 6</b>	Lunch	<b>FRI, JAN 24</b>	Steak Night (5:30pm)
<b>SAT, JAN 11</b>	Steak Shoot (2-4pm) Spaghetti Dinner (5-7pm)	<b>SAT, JAN 25</b>	Steak Shoot (2-4pm)
<b>MON, JAN 13</b>	Lunch	<b>SUN, JAN 26</b>	Breakfast (9:30-10:30am)
<b>JAN 13 - 17</b>	Drink Specials	<b>SUN, JAN 31</b>	Dinner (5pm) <i>National Commander Visit</i>

**EVERY TUESDAY & FRIDAY** - Karaoke Night (7-11pm)  
*Jell-O Shots or 50/50*

**EVERY WEDNESDAY** - Lunch

**PROCEEDS FROM EVENTS BENEFIT  
PROJECT: VETRELIEF**

## DID YOU KNOW? • FEW QUICK FACTS

- ▶ The PVR **office was closed** from December 24th and reopened on January 2nd. Be patient as we work through calls received during that time.
- ▶ **92% of every dollar** donated to the program goes directly to our veterans and their families. Less than 2% is used towards organizational compliance and accounting/banking fees.
- ▶ We are collecting resources and contact names of Veteran Service Organizations to create a **state-wide resource tool**. If you have any contacts you'd like to share, please visit the following website to enter their information:  
<https://www.projectvetrelief.org/vso-resource-entries/>
- ▶ Our **veterans are depending on us** to process their financial assistance cases in a timely manner. If you are conducting an interview on our behalf, please schedule a meeting and return the follow up report as soon as possible.
- ▶ Commander William "Rick" Johnson chose PVR as one of his charities for his fundraising project. When submitting donations for his efforts, be sure to include "Commander's Charity" in the memo line. **Let's help him get to his goal of \$75,000!**
- ▶ PVR has partnered with **AmazonSmile**. If you choose PROJECT: VetRelief, Inc. before checking out, Amazon will donate 10% of your order to our program!



**SUPPORT CASES**

\*Numbers reflect PVR Cases ONLY

JULY - NOV 2019 •

**65** families  
helped

**\$76,216.94** amount  
distributed

*Training for Scouting Adult Volunteers*

**Chuck Weber, Scouting**  
[scouting@legionmail.org](mailto:scouting@legionmail.org)



This is the time of year when all Posts and their Scout units are preparing to recharter for another year. With that activity comes the likely addition of new adult leaders. BSA requires all that all adults must complete the new Youth Protection Training Course before their registration applications will be accepted. If a leader's YPT will expire within two months of the unit's registration, it is a good idea to have the leader retake the training early so that it will not expire during processing of the charter.

Some BSA Councils also require that position-specific leader training be completed beforehand. Even if not Council required, it is a good idea for a Post to require that all its leaders are fully trained before their approval to register. This helps

to ensure that the individuals involved are fully committed to, and prepared for, the positions they are about to enter.

NOTE – The Post's Scouting Chair/Charter Organization Representative is also required to complete the YPT training course and is expected to take the position specific one.

This past year has seen many updated changes in leader training which correspond to changes in the BSA's various programs. Position-specific training courses for Cub Scout leaders and Scouts BSA (Boy Scout) leaders have been updated and are available on <https://my.scouting.org> in the BSA Learning Center. Various BSA Councils have additional specialty classroom and field training.

All other required and optional adult leader training courses may also be found at: <https://my.scouting.org>. New adult leaders will need to establish an account before logging in. Their YPT training certificates will be emailed to the address provided at account registration. Existing leaders should remember to print out their

completion certificates for both YPT and position-specific courses as soon as they are completed.

Remember – every Scout deserves a well-trained leader.

This year, in addition to the training verifications that will be made during leader registration, there is an additional requirement for ALL leaders to sign a document consenting to their individual background registration. If not signed, registration will be refused.

On another note – There have been many questions about several BSA policies as they relate to American Legion Scouters and Scout Units. Please go to our website Scouting page at <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/> for a lot of new BSA policy information. Included are uniform, bylaws, merit badge and other issues.

As always, thank you for all that you do.

*VA&R*

**Alan Cohen, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**  
[var@legionmail.org](mailto:var@legionmail.org)

As we begin the new year I'd like to start by extending my deepest appreciation for yet another year during which I've had the honor to work with and for my fellow veterans. I hope that 2020 brings us all good health, happiness and success. Our mission continues.

I must admit to being remiss in not having previously congratulated Post 144, Miami Lakes, for conducting yet another Community Salute to our Military. This year's event was held at the Coast Guard Air Base locally and was attended by over 2,000 veterans and their families. Along with a variety of services offered to attendees was the unveiling of the new Purple Heart stamp by the Postmaster General of the U.S. Job well

done to all involved.

During the month there were stand-downs conducted in 2 different parts of the state and as always the Legion family made significant contributions. Suffice it to say that hundreds of our troubled or less fortunate brother and sister veterans. Services and comfort items were supplied and distributed generously.

Our VAVS hospital volunteers continue to give selflessly of their time at VA hospitals and CBOC's and have, as always, found ways to lift the spirits of patients.

I just recently attended the retirement ceremony of a friend of us all, Dennis Latta, who had worked for the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs for 27 years in various capacities, not the least of which was as lead instructor in the Post Service Officer class twice annually. There are

literally hundreds of veterans whose lives he touched during his career. I'm sure he'll continue advocating for veterans even in retirement.

In closing, while this may seem a bit early I would remind everyone that soon enough it will be time for the Department's June Convention. That said, watch the website and please be mindful that we welcome all registrants for the Post Service Officer class.

In line with Fall Conference, registration is open for the 2-day Post Service Officer class, to be conducted Nov 1 and 2. You can find the registration form on the Dept website so don't wait 'til the last minute to sign up as seating is going to be somewhat limited. As a Post Service Officer you'll play an important part in the lives of your fellow veterans.



Youth Law Cadet Bulletin

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet  
youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



First, I hope you and all of yours had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Our Florida Highway Patrol/American Legion Cadet Program is a

definite go this year. But please do not waste time in getting your cadet or cadets a guaranteed spot in this program. In the past 2 years, we had to turn down requests because the Posts did not get their information in to us in a timely manner. The cadets really enjoy this program, and I know this because we have not received a single complaint from any one of them or their family. I really hate it when a Post contacts me right after we close the registration for that year.

With us working with another organization, we must adhere to their rules. Space is limited, so please get your cadets entered as soon as possible. We have a little flexibility, but not a lot. I have met with the Florida Highway Patrol Major in her office, and she is totally committed to this program. She has made a couple personnel changes to make this program more efficient.

Florida Membership Trivia

Clarence Hill, Past National Commander  
pnchill@legionmail.org



At the December 5th District meeting, I picked up a copy of the National Membership Record and reviewed it. As a new decade is about to begin, I thought I would pull out some tidbits to share. The Department of Florida's All Time High in membership is 144,078 which was set in 2008. I believe that Florida has achieved more All Time Highs in membership than any other Department, but I don't have the time to verify that.

The statistics start in 1920. The 2019 year doesn't close out until December 31st, but since it obviously won't be an All Time High year, I counted it so there are 100 years of statistics. Florida started

with 5,261 in 1920. Overall, Florida has had 48 All Time High years (48%) and missed in 52 years (52%). There have only been 3 decades that Florida did not have at least one year with an All Time High-the 1930's, 1950's and this decade, the 2010's. There were two consecutive decades that Florida achieved an All Time High each year-the 1970's and 1980's. The longest All Time High streak was 29 years, from 1966-1994. I'm not sure whether any other Department can match that streak. Dyke Shannon sure has a lot of All Time High rings. The longest streak without an All Time High was 19 years-from 1947-1965. The All Time High streak that started when 1966 broke the 1946 All Time High of 49,237 by achieving 49,566. During the streak, Florida crossed 100,000 in membership in 1987, achieving 100,170. Florida also came close to doubling its membership one time when 1945 achieved 25,276 and 1946 achieved 49,327, an increase of 24,051 or just over 95%.

All Time High rings are: Ray Daniels, Dennis Boland, Alan Hall, Omer Smith, Clarence Hill, Reginald Beverly, George Wehrli, Larry White and Warren Post (also have All Time High rings as Department Membership Chairmen). Both Larry Sheets and Ken Powell achieved All Time Highs.

There were 59 Departments once upon a time. The Department called Outlying Posts expired in 1964; and Canada, Italy and Panama expired in 1995. There are 24 Departments whose All Time Highs were set in the 1940's, 6 in the 1950's, 4 in the 1970's, 1 in the 1980's, 14 in the 1990's, 6 in the 2000's and only one this decade, Nevada in 2012. There were 4 other Department achieve their All Time High with Florida in 2008-Arizona, Delaware, South Carolina and Virginia.

Let's not let another decade go by without achieving an All Time High.

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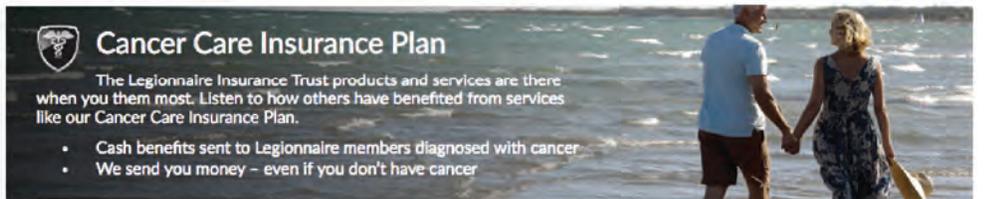
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*"If they are remembered, they are not gone truly, they simply change duty assignments and are amongst the best."*

**POST EVERLASTING 2019**

**Kenneth Lee Powell Sr**

Kenneth Lee Powell Sr, of West Palm Beach, Florida passed away on Monday, November 25, 2019 at the age of 71. Kenneth is survived by his wife, Natalia, three children, Kenneth Jr, Natasha, and Austin.

Kenneth was a U.S. Navy Vietnam War Veteran and a member of Memorial American Legion Post 141, West Palm Beach, FL with 27 continuous years of membership. Kenneth served as an Store Manager while in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. Kenneth owned and operated many corporations and was active in Rotary International, Rotary Club and was a Life Member of the VFW as well a Paid Up For Life Member of The American Legion.

Kenneth joined The American Legion in 1994 at West Palm Beach, Florida Post 141. He served in many elected and appointed positions during his impressive career in The American Legion including 2 terms as Post Commander. On a Department level, Kenneth, served as; Department Finance Chairman (2007-2014; 11th District Commander (1998-1999); Department Historian (2000-2001); Vice Commander – Southern Area (1999-2000); and Department Commander (2001-2002). On a National level, Kenneth, served on the Department Historians Organization (2000-2001; American Legion Insurance Committee (2000-2012); National Legislative Council (2013-2015); National American Legion Press Association (2004-2008) ; and Revenue Enhancement Committee (2012-2013).

**Joseph A.R. Thibault**

Past Southern Area Commander, Joseph A.R. Thibault, of West Palm Beach, FL passed away on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at the age of 76.

Joseph was a United States Army Vietnam War Veteran and a member of Memorial Post 141, with 33 years of continuous membership. Joseph served many elected and appointed positions during his impressive career in The American Legion. He served as Post Commander (1997-2003 & 2005-07 & 2013-14); 11th District Commander (2000-01); Southern Area Commander (2003-04), and Department Blood Donor Chairman (2004-05).



**Andrew F. Burkett**

Department Baseball Chairman, Andrew F. Burkett, of Lehigh Acres, FL passed away on Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at the age of 70. Andrew is survived by his wife, Jeanie.

Andrew was a United States Army Vietnam War Veteran. and a member of Lehigh Acres Post 323. Andrew joined The American Legion in North Carolina while on active duty in 1970. He served many elected and appointed positions during his impressive career in The American Legion. Andrew served as Post Commander (2013-15 & 2018-19); 13th District Commander (2014-15); Department Americanism Chairman (2016-17); and Southwestern Area Commander (2016-17). On a National level, Andrew, served on the Americanism Council (2013-19).





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**POST EVERLASTING 2019**



**John Michael "Mike" Addis**  
Past Department Sgt-at-Arms, John Michael "Mike" Addis, of Seminole, FL passed away on Saturday, August 31, 2019 at the age of 75. Mike is survived by his wife, Caron, and a brother, Pat.

Mike was a U.S. Navy Vietnam War Era Veteran and a member of Pinellas Park Post 104. Mike joined The American Legion in 1969 in his hometown Galesburg, Illinois. He served many

elected and appointed positions during his impressive career in The American Legion. Mike served as Post Commander (2005-08); 16th District Commander (2007-08); Department Americanism Chairman (2008-09); Central Area Commander (2009-10); Department Sgt-at-Arms (2009-11); Department Blood Donor Chairman (2011-12); Department Finance Committee (2018-19). On a National level, Mike, served on the Foreign Relations Council (2009-12); National Security Council (2014-16); Veteran Affairs & Rehab Council (2016-18); Legislative Council (2016-19); and Marketing Commission (2018-19).



**Dan Reffitt**  
Post 321 Commander, Dan Reffitt, of Cooper City, FL passed away on July 22, 2019. Dan was a member of the Department Finance Committee.

**Albert "Big Al" Diaz**  
Past Eastern Area Commander, Albert "Big Al" Diaz, of Cocoa, FL passed away on Thursday, April 25, 2019 at the age of 72. Albert is a U.S. Air Force Vietnam War Era Veteran and a member of Post 348, with 20 years of membership. Albert is survived by his wife, Rose.



**Larry D. Sheets**  
Department Judge Advocate, Larry D. Sheets, of Miami, FL passed away on Tuesday, January 1, 2019 at the age of 72. Larry is survived by his sister, Nancy Carroll, of Hampton, Georgia, and his brother, John Sheets, of Plymouth, Indiana.

Larry was a U.S. Air Force Vietnam War Era Veteran and a member of Sullivan-Babcock Post 32, with 51 continuous years of membership. Larry served as an aircraft mechanic while in the U.S. Air Force during the Vietnam War. He worked for Eastern Airlines for 21 years and retired Executive Airlines (American Eagle) in Miami.

Larry joined The American Legion in 1968 at Nappanee, Indiana Post 154, and transferred to Hialeah, Florida Post 32 in 1972. He served in many elected and appointed positions during his impressive career in The American Legion including 14 terms as Post Commander. On a Department level, Larry, served as Department Internal Affairs Chairman (1994-2002 & 2006-15); 10th District Commander (1980-81); Department Sgt-at-Arms (1987-89); Vice Commander – Southern Area (1985-86); and Department Commander (1989-90). On a National level, Larry, served on the National Internal Affairs Committee (1987-19); National Legislative Council (1993-94 & 1999-19); and was elected National Vice Commander (2011-12).

