



# THE LEGION LINK

★ SERVICE  
★ HONOR  
★ SACRIFICE



FEBRUARY 2020

COMMANDER WILLIAM "RICK" JOHNSON VOLUME 28 ISSUE VII

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### From your Department Commander Rick Johnson

**Rick Johnson, Commander**  
[commander@floridalegion.org](mailto:commander@floridalegion.org)



#### BIG EVENTS COMING UP

Well!!! January was a very busy month. I visited the 3rd District and the 15th District Bay Pines hospital and Tampa VA hospital and attended a couple of District meetings. I

attended Legion college held on Jan 23-25. I also attended the Southern Area Ball and the Four Chaplain's Ceremony at the Fort Lauderdale Coast Guard Station. Jan 28-Feb 2 National Commander, James "Bill" Oxford, is visiting the Eastern Area for his official visit. I will give more information on his visit in my next article.

On February 5-9, I will be attending the Rider's Summit. There will be lot of classes taught and new information put out to take back to the posts. The Challenge 22 Event will be held Feb 15 at Post 69, with a lot of information and vendors set up to assist the veterans and the kids. There's

a great event to be held in downtown Dunedin on Feb 22nd. It will be a Mardi Gras where thousands of people will show up and have a great time. Post 275 will have a float and you can assist in the bead tossing.

Feb 23rd is the deadline for the Area Oratorical Contests to be completed. I'll be traveling around the state, there are still numerous events happening out there that no one knows about. PLEASE let us know of your events and toot your horn on what you are doing out there. We have had a great year and let's continue to move forward. Start thinking about your CPRs and start filling them out. You can do both online. I want to thank everyone out there for the hospitality while visiting certain Districts. We will move forward and even get stronger with your help and vision for the future.

Thanks, again for what you have done and continue to do. Still serving.

Service, Honor, Sacrifice

**ADOPT A HIGHWAY!!!!!!!!!!**

**DEPARTMENT COMMANDER HOMECOMING & LUAU**

see page **19**



*Membership & Post Concerns*

**Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice Commander**

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



To start with, I would like to congratulate the 6th District and Commander Suelter for winning Zone 1 Traveling Trophy for the 2nd Quarter. Plus 6th District, on January 9th, is over 90% in membership. Well done 6th District. In fact, 4 of the 5 Districts in Zone 1 achieved the 80% goal by January 9th.

- 6th District is 90.22%
- 12th District, is in 2nd place in Department at 87.21%, last year at this time, 12th District was at 85.57, and they when on to win the Rice to the Top.
- 11th District is at 84.71%, last year they were at 81.31%, they are up 3.4%
- 9th District is at 81.03%, 73.51%, they are up over 6% from last year.
- 14th District is following up, with 73.28%, however they are still working on their membership.

I would like to remind everyone that the Department of Florida is a Veterans Organization. As Veterans, we understand the Chain-Of-Command. The problem is that many of our members want to go straight to the Top with their problems. We often receive letters from National on Post problems. Worst, we do not receive any notifications from our Posts or Districts about these problems. National will not assist with a Post problem, they will immediately send it back to Department to review. Department then sends the complaint down to the Post level. If you have a problem at the Post level, always talk to your leadership at the Post, especially the Commander. If the problem is the Post Commander, and the problem persist, reach out to your District Commander for assistance.

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](http://www.floridalegion.org) > Resources > Legion Post Documents > Forms > Dept Chair Interest. The forms will be reviewed starting January, so don't delay. I have already received a few and currently reviewing them. Thank you if you have already send in a request.

*Congratulations and Keep Pushing*

**Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander**

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



Congratulations to Post 192 of District 13, Post 147, 26, and 99 of District 15 and Post 11, 314, and 413 of District 8 for attaining 100% membership by December 31, 2019. Each post who attained 100% by December 31st, 2019 will receive a \$100 check from 2nd Vice Commander Eunice Butts. Special thanks

to all posts who made their 85% goal for February 2020. Thanks to the Central and Southwestern Commanders for promoting the membership challenge. Now it is time to do "The Buddy Check", revitalizations, newspaper, T.V. promotions, etc. These are only a few suggestions. Let's get our membership to 100% by March 20, 2020.

Remember, I believe in you and I know you can do the best that you can do toward membership and I appreciate you all with all the love from my heart. Happy Valentine's Day.

FEBRUARY 2020	
29-2	National Commander Visit 🌟
1	Freedom Day
1	Registration for Youth Law Cadet begins
1	1st Round Target Deadline
1	6th District Casino Night
1	Vietnam Veterans Tribute
2	Super Bowl
2	Groundhog Day
3	Four Chaplains Day
4	USO Birthday
6-8	ALR 4th Annual Summit 🌟
9	Oratorical District Contest Deadline
11	Finance Meeting 🌟
12	Lincoln's Birthday
12	National Membership Goal 85% ★
12	Ext Deadline for Boys State Reg Fee
14	Valentine's Day
14-15	Challenge 22 🌟
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15	Assisting Our Veterans Expo
17	President's Day
17	Washington's Birthday
17	Headquarters Closed
19	US Coast Guard Reserve Birthday
21-22	Mardi Gras 🌟
22	District 1 Meeting
23	Oratorical Area Contest Deadline
24	Operation Desert Storm Start (1991)
29	Operation Desert Storm End (1991)
26	Ash Wednesday

🌟 - 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.



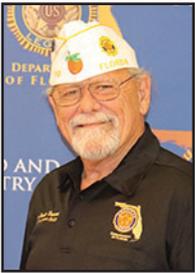
**DEPARTMENT CONVENTION NOW BOOKING**  
[www.floridalegion.org/flcon](http://www.floridalegion.org/flcon)



*We Are Smokin'*

**Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander**

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



I titled this month's Link submission "We Are Smokin'", for several reasons. Not only is our membership "smokin hot" due to the efforts of our Dept. membership team and you the local

Post leadership, but because there are so many questions concerning smoking in our canteens across the State. There are certain criteria you must address before a change of policy regarding smoking occurs at your Post. It is very important to have an honest discussion during your general membership meeting to find

out just where your entire membership stands on this issue. Anyone can make a motion to abolish smoking at a post but remember one thing, anyone can make a motion to bring it back. The best thing in my opinion is to first discuss, notify and then vote. All members of the Post should be notified by either snail mail or e-mail or both. Set a date to vote on the motion then if passed put it in your house rules or standing rules. It would be very difficult to put in your bylaws as it would be very time consuming and very hard to change. One very important thing you must remember. Smokers have rights and you should consider an alternate smoking area for them before you change your rules. A lot of people have told me time and time again that a post will cease to exist if you ban smoking. That my friends is fake news. You might slow down for a while, but people

will return. Remember, you are hearing this from a hardened smoker. This is the future. I sincerely hope everyone had as good a Christmas as I did this year. It makes me so proud to be a part of an organization that takes care of those that are not as blessed as the rest of us. I was so amazed at all the events this year sponsored by our American Legion. I was lucky enough to attend a Veterans Christmas party sponsored by the Little Post in Havana Florida. A well-attended event with over 100 Vets who were very well fed with turkey, ham and all the fixins' prepared and served by a dedicated Post 84 family and other volunteers from the surrounding area. As we enter our new year let's all keep our eye on the prize. We are one "Smokin" Dept.

*Suicide Prevention*

**Dennis Boland, NEC**

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Dear American Legion Family and Friends, Suicide is a national public health issue. Veterans are among higher risk groups, but suicide affects all Americans, which is why VA and The

American Legion are working together to adopt a public health approach to suicide prevention. The public health approach looks beyond the individual to involve peers, family members and the community in preventing suicide.

Preventing veteran suicide is a top priority for VA, but they need help from dedicated partners like the American Legion Family to reach veterans outside the VA health-care system.

Last year, VA released the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, a long-term plan that provides a framework for focusing national attention and community resources on veteran suicide prevention. The strategy brings together different sectors to reach veterans in the communities where they live, work and thrive. This strategy is more than a plan; it is a call to action. And it requires your help to succeed.

The National Strategy is a guide to online suicide prevention resources. We strongly encourage you to review the National Strategy and determine how you can advance its four strategic directions:

- (1) Healthy and Empowered Veterans, Families and Communities;
  - (2) Clinical and Community Preventive Services;
  - (3) Treatment and Support Services;
  - and (4) Surveillance, Research and Evaluation.
- In addition to applying the strategy's

principles to your organization, we invite you to take advantage of VA's resources to educate your members and supporters, including your social media networks, about veteran suicide prevention best practices.

Legionnaires play a crucial role in VA's public health approach to suicide prevention. We urge you to become a leader in our mission by adopting the principles of the National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide and by contacting your local VA Suicide Prevention Coordinator (SPC) to collaborate and explore potential partnership, education and training opportunities. The Veterans Crisis Line resource locator will help you find a SPC in your area.

When we all work together, we can deliver on this comprehensive plan and save veterans' lives.



*Is Your American Legion Post a Florida Nonprofit?  
Are you sure?*

**Dick Mondo, Judge Advocate**

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



The Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) includes a subsection [501(c)(19)] which provides for tax-exemption under section 501(a) for organizations that benefit veterans of

the United States Armed Forces. Internal Revenue Code defines "Armed Forces of the United States" to include all regular and reserve components of the uniformed services which are subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force, and each term also includes the Coast Guard.

**To be exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(19), an organization must be either:**

- a post or organization of past or present members of the United States Armed Forces
- an auxiliary unit or society of such post or organization
- or a trust or foundation for such post or organization

**Tax treatment of donations:** Donations to war veterans' organizations **are deductible as charitable contributions on the donor's federal income tax return.**

**Can my post lose its nonprofit status? Yes, it can!**

**How can my post lose its nonprofit status? ...continue reading!**

**Reminder to all American Legion posts: You Must File Corporate Tax Returns with the IRS annually. The Dollar amount of the gross receipts of your Post and the type of revenue your Post earns will dictate the IRS forms you are required to file. You should consult with your tax professional (CPA).**

The American Legion is tax-exempt under Section 501 (c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code. Every post needs to obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS to be listed as a tax-exempt organization of the Legion. This is like a social security number for a corporation, also known as a taxpayer identification number (TIN).

This EIN Number once issued by the IRS can then be used to apply for incorporation as a Florida Not For Profit Corporation under Florida Statutory Law. Every Florida American Legion Post must be incorporated in Florida and annually file an annual report to maintain the Florida Not for Profit Corporation in good standing.

The IRS Forms that a Nonprofit files annually is available to the public so that those interested in donating may verify your tax-exempt status so they may use it as a personal or business deduction. It also shows compensation paid to officers or directors and your organizations income and expenses. Misrepresentation on these IRS forms can be considered fraud.

According to government figures, last year, Florida had 13,903 auto-revocations of all nonprofits out of a total of 84,282 Florida nonprofits which equates to 16%. For your information we currently have approximately 100 or so Posts that have had their tax-exempt status REVOKED by the IRS.

**About IRS Nonprofit Status Auto-Revocation**

Auto-revocation is the process in which the IRS revokes a nonprofit's tax-exempt, status for failure to file the required annual IRS forms for three consecutive years. If your organization is on that list, here's what it means to you:

- **Your nonprofit is no longer a 501(c) tax-exempt organization**
- **Donations to your nonprofit are no longer tax-deductible to the donor**
- **Your organization is now considered a for-profit company and liable for federal corporate taxes**
- **You may now have serious, expensive consequences in the state, as well and will be liable for Florida State Sales Tax on all business transactions such as beverage and food sales as well as catering and hall rentals to include liability for the payment of property taxes**

The ramifications for those revoked couldn't be more critical. This is why it is a requirement to conduct an internal audit of your posts every year to ensure compliance. Don't let it happen to your post.

**Want to check to see if your EIN is revoked, go to the IRS website and search for Automatic Revocation of Exemption List, when it comes up put in your Posts EIN number and you can see if it is revoked or still valid and you can actually view the latest IRS forms filed and even download them.**



**Attending Dept Convention?**  
**sign up** for TEXT ALERTS  TEXT **FLCON** to **662-200-4303**



*Northern Area News*

**Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander**

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Congratulations to everyone that has met or exceeded the 80% goal. The next membership goal is 90% before 04 MAR. Remember... the Northern Area membership goal is 100% before St. Patrick's

Day, so each District can be in the running for National Race To The Top Honors.

On 10-11 Jan 2020, I traveled with Department Commander Rick Johnson, as he visited the Third District. This included a visiting Post 383, District Meeting at Post 96, and visiting Post 224.

There is still work to accomplish 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. Please remind your bartenders to check membership cards.

The Northern Area Ball will be held on 21 Mar 2020, at American Legion Post 155,

Crystal River. This year the theme will be Legion Blue and Gold or Military. Attire will be semi-formal/formal, (optional) Military Service Dress uniform (ribbons) or proper civilian equivalent. See flyer for details. Please contact either myself, or 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. Let's finish what we started last year and go out with a BANG!

*Southern Membership News*

**Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander**

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Southern Area Post 268 Riviera Beach in District 11 was the first post to hit over 100%. Posts 367 and 199 also hit over 100%. In District 9, Cooper City Post 321 hit over 100%. In District 14 Post

168 and Post 144 also hit 100% before December 31. This was a Great Job, and my hat goes off to their officers and members.

I hate to keep harping on the membership, but I am. We are at the bottom of the area list for the State. District Commanders, you need to visit the Posts that are in the red and those that are yellow and about to drop into the red. Post Commanders it's time to start making the members who come thru the door show their membership cards. Those who are delinquent have them pay or send them packing. The Posts that don't have homes, start sending your members letters asking for their dues. Better yet, put a team together and have them visit those members that you haven't seen in a while. They may have moved. They may need assistance, or they may have gone to Post everlasting.

The next goal is 85% by February 12th keep up the good work.

February 2nd is Groundhog Day. The 14th is Valentine's Day and the 17th is Presidents Day. Plan an event and those who did not renew their membership cards, well you know what to do.

Super Bowl LIV will be played on February 2nd 2020, in Miami. My Almanac said that after several years of playing in an indoor stadium, the game will once again be played outdoors. Less than half of the Super Bowls have been indoors.

As a little reminder this year February has 29 days.

*Western Area News*

**John Eden, Western Area Commander**

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I attended Western Area's 1st and 2nd District's second District Meetings in November and December. Both Districts had a great attendance at these meetings. I was extremely impressed

with the professional way these meetings were conducted and the important veteran information that was passed on to their Post Commanders and staff.

I want to thank all the Posts that invited me to their Thanksgiving and Christmas Parties over the past few months. I could only attend a few, but I was extremely pleased with the Family interaction and cooperation putting these events together. Especialy those that invited our young troops and elderly Veterans for a free meal and great social time. THAT is what the American Legion is all about.

Most of our 33 Posts reached their 90% membership goal this past month. If you remember though, I said these temporary goals are nice, but we need to go well beyond those goals this year and work on our personal goals of 120 – 150% goals

this year. **The American Legion is getting smaller every year and we need to show the other states that we intend on doing our part to get membership back up like they did it 100 years ago.....get every member to try to recruit at least one new member each month; it can be done with a little dedicated effort!**

I look forward to visiting all the Western Area Posts again in Feb and Mar, and I will have my Area Membership Chairman (Tony Hammerling) with me most of the time to help each Post with ways to drastically increase our membership numbers this year. Thanks for everyone's hard work.



*Why is Social Media Important?*

**Hank Mangels, 17th District**  
 district17@legionmail.org

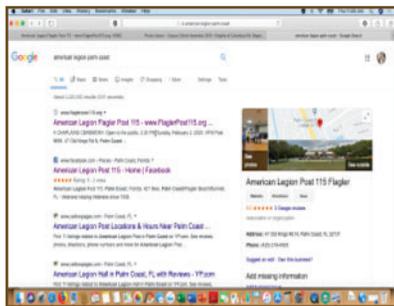


**Recruiting**

In 2020 prospective members rely more and more on social media to locate and contact an American Legion Post.

For Example, I typed in, "american legion palm

coast," on the search box and below is the result.



The first result was the website, FlaglerPost115.org. Notice that it displayed current information about the 4 Chaplains Ceremony.

However, the very next result was our Facebook page. This is important because

according to Pew, about 69% of adults have a Facebook account. They are probably more likely to visit our Facebook page to see what people say about our post. Also, they are more likely to find CURRENT data because Facebook (FB) is a two-way platform while a website is only one-way. The website is usually reliable for location and other static information while Facebook is interactive. The most important consideration for both is that they are maintained frequently.

**Retention**

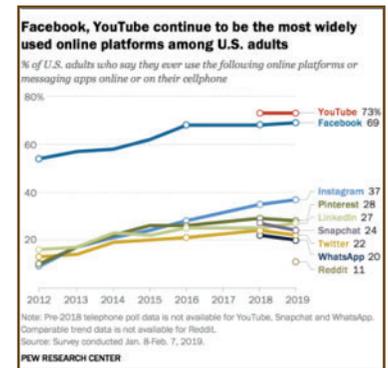
Once you have established a Facebook presence and have committed to maintaining it, members must be encouraged to follow it. Below are some tips:

1. Promote your FB page at every opportunity, newsletters, emails, and other media such as your website.
2. Post daily; events, articles of interest. Relevancy is important but be broad in your approach.
3. Follow other relevant pages. You will receive posts regularly by following relevant FB pages of other VSOs, city, county, other American Legion Posts, and members. This will give you plenty of interesting "stuff" to share.

4. Manage privacy settings. Be sure your settings are "public" so ther FB users can spread the word by sharing your posts.
5. Use the features such as "events" and advertising to ensure timeliness and reach more followers.

The FB page, American Legion Post 115" reached 1,880 people between January 9 – 15 and since December 15 has received 422 "likes".

More and more, people of all ages are "connected." They engage one another with social media because it is easy and discretionary. Use social media to both grow the post and retain members!



*We Need to Continue Working Membership...*

**Jim Ramos, Northern Membership**  
 teamramos@legionmail.org



**Congratulation to the 6th, 4th, 17th, 1st, 5th, 3rd and 2nd District for doing a great job. Thanks, but we still need to work. Our next Goal is 85%, but how about 95% in**

**February 5, 2020 that would be Great. "Always do more not less"**

*We still need to continue to work with our District and Post's to see how we can make 103% goal.*

The Department Membership Plan & Awards Manual 2019-2020 on pages: Page 12, Increasing your Post membership 10 proven steps to use for Success Page 13, Top five reasons Veterans and their families Join the American Legion Pages 14-16, Need help in Recruiting and Retention Frequently asked question Page 17 Membership ideas Pages 21-28 Process membership (mylegion.org) \*\*\*DO NOT abuse the system!

**\*\*\*NOTE: If you are using mylegion.org to be transfer members to your Post. PLEASE contact them first and see if they want to become a member of your Post. Because some Posts are just transferring members without the member agreed**

**or knowing of the transfer. That is wrong you must call the member up and get them to agree of the transfer to your Post first or have the member come by the Post and sign the transfer form. Remember "They have to have approval of the member to submit a transfer". DO NOT just transfer a member without their knowledge that is totally WRONG. \*\*\*\*\***

**Please continue to read some more of the Membership Plan and we can make 103% goal.**

*Continued on Page 7*



Northern Membership - Continued from page 6

**The next 3 months starting with:**

- **February** make something happen, a Four Chaplains program, Valentine day event, President Day event and/or a Legion event for ideas let me know call me.
- **March**, Oh now we need to step up 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. Remember is the American Legion Birthday March 15-17, but we can Celebrate all month long.
- **April is Children & Youth month:**
  - Celebrate do some for our "Children & Youth" a perfect time of the year get Legionnaires to demonstrate that we are a Legion family and let the Community know who we are. Plan an event, activities and/or some project

to help your community know who we are as the American Legion and what we do for our Veteran's and their families. We care for our Children and Youth.

- **But whatever you do make it BIG.**

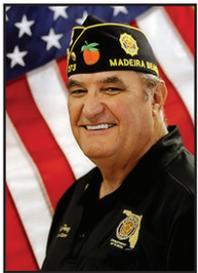
Communication is the Key to Success and Recognized your Volunteer or just say Thank You

If you need ideas just ask me (call 352-226-4370 or email [jramos149@bellsouth.net](mailto:jramos149@bellsouth.net))

*Southern Membership Bulletin*

**Ray Perez, Southern Membership**

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



As we move into the final 4 months of our membership year, I am going to take a lead from one of my mentors, PDC Jim Ramos, the Northern Membership Chairman. Let's look at what our Department

Membership Manual recommends:

- 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
- Page 21-28, Process membership ([mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org)) For those Posts that are not automated yet
- February 5th is our 85% goal, March 4th is 90%, April 1st is 95%, May 6th is 100% and June 1st is 100+1

For February, by now most Posts have scheduled events like the Four Chaplains program, Valentine's Day, President's Day and/or a Legion and family events. But whatever you do make it BIG and don't forget to invite your VIPs in the community and your Reserve/Active duty troops from local armories and bases. Also, in February there will be a membership table setup at the Assist a Vet Rally at Post 69 in Avon Park. This is a Challenge 22 event

spearheaded by Larry Roberts.

During March, take a look at what the Membership Manual's criteria for individual members, Post and District awards. If your District is at 100% now help your District win the "RACE To the TOP". If the District is 100% +1% they will have a chance to earn a National Competition and help the Department make that 103% goal. Also in March, the Legion's Birthday, continue to expound on our anniversary. We will also have a membership table at the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Parade at Laishley Park in Punta Gorda on March 28th.

In April we focus on Children & Youth and a great opportunity to conduct membership drives at the C & Y Picnic on the 4th at Post 1 in Titusville and the Golf Tournament in Bradenton.

As you can see from our "Battle Map" the Phase Line to reach OBJECTIVE ORLANDO is "Patreas". The training conducted in the South has been outstanding. Some recent lessons I learned is that Posts can submit more than one pending batch. The ONLY time you have to hold on to one batch is during the initial set-up. Once that has processed, you can submit multiple batches. During our training sessions we have received positive remarks about the methods of contacting Post 400 members by email. We have created a cheat sheet that I pass out during our training because the process is very detailed but the rewards are quick and simple. Jim and I are offering this demonstration during our

training sessions requested by the District Commanders. We are also reminded that the proper way of processing Post 400 members is to notify them by inviting them to your Post and transferring them either as a Paying or Non-Paying Transfer.

Together as a team we can reach our goal of 100% early and move on to the next goal of 103%.

For assistance or training requests please contact me at [blooddonor@legionmail.org](mailto:blooddonor@legionmail.org) or call 727-412-5356.



— SHOW YOUR —  
**SUPPORT**

The American Legion  
official license plate.

Proceeds benefit Veterans and their families in the State of Florida.

Now available at your local tag office!



*ALR Summit & Unity Ride Bulletin*

**Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders**

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



FYI - for those going on the South Unity Ride, there are two single rooms & 8 doubles left at Blackfin Hotel in Marathon. Call Chris 407 314 7181.

I'm writing this in the middle of January and we've just about got everything in place for the Summit. A lot of new things this year based on your last year's Survey. A big change is our Saturday morning classes. We have also added a Sunday Road Captain's class and University of South Florida's "Ride Smart" simulator. You have a lot of opportunities to learn the basics of all the chapter's main positions and share your ideas with your comrades.

The Unity Routes have been completed and we are also finishing up the Hotel schedule. It should be ready to share at

the summit. Once again, they will both be on the Website.

The 5th District will have attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the National POW/MIA Memorial at Cecil Field in Jacksonville. We will be scheduling a "Department Ride" on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, September 20th to "Never Forget" our POW/MIA's".

You've asked for our own Scrapbook Competition; we have scheduled the classes, 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" and 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, 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.

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!

*Americanism Commission Communication*

**Kurt Gies, Americanism**

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



One of the greatest challenges to any organization or group is successful communication amongst the members. A solid, proper system that is easy to use allows for great ideas

to be propagated, new initiatives to be implemented and lessons to be learned from other's successes and challenges. In order to accomplish our goal this year to make the Dept of Florida Americanism Commission the Best in the world, we all need to be working together as one.

Are you a member of the Florida American Legion Americanism Facebook page?

Have you ever visited our Americanism tab on the Florida department webpage? Have you signed up to receive text messages about Americanism events and occurrences happening across the state of Florida? If not, it's probably because no one has ever invited you. Consider this your formal Invite to join us.

There is a free text messaging system is called **Remind.com** for non-profits that as developed for school systems to allow teachers to communicate with students and parents. To subscribe to the text messaging system, all you need to do is text the code **@d9c3eh** to the number **81010**. Doing so, will help keep you informed about what's happening at the Department level in the Americanism Commission across the Dept of Florida.

You can also use this system for notifying your membership and your Legion family

members of important events happening at your post, your executive board, or various committees about what's going on with in your district or within your Post. We highly encourage you to set up your own account. Please go to their website, [www.Remind.com](http://www.Remind.com) and create your own account for your use at the Post and District level.

Another new communication tool for those who are on Facebook is to go to **Americanism – Department of Florida** and request to join the Florida Americanism Commission FaceBook group. The intent is to get as many people signed up to this group, so ideas and events can be shared. Every time you have an Americanism event, you can add something about it on this FB page. At the end of the year when we're preparing our package for the National Americanism

*Continued on Page 9*



*Americanism - Continued from page 8*

award, where we get to brag about all the great things were doing in the state of Florida, it will be as easy as reviewing our CPRs and making sure we include what people have posted throughout the

year into our submission to National. This closed group is open to Legionnaires and all Legion family members. We encourage you to join the fun.

Finally, we have recently stood up an

Americanism Commission tab on the [Floridalegion.org](http://Floridalegion.org) webpage. Here you will find links to valuable resources to help facilitate your role in promoting Americanism within your local community. Take a few seconds today and check it out.

*Americanism*

**Kurt Gies, Americanism**

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



**Americanism:**

Nothing more signifies Americanism to me than the flag of our country. Flying proudly, it represents so much, including the symbolism of freedom, our way of

life, and a reminder of the sacrifices and bloodshed by those who serve to defend her. Wouldn't it be great to see every house on your street or business in your town flying it proudly? This is where you at the Legionnaire can play a significant role.

After a period of time of flying proudly and working so hard to represent the USA, our flags will become tired, tattered and torn. It then comes time for the flag to be retired. The US flag code dictates that the flag must be destroyed by burial or by burning in a dignified manner. Does your American Legion Post retire flags? Many posts offer this type of service to your community. Do you collect them from the community and/or have others retire them for you? Or do you retire them yourselves? Do they need

to stop by when your there or can they drop them in a mailbox outside your post? If so, great! If not, please consider doing this today. Whatever you are doing, I ask that maybe you take two extra steps.

The first step is an additional service to the community, but also can turn in to a money-maker for your Post. Here's how! Ask yourself the question, **"if someone is willing to go to the effort of driving to your Post to drop off a retired US flag, then wouldn't they be more than willing to buy a new US flag from you if you could offer it to them easily?"** Through Emblem Sales, we have American flags that are very high-quality, made in the USA and where all the proceeds go directly towards supporting veterans who have served. Even though the cost of a flag from Emblem Sales maybe slightly higher than what you can get in the local discount store, those cheap, foreign made flags don't last very long and the proceeds do not go towards our veterans. Plus, a little known fact is that Emblem Sales will give your Post a credit in the amount of 10% for all sales made each year. Use those funds to buy more flags. Then apply the proceeds from those sales towards American Legion programs.

For example, if in 2019 you sold \$4500 worth of flags, your post would get a

\$450 credit at the end of the year. This is the same amount it cost to send one Delegate to Boys State each summer. So why not attach an order form to the collection box so that those who are dropping off can place an order for a new one? Then 1-2 times a month you can hand-deliver the new US flag to whomever bought it. This way you can you can personally thank them for supporting the American Legion and also possibly recruit a new member.

The second step happens when you retire a flag by burning. You see, once the fire is out, all that is left behind are the **ashes and the brass grommets** that once held the flag to the pole. Typically these are swept up and thrown away. But here in the Dept of Florida, we are starting a campaign to collect all the burned/retired flag grommets. The idea is to gather as many of these as we can each year, so that they can be ultimately be melted down into something of value. Imagine a beautiful brass piece of art made of retired US flags that can be awarded each year as a traveling trophy to the Post with the Best Americanism program or maybe a beautiful brass monument to be displayed at our Dept HQ made out of the melted grommets. Please start collecting those grommets from your fire pits today!

*Baseball Registration*

**Terry Phillips, Baseball**

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

The 2020 American Legion Team Registration period is now open January 1st thru June 1st.

The Baseball Program continues to grow and expand into new areas and districts all

over the state.

More and more Posts and Squadrons are noticing the great service and work this program is doing to reach local kids and families in our communities.

Every post should have received the 2020 Baseball Packet and Department Baseball Manual, if you have not received

it, please let Bekki Tibbs in the Department Headquarters know and we will get it out to you ASAP.

In the January Legion Link Article, I addressed how it is vital for an All-In effort from all Posts and Squadrons as we develop our youth in the areas

*Continued on Page 10*



*Baseball - Continued from page 9*

of Americanism, Patriotism, Service, Leadership and Team Building.

Please understand, this program is not just about baseball games, we are touching and changing lives through the Baseball Program.

The Executive Baseball Committee will be out in the field and available to meet with your Post Officers and Membership to

answer any questions and guide you in the process to have or support a Sr (19U) or Jr. (17U) Team or both if needed to get kids and families involved in Legion Baseball.

We are needing a Northern Area Baseball Commissioner (Districts 3,4,5 & 17) and a Western Area Baseball Commissioner (Districts 1 & 2). I will meet with anyone interested in being a big part of this successful and growing program and serving your communities.

My contact info is in the Department Baseball Manual and in the Department Directory.

The requirements and expectations for the Area Baseball Commissioner, District Baseball Chairmen and Post Chairman are found in the Department Baseball Manual on pages 6, 7, 8 and is available on the [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org) website under the Baseball tab.

*Setting Up a Blood Drive with OneBlood*

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



Looking back at my first article to everyone in September 2019, I was trying to work with One Blood Headquarters Staff to contact our Post Commanders to establish blood drive events. One Blood does not have the resources to do that so I am providing you with every Regional Manager in the state. I have broken it down to Department Areas using a map they provided me. If you have any problems getting in touch with one of the managers please call me.

I'd like to express my most sincere appreciation to all the District Commanders that invited me to speak at their meetings and allowing me to spread the word about this great program. The Blood Donor Program as I have mentioned is by far the easiest program for a Post to start and maintain. That being said I know there are hardships Post Commanders have simply because of their geographical location and demographics. There are Posts that cannot sustain a blood donor program. Those that can here is some information you may not be aware of.

- Red Bus who returns it the Post filled out with the names of the donors and amounts donated.
- 3. The packet arrives to the Post by mail at least 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled blood drive.
- 4. They provide you the opportunity to have an online account for scheduling and a method to see your past blood drives.

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

- 1. All the advertisement material for each event is sent to the Chairmen to distribute at the Post and local community establishments.
- 2. They send you a blank roster that you give to the person in charge of the Big



Southern Area	Region 01	Melgar, Marcela B	<a href="mailto:Marcela.Melgar@oneblood.org">Marcela.Melgar@oneblood.org</a>
Southern Area	Region 01	Vargas, Nylma G	<a href="mailto:Nylma.Vargas@oneblood.org">Nylma.Vargas@oneblood.org</a>
Eastern Area	Region 02	Caruso, Paul W	<a href="mailto:Paul.Caruso@oneblood.org">Paul.Caruso@oneblood.org</a>
Eastern Area	Region 02	Darrow, Debbie L	<a href="mailto:Debbie.Darrow@oneblood.org">Debbie.Darrow@oneblood.org</a>
Northern Area	Region 03	Franco, Javier	<a href="mailto:Javier.Franco@oneblood.org">Javier.Franco@oneblood.org</a>
Eastern Area	Region 04	Oubre, Jodie	<a href="mailto:Jodie.Oubre@oneblood.org">Jodie.Oubre@oneblood.org</a>
Southwestern Area	Region 05	Stiles, Denise A	<a href="mailto:Denise.Stiles@oneblood.org">Denise.Stiles@oneblood.org</a>
Central Area	Region 06	Lee, Amy L	<a href="mailto:Amy.Lee@oneblood.org">Amy.Lee@oneblood.org</a>
Central Area	Region 07	Scott, Mary S	<a href="mailto:Mary.Scott@oneblood.org">Mary.Scott@oneblood.org</a>
Northern Area	Region 07	Lipford, Tina M	<a href="mailto:Tina.Lipford@oneblood.org">Tina.Lipford@oneblood.org</a>
Northern Area	Region 07	Malan, Justin	<a href="mailto:justin.malan@oneblood.org">justin.malan@oneblood.org</a>
Northern Area	Region 08	Janson, Sandra M	<a href="mailto:Sandy.Janson@oneblood.org">Sandy.Janson@oneblood.org</a>



*Children & Youth Canisters and Suicide Rates*

**Les Martin, Children & Youth**

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



January has again been a busy month. I attended the 11th District meeting hosted by Post 268 in Riviera Beach. Thank you, Commander Dan Dalton, for your hospitality. The breakfast was fantastic. Also, Thanks to District Commander Johnny Castro. You held a great meeting with a lot of information distributed to the District Posts. I also attended the 8th District meeting hosted by Post 266. It's always nice to see the folks at that Post with Commander Kyle Stoothoff.

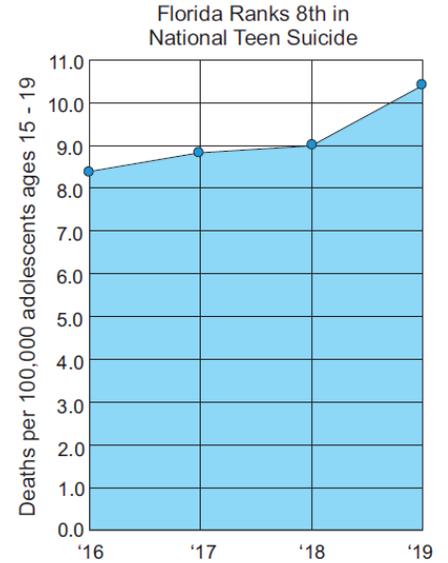
To all the Posts that received the Children & Youth canisters at your District Meeting

or through your District Commander, it's time to start collecting the money from the canisters. We are looking to get \$100 - \$200 per canister. Our Children & Youth programs cannot function without funds collected through our fundraisers.

Remember, we are approaching Children & Youth Month, in April. We are holding both of our fundraisers during the month of April. We are asking all posts to participate in one way or another. If your Post can't attend the picnic, please send a basket or other gift for our raffle. For our Golf Tournament, we need your participation in getting a foursome together and come on over to the IMG Academy Golf Club. You can also participate by becoming a sponsor. I am providing a registration/ sponsorship form that you can use and send in. It should be an extremely fun day.

On February 15th, I will be attending the Assisting Our Veterans – Exposition, at Post

69 in Avon Park. Remember, not only are we losing 22 veterans a day to suicide, but suicide has been on the incline among Children and Teens for the past several years. This is a trend that we don't want to see continuing. See Chart



*Youth Law Cadet Program*

**Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet**

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



Time is a wasting! We have approximately 40 rooms reserved at the Florida Highway Patrol barracks. They are holding a few extra rooms in case we get an odd number of boys and girls. If you are looking for a candidate

for this program, talk to your local police, whether it be city, town, or county, or Highway Patrol. As soon as we have 18 to 24 prospects, we will close the books and head for another great class. If your area has a Sheriff's Posse, that is another great place to find your candidates. Talk to your own members about their children and grandchildren. So far in the years that we have had this program, most of the kids are coming out of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Districts, plus the Lehigh Acres Post. Florida was the 17th state in our nation to have this program. About five or six other

states now have this program. In the four years that we have had this program, we have not had any complaints from the cadets. A few wanted to come back the next year. Brochures are available through the Department of Florida and on-line. At this time, we have had only one cadet that we accommodated. Any questions, please contact the Department of Florida, myself (904-272-1619), and my good friend, Tom Gora (904-583-4597).

*Florida Legion College Class of 2020*

**Tom Gora, Legion College**

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

As you read this publication which will be released on February 1, 2020, the Florida American Legion College Class of 2020 graduated January 25, 2020. I will write more detail about the class in next month's Legion Link but for now thank you to those who took the time from their busy schedules to attend. I hope you found

the courses and presentations useful. I also would like to thank the instructors, as always you did a great job! Lastly, a program such as this could never be a success without the help of department staff and as always, they did a great job this year to support the Florida American Legion College.



*ROTC / JROTC / Shooting Sports*

**Loretta Young, ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports**

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



Now that the Holiday Season is over, school is back in session. Many JROTC Units are having their Annual Formal Inspections by either their Service Command Personnel or local Curriculum Director and Staff. These inspections are well worth the time to attend and see firsthand how the JROTC Program is conducted and see the Cadets at their best. All services have these annual reviews; however, the programs differ with each service and Unit. The Cadets are graded on performance on Drill Exhibition, Color Guard, Formal Briefing, uniform inspection and all classroom records. There are also special recognition and awards given at some of the inspections. At Stranahan HS MCJROTC, 1st Sgt Wayne Labeau was presented with the Army Cadet Command Silver Instructor Award by the Curriculum Director, LTC Kenneth Green, Ret. for his 23 years'

service at Stranahan HS. At the Formal Inspection at Deerfield Beach HS, MCJROTC Inspection, LTC Green also presented the Cadet Command Silver Instructor Award to both Master Guns Alberto Gomez and 1st Sgt. Leslie Thomas. I would like to hear from any other Legionnaires who attend any special events to please get me the info or pictures so they can be posted.

JROTC Cadet of the Year applications are due to Department of Florida Headquarters by March 1, 2020. The application can be downloaded from the Department's website at <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/jrotc-rotc/scholarships/>

The JSSP Postal Match Target Sets are due to the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) and must be post marked by 01 Feb. 2020. All targets that qualify for the 2nd Round postal match competition will be mailed out by 15 Feb. 2020 by CMP. The results will be posted on the CMP website and targets for the 2nd Round must be fired and returned by 01 April 2020. Our Florida qualified top State shooters who

qualify to attend the National Competition at the USA Olympic Training Facility in Colorado Springs from 22-25 July 2020, will be receiving a \$500 Scholarship and an invitation to attend the State Convention in Orlando. Good Luck to all our competitors.



Deerfield Beach MCJROTC Battalion Lineup



Stranahan MCJROTC Color Guard

*Active Shooter/Mass Shootings*

**Daryl Bass, Law & Order**

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



Within the last two decades our world has had to deal with Mass Shootings. Schools, government facilities, military installations, churches, workplaces and even concerts have been the target of these shooters. Police response to most of these incidents have been criticized as too slow to downright cowardly.

Arm-chair quarterbacks of the world have come out and stated on social media how they would have bravely confronted the shooter and taken care of the problem. We know most of that is flexing muscle.

The reality of it is that no one wants to die. A police officer is only human. What the public does not understand is that a police officer is the product of his training and experience. Since the Columbine shooting, departments across the nation have made it mandatory that officers take a course called, "Active Shooter". The whole premise of this training is to, answer the call, run toward the gun fire, end the situation. This sounds simple until you as the officer are placed in this scenario for real. The need for self-preservation is number one in the human physique. That's for everyone even the bravest of our Warriors.

In my thirty-three years, many as a road officer and supervisor I've learned that some officers are braver than others and will without question run toward the sound of the gunfire and some will hesitate. Prior training is a lot to blame.

Training before the Active Shooter course carried words like, "Wait for back up, call in S.W.A.T. remain behind cover, ect". Training was geared toward doing the job and not getting hurt. Instructors would say things like, "If you're in a gunfight and you exhaust your ammunition you better be looking for somewhere to go." My favorite ones are from one of my old lieutenants. At shift briefing he use to tell us, "There will always be victims, don't you become one. Make sure at the end of your shift you go home". So, are those Officers in today's times that hesitated cowards? Maybe, but maybe they're just a product of their training and prior experience. So, don't criticize until you're in that position standing on that, 'Thin Blue Line'.



*Is your Post making a Difference in your Community?*

**Jim Ramos, Post Development**  
[postdevelopment@legionmail.org](mailto:postdevelopment@legionmail.org)



**Hello Florida Legionnaires: We need to do some Post Training so we can continue to Celebrate our Legion History. And Continue telling our story for the next generation of Veterans.**

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

*How do you tell our History of The American Legion you have to know it first? We started 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:**

\*U.S. Veterans Bureau, forerunner of the Veterans Administration, is created as a result of efforts by The American Legion (Aug 9, 1921)

\*In July 17, 1925 The American Legion Baseball program is created.

\*In June 23, 1935 First American Legion Boys State convenes in Springfield, IL.

**Questions:**

1. **What dose the American Legion Emblem mean?**
2. **What dose the Pledge of Allegiance mean?**
3. **Do we make a Difference to our Veterans and How?**

Tools and Resources:

**Is your Post making a Difference in your Community?**

**See if can you answer the following Questions?**

1. **What is your Post doing for the Community and our Veterans?**
2. **What is your Post doing to get new members and is it work?**
3. **Is your Post a truly a community asset?**

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

*Published Words and Opinions*  
*Impact Membership*

**Tom Gora, Public Relations**  
[publicrelations@legionmail.org](mailto:publicrelations@legionmail.org)

Remember, public relations can work either for or against you, all people have likes and dislikes which we voice in opinions, some good, some not good. Although expressing your opinion may be your freedom of speech right, remember your spoken or printed opinions are often heard or viewed by

nonmembers of our organization. Words can give the wrong message about an entire organization although the comments may be directed at only one person or one post. Some printed opinions should not be put out for the entire world to be seen; www=world wide web! Once an e-mail containing an opinion is placed on the world wide web, you can't take it back, it's out there! Unfortunately, this year we have experienced more negative communication in this manner than I remember ever seeing in this

department. Before you hit that 'send' button with a negative opinion think about **MEMBERSHIP**. Last year by The American Legion Act membership was opened to those who previously could not get in, and they use **INFORMATION** we make available to help them make their membership decisions. Some who may be thinking of joining our organization may read some of this negative stuff and wonder; is this organization really for me? **Think about that before you hit the 'send' button.**

*Women Veterans Bulletin*

**Debbie Wheeler, Women Veterans**  
[womenveterans@legionmail.org](mailto:womenveterans@legionmail.org)



I would like to share some information about Women Veterans Chair. I have attended several District Meetings so far this year and will be attending more the remainder of the year. My message is to bring awareness to you about our sister veterans.

For decades most female veterans were considered the invisible vets. They were proud of their service but keep it quiet due to the stigma that could be attached. Many willing future service women were discouraged by friends and family because this was not what good ladies do. But we must remember the era of those times. The brave ones became veterans and served their country proudly. Many were forced out because of pregnancy despite being married while some retired and others served their commitment proudly. Most positions were not open to women.

But over time things changed as well as public opinion.

Today female service members have broken the old records and strive to make our military stronger by serving in positions only available to our brothers in arms. Pilots, Generals and combat related, Academy numbers have increased as well. They are breaking the barriers.

All this progress has its downfalls as well.

*Continued on Page 14*



Women Veterans - Continued from page 13

With over two million female veterans, female suicide numbers are rising rapidly, the female veteran homeless is also on the rise. Claim cases for women are going up as well. PTSD, military sexual trauma,

homeless families with children just to name a few issues that don't seem to go away only increase.

I leave you one thought, consider your spouse, mother or grandmother for a moment as a veteran. Think about what

she would have went through at the age of 18 as a sailor, soldier, airman or a marine and how different her life would have been today.

Financial Matters for Scout Units / ESOY Heads-up

Chuck Weber, Scouting  
scouting@legionmail.org



From time to time questions come up regarding the handing of monies by Scout Units that are chartered by Legion Posts. The matter can become quite involved, but we'll give an overview here.

EINs are identifying numbers issued by the IRS to various organizations. Every Post has one. When Scout units start-up they will want to open a checking account and the banks will require an EIN in order to that. The question becomes whether the Scout unit uses the Post's EIN or if it should it apply for one on its own. Either way is allowed, but experience will show that the recommended way is for the Scout unit to use the Post's EIN. It will simplify Post IRS-990 tax reporting and the transferring of the Post's sales tax-exempt status to the Scout unit.

An issue that will often cause controversy is who owns the Scout unit's assets. The simple answer is the Post. The Scout unit is not recognized as a legal entity, but the Post is because it is a corporation. The Scout unit is a program subdivision

of the Post. That said, the Scout unit can raise funds (provided they are for Scouting purposes only), manage them and related bank accounts but needs to be very careful about using individual Scout accounts. The funds raised by the Scout unit are for the use Scout unit itself, and not the individual Scout members. The IRS in recent years has taken an adverse stance on Scout unit funds that yield financial benefit to individual persons. Although managed by the unit, the funds are financially owned and reportable by the Post.

Tangible assets of a Scout unit may need to be insured. Either the Post or the Scout unit can obtain the insurance, but usually the Post's general liability insurance will cover it.

In the event of a Scout unit's demise, the debts of the unit are to be paid and the remainder of cash and all tangible assets are turned over to the Post. Nothing is to be paid or given to any individual. Nor is anything to be transferred to another Scout unit without the Post's written approval. The Post may hold these residual assets for a later start of new Scout units or it may arrange with the local BSA Council for other disposition.

Scout units may raise funds to operate their program provided they meet the parameters approved by the BSA. Ensure that all fundraising activities are approved at least two weeks in advance by both the Post and the local BSA Council.

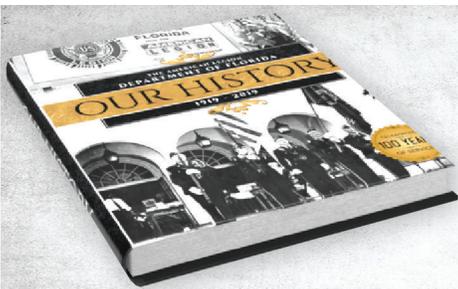
Remember that Scout may never solicit monetary gifts for their units. The only direct solicitation of funds is for the Council through the Friends of Scouting Program.

As in all well managed financial matters, reporting and oversight should be maintained for all Scout unit funds. Scout units should make periodic reports to the Post Commander and Finance Officer as directed.

References: *Fiscal Policies and Procedures for BSA Units, March 2015* and *BSA Product Sales Guide, August 2014*. Given the age of these authoritative references, updates may be expected in the near future. These documents can be accessed for details at [www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/](http://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/).

\*\*\*\*\*

It's that time of year again to consider nominations for the Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship program. National has changed many of the requirements for this year. Application and guidelines for submission can be found at [www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/](http://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/). Applications for ESOY are due in Department NOT LATER THAN MARCH 1ST.



THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA  
**OUR HISTORY**  
Celebrate 100 Years of Florida Legion history

**GET YOUR COPY**  
[floridalegionstore.org](http://floridalegionstore.org)



*VA Entitlements*

**Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements**

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



As the VA Entitlements Chairman my job is to inform veterans about their benefits and here is one new one.

Commissary, Military Service Exchange, and MWR access extended to more Veterans

beginning January

New law provides eligible Veterans and Primary Family Caregivers with access to DoD and Coast Guard commissaries, welfare, and recreation retail services.

According to Department of Defense, starting Jan 1, 2020, all service – connected Veterans, Purple Heart recipient, former prisoners of war (POW), and individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregivers of eligible Veterans under the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) can use commissaries, exchanges, and moral welfare and recreation (MWR) retail facilities, in person and online.

For more information regarding these privileges and access to military installations, visit <http://www.militaryonesource.mil/expanding-access>

**Who is eligible Jan. 1, 2020 ?**

- Veterans with
- Purple Heart recipients
- Former prisoners of war
- Veterans with 0-90% service – connected disability ratings
- Medal of Honor recipients and Veterans with 100% service-connected disability ratings are already eligible under existing DOD policy.

**Caregivers**

- On Jan. 1, individuals approved and designated as the primary family caregiver on an eligible veterans under the PCAFC will be eligible for these privileges .
- For information about the PCAFC, visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>.

**Required credentials**

- Veterans
- On Jan. 1, Veterans eligible solely under this act who are eligible to obtain an Veterans Health Identification Card must use this credential for in - person installation and privilege access. The card must display the Veteran's eligibility status (i.e., PURPLE HEART, FORMER POW or SERVICE CONNECTED). Apply here: <https://www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic/index.asp>.
- Veterans eligible solely under this act who are not enrolled in or are not eligible to enrolled enroll in VA health care, but do not possess a Veteran Health Identification Card will not have access to DOD and

Coast Guard installations for in – person commissary, exchange, and MWR retail privileges, but will have full access to online exchanges and American Forces Travel.

- Medal of Honor recipients and Veterans with 100% service-connected disability ratings are eligible for DoD credentials under DoD policy.
- Caregivers Eligible caregivers will receive an eligibility letter from VA's Office of Community Care. If you are a primary family caregiver under the PCAFC and lose your eligibility letter, please call 1-877-733-7927 to request a replacement. Please allow two weeks for processing.

**Find out more about military resale privileges.**

- Army and Air Force Exchange Services (<https://www.shopmyexchange.com/vets>)
- Coast Guard Exchange (<https://shopCGX.com>)
- Defense Commissary Agency (<https://www.commissaries.com/>)
- Marine Corps Exchange (<http://www.mymcx.com/>)
- MILITARY STAR Card (<https://www.myecp.com/>)
- American Forces Travel (<https://www.americanforcetravel.com>)

This information is from the Official Blog of the U.S. Department of Veterans affairs

*Sales Tax Exemptions with Department*

**Emily Church, Emblem Sales**

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



Did you know you can set up a purchase account for the Department of Florida Flag & Emblem? All you have to do to get started is go to <https://floridalegionstore.org/cart>. Enter an email address and

click Checkout, put in your name and make sure put in Your Post Number under

Company Name and proceed through the shipping and payment menus as normal. In the order comments make sure to indicate that this is a Post Purchase being made with a Post Credit Card and it should be tax exempt. As long as The Department of Florida has a valid tax exemption certificate on file for your post on the first order your taxes will be refunded back to you and in the future the email the account was created with will be marked as tax exempt in the store and it will always remove taxes at checkout automatically.

In order to take advantage of this the Department of Florida must have your

current tax exemption certificate on file. We will be reaching out to posts that we do not have a current exemption on file and to Posts whose certificate will be expiring in the next two months for your awareness to send one to us when the new one arrives. Thank you so much for your assistance!





OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF:



**PROJECT: VETRELIEF**  
 ★★★★★★

**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 for more information.

**SPOTLIGHT • HOCKEY LEAGUE SUPPORTS PVR**

The Jacksonville Icemen Hockey Team has partnered with The American Legion, Department of Florida for a Veterans Appreciation Night to benefit Project:VetRelief. A portion of each ticket sold will be donated back to Project: VetRelief!

- \* \$20 ticket- \$5 donation
- \* \$30 ticket- \$7 donation
- \* \$40 ticket- \$10 donation



To purchase tickets, visit:  
[www.jaxicemen.com/alriders](http://www.jaxicemen.com/alriders)

Purchase (10) ten or more tickets, by calling Trent Blair: 904.661.7241 or email [trent@jacksonvilleicemen.com](mailto:trent@jacksonvilleicemen.com)

Come out and help cheer on the Icemen as they take on the Cincinnati Cyclones. This is sure to be a FUN event. We hope to see you there!

**FEB 1**   
 Veterans Tribute Event  
 Gainesville, FL

**FEB 15**   
 Challenge 22 Event - Post 69  
 Avon Park, FL

**FEB 15**  
 Coral Head MusicFest 2020  
 Marathon, FL

**FEB 22**   
 Challenge 22 Event  
 Fern Park, FL

**MAR 28**   
 ALR Night - Icemen Hockey  
 Tailgate Party  
 Jacksonville, FL

**APR 26 - MAY 2**   
 ALR Unity Ride & Rally  
 Two Routes (North & South)  
 Entire State of Florida

**MAY 2**  
 Post 69/74 Golf Tournament  
 Sebring, FL

**RAISING AWARENESS • ONE EVENT AT A TIME**



We are so grateful to the Legion Family for stepping up and hosting events for our NEW Suicide Prevention Initiative program. For the month of February, there are three different events scheduled around the state: Gainesville (Feb 1st), Avon Park (Feb 15th) and Fern Park (Feb 22nd).

Please plan to attend to show your support and raise awareness to end Veteran suicide. We are on a mission and need you to help us get there! **#EndVeteranSuicide**

**LEGION RIDERS • UNITY RIDE**



**CALLING ALL LEGION RIDERS** ... Are you wanting to participate in a week-long FUN ride to benefit PROJECT: VetRelief? We have just the event for you... **The Florida Legion Rider's Unity Ride.**

This year's event will be from April 26th through May 1st and will feature two routes. The North Route will begin in the panhandle and the South Route will start near the Keys. Each route will be stopping at Posts along the way to collect donations and raise awareness for PROJECT: VetRelief. There will be opportunities to earn COOL PRIZES! More details will be announced during the Legion Riders Summit.

 **facebook**  
 @ProjectVetRelief

**Florida American Legion Funds 2019 - COTA Disbursements**

January - March 2019			
Patient	Age	City	Amount
1021	12	Center Hill	\$850.00
1557	8	Tallahassee	\$750.00
1686	12	Naples	\$2,500.00
1710	7	Orlando	\$500.00
1980	22	Crestview	\$1,000.00
2712	8	Panama City	\$1,300.00
2770	2	Oviedo	\$2,000.00
2799	10	Hialeah	\$500.00
2922	2	Pensacola	\$5,000.00
2940	3	Jacksonville	\$550.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$14,950.00</b>

April - June 2019			
Patient	Age	City	Amount
1021	12	Center Hill	\$2,500.00
1557	8	Tallahassee	\$750.00
1710	7	Orlando	\$1,000.00
2712	8	Panama City	\$1,000.00
2799	10	Hialeah	\$1,000.00
2770	2	Oviedo	\$2,500.00
3071	3	Tallahassee	\$500.00
3102	1	Pensacola	\$2,500.00
3130	4	Lake Worth	\$1,000.00
3141	<1	St. Augustine	\$1,500.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$14,250.00</b>

July - September 2019			
Patient	Age	City	Amount
0965	16	Oak Hill	\$800.00
1021	13	Center Hill	\$750.00
1219	11	Keystone Heights	\$1,750.00
1557	9	Tallahassee	\$600.00
1710	8	Chuluota	\$1,000.00
2573	13	Jacksonville Beach	\$1,850.00
2712	8	Panama City	\$750.00
2770	2	Oviedo	\$1,450.00
2799	10	Hialeah	\$400.00
2922	2	Pensacola	\$2,500.00
2963	15	Deltona	\$1,000.00
3089	15	Pinellas Park	\$150.00
3102	1	Pensacola	\$1,000.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$14,000.00</b>

October - December 2019			
Patient	Age	City	Amount
0792	14	West Palm Beach	\$1,500.00
0965	16	Oak Hill	\$500.00
1021	13	Center Hill	\$500.00
1557	9	Tallahassee	\$1,500.00
1710	8	Chuluota	\$1,500.00
2712	8	Panama City	\$1,500.00
2770	2	Oveido	\$1,500.00
2799	10	Hialeah	\$1,500.00
2963	16	Deltona	\$500.00
3089	16	Pinellas Park	\$500.00
3102	1	Pensacola	\$500.00
3130	4	Lake Worth	\$1,000.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$12,500.00</b>

**2019 TOTAL ALLOCATIONS: \$55,700.00**

*Post 270 - Port Orange*

**Bob McLaughlin, Adjutant**  
(386) 295-7007

We are rebuilding our post home after the fire in January of 2019. The roof was installed last week and more construction work such as electrical and plumbing will be going on for the next couple of weeks. We do NOT have a completion date YET.

Hopefully two (2) or three (3) months. The building will be increasing from 2500 sq. ft. to 3800 sq. ft. We have increased the size of the bar area, kitchen, offices and brought the bathrooms up to comply with the ADA requirements (WE NEEDED to do that for years). The post membership voted overwhelmingly to go completely NON-SMOKING/NON-E-VAPE in our NEW POST HOME. We have built an outside patio for the smokers.

Any questions please call Bob McLaughlin 386-295-7007.



January 23, 2020 85% Target Report (Currently 86.39% )		
6	Robert Suelter	92.58%
12	Christ Hamrick	90.05%
16	Randall McNabb	89.40%
4	Cherie Korn	88.90%
8	Skip Felicita	88.80%
17	Hank Mangels	88.29%
11	Johnny Castro	87.46%
15	Bruce Carl	86.51%
1	Lamar Carroll	85.61%
5	Troy Horsley	83.85%
13	Brian Gehling	83.57%
9	Arthur Barber	83.02%
7	Rick Orzechewski	81.52%
3	Stuart Scott	80.46%
2	Roger Hewitt	77.34%
14	Rocco LaPace	74.47%
Eastern	T.C. Biddle	91.47%
Central	Sid Damsgard	87.36%
Southwestern	Jerry Faught	85.96%
Northern	Marie Conti	85.57%
Western	John Edens	84.13%
Southern	Paul Bosco	82.24%
Post 400		84.25%
Post 208		75.43%



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**  
**85%** 2/5/2020

[www.thelit.com](http://www.thelit.com)



# DEPARTMENT COMMANDER HOMECOMING AND LUAU

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

POST 273

MADEIRA BEACH



**SOCIAL HOUR 4-6PM W/ CALADES! STEEL DRUM BAND  
DINNER 6-8PM W/ MUSIC BY BOTH WORLDS  
ROASTED PIG PLUS PORK & SHRIMP & STEAKS AND MORE!  
\$35.00 PER PERSON / PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE POST!  
HAWAIIAN SHIRTS & SHORTS & SANDALS & MUMUS**

# 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

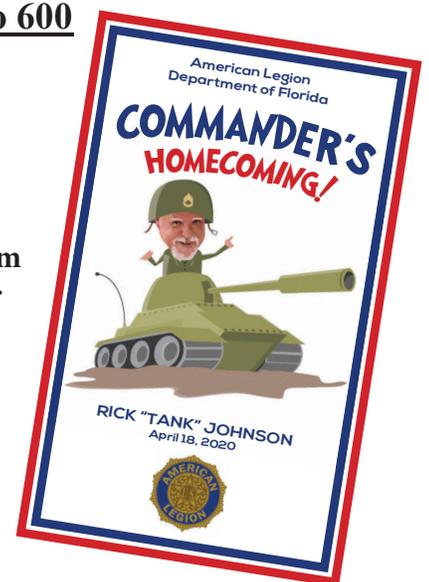
¼ Page \$20.00; ½ Page \$30.00; ¾ Page \$40.00; Full Page: \$50.00

Corporate Sponsors: Red: \$400.00 (Incl a full page add); White: \$300.00 (Incl a half page add); Blue: \$200.00 (Incl a ¼ 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





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



# THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA



## CHILDREN & YOUTH GOLF TOURNAMENT REGISTRATION & SPONSORSHIP FORM

Tournament Date: April 25, 2020  
Cur-off Date for registration: April 15, 2020

**Golfer Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Golfer Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Golfer Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Golfer Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Silver Hole Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$100

**Gold Hole Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$250

**Closest to Pin** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$300

**Longest Drive** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$300

**Beverage Cart Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$500

**Lunch Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$500

**Dinner Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$1,000

**Primary Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$1,000

**Tournament Sponsor** \_\_\_\_\_  
\$2,000

Please make checks payable to:

Sons of the American Legion  
Squadron 24

2000 75th St. W., Bradenton, Fl. 34209

Attn: C&Y Golf Tournament

Questions?

Dept. Children & Youth Chairman:

Les Martin; 941-201-7293

CY@legionmail.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](mailto: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](mailto:Jconti3547@gmail.com)



**Vietnam and all Veterans  
of Brevard**

*Present:*

# **Florida's 33rd Annual All Veterans Reunion**

**The Nation's Largest Veterans Reunion  
PUBLIC INVITED TO ATTEND**

## **May 7th – 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall on display **May 3-10, 2020**

**LIVE MUSIC  
FOOD & DRINKS  
MILITARY VENDORS  
MILITARY DISPLAYS**



### **THE SOME GAVE ALL MOVING TRIBUTE**

**Wall Escort May 3, 2020 Leaves at 10am  
Eastern Florida State College Cocoa Campus  
Reunion Web Page at:**

[floridaveteransreunion.com](http://floridaveteransreunion.com)

#### **Wickham Park**

321-255-4307 - 2500 Parkway Dr  
Melbourne, FL

No Coolers, Glass or Pets allowed  
in the Reunion Area

Per Wickham Park: Golf Carts Permitted  
For the Handicapped Only And Must  
Abide By FL Highway Laws

Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall  
<http://travelingwall.us>



**Call For Info**

**321-408-2698**

**321-652-4185**

**Vendor call 321-652-4185**

[Yet.reunion.vendor@gmail.com](mailto:Yet.reunion.vendor@gmail.com)

[RaRusso1962@gmail.com](mailto:RaRusso1962@gmail.com)

[Candy1540@yahoo.com](mailto:Candy1540@yahoo.com)

**Club Escort Lineup Info**

[vvbreunionesort@gmail.com](mailto:vvbreunionesort@gmail.com)



*Fellow Legionnaires.*

**American Legion 6<sup>th</sup> District Staff is looking for your support:**

February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 will be on our heels very quickly. Casino Night is designated to raise funds for Boys and Girls State transportation.

Post 347, Lady Lake, will be hosting this event, but “all hands on deck” is needed for a successful event. It is also opened to the public.

If you, your post officers and members cannot participate in the actual event, your contributions in the following ways will ensure a successful event:

Monetary donations to the 6<sup>th</sup> District directed for Casino Night.

Prizes for Casino Winners.

Silent auction items for bid is definitely encourage. Any items that you will have, please contact any member of the 6<sup>th</sup> district staff to arrange for pick up.

For tickets, please contact 6<sup>th</sup> District Vice Commander Joan Suelter @ 713-998-7526 or Chris Falkowski, Legion Rider Chair @ 407-301-3153



## EASTERN AREA BALL

At

American Legion Post 347  
699 W. Lady Lake Blvd  
Lady Lake, FL  
(321) 269-9959

April 4th, 2020  
3:00PM til ?

Dress: Country Western Theme

Charity: Honor Flight

Music by: Tobacco Road

Accommodations: Hampton Inn & Suites - Villages: 352-259-8246 Holiday Inn Express & Suites - Villages: 352-750-3888 Comfort Suites the Villages: 352-259-6578

PRICE: \$25.00 PER PERSON

### MENU:

Pulled Pork or Turkey Breast w/Gravy: Baked Beans, Green Beans, Potato Salad, Mashed Potatoes and Dessert

**Please send your choice of meal along with check payable to Thomas C. Biddle:**

Thomas C. Biddle  
Eastern Area Commander  
3434 Trout Ave  
Fruitland Park, FL 34731  
(352) 551-9474  
RSVP by March 1, 2020

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Guest (s) Attending: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Meal Choice: Pulled Pork # \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey Breast # \_\_\_\_\_

\$25.00 per person RSVP by March 1, 2020

**Make check payable and mail to: Thomas C. Biddle, Eastern Area Commander 3434 Trout Ave, Fruitland Park, Fl. 34731**