

DECEMBER 2022

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Submit Articles at floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

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Message from the Department Commander Eunice Butts, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



Everywhere you go, town to town, home to home, it's Christmas in America, and His blessings overflow. May love and laughter fill your days all through the coming year. May the message of the holiday fill your

heart with cheer. May God shed His grace on you and yours and upon this great land at Christmas and in the coming year.

Legionnaires, Department officers, and staff; Thank you for an AWESOME Fall Conference. I participated in the Female Veterans Forum, presided over the Boy's State Board meeting, the General session and the Department Executive Committee meeting. I addressed the Auxiliary and SAL sessions. It was also an honor and surprise for me to host the Past Department Commanders Luncheon.

I am in the process of setting up District Visitations, some are already in place. I will contact the District Commanders to help arrange their prospective District dates.

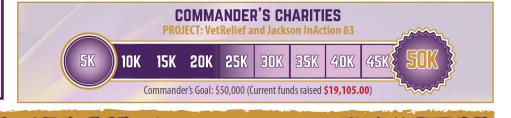
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The following is a list of scheduled visitations:

- District 3 March 29 – April 1, 2023
- District 5 January 13 – 15, 2023
 District 6
- March 20 22, 2023
- District 7
 December 8 10, 2022
- District 8 December 19 – 21, 2022
- District 12 January 18 – 21, 2023
- District 13
 December 11 13, 2022
- District 15
- December 14 16, 2022 District 16 December 1- 3, 2022

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COURAGE



2022-2023 COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

GOD

DECEMBER 2022

THE LEGION LINK

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<< Commander continued from page 1

Other important dates on my schedule:

- Guest Speaker, Orlando
 December 7, 2022
- Post 334 December 26, 2022
- Hoe Down, Palm Bay
 January 21, 2023
- National Commander Visit *February 1-7, 2023*
- Eastern Area Ball February 25, 2023
- Northern Area Ball March 25, 2023
- Auxiliary & SAL Homecoming, District 3 Picnic *April 1, 2023*

Get the Word Out!

Michael Raymond, 1st Vice Commander 1stvice@legionmail.org



I was honored to attend the annual Toys for Tots fundraiser in Lake City hosted by Post 57 and their Riders Chapter. A great showing and success, as usual. Great job by my friend and brother, Bill Huggins.

While waiting for the ride to start, I was approached by a rider with a question that took me by surprise. He asked me why he should renew his membership in the American Legion. Without hesitation, I told him that the answer was straightforward.

Strong Legion Family

Chris Hamrick, 2nd Vice Commander 2ndvice@legionmail.org



I hope everybody is well. Our State has seen some very troubling and challenging times these past months. Words can hardly describe the catastrophic events that have unfolded. My prayers continue for

- Children & Youth Picnic
 April 15, 2023
- Dept Commander's Homecoming Winter Haven, April 22, 2023
 NEW DATE
- National Spring Meetings
 May 8-10, 2023

District Commanders, please inform the Post Commanders that I would like to see the family in attendance.

Please continue to do your Buddy checks and memberships. Thanks to all of you for your kindness and love. You will always be special in my heart.

Because he is needed in the organization, and without him, we cannot accomplish the great things we do, like being there that day for this important fundraiser. Without members like him, we cease to exist.

Every member not only needs to be told this but must be shown that they are all valuable to the existence of our great organization. Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders all play an essential part in our success; together, we are an unbeatable team. Please help get the word out about why we need our members to renew and renew early. Buddy checks are still a unique tool and should be used extensively. Need help? I'm just a phone call away.

those affected in our State by the forces of Mother Nature. But we are resilient and strong and will once again see that daylight.

Throughout these trying times, I have reinforced Pride in being associated with a Strong, Dynamic, and Loving Family called The American Legion. I am amazed at some of the kindness, love, and strength displayed for one another to hold each other up as a family should. Our Districts and individuals throughout our Department have

DECEMBER 2022

24 - 31	★ Holiday Blood Donor Drive
1-31	🍎 Dept Holiday Raffle
1	Civil Air Patrol Birthday
3	Post 316: Pearl Harbor Golf Tournament
3	District 3: ALR Meeting
3	District 3: Meeting
4	Post 38: Annual Teddy Bear Ride
7	Pearl Harbor Day (1941)
7	Flags Half-Staff
7	🍯 Membership Goal 75%
10	Post 127: Blood Drive
11	District 13: Meeting
11	District 5: Meeting
13	US National Guard Birthday
15	🍅 Legion Link Articles Due
15	Bill of Rights Day
17	Wreaths Across America
17	Wright Brothers Day
17	Punta Gorda: Wreaths Across America
19	Hanukkah
20	US Space Force Birthday
20	Panama/Operation Just Cause (1989)
21	First Day of Winter
23-2	🛎 Dept Headquarters Closed
24	Christmas Eve
25	Christmas Day
26	Boxing Day
31	New Year's Eve

Commander Eunice Butts' Attendance Tentative.
 Department Event

Department Event National Event

Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at <u>www.floridalegion.org</u>. We share the information we are provided.



demonstrated selflessness and devotion to one another to assist those who have lost EVERYTHING.... It is the epitome of what we represent, what we do...and who we are. THANK YOU...

As you read this article, we have completed our Fall Conference and are at our Mid-Year mark. We all have a busy month coming up as a Legion Family and with our families

2nd Vice Commander continued on page 3>>



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<< 2nd Vice Commander continued from page 2

with the Holiday season upon us. Let us all reflect on our journey so far this year. Where we've been... where we're at... and focus on where we need to be. There are membership goals and program goals still to meet. Let's do our best to remain focused on our mission AS the American Legion and continue to look out for each other during these trying times. Yes, there are still struggles ahead. But I am confident we'll get through this and be much stronger in SPITE of it. I hope that you find

and friends at our Fall Conference with an

fellowship, pausing and giving Thanks for

This month brings us the gift of giving with

visits, and Holiday time to recharge and

I'm grateful to travel all over the state, see

Blood Donor drives, Wreaths Across America,

everything we have and need.

regenerate my batteries.

enormous amount of great information and

these words motivating and encouraging. I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a SAFE and PROSPEROUS New Year. And as I always say... "Keep It Real."

Giving Thanks

Jessica Moore, 3rd Vice Commander <u>3rdvice@legionmail.org</u>



Happy December! November was a great month of reflecting, honoring, and being grateful. Honoring our brothers and sisters on Veterans Day.

Being with family

National Executive Committee Jim Ramos, NEC nec@legionmail.org

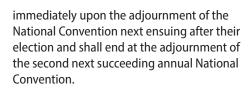


To continue from my last article on my responsibilities as NEC:

National Constitution and By-laws (ARTICLE VII) NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. Between National Conventions, the administrative power of The American Legion shall be vested in the National Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the National Commander, the National Vice Commanders, and one National Executive Committee Member and one alternate from each Department to be elected as such Department shall determine, the alternate to act only in the absence of the National Executive Committee Member.

Section 2. The term of office of such National Executive Committee Member and alternates shall be two years. The term of office of each National Executive Committee Member and alternate shall commence



Section 3. Members of the National Executive Committee shall be delegates to the National Convention with vote, which vote shall be exercised with their respective Departments, except that the vote of the National Commander shall be exercised only in their capacity as chair of the National Convention.

Rules of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion

Rule 1 Self-Governing

The National Executive Committee of The American Legion ("Committee"), as defined in the National Constitution and National By-Laws of The American Legion ("C&BLs"), shall be a self-governing committee and transact business in accordance with the rules hereinafter set forth, subject only to the Constitution and By-Laws of The American Legion and resolutions of the National Conventions of The American Legion different posts, meet many people, hear other ideas, and see our mission work!

And we are halfway until the next convention. Where does the time go?

I hope each of you has a Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year!

I am keeping the #oneteamonedream going strong!

("Convention") and Committee meetings.

Rule 2 Officers

The national commander shall be the Chair of the Committee and the national adjutant shall serve as Secretary. Any temporary vacancies, in such offices of Chair and Secretary shall be filled by action of the Committee for the respective meeting in which the vacancy occurs.

Rule 3 Powers and Rights

The Committee is specifically empowered to exercise the following powers and rights and may delegate to any national commander's appointed subcommittee that is composed of members of the Committee the authority to investigate and report back to the Committee on any of the following powers and rights: *Need to read part A*. To make decisions on all matters, executive or administrative provided, however, that said action taken...

May we All have a Merry Christmas, and a Safe and Prosperous New Year 2023. If you have any questions please contact by phone 352-226-4370 or email: <u>NEC@legionmail.org</u>



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National Visitation Jerry Brandt, ANEC anec@legionmail.org



I hope everyone had a Great Thanksgiving and a Great Fall Conference. Speaking of the Fall Conference, I hope everyone met the National Vice Commander, Patricia Harris, and the Leading

Candidate for American Legion National Commander, Daniel J. Seehafer. They came down to see Florida; you may have met them

Holidays and Community Helpfulness

Jim Bowers, Northern Area northernarea@legionmail.org



Now is the time of year to remember and assist those who are less blessed than we are. Stand Downs are going on to assist Homeless Veterans. Food Pantries, Toys for Tots, and many causes assist Veterans

Ending 2022 Strong

Sonny Decker, Western Area westernarea@legionmail.org



As we approach the end of 2022, let's all finish strong. There is still work to do and much to plan for.

I truly hope that everyone had a great Fall Conference. The conference is one of

the best learning experiences in the legion. Whether you desire to hold an office or, more importantly, just to become that informed member, Conference is a good place to begin your learning experience. The conference gives you a base to grow your knowledge about the legion, how the programs work, and how the offices support the programs. The more members know about their legion, at the various training classes and seen them on stage during the General Session.

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The National Commander will be visiting Florida, January 1st thru the 7th, in the Western Area. The Western Area Commander will reach out to the various Posts letting them know the date and time of the Visit.

As I previously indicated in last month's newsletter, National is hopefully watching Florida's Disaster Preparedness Team under Bill Hopper to improve National Disaster Preparedness. Well done, Bill. Also, during the Fall Convention, National media team visited Florida, not only at the Fall Conference but also in Port Charlotte, Fort Myers, Sanibel Island, and Punta Gorda, which suffered greatly during Hurricane Ian. They are there to document and record how the American Legion members assist others in this disaster.

Let me know if there is anything I can assist with. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

and the community at this time of the year. We have just Honored all Veterans and supped with our families for Thanksgiving.

Remember, you do not need money to help Veterans and the community. Your time is the one thing that is freely accepted and needed. Nursing homes need new faces. If all you do is go and play cards with a resident, it is greatly needed. Giving a ride to someone for medical appointments or treatments will fulfill you with pleasure. Helping others will cause you to be enlightened. Set up a list of members you check up on. Also, remember the Buddy Checks. The buddy checks are not on your list. Your list is one you set up. It is your list.

Once you are filled with happiness, try to carry the feeling thru the rest of the year. Happy Holidays to everyone.

the stronger we are as an organization.

November 11th was Veterans day. Did you stop and thank another veteran for their service, March in a parade, go to a celebration at a park and eat hamburgers and hot dogs? I hope you did, but I also hope that you took a minute to remember that brother or sister-in-arms that you have not heard from in a while and gave them a call and thanked them. Come on, team, BE THE ONE; reach out to all the veterans and make sure they know that YOU got their six and will walk that mile with them every time.

So very much going on this time of year. Thanksgiving, did you feed some troops at your post? Christmas is this month; take care of the children, the under privilege, and the special needs children within your community. And by all means, if you know of any gold star children, let them know that they are not alone in this world, and give them the toys or that particular need they have. Let their happiness be the fuel that keeps you going and sharing your time and talent. While you are giving, don't forget those veterans in nursing homes in your community. Riders, set up a Christmas ride to a nursing home, and while you are there, maybe replace a flag at the nursing home. That will mean so much to the veterans, and ask them to take part in taking down the retiring flag and put up the new one.

Keep working on the American Legion programs, and watch your membership numbers grow. Nothing shows the community what we are all about like working the programs.

I wish each and everyone one a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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Record Breaking Year

DECEMBER 2022

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders alr@legionmail.org



Wow, it's December! Bev and I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year! We would also like to Thank You for the record-breaking year supporting the Legion

programs. We acknowledge your passion for the program as we are driven by the same.

. On Behalf of PVR/SPI, I would like to Thank You for your continued support. Our ten strategic partners utilize the dollars that you contribute to continue their programs handling suicide prevention.

Would like to thank all that attended the Fall Conference, it was productive, and we addressed several topics.

- We reviewed the Area and District Chairs reports and discussed the importance of understanding Chair responsibilities as defined in the SOP.

 Summit, we have the Survey Monkey reviews completed and will be making changes to the program based on your feedback. Hopefully we will have everything completed before Christmas. Jeff Hawk has finished negotiations on the hotel.

THE LEGION LINK

- Keep your eyes open for the Raffle, we are keeping our fingers crossed that we are as successful as Bert Barracudas Harley has been in the past with their raffles. Some of their raffles have generated "Big Bucks".
- The hotels will be coming out soon for all three routes for the In-State Unity Ride. I know Joe Marcheggiani, and his crew are really shopping around so we can get the best deal. As soon as we get the reservations, we will get them posted
- We will be keeping you posted if there are any further needs at Patrick AFB. We are sure going to make Christmas for a few kids!

That is the update for now. If you have any

ideas or would like to become part of our volunteer team, please do not hesitate to let Bev or I know. We are always looking for help.

Thanks to all that participated, Ride Safe, looking forward to seeing you soon.

Your 2022 – 2023 Schedule Summit

Meet & Greet, February 8, 2023 Classes, February 9-11, 2023

"Round Robin" Month of April 2023

In-State Unity Ride

Meet & Greet, April 16, 2023 *Ride*, April 17-21, 2023 Rally, April 22, 2023, Orange County **Chopper Museum**

If you have any ideas, please share!

Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such an excellent group!

"For the Cause, not the applause"

"It's more than just our Programs." **Doug Hockenberry, Americanism**

americanism@legionmail.org Good day Department of Florida Legion Family. Hard to believe that December is already here. Where has the time gone? Before I begin, on behalf of Kathy and myself, I want to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays Season filled with love and joy.

The past two months have been challenging to say the very least. First, we had Hurricane Ian, followed up almost a month later with Tropical Storm Nicole. In all honesty, challenging is being polite. For the Posts' that lost everything, it is more than that. Not to mention all the Legion Family households that lost their

homes or sustained damage. Yes, we live in Florida, which does not make it any easier. Yet, despite the adversity, the light shines through from our fellow Legionnaires and the Posts throughout the Department and how they pulled together. Even though many suffered losses, you continue to lend a hand within your communities. It's things like that that lends credence to the word Americanism.

Sure, we have programs under the Americanism umbrella and those respective Department Chairs, along with the District and Post Chairs, do a phenomenal job. However, when you cut away all the fat (to coin a phrase), Americanism is much more than just our programs. It's fellow

Americans, fellow Legion Families lending a hand and helping those in need. Rich Anderson, a former American Legion Americanism Commission Chair, echoes that time-tested definition of Americanism. "True Americanism is an ideology continually nurtured within one's soul through individual daily actions, thoughts, and beliefs in what their responsibilities are to be, blessed to live in one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all." Those words hold true to us in the Legion, as they should. "Through our daily actions" those four words from Mr. Anderson speak volumes about who and what we are. As with so many things we take for granted but know that through our deeds and

Americanism continued on page 6>>



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THE LEGION LINK

<< Americanism continued from page 5 actions in our communities and events held within our Posts' we make a positive impact, promoting Americanism. Okay, I'll step down off my soap box. I'm sure you get my drift.

We have some significant events this month, starting with Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day on December 7th. This is an excellent opportunity to recognize and honor those Veterans in your communities. It doesn't need to be an elaborate affair, but it does need to be done respectfully. Yet, another great opportunity to engage with your local ROTC Cadets or the Young Marines if you have a chapter in your area. We can promote Americanism by influencing our young people through our programs. December 15th, Shooting Sports Registration begins; this is a beautiful program headed up by Loretta

2023 Season Team Registrations

Terry Phillips, Baseball baseball@legionmail.org



MERRY CHRISTMAS To ALL from the Executive Baseball Committee and me. Thanks to all the Teams

and Posts that helped support our program last season.

The 2023 season Team Registration opens on January 1st.

We expect a significant increase in new teams and posts joining our Junior and Senior programs this season.

We also need fundraising help for the maintenance and upgrades to our Rondette Park Facility as costs and expenses have increased.

Please get in touch with me if you have ideas or will be able to help with a financial donation. I will send out a detail of our many park needs in January.



Young, who does an outstanding job. And before we realize it, January 1st and Baseball Registration opens, headed up by Terry Phillips, who does a beautiful job. Then there is our Scouting Program Chair, Chris Ragusa, who does a phenomenal job with our Scouts. Then we have the Oratorical Program headed up by Meri West, who does a marvelous job. Speaking of the Oratorical Program, all Posts should be conducting those competitions soon, with District Level competitions taking place in January, followed by Area competitions in February. What else is in the new year? Oh yes, Boys State is another excellent program headed by PDC George Wehrli. George knows this program inside out and, like the rest of the chairs, works many hours to ensure its' success. These are just a few of the Chairs in the Department but know that each Chairperson does an outstanding job carrying out their respective programs - all of which directly promote

Americanism. To all the Chairs, please accept my sincere thanks for all that you do to promote Americanism.

Oh, and don't forget that February is Americanism Month. Is your District holding any activity to promote Americanism? Is your Post hosting an event? If so, please let me know; I would love to attend. Please give it some thought, talk with your Executive Board, and solicit ideas from your membership. How can you make an impact in your community by promoting Americanism?

Once again, I wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season filled with all of life's treasures. Stay Safe and look out for one another.

Hang Tough! "For God and Country"

Quality Family Time Dianne Boland, Children & Youth cv@legionmail.org



Greetings. I hope everyone had a chance to spend quality time with family and friends this past Thanksgiving during National Family Week. You should have been planning for some C&Y Events for this month (December).

Christmas is the time of year for Children and those adults who still feel like a child, myself included.

Charity has a significant presence during our Holiday Celebrations. Whether you invite local children and their families to your post for gifts and a Holiday Meal or support your local Sheriff's Department by donating cash towards their "Shop With A Cop" program, your post is furnishing a lot during these rough times. Keep track of your hours and money, not so you can pat yourself on the back but to provide the correct numbers for your end-of-year reports. The higher numbers on our CPR & Addendums better reflect what we do and who we are. This is needed when our National Commander makes his testimony before the House & Senate Veteran's Affairs Committee.

I want to thank those who took the time to attend my class during our Department Fall Conference. I hope you all learned something, whether you be an old-timer in the legion or if you attended your first conference. Thank you all for what you do, especially when children are involved.

I want to end by wishing you all "Happy Holidays" (for those who need to be politically correct"). "Merry Christmas!" "Have a Safe and Happy New Year."

Children & Youth Picnic - Saturday, April 15th at Post 323.

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Legion Family Working Together

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness disaster@legionmail.org



DECEMBER 2022

It has been over a month since Hurricane lan destroyed the Southwest Coast of Florida. Since then, the Legion family has been working together to bring order to the mass destruction that the storm created. Our family consists of over 27,000 plus members (Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Legion Riders), including Legionnaires who suffered flooding in central Florida.

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Without the cooperation of the Legion Family, the advancements that have been made would not have been possible. As we work together as a family, we will work to clear these hurdles and move forward to rebuild our communities better and stronger. It will take months or

Careersourceflorida.com and Employment Resource for Veterans and Spouses

James Douglas, Employment employment@legionmail.org



Are you an honorably discharged Veteran or Spouse of an honorably discharged Vet who needs help with career planning, professional development, or training on writing resumes? CareersourceFlorida.

com has counselors who can assist you at no cost.

Go to the website <u>CareersourceFlorida.</u> <u>com</u>

- Click on Careers Seekers
- Scroll down and click on FIND YOUR LOCAL TEAM; sadly, each state area has different-looking websites.
- Type in your location to locate a local CareerSource office. The location will appear on the map.
- Click on the location closest to you. A box will appear on your selected office's website.

- On the website, find and click on CAREER SERVICES. Information for Veterans will be in this area.
- <u>CareersourceFlorida.com</u> states that "Veterans receive priority of service." Below are available career services:
- Schedule an initial consultation (Virtual or In-Person) to learn about Career Sources' complimentary career services available to Disabled Veterans, Veterans, and Veterans' Spouses.
- Advance Your Skills Expand your career options with training and certification opportunities at no cost to you.
- Career Coaching Get one-on-one support to update your resume and practice your interview skills.
- Career Placement Let's get you hired! We'll connect you with employers hiring right now.

Posts if you have a Stand Down for Homeless Vets, reach out to the DEO Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representative in your local CareerSource.com office to see if they would like to participate in the Stand Down. years, and sometimes, there is no rebuilding. The Legion family is strong and will prevail.

> **DONATE** floridalegion.org/aid

VOLUNTEER floridalegion.org/volunteer

RESOURCES floridalegion.org/relief

REMINDER: December 19, 2022, is the deadline for the below Employment Programs Awards.

- National Employer of the Disabled
 Award
- Employer of Veterans Awards Small (50 or fewer employees) Medium (51 – 200 employees) Large (201 or more employees)
- Employer of Older Workers Award
- Employment Services Awards

Submit your awards packages by mail to:

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

OR

Fax to 407-299-0901 (Attn: Programs Director)



2022-2023 COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

To Attend the Florida American Legion College

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College falc@legionmail.org



DECEMBER 2022

The 2023 Florida American Legion College (FALC) will be held on February 16 – 19, 2023. The application can be found on the Department of Florida's website (floridalegion. org).

All FALC applicants must have completed the Basic Training online course within the last two years. A copy of the Basic Training certificate must be attached to the application and mailed to the following address:

The American Legion, Dept of Florida Attn: Events Coordinator P.O. Box 547859 Orlando, FL 32854

In completing your essay portion of the

JROTC Events and JSSP Postal Deadline Loretta Young, JRTOC / JSSP

jrotc@legionmail.org



The semester is quickly moving along, and the JROTC Units and Squadrons are now holding the County Meets in Raiders, Drill, Color Guard, and Marksmanship. The qualifiers from these meets will advance to

the State Level Competitions, usually held at the end of the year and the beginning of the new year. We have just wrapped up the Veterans Day Programs and Services. I know many programs and events were held throughout the state. I was very impressed with the service I was in attendance. That was opened by the presentation of Colors by the Piper JROTC Color Guard and commanded by the Broward County JROTC Cadet of the Year for 2022.

I cannot overstate the importance of having our Legionnaires in attendance at these

application, in addition to "why you want to attend the FALC" and "how you would apply the knowledge you will acquire to help your District and the Department of Florida," include what your future goals are in The American Legion, Department of Florida, and how you can assist your District in training others.

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The FALC is intended to teach the principles, techniques, and skills needed for programs and effective leadership at the Post and higher levels.

Some of the topics to be addressed during the FALC are as follows:

- Team building to set and accomplish goals
- Communicate using face-to-face, social media, and written
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Develop, instruct, and support the Post, District, and Department level training
- Salesmanship and marketing

(community networking strategies)

- Training tips to hopefully aid your District to be the best in the Department of Florida
- Motivate members to increase their Legion knowledge
- Offer incentives for new members to learn and increase their skills

There will be computer-based training (please bring your laptops). All other course materials will be supplied. The dress for FALC is business casual (trousers and collared polo shirt, preferably Legion polo for men and appropriate parallel dress for women).

Students attending the FALC should expect after-hours group homework, which will be expanded on from day to day.

Have a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2023 New Year. If you have any questions, please contact me by phone at (352) 226-4370 or by email at FALC@ legionmail.org.

events in support of the Legion Programs. What better time to showcase the American Legion and let the community know what we stand for and the support we give to the community? This is when the community and the City Officials are out and when the Legion is visible, with a table setup or members present, our value is continuously increased. I have included a picture to share because a picture is worth a thousand words. I continually ask that our members share their experiences in the community with me so that I can showcase more of the great things happening in our communities, including our JROTC Cadets and posts.

I urgently ask that all posts contact your schools and private clubs with Marksmanship Teams. The deadline is two weeks away for the JSSP Postal Match, which is due on Dec. 14th. The requirements are too involved to try to register a team at the last minute. We've had many challenges here in the state of Florida these last couple of years. The pandemic caused a significant delay in participation for two years with school closures and restrictions. This was followed this year by hurricanes on both the west coast and, most recently, on the east coast. This is in addition to having the marksmanship program wholly suspended in the schools in some of our counties. The National JSSP Postal Match is a scholarship award of \$5,000 for the Winner and \$1,000 for the Runner Up for the Shoulder-to-Shoulder meet in July 2023 in Colorado Springs. Thanks to all our youth program supporters and have a successful end-ofthe-year wrap-up.





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COMING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR VETERANS



123 VETERANS ASSISTED

During the Legion's Fall Conference last month, PROJECT VetRelief hosted a networking event. We invited interested VetRelief Advocates, our Board of Directors and the Suicide Prevention Initiative Strategic Partners.

The event opened with a brief social meet and greet where attendees enjoyed light appetizers, and even sang *"Happy Birthday"* to Bob James, our Board President. Eventually, Bob and Jim Wineland, Board Vice President, spoke on behalf the program to provide insight on the program's overall progress and future goals. Then, Jennifer Cooper, Co-Executive Director, gave brief instruction to the Advocates on the restructuring of the Emergency Assistance process.

\$10,000

тамр

But the real magic happened when our SPI Partners got up one by one to share information on their individual organizations. It became apparent that, together, we are on the same mission to provide a support network and end veteran suicide through our various efforts. We also acknowledged that, when combined, we make a larger impact and meet the true needs of our veteran community.

The photo above is the group who attended. We are so honored to partner with these folks as we all continue to work towards supporting our veterans and their families!

FINANCIAL AID AWARDED

SEMINOLE HARD ROCK CASINO'S PHILANTHROPY DAY

PROJECT: VetRelief received an invitation to Seminole Hard Rock Casino and Hotel's National Philanthropy Day in Tampa mid-November. Jennifer Cooper and Comer, Legion's Department Adjutant, attended on behalf of the organization. They heard from guest speakers, Titus O'Neil (WWE Super Star) and Derrick Brooks (NFL Hall of Famer), and were entertained by Hard Rock Casino performers.

As it turned out, we were one of 75 Florida-based nonprofit organizations who received a \$10,000 donation from the Seminole Hard Rock Casino & Seminole Tribe of Florida. We are extremely grateful to have been chosen and featured during this special presentation!

ASSISTANCE STATS: JULY-OCT 2022

OJECT: VET RELIEF

Looking Out for Fellow Veterans

Bruce Thurber, Membership membership@legionmail.org



DECEMBER 2022

So, two hurricanes have shown us what The American Legion is all about. Whether you are a regularly scheduled volunteer or an occasional volunteer for special events, you make a difference. I want to personally thank

the hundreds of Department of Florida volunteers who put forth the effort during 2022.

Fall Conference and Thanksgiving are now behind us. Christmas and New Year are just around the corner. Department and National will have limited office hours. The computers will be running, so please process membership frequently.

Veterans Expo Information

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements benefits@legionmail.org



thank you to Deanna Hall, American Legion Department of Florida Women's Chair, for hosting a Women's Veterans forum at Post 69.

This forum allowed women veterans to express their issues and concerns about The American Legion and the VA. I'll be working with Deanna to see what we can do about some VA issues.

One of my duties as the American Legion VA Entitlements Chair is to plan and host Veterans Expo / Benefits Fairs.

The Veterans Expo/Benefits Fair is an opportunity for veterans and their families to speak to the experts about VA State and

As American Legion members, our most sacred responsibility is to look out for each other and our fellow veterans. As a way to reach out to members and former members who may need help over the Holidays, our members are often alone; Buddy Checks can help prevent them from feeling isolated.

A THE LEGION LINK

- 1. Gather up a team to call or personally visit members and former members of The American Legion
- 2. If you don't have a list of members and former members at your fingertips, visit MyLegion.org and download the names of current members and those who have let their memberships expire.
- 3. Divide up the call list among your team members. Some may have personal connections with the member or the former member and should make that particular buddy check.

- 4. Start making connections either from a quiet place inside the post or from your home - to see how the members and former members are doing, ask if they need anything, and invite them to any event or activity planned to help celebrate the Holidays.
- 5. Make sure you thank the member or former member at the beginning and the end of your call.
- 6. If the member or former member wishes to renew, have your post's payment procedure at your fingertips, the address to send a check, or offer to stop by in person to pick it up (another opportunity to connect).
- 7. Leave contact information in case the member or former member can't take the call or needs anything in the future.

Local Benefits.

Friday, January 6th, Saturday January 7th, and Sunday January 8th, 2023.

American Legion Post 69 1301 W. Bell St Avon Park FL

Friday, January 6, 2023

Is the Escort of the Mobile Vietnam Veteran Wall to American Legion Post 69. We are asking all Riders, Jeep Owners, and one that would like to participate in the escort is welcome.

When the Wall arrives to Post 69 Thunder (The Bald Eagle will be on site), As well as the leading 12 organizations I use to help veterans.

- Project Vet Relief
- (FDVA) Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

- Highlands County Veterans Service Officer
- **IGY6** Foundation
- . K9 Line
- Lakeland Vet Center
- Liberty OVE
- National Veterans Resources
- Paint 22
- S.O.S. Missions
- The Grey Team
- Veterans Counseling Veterans

Saturday, January 7, 2023

Is the Main Event (Veterans Expo)

- Mobile Vietnam Wall set up
- Thunder
- Up to 50 vendors on site that help Veterans and their families. Here is a list of just some of the vendors that will be on site.

VA Entitlements continued on page 11>>



COURAGE GOD 🤎 FAMILY 🧡

2022-2023 COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

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<< VA Entitlements continued from page 10

- Project VetRelief
- Bobs Vets
- Camaraderie Rescue Mission
- Comfort Keepers
- County Service Officers
- FDVA
- First Orlando Counseling
- Gold Star Mothers
- Hands for Homeless
- IGY Foundation
- K9 Line
- K9 Partners for Patriots
- Lakeland Vet Center
- Liberty OVE
- Military Sportsman Foundation
- Mission 22
- Mobile Vietnams Wall
- My Warriors Place

Camp Lejeune Information

Alan Cohen, VA&R

var@legionmail.org



As I write this, we'll already have attended yet another busy and successful Department's Fall Conference. I'm sure that many of you took advantage of the classes that were offered and are even better equipped to make our Posts more

effective in carrying out our mission to help fellow veterans, and I thank you for that.

I want to spend a minute to address an issue that keeps being brought to our attention, The Camp LeJeune Justice Act. It's no secret that we can't turn on the tv without seeing ads from a variety of law firms encouraging veterans and civilian workers at Camp LeJeune during the specified era to "sue National Veterans Homeless Support

THE LEGION LINK

- National Veterans Resource
- Paint 22
- Patriot Riders
- S.O.S Missions
- Sebring VA Clinic
- South Florida Collage
- Southeastern Guide Dogs
- Steven A. Cohen Military Clinic
- Taps Hope4Vets
- The Grey Team
- Thunder (Bald Eagle)
- VA Suicide Prevention
- Veterans Counseling Veterans
- Wolf Hound Legacy

I'm asking all the Chairs from the Legion, Auxiliary, and Sons to set up a booth to promote family and all our programs.

for the compensation they're due." All well and good; however, not one of these ads include the information that a clause written into the legislation states that should an affected party be successful in suing, any award received will be offset from Federal benefits, including VA compensation, Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid. So beware... all that glitters isn't gold. I encourage anyone who believes they're affected to contact our highly knowledgeable law firm partners at Bergmann&Moore at 800-898-9450 for guidance.

Beginning November 8, 2022, the VA started offering toxic exposure screening to all veterans registered for VA healthcare. This covers veterans who served in-country in Viet Nam and related locations where they were exposed to Agent Orange as well as Gulf War vets, veterans having been exposed to radiation, and Camp LeJeune contaminated

This event is for the whole family

- Live Band
- Food Trucks
- The Juniors will be jailing people as part of the fundraiser. All proceeds are going to Project VetRelief.
- 2 Mile Walk to pay respect to the estimated 22 Veterans a day committing suicide.

Sunday, January 8, 2023

Poker Run Fundraiser for Project Vet Relief. Anyone can participate.

Hotel Recommendation for this event:

Jacaranda 19 E Main St Avon Park, FL 33825 Phone: (863)453-2211

water as well as others. The initial screening takes appx. 15-20 minutes, and any necessary medical care will follow. All considered, it would be time well spent.

I once again feel compelled to speak about something I had mentioned previously, that being the ongoing crisis of veteran suicide. In cooperation with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, at-risk veterans can now dial a 3-digit number..988..and instantly be connected to one of over 200 crisis centers to receive the help that can often get between the veteran and suicide. Let's do all that we can to help our brother and sister veterans.

In closing this month's article, I'd like to thank everyone for their unselfish hard work and dedication. Every day I'm proud to serve beside you.





Empowering Our Voice

Deanna Hall, Women Veterans womenvets@legionmail.org



"Because all of us believe and understand in the fabric of the common bond of why we call ourselves American is to care for the men and women who wear the uniform; and when they take off the uniform, we care for

them when they are veterans."—Steve Buyer

Our hearts and prayers continue to go out to the Veterans, their families, and all the communities affected by hurricane lan.

The Women Veteran's Forum took place at the American Legion, Department of Florida, Fall Conference in Orlando and was the first of its kind. The forum brought together women Veterans to discuss specific challenges women face after service.

The forum highlighted the central themes, including the following: what the American Legion can do to assist Women Veterans to continue their membership and others to join; what the American Legion can do to promote successful leadership roles among women veterans; and what can the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) do to improve benefits and communicate with women veterans?

We were fortunate to receive extensive insight from the American Legion National Vice Commander, Patricia Harris, and Department Commander, Eunice Butts. These female Legionnaires' leadership, guidance, and motivation brought a high level of engagement to the forum.

As a female veteran, I know it can sometimes feel lonely in a world where no one understands what happened to you in the military. Also, it can be harder to connect with non-Veteran females. The American Legion Department of Florida has heard you. We are conducting District/Area wide Women Veteran Forums throughout Florida to ensure we listen to women veterans and understand their challenges. The forums are open to any female veteran; they do not have to belong to the American Legion.

The following is the schedule:

- 8:00-9:00 am Breakfast. Everyone is welcome to come and support female veterans.
- 9:00-9:30 am Introduction of quests.
- 9:30-11:00 am Female Veterans Forum (FEMALE VETERANS ONLY)

Our following two forums are:

Women Veterans Forum 1. December 10, 2022

8-11:00 American Legion Post 75 898 F. James Lee Blvd Crestview, Florida 32539

2. Women Veterans Forum January 14, 2023 American Legion Unit 323 1124 Ashlar Avenue Lehigh Acres, Florida 33936

WOMEN VETERANS' MANTRA: "JUST BREATHE" When you feel angry, sad, frustrated, anxious, depressed, or need a moment to "JUST **BREATHE.**"

Please repeat your mantra as many times as needed:

> You are "Brave" You are "Resilient" You are "Essential" You are "Amazing" You are "Timeless" You are" Heroic" AND YOU ARE "ENOUGH"

"Just BREATHE"!

Thank you for supporting Women Veterans!





GOD





November 11th.

Post 34

2022-2023 COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

COURAGE

**** • DECEMBER 2022

VOLUME XXXI ISSUE 5

November 23, 2022 Membership Target Report (75%)

A.A.A

Membership larger report (75%)				
4	John Bennett	71.19%		
1	Ronnie Grover	67.14%		
7	Burl Thomas	66.99%		
17	Bruce Howe	66.12%		
16	Eric Nestler	65.61%		
6	Joe Marcheggiani	64.83%		
5	Lena Heredia-Perez	64.82%		
8	John Rauh	64.40%		
9	Geo Bograkos	63.47%		
11	Harry Malecki	63.45%		
15	Victor Kelly	62.94%		
2	Roger Hewitt	62.96%		
3	Stuart Scott	62.82%		
13	Bud Boyer	60.43%		
14	Angela Glover	60.10%		
12	Wayne Mulligan	58.71%		
Western	Sonny Decker	66.51%		
Northern	Jim Bowers	66.31%		
Central	Bob Matheson	65.07%		
Southern	Johnny Castro	62.61%		
Southwestern	Skip Felicita	62.19%		
Eastern	Dennis Mallon	62.11%		
Post 400		59.93%		
Post 208		57.06%		

Next Membership Goal 2022-2023: December 7, 2022

PROJECT: VETRELIEF

CKSON IN ACTION 83



THE LEGION LINK

LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

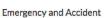
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Cash benefits sent to Legionnaire members diagnosed w We send you money - even if you don't have ca

www.thelit.com





2022-2023 COMMANDER EUNICE BUTTS

Commander Jim Bowers

invites you to attend the

Northern Area Ball



Tickets \$40 per person \$70 per couple

Program Ads

\$30 half page \$50 full page American Legion Cost 57 2602 SW Main Boulevard Lake City, FL 32025 (386) 752-7776

Dress in your **1920's** best!

Choice of Roast Beef *or* Chicken Cordon Bleu; served with salad, mashed potatoes & gravy, roasted green beans, dinner roll, and cake.

Please indicate beef or chicken on all ticket requests/payments.

Checks, for tickets and ads, should be made payable and mailed to:

Jim Bowers 6 Oak Brook Drive Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Email program ads (in jpeg or word format) to jbowers500 @cfl.rr.com, no later than February 25, 2023.

Call (407) 484-6020 with any questions.

Hampton Inn & Suites



YOUR DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS PRESENT

HILLBILLY

XXI

COME DRESSED AS A HILLBILLY! JEANS-OVERALLS-STRAW HATS USE YOUR IMAGINATION!

SATURDAY JAN 21, 2023 STARTING AT 12:00PM

LIVE MUSIC BY LAST CALL BAND

TICKETS:

\$25/PERSON \$40/COUPLE

CONTACT A VICE COMMANDER FOR TICKETS MICHAEL: (618) 616 - 2753 CHRIS: (321) 313 - 3469 JESSICA: (239) 839 - 0602

AMERICAN LEGION POST 117 189 VETERANS DRIVE PALM BAY, FL

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YES! I want to advertise in the American Legion Department of Florida's Hillbilly Hoedown

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Half Page	\$25.00		
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Point of Contact: -			
Phone#:			Amt. Paid
E-mail:			
			Cash:
			Check #
Must be submitted	by December 30, 2022.		
		Busine	ss Signature:

Signature:

Make Checks Payable To: American Legion Post 117 261 Comet Ave SE Palm Bay, FL 32909 Memo: Hoedown Ad E-mail ads to: J_moore71@yahoo.com

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MIL

American Legion Chapter 69

With Patriot Guard Riders 🥍

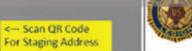


MERICIA

Proceeds raised during this event benefit Project Vet Relief™. Find out more by visiting www.ProjectVetRelief.org

Cars and Trucks Welcome

- The American Legion Chapter 69 with the Patriot Guard Riders will be escorting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the War on Terrorism Walls from <u>1901</u> Longleaf Blvd, Lake Wales, FL 33859 to the American Legion Post 69 in Avon Park for the Veterans Expo on Jan 7th.
- The staging area is 2 miles south of Hwy 60, on Hwy 27 Lake Wales, (*Across from Loves Truck Stop*) with a 22 mile ride to Post 69
- Staging at Post 69 1000, for those wanting to meet and ride up
- Staging at Longleaf 11:00 for the actual escort event
- There will be a Police escort from Polk and Highlands
 - **County Sheriffs Offices.**





(01/06/23)

- 1000 Staging (Post 69)
- 1015 Sharp KSU
- 1100 Staging (Longleaf)
- 1115 Briefing
- 1130 KSU

Staggered Formation Order of Escort

- Law Enforcement PGR-Flag Bikes American Legion VFW VMC
- Saddle Memorial Wall
- Vehicles
- Water available

Scan QR Code-> For Event Info

Restrooms available



POC: David Partain, Events Coordinator Chapter 69 (xxx) xxx-xxxx



POC: Larry Roberts for more information on how you can get involved: 850-7018-7773