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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

BE THE ONE

A Message from the Department Commander

Michael "Gambler" Raymond, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



Unfortunately, I must start this month's newsletter with not-so-good news. We all lost a great Legionnaire, a great volunteer, and a great Rider and friend. Tim Morris has lost his battle with pancreatic cancer and has gone to the

Commander of us all. I was very close to Tim, having traveled all over this great country on 4 Legacy rides. When you spend this kind of time with a person, you get to know them very well. Debbie and I will miss his smile tremendously; each "bridge out" sign will always bring fond memories. Keep smiling and riding, Tim. We'll see you again, I'm sure.

The good news is that you guys are killing it in membership. At the pace we're going, there's no doubt in my mind that we will be on top this year. We are currently running well ahead of last year, and if the trend continues, we'll be looking at a solid 100+ percent by March 2024. All we have to do is continue what we are doing. Keep up the Buddy Calls and stay in touch with your members. Continue to do the programs you're good at, and maybe even add one or two to your agenda. I,

along with Law Cadet Chairman Bud Boyer, would love to see this program take off this year. We will be opening registration on Jan 1st to all interested candidates. Contact Bud or Bekki for more info. I also have some flyers with me, so ask.

During my visits this year to your Posts, I have asked questions concerning your successes at your Posts. I've been to many Posts already, and I am getting some great input. I will compile this info and report back to you at the Dept. Convention. As far as complaints are concerned, most Posts tell me the same thing. Lack of volunteers! I've talked to these "same ole six" and I always get the "same ole reason". Lack of appreciation! We have to make a point of thanking and rewarding your volunteers on a regular basis. Whether it's a pat on the back, a certificate, or even a free drink, they will always appreciate it. And reward them in public, maybe at a Post-meeting or event. One of the most cherished awards I ever received was for community involvement and was given to me at an event for our 100th anniversary of the American Legion. Totally unexpected and meant the world to me. Reward your volunteers, and they will come back.

Finally, please keep doing what you're doing. When

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I asked you at the beginning of the year to help "Stop the Slide," you took me literally, and you're

knocking it out of the park. Please have a safe and wonderful holiday.

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

Disaster Relief and C.O.T.A.

5K

10K

15K

20K

25K

30K

35K

40K

45K

50K

Commander's Goal: \$50,000 (Current funds raised \$0)

Busy Time of Year

Chris Hamrick, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



Fellow Legionnaires, we're halfway there and rocking right along with membership. That is the lifeblood of our great organization. Keep up the great work. At the time of this writing,

we're at 78%+ and climbing. January is going to start our busiest time of year, and there is a lot going on. Let's keep our momentum and work our programs hard. Veterans Expo in Avon Park,

followed by Northern Area Ball, followed by Vice Commanders Hillbilly Hoedown, and the Memorial Run for Tim Morris, followed by Southern Area Ball and National Commander's visit to Southern Area. Not to mention events elsewhere across the state

Program deadlines are looming, and I predict the second half of our year will feel like Warp Speed. Looking forward to it.

I want to wish everyone a Happy, Healthy New Year. ~ Keep it Real Peace.

How many of you make New Year's resolutions?

Jessica Moore, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



Do you create a list of things you would like to do in the new year? Whether you do or don't, I'd like you to consider some things to put on your to-do list. I hope everyone places the "Be the One" mission

at the top of their list. This program is designed to help all Veterans. We know that everyone responds differently to stress and has different life experiences.

The American Legion is asking us to talk with others about how they are feeling. If someone is asking for help, reach out. There are lots of people ready to

help, and most importantly, remember your family and friends' care.

I also hope in the new year you can recruit at least five people. Membership matters and it is the key to our success. Consider our young population as well and be a mentor to them.

Perhaps in the new year you are able to support one of our many missions. Maybe it's time to explore your options and get more involved.

How about if you explore the officer positions in your Post and get involved on the Post, District, or even Department level?

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 2024

1-21 Post Oratorical Contests *

1 Department Headquarters Closed *

1 New Year's Day

1 Baseball Registration Opens ★

2 District 15: District Commander Visit (389)

3 Boys State Registration Fee Deadline *

5-6 Veterans Expo (Avon Park)

6 ALR: Chapter 316 Monthly Meeting

10 Department Membership 80% Goal *

10 Boys State Del/Alt Registration Open *

10 ALR: Chapter 10 Meeting

13 District 17: Meeting

13 Northern Area Ball

14 District 13: Meeting

14 ALR: Chapter 8 Meeting

15 Legion Link Articles Due *

15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

15 Department Headquarters Closed *

16 District 15: District Commander Visit (138)

17 District 15: Area Commander Visit (138)

20 District 4: Meeting

20 Bords 'n Bags

20 Post 117: Hillbilly Hoedown

20 Kornhole 4 Kids' Sake

20 Vice Commanders' Hillbilly Hoedown *

21-30 National Commander's Visit ★ *

22-10 District Oratorical Contests *

25 District 13: Disaster Fund Drive Concert

27 Southern Area Ball

27 ALR: Chapter 10 Kissimmee Bike Night

31-2 ALR Summit & Expo *

★ Commander attendance tentative.

* Department of Florida event.

★ National event.

Events are subject to change. More details at floridalegion.org.



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National News

Jim Ramos, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



"Happy New Year 2024!"

How to stay informed by going to Legion.org and signing up for all the notifications you need each week. By staying informed, you can help your members and your Post with updated information from National Headquarters, for example, Legislative, VA news, Legion Riders, Oratorical Contest, and more.

Legislation is very important because of what we do for our Veterans and our organization. Plus, we must stay on top of our elected officials that we vote into office so they can help our issues. Staying on top of the Legion issue, for example, Legion.org/action and (pass the American Security and Afghan Allies Protection Act, Support the Veterans Service Recognition Act, and Love Live On: Support our Gold Star Spouses), to name a few. Let our Congress know we care for our Veterans and their families just like we supported our country in times of peace and war.

Legislative is a need for all Veterans to get involved in the issues to improve our government so they can support our community, our Veterans, and our

families. Stay informed. Always go to legion.org to see what is going on and watch your local news and the world news.

You can watch a video at your Post meeting. It will make a big difference to your members because now they see it and know what is happening. For video, go to Legion.org. "Featured Videos" and look for a video on what you will discuss or get a new program started by checking out a video for that program. You can do a million things to help your Post improve. Also, help with membership. Who doesn't want to make 103% in membership? We all must help (Be the One), but how? Please go to Legion.org and check out each of the topics. Each topic like Programs (Baseball, Legion Riders, and Scholarships), Services (Benefits center, Family Support, and Career Center), media (Basic Training, Publications, and Press Center), and Membership (Renew your membership, member discounts, and myLegion.org) just to name a few. You can see what you need assistance with by going to the website.

Also, the 2023 Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies is an excellent start to getting information from and letting your members know about Post officer duties and all kinds of programs

like the Auxiliary and how they can assist the Legion. How do the Sons of the American Legion work with the Legion? Our most extensive program is the Legion Riders because it's bringing the whole family together, and we can do more. How many of you have done the Basic Training course online (it is free)? One more thing you can do to assist your Post is to learn more about the American Legion and what we do.

"Welcome new members into the Legion by assigning them a mentor familiar with our tradition, customs, policies and programs."

Finally, please be nice and respectful (be kind and helpful all the time) to one another, and we can be better every time we see each other. Our American Legion Family is full of traditions and good people, but we still must be better than the last generation.

I hope we are all safe and back to work in the New Year 2024.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me by phone at 352-226-4370 or email NEC@legionmail.org.

National Commander's Visitation and Other Information

Jerry Brandt, ANEC

anec@legionmail.org



Comrades, have you heard about the new 3-year membership? If you have not already renewed for 2024, you can go online at Legion.org and renew for the next three years at the same yearly rate you currently have. This is only good for those who have not renewed their 2024 dues at this

time.

Please remember a rate increase will take effect on July 1, 2024. As a reminder to the Posts, please check your current dues amount. The National is increasing by \$5.00, and the Department may also increase. Are your Post's current dues sufficient for this increase? If not, please update your rate with the Department so they can update National by July 1st.

A reminder: the National Commander will be visiting Florida from January 21st to January 30th. He will be visiting the Southern Area. The information on routes and times of Post Visits is on the Florida Legion website under News & Events, National Commander's Visit.

If you wish to speak with the National Commander,

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the best way is to attend the Southern Area Ball on January 27th at Callaway National Guard Armory; this information is also on the Florida Legion website.

The following came about due to companies filing predatory claims due to toxic waste found at some military sites: On December 12th, 2023, during a

Special National Executive Committee Meeting, The American Legion voted to send a strong message to Congress, Resolution 1, indicating we oppose any legislation that seeks to elevate the standing of predatory claims companies by legitimizing practices that target Veterans and their dependents, and urged the Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General and Office of General Counsel to work more effectively with the Federal Trade

Commission, Department of Justice, state attorneys general and state bar associations to identify and prosecute such predatory claims companies to the fullest extent of the law. This resolution supports the "Guard Act" currently moving through Congress.

I wish everyone a safe and Happy New Year. I will see you soon.

Flag Size and Location

Les Martin, Sergeant-at-Arms

sgtatarms@legionmail.org



Greetings, fellow Legionnaires; I hope everyone had a great holiday season. I'm not trying to be politically correct here; it's just that too many groups celebrate a holiday at this time of the year to mention them all.

Keeping up with the training that I have been providing on this forum. As you may have noticed, I have been big on the protocol at meetings and other activities and ceremonies. Our organization has been based on protocol since its inception in 1919. I encourage everyone to go to the Department website and download the "Sergeant-at-Arms and Protocol Manual" from the resources section. There is a lot of good information there, from how to set up your meeting or ceremonial room to when to wear your Legion Cap and how to introduce fellow Legionnaires in your meeting or ceremony. This manual should be followed as closely as possible at your Post or District.

I have been asked what size flag should be on outdoor flag poles. Even though you can get this

information from any flag company website, I have included a chart below. The "Sergeant-at-Arms and Protocol Manual" also includes how the flag should be displayed.

FLAGPOLE HEIGHT	FLAG SIZE
<i>*in feet</i>	
20	3X5 OR 4X8
25	4X6 OR 5X8
40	6X10
50	8X12
60	10X15
70	12X18
90	15X25
125	20X30
200	30X40
250	40X50

For our ALR members who display a U.S. Flag on their motorcycles, I am sure you know that there is a right way and wrong way to display your flags. If you are only displaying the U.S. Flag, the flag should be in the center rear of the motorcycle. If you are displaying multiple flags, the U.S. Flag should be in the center and noticeably higher than the other

flags. If it is not noticeably higher, it should be on the right (curbside) of the motorcycle. This is because when your motorcycle is resting on its



kickstand, it will be higher than the other flags. If you are placing two or more flags on stands on a car or truck, you should place all flags at the same height with the U.S. Flag on the passenger side of the vehicle, so when looking at the vehicle from the front, the U.S. Flag will be on the left side, just as you display your flags in your meetings.

I have also been asked about placing a Bible on the POW/MIA Table. This is optional. Although this is optional, the reading of the meaning of what is on the table, most places I have looked up, does not include the Bible.

Until next month: Please stay safe and healthy.



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NEWS, FORMS, VETERAN RESOURCES,
UPCOMING EVENTS, AND MORE



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Membership

Bob Matheson, Central Area Commander

central@legionmail.org



Well, it's hard to believe that 2024 is already here. It seems like we just started Legion year and are halfway through it. The Central Area membership is coming on strong. We started slow but have definitely put it into high gear. I want to thank the Central Area's own Bruce Carl for the outstanding job

that he is doing leading Department membership. The Central Area itself is only at 77.08, but we are moving up every week.

We have two Posts within the District that are going above and beyond. In the 7th District, we have Post 15. Last year, this Post was struggling, but after a revitalization from the Department team, they are now at 122.94%. Last year, they finished the year at 79.17. That is one heck of a turnaround, and

they're not done yet!

In the 15th District, we have Post 418 at 241.74%. One of the newer Posts in the Department who are coming on strong. They are working to fulfill a challenge with the Department Commander to make it to 418%. I won't tell you what happens if they make it, but if they do, make sure you're at the convention!

Ending the Year

Joe Marcheggiana, Eastern Area Commander

eastern@legionmail.org



Happy New Year to all. May it be a prosperous and healthy year. Half the year is still ahead, with many area visits on the agenda. I will be seeing you soon. It's been a productive first half filled with comradery, fundraising, and bringing joy to children and families. We lost a dear friend and riding partner, Tim Morris, from Post 117 in December, while God gained a new Sergeant at Arms. The best there is.

Thank you to all the Eastern Area Post Commanders in District 6 and District 12 who continue to push membership. We're so close to wrapping

up this year's mission. Membership can never be in the rearview mirror. It is right there in front of everything thing we do.

Looking ahead, the calendar is filling with events such as The Florida American Legion Riders Summit, the In-State Unity Ride, Oratorical competitions, and Boys State, to name just a few activities. And before you know it, Convention. Where does all the time go?

I do several hours of Legion administrative work on a typical day and some days more. This does not include calls and texts, which add considerable time. Often, this work is what I call "putting out fires." It can be anyone that starts a fire. It is when it involves members that it becomes frustrating. When

times become frustrating as a member, go back and read the Preamble and what each verse means. It can be enlightening and help to put your troubles at rest. Remember, "The last or 10th clause of our Preamble is the most important ideal expressed in our Preamble."

TO CONSECRATE AND SANCTIFY OUR COMRADESHIP
BY OUR DEVOTION TO MUTUAL HELPFULNESS...

(<https://www.legion.org/documents/pdf/preambleinterpretation.pdf>)

Please like and follow the Eastern Area Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100093197187326&mibextid=ZbWKwL>

Northern Area Activities

Lena Heredia-Perez, Northern Area Commander

northern@legionmail.org



"Approach the new year with the resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day."

Happy New Year!! As the Northern Area Commander, I cannot ask for a better group of individuals to work for! The

Northern Area is successful because of all the hard work and dedication that each of you put in. THANK YOU!! We have started off strong and all I ask of is that we dig down deep and let's finish out this Legion year stronger than we started. Remember, it is all about our Vets!

Please do not forget that the Northern Area Ball "There's No Place Like Home" is scheduled for

January 13, 2024 from 6-10pm at American Legion Post 57 in Lake City, Florida. This is a time for all members of the Northern Area to come together and celebrate our successes, fellowship and raise money for an great cause.

Tickets can be purchased at the door if you have not purchased your tickets already. This is a night

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<<Northern Area Commander continued from page 5

you do not want to miss as we have LOTS of raffles, a Costume Contest, Silent Auction for 1 week stay

at Westgate Resort and fantastic music by Fratello Classic Rock Live Band. ALL monies raised will go towards Boys & Girls State Scholarships! If you

have any questions, please contact me directly at 904-449-6318, otherwise I look forward to seeing you there!

Future Events

Bruce Thurber, District 12 Commander

District12@legionmail.org



Happy New Year! I want to wish you and yours a healthy and happy 2024

Now that the holidays are over and a new group has graduated from American Legion College, the next major event is the Riders Summit. Branding and awareness are important, and they are a part of our strategic membership plan. I know I will see

plenty of challenges all over social media. I ask that all Florida Family members take on the challenge of an all-time high at your Post. It is also time to put together your Post Excellence Award information for your District Commander. The American Legion's Post Excellence Award has added new criteria. To qualify now, a Post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, submission of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR), sharing of Post history, and community activity. Remember, you can start your CPR on mylegion.org.

We have seen many members volunteering, especially during the holidays. It is now time to say thank you. Contact me for the Billy Awards.

We have the walk for "Be-The-One" coming up at the Posts. You can get your shirts from Gary Raymond at Post 394. Remember, each Post can do the walk and submit your proceeds for suicide prevention. Post 394 is holding its walk on January 27th and is splitting the proceeds with Police and Fire suicide prevention.

American Legion Fest and Project Vet Relief

Eric Loyd, District 13 Commander

District13@legionmail.org



District 13 is holding an American Legion Fest on JANUARY 25th in Fort Meyers, Florida. We have Sixties Music by JR and the String Rays, The Grass Roots and the voice of Rare Earth Peter Rivera, and a Special appearance by Jackson Haney. We are also

selling T-shirts, have a 50/50 raffle, and are raffling off a Barrel of Booze. I encourage all members of the American Legion to come and support this cause.

All the money raised goes to Posts in District 13 affected by Hurricane IAN. See attached flyer. If you need tickets, call me at 603-903-7707, and I will get them to you.

SAVE THE DATE: District 13 Family "BE THE ONE" Event & Project Vet Relief Resource Fair will be on February 24, 2024, at American Legion Post 192 in Fort Meyers, Florida. Starts at 10:00 am. See attached flyer.

PORT CHARLOTTE Post 110 is still requesting donations. Every dollar helps.

Post Transfers

Randy Holeyfield, District 15 Commander

District15@legionmail.org



Post Transfers and how to utilize them.

Let us first look at the DMS (Direct Mail Solicitation), National's program to entice Veterans to join The American Legion. After a Veteran responds to the mailing, they attest that they are honorably discharged and pay their first

year's dues. This places them into the national database, and part of that identifies and designates them to the state they reside in. For Florida, this is Post 400, our holding Post for these new members in TAL. Along with this process, it also shows how long they are in that DMS program, to which, if they have only been there for one or two years, they are assigned a special Alpha code of "AD." This AD code is unique because it allows these particular members to count toward the National's goal set for the year even if they paid their dues, a mulligan. These

DMS members are transferred one of two ways: if they are "Paying your Post" while their current membership is in good standing, you can utilize the MyLegion through your Posts portal. If they have already paid their dues, you will have to transfer them using an MDF (Member Data Form) and send it to the Department to be processed.

But how do I find these Gems?

And how do I identify which ones are within my

District 15 Commander continued on page 7 >>



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<< District 15 Commander continued from page 6

Post's proximity vs another Post?

In some areas, that can be challenging, like the St. Petersburg area, where you can almost see one Post from the other (very close to each other). In this type of situation, a gentleman's agreement should be observed. But for the most part, there are identifiable demarcations between Posts, and respecting other Posts' zones should be observed. The best method is by zip codes because it usually gives the demarcation lines. Once these zip codes (or parts of zip codes) are recognized, you can start your quest to find these gems (new members).

To access these members, go to MyLegion.org and log in; once there, you can access them by "Find a member in my Area." If your Post has more than one zip code, make each listing one zip code at a time; it helps limit the area and size of each list. Another is by proximity (distance in miles), but that can bleed into other Post areas. Once you establish these listings, you can request these Post 400s for your Post. One of the easiest ways

is through emailing them (if they have an email address), several at a time by pasting their email address into the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) location, with an attached transfer letter about your Post and what your Post is doing in their community with the Veterans and Youth. A snail mail letter is another option, but it is more time-consuming and costly. It is, in some cases, the only option. Your Post could also get a few members at your Post and call these potential new members. This would be the same Team that does Buddy Check calls the "Be the One" program.

But what about Post to Post transfers?

If the member is unknown, especially an out-of-state member, it might be prudent to gather some background about them by the Post they are leaving. Remember, once you accept a Veteran/member into your Post, they are there until they want to leave or a trial. So, due diligence is advised when accepting members into your Post. Once the Post is satisfied and the member is willing to be transferred, use an MDF (Member Data Form) to complete it. If they are now current with their membership and are ready

to pay next year's dues, you could transfer them to the MyLegion.org website. But only members eligible to pay can use the MyLegion processing website; anyone who does not will have to use an MDF and send it to the Department for processing.

Whether you are accessing by the DMS method or transferring from one Post to another, you should be respectful of other Posts. That includes transferring to an adjacent Post and contacting members from your last Post to come to the new one you are now at. You might find yourselves in hot water for attaining either another Post roster or your last Post roster and soliciting members to your new Post. This is not only unprofessional but disrespectful, as we are here to serve our Veterans, community, state, and nation. When personalities are energized, and spite pops its head up, it only leads to strife; we are better than that. Working together and not against ourselves is the pleasantness and continuity to harbor goodwill to all.

Celebrating America

Kurt Gies, Americanism Chair

americanism@legionmail.org



Americanism Commission:

Boys State applications and Oratorical Contest topics are the hot topics this month. Please send your Post money to the Department to reserve your

Boys State Delegates spots today so Bekki and her team can start adequately preparing for the upcoming session.

"Celebration of America – A Walk 4 America" - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

February 2024 was designated as Americanism

Month. The "Celebration of America – A Walk 4 America" will start in Winter Garden, FL, and travel through the five Florida Districts (17th, 5th, 3rd, 4th, and 6th Districts), two Florida Areas, and 17 Florida counties. After 12 days, ending on Presidents Day, we will have hoped to have visited 33 American Legion Posts and 3 Villages Squares while covering 675 total miles (including walking over 286 kilometers), averaging 24km/day (14.5miles/day) walking. But our Department Commander, Michael "Gambler" Raymond, is asking that all 282 Florida Posts find a way to celebrate Americanism during this period.

The visits to each Post will last about 1 hour. The goal is to have representatives from your community, including elected officials, your Boys State and Girl State delegates, Boy Scouts, JROTC/Sea Cadets, Legion Baseball Teams, Oratorical Contestants, School Medal Winners, Youth Law Cadets, in attendance so they can be recognized by the local community and/or press. We also want you to invite any other local organizations (like the Elks, Rotary, VFW, DAV, Marine Corps League, Navy League, etc.) that want to help celebrate America as we can during this 12-day period, which will end on Presidents Day. Finally, Posts should coordinate and

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organize a Blood Drive with Blood One for that

day, conduct flag retirements, and present flag grommets to the Department chair. Basically, we

want your Post to host a HUGE celebration of America and honor her in your own special way.

ALR offerings

Jim Wineland, Legion Riders Chair

alr@legionmail.org



I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays with family and friends! Here comes the New Year, and we are looking for some new ideas; please share.

We have changed a few things at the Summit this year. Beverly will have a two-hour session on reporting and a couple of new ideas we must cover as required by "The Motorcycle Safety Association."

We will also offer a Red Cross CPR & First Aid course. The course is a little pricey, but as we all know, you get what you pay for. It includes CPR, AED, first aid, head, neck, muscle, bone, joint injuries, and splinting skills. It's a Five (5) hour course, with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 24 individuals. There will be a charge of 45 dollars per person to attend to help cover the \$90.95 per person cost of the courses. After the course, you will receive a 2-year Certificate covering Adult First

Aid/CPR/AED and Head, Neck, Muscle, Bone, Joint Injuries and Splinting. The cut-off date for registering for the program is January 19th.

The Motorcycle Safety Association is starting to pick up speed. Remember, we are starting from scratch. We are designing a logo, educational material to be shared at events, a website, deliverables (pens, key chains, etc.), and an advertising campaign to support Motorcycle Safety. Your ALR team consists of myself, Connie Koonce, Assistant Program Manager, Ted Wieder, Safety/Road Captain, Lamar Camacho, website design, Shirley Douglas & Elizabeth Zuehlke, Finance. This will all be funded by a \$2.50 assessment at motorcycle registration, with no cost to the Department. We will need help from each Chapter/District in forecasting events, distributing motorcycle safety information at your events, and participating. More to come at the Summit.

All the scheduled activities are coming together, and at this point, we are on schedule.

Ride Safe; looking forward to seeing you soon!

Your 2023 – 2024 Schedule

- Summit
Meet & Greet, January 31
Classes February 1-3
- "Round Robin"
Month of April 2024
- Children and Youth Picnic
April 6
- In-State Unity Ride
Meet & Greet, April 21
Ride April 22-26.
- Rally April 27
Location OCC Clearwater, FL.

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"

New Fillable Form

Jamie Grinis, Blood Donor Chair

blooddonor@legionmail.org



Another year has passed, and we are still diligently working on our membership goals and Post programs again. Many Posts have adopted the Blood Donor Program.

This means a lot since the holidays have diminished our state's blood supplies. It's not too late to get started with your Blood Donor Programs up and running; it is a great recruiting opportunity. To host

a drive link for scheduling a drive, contact <http://pulse.oneblood.lan/ProjectsList/PID0100/Project>

Documents/Host a drive form.docx.

We've created a fillable report on the Blood Donor pages. The data will go directly to the Blood Donor Chair for easier accountability and reporting needs. Please submit a report each time your Post has a blood drive at the site provided:
<https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/blood-donor/donor-report/>

One thing I have learned this year is that it is easier to get Blood out of a turnip than it is to get a Big Red Bus at your Post. Please get involved with this life-saving program and help our fellow neighbors and Veterans in need.

Next month, we will start Posting the amount of activity that is reported from the Department's accessible fill-in forms.



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2023-2024 COMMANDER MICHAEL "GAMBLER" RAYMOND

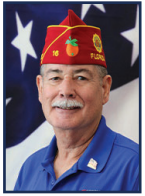
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Florida American Legion College (FALC) is completed for 2023

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College Chair

falc@legionmail.org



If you are reading this and you want to go to the Florida American Legion College, **you are too late because the FALC is done for 2023.** Next year, a new application will be on the website (Floridalegion.org).

Please have your basic training certificate within 2yrs and a copy attached to your application and mail it to:

The American Legion
Department of Florida
P.O. Box 547859
Orlando, FL 32854

All course materials will be supplied to each student. As a student, please have your laptop or computer for assignments and other work for the group and class assignments.

Be ready to work hard and long hours. Follow the dress code (for men, Legion Polo-type shirts and slacks), and (for women, Legion-appropriate parallel dress), which is business casual.

Thank you all for coming to the FALC from 2014 to 2023. It was a great time with all the Legion family who attended the classes with me. I just wanted to say Thank You All.

I hope your holiday was a safe time and a prosperous New Year 2024.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me by Phone at 352-226-4370 or email: FALC@legionmail.org.



Homeless Veterans

Jim Burk, Homeless Veterans Vice

homelessvetsvice@legionmail.org



In the past several months, I have addressed the plight of our homeless Veterans. The American Legion was founded on four pillars. One of these is Veterans

affairs and rehabilitation. To me, that means to aid and comfort these poor souls.

Please go back and read my articles and, in 2024, make a difference in their lives. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, give out some McDonald's gift cards, and partner with groups like the Salvation Army, St.

Vincent De Paul, or others. This is also a great way to recruit new members for our various Legion family groups. And please send me success stories and feedback.

Please do what you can to end homelessness for our Veterans.

JROTC Florida JROTC State Raider Meet and JSSP First-Round Competition

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP Chair

jrotc@legionmail.org



The 2023 JROTC Florida State Raiders Championship Meet was held in Hudson, FL, on December 2. There were over 70 teams from across the State who competed over the weekend. The team

categories were all-male teams, male/female mixed teams, and all-female teams. Each team competed in a Team Run (3.1 miles), Tire Flip, Cross Country Rescue (1 mile), Fitness Test, and Rope Bridge.

Some of the winners were West Broward - Mixed Team and Marjory Stoneman Douglas - Female Team, both took home the honors of being crowned First Place in their tiers. There are many individual, local, and area meets before the teams qualify for the state meets. These competitions are open to visitors who want to see how our JROTC Units are performing in Raiders, Drill, Marksmanship, Drone, and other areas of the JROTC Program structure. These are skills and training that help in the development of the cadet's overall training. I would encourage our members to attend a competition and show support for our youth

and the future of our country. The next State competition meet will be marksmanship at Island Coast HS in Cape Coral on Saturday, Jan. 20th.

The JSSP First Round Competition has been completed as of Dec. 14th. The results have not been Posted as of this writing; however, I will follow up in the next issue of the Legion Link. I want to thank the 8th District Cmdr. John Rauh for assisting with registering the Sarasota Military Academy, sponsored by Post 266. They were able

JROTC/JSSP continued on page 10 >>



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<< JROTC/JSSP continued from page 9

to make the deadline and have both a Precision and a Sporter Team compete again this year. Kudos to Coach Pellegrino at SMA for his consistent training and guidance for this outstanding team participation. As a reminder for all teams registered, the first round targets must be fired and returned by Feb. 1, 2024, to be eligible for the 2nd Round. Good luck to all our teams and individuals, and please reach out to me if you have any concerns.

As we close out the year, may you all have a happy and safe holiday season and a prosperous and healthy new year.



MSD Female Radier Team with Instructors

Keep working on those memberships and renewals.

Bruce Carl, Membership Chair

membership@legionmail.org



Happy 2024!!! I hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday season! We are into the new year and halfway through our fiscal year. Before you know it, we will hold our Department

Convention. Our membership numbers are looking great, and I would like to commend everyone for the awesome job you are doing. As of the writing of this article, we are sitting in 18th place in the National standings at 78.20%. We missed the Department 75% goal but hit the National 75% goal.

Please ensure your canteen staff is checking for the 2024 cards before serving anyone. As they are the member's (or prospective members') first point of contact, they should also know how to take applications or renewals in the absence of a Post officer.

The 2023 cards have expired, and we need to get those remaining non-renewed members back into the Posts. Here is a sample letter you can use to contact those unrenewed members. Feel free to adapt it to your specific Post needs. Be sure to include events and functions you do at your Post,

as well as community events you participate in and Legion programs that you work:

Good afternoon, Comrade,

I hope this email finds you in good health. The reason for this email is two-fold. One is to make sure you are doing okay and to see if there is anything the Post can do for you. We understand many members do not come to the Post, so it is difficult for us to know your situation. If you are struggling, please know that the Post is here for you and will try to assist you as best we can. Just give us a call!

The second reason is that in going through the Post roster, I noticed you have not renewed your membership for 2024. The end of the year has passed, and your 2023 card is no longer valid. You will lose all privileges at American Legion Posts around the world, including the canteen, games, and any other events that the Posts may be having. You will also lose all the other benefits that are available to you as a Legion member.

Your renewal is very important to both the Post and the Department of Florida. When you renew your membership, it helps the Post with activities and projects that support our Children and Youth, Veterans,

and the local community here in Brooksville. Every year, our National Commander makes a report to Congress (since we were chartered by them). This report is a comprehensive overview of how many dollars, volunteer hours, programs, etc., the Legion donates to our programs. This is because they chartered us and can take us away if we are not performing up to their standards. We are the largest Veterans' organization in the world, and we set high standards for ourselves. We still follow the four Pillars that were originally set forth by our founders in 1919. Let your voice as a Veteran be heard! Please consider renewing your membership by going online, mailing it to the Post, or dropping it off at the Post. If there is anything we can do for you, please let us know!

Thank you for your service and for being a member of the American Legion.

It is time to start working on Phase 3 of the membership plan. Continue working on your renewals and DMS lists, which were Phases 1 and 2. In addition, now is the time to work on new members. The biggest part of Phase Three is meant for those Posts that are close to but have not hit 100% yet. If your Post needs 10 members or less to hit 100%, bring up a motion at your general

Membership continued on page 11 >>



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<< Membership continued from page 10

meeting to pay the dues for those members still needed. The other option is to work with your District and Area chairs to work the DMS400 AD list to bring them into your Post. Remember that the 400AD members count towards your membership goal even if they have already paid their 2024 dues. We are still on track to hitting 100% and getting back to 100,000 members! Our retention rate is also looking good, reaching 90%!

National has opened the three-year renewal process for those members who have not paid their 2024

dues yet. Your unpaid members can go to www.legion.org/renew and renew for three years at the current rate. Remember, the dues per capita will increase to \$34.00 on July 1st. For those who have already renewed for 2024, the three-year option will be made available at a later date. I will update everyone as soon as that option is available.

The District Commanders Race to the Top deadline is March 31st, so we need everyone to keep pushing those memberships to have your District at 100% by that deadline. I hope to see several Districts make the deadline and qualify for this prestigious award.

I have won it twice myself, and it is an incredible experience to go to the National Convention to be recognized.

Thank you again from the Department Membership team for all your dedication and hard work to meet our goals. If you need assistance with anything, please contact me. Also, if you are having any membership events, please let me know, and I will try my best to attend and help! Our next goal is 80% by Jan 10th for the Department and Jan 18th for the National.

News Releases of Missing Individuals that have been found

Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair

powmia@legionmail.org



For the current FY 2024, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has identified 6 DoD personnel from WW II, one from the Korean War, and one from the Vietnam War, for a total of 8 missing individuals. The DPAA has also issued 12 News Releases for the month of November. The DPAA will issue a News Release whenever they have identified the remains and notified the next of kin of their findings.

The following individuals have met that criterion. Please click on the link to read their story.

U.S. Army Air Force Sergeant White S. Goings Jr. - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3582650/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-goings-jr-w/>

U.S. Army Cpl. R. V. Leo Short - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3582845/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-short-l/>

U.S. Army Air Force Pfc. Henry J. McConnell - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3583988/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-mcconnell-h/>

U.S. Army Cpl. William J. Herrington - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3585212/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-herrington-w/>

U.S. Army Pfc. Clinton E. Smith, Jr. - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3585476/soldier-accounted-for-from-wwii-smith-c/>

U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Robert J. Ferris Jr. - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3591026/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-ferris-r/>

U.S. Army Cpl. Daniel De Anda - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3272565/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-de-anda-d/>

U.S. Army Air Force 2nd Lt. Kenyon Brindley - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3594011/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-brindley-k/>

U.S. Navy Mess Attendant 1st Class Ralph M. Boudreaux - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3595940/uss-oklahoma-sailor-accounted-for-from-wwii-boudreaux-r/>

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Gene F. Walker - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3596922/tanker-accounted-for-from-wwii-walker-g/>

U.S. Army Air Force Staff Sgt. Franklin P. Hall - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3598456/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-hall-f/>

U.S. Army Sergeant George F. Bishop - <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3599633/soldier-accounted-for-from-wwii-bishop-g/>

POW/MIA continued on page 12 >>



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<< POW/MIA continued from page 11

Airman Franklin Hall is from Leesburg, Florida, and will be buried in Leesburg. The American Legion Riders Chapter 418 will provide an Escort for this event. They are currently awaiting an official date and time from the DPAA Casualty Officer. Please check the event page for updates: <https://www.facebook.com/events/319595890950487>.

I want to remind everyone that we have a solemn day approaching. It was on 3 February 1943; four Chaplains sacrificed their own lives to save others as the military transport ship USAT Dorchester was torpedoed by a German submarine. To my knowledge, their remains have never been recovered,

making them MIAs who will likely never be recovered and repatriated. Now is the time for your Post to plan a Four Chaplains Ceremony if they have not already.

I want to encourage all to visit The American Legion Department of Florida website, <https://www.Floridalegion.org/programs-services/powmia-remembrance/about/> to learn more about the POW-MIA program. Under the resources tab, you will find a link to the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) <https://www.dpaa.mil/>, Library of Congress Vietnam Era POW-MIA Database, National League of POW-MIA Families, National Alliance of Families for the Return of America's Missing Servicemen, and the

POW-MIA Chairmans Manual. The National American Legion website link is under the Media tab: <https://www.legion.org/honor/powmia>.

I also encourage you to visit the National POW-MIA Memorial and Museum website, <https://powmiamemorial.org/>, to follow the progress being made to complete this wonderful and only National POW-MIA Memorial being built here in Florida. As of the end of August 2023, Phase 1 lighting work is almost complete. Overhead lighting has been installed along with lighting of the aircraft and pads. Lights have been added to the replica of the Cicel Field runway, and all looks great.

Resolution Checklist

Clarence Hill, Resolutions Chair

resolutions@legionmail.org



The following is a resolution writing checklist. It should be used as a guide as you are composing your resolution and again to check the final product.

- Use Times New Roman or Arial Font
- Font size should be 12 or greater
- Check the spelling-don't just rely on spellchecker
- Check the grammar
- Have a non-expert read it to see if they have issues understanding it
- Make no reference to specific congressional bill support
- Put the date of the meeting in the header
- Ensure the wording in the resolved clause(s) is/are correct
- The entire resolution is only one sentence with a period (.) at the end of the resolution
- Ensure the resolution is relevant to The American Legion
- Check the archives to ensure a resolution doesn't already cover the issue
- One subject per resolution
- Signature(s) on each page of the resolution
- Resolved clause(s) in bold
- Authority noted before the text of resolution begins
- Concisely title the resolution
- Documentation attached when appropriate
- Do not use 'partnership' in reference to other organizations; use 'relationship'

When you have completed your resolution to your satisfaction, please forward it to me for further review at cehill316@aol.com. All resolutions should be reviewed before the deadline so the Department can mail them to all Posts.

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School Medal Information

Deveron Reaves, School Medals Chair

schoolmedals@legionmail.org



Good day, and a good New Year to all of the Department of Florida Legion Family! I hope this year will bring prosperity and good times to you and your family.

We are at the start of the new calendar year, but we are halfway through the Legion year. There are still many Posts that have not selected a School Medals Chairman. Every Post should sponsor at least one

Legion program, and School Medals fit the mold perfectly! This program brings smiles and joy to the recipients of the awards they are presented at the school's ceremony, as I have seen first-hand. It also encompasses your Children and Youth program as well as Americanism.

Let's get out to your local schools and talk to the Guidance Counselors to be able to present School Medals to the most deserving male and female students that represent "COURAGE, HONOR, LEADERSHIP, PATRIOTISM, SCHOLARSHIP, and

SERVICE." They are our future!

To all of the Post Commanders who don't have a School Medals Chairman and have a volunteer who wants to take on the program, please send me their phone, address, and email information so I can get them the right materials for them to receive a packet so they can get started. It will be time well spent! You can always reach me at schoolmedals@legionmail.org if you have any questions.

Disposal of Unserviceable Flags and Guidelines for American Legion Square Knot Award

Chris Ragusa, Scouting Chair

scouting@legionmail.org



American Legion Scouters:

Disposal of Unserviceable Flags Ceremony: Cub Scouts from Pack 1381 (chartered to American Legion Post 138

in Port Tampa City) and Pack 9 (chartered to American Legion Post 147 in Odessa) conducted an Unserviceable US Flag Retirement Ceremony during a recent camping trip on MacDill AFB in Tampa. Per Title 4 of the US Flag code, section k, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be

destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning." Sons of the American Legion Squadron, 138 of Port Tampa City, purchased a dedicated fire pit for the purpose of retiring these flags. Contact me for more information on adding one of these customizable and collapsible fire pits to your gear locker (I don't get a commission). It is reasonably priced at about \$275, including the shipping.

Guidelines for the American Legion Square Knot Award: This BSA Community Organization Award was adopted by The American Legion to recognize members of the Legion family (TAL, SAL & ALA), who are also registered Scouters, and who have furthered Scouting and its relationship with the Legion. It is awarded to those Legion Scouters who have demonstrated their commitment to personal improvement and performance in the Legion Scouting program. **ELIGIBILITY:** Any member of the TAL, SAL, or ALA who completes the requirements while also registered as a Scouter in the BSA may apply for the award. Requirements that are completed while the applicant is neither a Legion family member nor a registered Scouter will not be considered. Note that

not all the requirements have to be completed. Because of the multitude of Scouting positions, the applicant may select those optional requirements most suited to their involvement. This is not suitable for, nor should applications be submitted by Posts as a "congratulatory," "honorary," or "retirement" award. Scouters awarded the American Legion Square Knot Award, and thus eligible to wear the BSA Community Organization Knot on the BSA Field Uniform, may place a 3/8-inch American Legion Lapel Tack in the center of the knot (Item Number 715.100).

Requirements can be found here: <https://www.Floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/>



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Board Member, Larry Roberts, and SPI Strategic Partner, Spirit Equine Therapy, leading the Nation's colors into the 2023 Veteran Expo

All-Time High Cases

As we mentioned last month, PROJECT VetRelief continues to be in high demand, which means we are helping more and more Florida's veterans each year. Additionally, we have had to adapt to the needs of our veteran community to quickly assist them with urgent needs like hurricane relief, or government shutdown.

We have made it our mission to ensure that we do what we can to keep veterans in their homes, lights turned on and food on the table while they work through their difficult times, and later expanding to invest in mental health programs to prevent suicides. **As veteran's needs continue to evolve or increase, the importance of funding becomes even more critical!**

This year, we've already seen record-breaking submitted applications and have provided more financial support dollars. We are doing our best to meet this increased demand, but ***it will require your help!***

We hope that you will donate so that we can continue to provide the same level of support to Florida's veterans well into the future. Donations can be made online (www.projectvetrelief.org/donate), mailed to Headquarters, given to Commander Michael Raymond during his visits, or at the Department Convention in June.

www.ProjectVetRelief.org

Upcoming Event

Veterans Expo, Avon Park

American Legion Post 69 in Avon Park will be hosting their annual Veterans Expo in early January. The Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall will be escorted in on the 5th, and all activities including food, live music, and vendors will be available from 10am to 5pm on the 6th. Many of our SPI Strategic Partners will also be in attendance.

Not only will they be able to raise funds for our Suicide Prevention program, but they will engage their local community, too. This event gives veterans the opportunity to see all resources within their area that are available to them.

We are thankful that our Board Member, Larry Roberts, and Post 69 continue to host this wonderful event. It has grown over the years and has provided much needed support to our program and supplies vital information to our veteran community!

If your Post is planning to host an event to benefit PROJECT: VetRelief, we want to hear about it so we can help promote it! Please contact Jennifer Cooper at 407-295-2631 or jcooper@floridalegion.org with the details.

Current Year: July 2023 - November 2023

159

Veterans Received
Financial Support

\$210,874

Provided as
Emergency Assistance

16

Suicide Prevention
Strategic Partners

\$60,000

Given towards
Veteran Suicide Prevention



Teamwork

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair

benefits@legionmail.org



Project VetRelief strategic partners came together and painted a canvas painting showing us working together.



This event I call the Veterans Benefits Super Bowl. If you want to know anything about VA, State, Project VetRelief, and Local Benefits, this event is where you need to be.

This event is a 2-day event. On Friday, January 5th, we are escorting the Mobile Vietnam Wall and the Global War of Tear to Post 69. Everyone is welcome to be part of the Escort. The 12 Strategic Partners who have teamed up with Project Vet Relief will be on sight, plus the FDVA who makes the disability claims. Saturday, January 6th, the main event is the Vietnam Wall and the Global War of Tears, with a live band and 60 Organizations that help Veterans.



Please come out to the Veterans Expo.

Meet the Project Vet Relief Strugic partners SOF Missions, Mothers of Veterans Suicide, The Grey Team, Veterans Counseling Veterans, K9 Line, Blue Guardan, I Got Your 6, Liberty Ove, Orlando Counseling, S.E.T. Spirit Equine Therapy.

Women Veterans Concerns

Joan Suelter, Women Veterans Chair

womenvets@legionmail.org



WOW! It's January 2024. Let me start by wishing all my fellow legionnaires a belated Merry Christmas and hope that this New Year brings health, happiness, and prosperity.

During the past 30 days as your Veterans Women's Chair, I have experienced firsthand the passion and commitment of individual Posts spreading the word and engaging with our female Veterans. Those Posts know who they are and will continue to have my support and admiration.

Female Veterans' concerns and struggles are real, whether it's navigating through the VA Medical

system, homelessness, transitioning to the private sector for jobs, or other entitled benefits; we should ensure that we provide a warm and inviting environment within our Posts to assist our female Veterans.

Our female Veterans are brave and strong. However, some may need help from time to time. Can you be the one that makes a "DIFFERENCE"?

Youth Law Cadets Program

Bud Boyer, Youth Law Cadet Chair

youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



Hello all, Well, FHP finally gave us something to work with. We can start recruiting students for the Youth and Law Cadet Program.

We are still negotiating for a date for the class. It may be the first or second week of July. When FHP determines a date, we will get the information out ASAP.

The total cost per Cadet/Student is \$500.00. This includes lodging, three meals per day, two polo shirts, three dry-fit t-shirts, one hat, one water

bottle, one cinch pack, and one patch.

The cost per Chaperon is \$400.00 which includes lodging, and three meals.

The Cadets/Students will be responsible for three pairs of black BDU pants, two pairs of black athletic shorts, and athletic shoes. One pair of black dress shoes/boots. They will also be responsible for their personal toiletry items.

With 16 Districts, we are hoping to send at least 2 Cadets/Students from each District. We will do what needs to take place if not all Districts send Cadets/Students. Now, it is imperative that we have 8

Chaperons if we have 32 Cadets/Students.

Bekki and the staff will re-work the brochure information sheet and the applications. We will get the information out to the Area Commanders, District Commanders, Post Commanders, and Youth Law Cadet Chairs as soon as we have everything updated.

Our goal is to have all information, applications, and brochures out to you by the 1st of February.

I hope all the Posts within a District work together and all the Districts do the same.



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Inspiration from Northern Care Commander

Lena Heredia-Perez, Northern Area Commander

northern@legionmail.org



Today ... "is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one." Brad Paisley

As we move forward through the new year, it is important for us to reflect on not only our achievements from the previous year but also our failures. Embrace the failures, learn from them, and keep moving forward towards your goal. Failures are not the end but rather the beginning of a new opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed. It is a crucial part of the journey toward success and one that we should learn to embrace.

The Power of Self-Reflection — Many times, when we experience failure, we naturally reflect on what went wrong and what we could have done

differently. We analyze every decision, every action, and every mistake. It can be a painful process, but it is also an opportunity to learn from and grow from our mistakes.

Choosing to Keep Going — After experiencing failure, we have two choices: give up or keep going. Successful people chose the latter. They use their failures as motivation to push themselves harder and try again. They have a specific strategy in mind for overcoming their failure, and they persevere with dedication and determination. It's this persistence that sets them apart from others and helps them achieve their goals.

Appreciating Small Successes — When we experience failure, it can be easy to get lost in the disappointment and frustration of not achieving our goal. However, failure can also help us develop a deeper appreciation for the small successes along

the way. It teaches us that success isn't just about achieving a specific goal but about enjoying the journey and celebrating the small wins along the way. This perspective can help us stay motivated and focused on our goals, even when we experience setbacks.

Embracing Failure as a Necessary Part of Life — It's important to acknowledge and accept failure as a necessary part of life rather than something to be feared or avoided. When we fail, we should take the time to reflect, learn, and adjust our approach. This helps us improve and get closer to our goals. Failure is not the end but rather a new beginning. It's an opportunity to learn from our mistakes, develop new skills, and grow as individuals.

Remember, actual failure is only when we give up and stop trying.

Key Metrics of the Veterans & Children Foundation

Dennis Boland, Past Department Commander

ddcboland@legionmail.org



The \$25 Million fundraising goal is to make the American Legion Veterans & Children's Foundation sustainable for the future.

750,000 is approximately the number of Veterans receiving free disability claims assistance at any time free of charge by trained and accredited American Legion service officers nationwide.

\$30 million is the approximate cash grant from The American Legion Endowment Fund and Veterans & Children Foundation to families in need since 1925.

A \$16 Billion amount in VA disability benefits was secured for Veterans in 2022 by American Legion

accredited service officers.

\$7 million amount in VA disability benefits secured by Oklahoma American Legion service officers at a local American Legion Post during the COVID-19 2020-2022

\$1.1 Million American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance Grants were urgently distributed in one month to 1,713 junior enlisted members of the U.S. Coast Guard with children at home who had a 35-day pay delay due to the January 2019 government shutdown.

1,136. The average number of children whose homes were stabilized by The American Legion each year for the last decade with Temporary Financial Assistance cash-grants distributions for military and Veteran families unexpected financial crises.

Seventeen thousand appellants were helped by the American Legion Board of Veterans' Appeals Units, securing over \$66 million in retroactive VA claim benefits in 2022.

\$1,500 potential amount of an American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grant to help military and Veteran families with young children cover the costs of basic household needs during a crisis.

\$529,000 is the average amount in annual American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants awarded between 2013 and 2022.

Three thousand trained and accredited American Legion service officers who provide free benefits counseling and claims application representation for Veterans and their families.



PLEASE SUPPORT
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

www.floridalegion.org
legionlink@floridalegion.org

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MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

December 31, 2023 (82.21%)

District 17	Jim Bowers	86.31%
District 2	Doyle Combs Jr.	85.66%
District 3	Stuart Scott	85.20%
District 7	Rick Orzechowski	85.01%
District 8	John Rauh	83.77%
District 11	Toni Sutherland	83.49%
District 6	Peter Gregory	83.29%
District 1	Shelby Windham	83.27%
District 4	Doug Hockenberry	82.10%
District 9	Rico Thomas	81.98%
District 12	Bruce Thurber	81.90%
District 15	Randy Holeyfield	81.16%
District 16	Eric Nestler	80.51%
District 13	Eric Loyd	79.76%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	78.80%
District 14	Thomas Frank	78.68%
Western Area	Sonny Decker	83.62%
Eastern Area	Joe Marcheggiani	82.68%
Northern Area	Lena Heredia-Perez	81.86%
Southern Area	Johnny Castro	81.79%
Southwestern Area	Harold "Bud" Boyer	81.56%
Central Area	Bob Matheson	81.32%
Post 400		83.83%
Post 208		82.86%

NEXT GOAL: January 10, 2024

80%

DEPARTMENT TRUSTED. LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust has been protecting Legionnaires and their families for over 50 years.



LEGIONNAIRE
INSURANCE TRUST

www.thelit.com



**"JUST BECAUSE I LIVE DANGEROUSLY
DOESN'T MEAN SHE HAS TO."**

Service often takes you away from family. USAA is always there for them when you can't be. We deliver the financial peace of mind and support you deserve. Checking, Savings, Credit cards, Loans, Auto & life insurance. Mutual funds. Get free financial advice. Get all you're earned. Visit usaa.com today.



★ ★ ★ BI-WEEKLY DRAWINGS ★ ★ ★

50/50 RAFFLE

WIN BIG & SUPPORT VETS

HUGE PRIZES

ENTER ONLINE
florida5050.org

AMERICAN LEGION Department of Florida

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

The American Legion official license plate.



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CHILDREN & YOUTH PICNIC

SATURDAY APRIL 6, 2024

12pm - 5pm

*Music by
Doc Holiday*



*Raffle Baskets
50/50
Carnival Games
+ More!*

Location:

*American Legion Post 117
189 Veterans Drive
Palm Bay, FL 32909*

1/3 Pound Burger or, 1/4 Hot Dog \$10

Kids Under 12 1/4 Burger or Hot Dog \$5

PICNIC MEAL = \$15

All Meals Served with Sides

Poker Run

Registration 9:30am KSU 10:30 am

Questions: Contact

AL Dept C&Y Chaiman Rick Johnson 954-242-4496

MaryAnn Spellman 917-834-5763

All Proceeds go to COTA



EVENT INFORMATION

**Location: Stonecrest Golf Club
11560 SE 176th Place Rd
Summerfield, FL 34491**

- Shotgun Scramble Start-8:15
- Cost per Golfer-\$85.00
- Coffee & Donuts before golf
- Longest Drive Contests
 - Men&Women
- Hole-in Ones-Men & Women
- Hole-in-One (Golf Cart) #15
- Closest to Pin-Men&Women
- Prizes & surprises
- Mulligans

****After golf please join us
at Post 347, 699 W.Lady Lake
Blvd in Lady Lake for lunch,
raffles, 50/50, auction and
more**

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ Bronze Hole Sponsor-\$100
- ◆ Silver Hole Sponsor - \$200
- ◆ Gold Hole Sponsor - \$300
- ◆ Platinum Sponsor -\$500 & Up
- ◆ *Includes Table Space
- ◆ **Major Sponsor - \$1,000 & Up**

***Includes Table Space &**

- ◆ **4 Golfers**
- ◆ **Donate a gift to be used as a**
 - ◆ **raffle prize**

**Cut-off date for sponsorships and
gift submissions:**

April 26, 2024

Make all checks payable to:

Squadron 347

**P.O. Box 1534 Lady Lake, FL 32158
ATTN: C&Y Golf Tournament**

All Proceeds Benefit Children & Youth



**AMERICAN LEGION POST 347
CHILDREN & YOUTH CHARITY
GOLF TOURNAMENT**

DEADLINE FOR SIGNUPS APRIL 26,2024

Golfer _____

Golfer _____

Golfer _____

Golfer _____

Contact for the Team _____

Contact Phone# _____

Contact Email _____

Hole Sponsor:

Bronze_____ Silver_____ Gold_____ Platinum_____ Major_____

Additional Guests for Dinner at Post 347 are \$10.00_____

Please make checks payable to: Squadron 347

PO Box 1534, Lady Lake, FL 32158

Attn: Children & Youth Golf Tournament

If you have any questions, please contact:

Danny Roe (317)508-6465

Bob O'Neal (352)350-4932

Email: sons347fl@gmail.com



DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS'



HILLBILLY HOEDOWN

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

SATURDAY JAN 20, 2024
STARTING AT 12:00PM



LIVE MUSIC BY LAST CALL BAND

RAFFLES!
DINNER!
& MUCH MORE!

TICKETS:

\$25/PERSON \$40/COUPLE

CONTACT A VICE COMMANDER FOR TICKETS

CHRIS: (321) 313 - 3469

JESSICA: (239) 839 - 0602

AMERICAN LEGION POST 117

189 VETERANS DRIVE PALM BAY, FL

PROCEEDS BENEFIT



Children's Organ
Transplant Association,



DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

There's No Place Like Home



Northern Area Ball

Jan **13** 2024
Saturday 6:00 PM



American Legion Post 57

2602 SW Main Blvd Lake City, FL

RSVP: 904.449.6318 or use the QR code to prepurchase tickets/ Ads.

Activities: Best Costume Contest, Fratello Classic Rock Live Band, Raffles,
& Silent Auction for 1 week stay at Westgate Resort

Hotel Reservations:

Holiday Inn & Suites 386.754.1411

Ask for the Northern Area Room Rate \$149.99

Dress Attire:

Semi Formal OR Come dressed up as a character
from the **Wizard of Oz Movie**

Tickets:

Program Ads:

\$40.00 Per Person or \$70.00 Per Couple

\$30.00 Half Page or \$50.00 Full Page

All Proceeds go toward Boys & Girl State Scholarships





Southwestern Area Ball

Date: February 10th, 2024

Cocktails 4:30 pm till 5:30 pm (cash bar)

D.M. McQueen American Legion Post 103

Dinner served @ 5:45 pm Music 6:30pm till 9:00pm

Prime Rib or Fish and Shrimp Combo, Cost \$35.00 per person

All proceeds to be presented to COTA

For Tickets and Information

***Contact Joann Boyer @ koba1424@yahoo.com or
(609) 425-3805***

Lodging:

Four Points By Sheraton / Harborside Punta Gorda, (941) 637-6770 (1mile)

***Springhill Suites by Marriot / 101 Harboeside Ave Punta Gorda Fl 33950
(941) 347-4224 (1mile)***

***Wyvern Hotel / 101 East Ratta Esplanade Punta Gorda Fl 33950
(941) 639-7700 (1mile)***

Holiday Inn Express / 9075 Mc Drive Punta Gorda Fl 33950 (941) 205-8002 (3m)

***Country Inn & Suites / 24244 Corporate Ct Port Charlotte Fl 33954
(941) 235 1035 (9mile)***

Hampton Inn / 22480 Sanhill Blvd Port Charlotte Fl 33983 (941) 627-5600 (9m)

***LaQuinta Inn& Suites / 812 Kings Highway Port Charlotte Fl 33980
(941) 979-4200***



AMERICAN
LEGION



Southwestern Area Commander's Ball

DENIM AND DIAMONDS

**Prime Rib
or
Fish and Shrimp**



February 10th, 2024

D.M. McQueen American Legion Post 103

2101 Taylor Road, Punta Gorda, FL

Cocktails 4:30 to 5:30 pm (Cash Bar)

Dinner Served at 5:45 pm

Music from 6:30 to 9:00 pm

Wear Your Best Denim




Cost is \$35 per person
All Proceeds to be Presented to COTA
For Tickets and Information Contact
Joann Boyer at (609) 425-3805
or via email koba1424@yahoo.com



PLEASE RSVP BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2




AMERICAN LEGION



Western Area Commander's BALL

Come have a Nip of Kentucky
Bourbon with Sonny Decker



Smooth as Kentucky Bourbon

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024

Post 235

105 Hollywood Blvd NW, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

Meet & Greet 5pm | Dinner 6pm



Wear your Sonny Decker Shirt, all proceeds go to
Project: Vet Relief/Suicide Prevention!
Don't forget your Jeans and Boots!

*We will have a staff attended buffet, live music
& comedy roast*

TICKETS: \$35 EACH / \$60 COUPLES IN ADVANCE

(Online tickets & shirt sales coming soon)

CALL JEANIE HENSON AT 850-445-8186 FOR MORE INFO



AMERICAN LEGION 2024

Southern Area Ball

Saturday
January 27
2024

Callaway Armory
3193 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

6:00 PM -
9:30 PM

- Honoring Past Area Commanders and Presidents
- Dinner, Dancing & Entertainment
- **Raffles & Silent Auction** including trip for 2 on board Margaritaville At Sea 3-days, 2-nights cruise to the Bahamas
- **Dress Attire:** Semi Formal



Honored Guest,
National Commander
Daniel Seehafer

BE THE ONE
AMERICAN
LEGION

- **Tickets:**
\$40 per person or \$70 per couple (payment to Zelle or Cash App @561-290-9980 no later than December 31, 2023)
- **Program Ads:**
Premium Full Page (inside front, inside back, or outside back page) . . . \$120
Full Page \$100
Half Page \$50
- **Program Ads Due** by December 31, 2023 to guamwarrior60@outlook.com
- **2024 Four Chaplains Ceremony,**
January 28, 2024, Sunday 2:00 PM,
I.T. Parker Community Center,
901 NE 3rd Street, Dania Beach, FL 33004
- **Reception Afterwards:**
American Legion Post 304

SAVE THE DATE

District 13 Family Be The One Event & Project: VetRelief Resource Fair

Open to All Veterans, Family Members, Veteran Organizations and the Public.

Join Us:

Date: February 24, 2024
Time: 10:00 AM—4:00 PM
Walk Starts: 10:15 AM

Where:

American Legion Post 192
3130 Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd.
Fort Myers FL 33916

Event POC: Mike Turner, Chair by email at
fld13VeteransuicideAevent@yahoo.com

All Funds raised will be for Project: VetRelief and District 13 Be The One efforts.

Project: VetRelief is a program of American Legion Department of Florida; visit



Vendors Needed:

FL Veterans Foundation	FDVA	Cnty Veteran Services	Government Agencies
VA Services	Vet Center	VBA	VA NCA
Veteran Service Organizations	Veteran Organizations	Service Dog Organizations	Homeless Resources
Mental Health Resources	Suicide Prevention	Education Resources	Employment Resources
Long Term & Home Care	Medicaid & Medicare	Caregiver Resources	Children Activities
Blood Mobile	Music		

AMERICAN LEGION

Central Area Ball

Red, White & Blue Salute ♦ Casual Dress

Saturday, March 16, 2024

Meet & Greet 5 pm ♦ Dinner 6 pm

\$35 per Person ♦ \$65 Per Couple

at

American Legion Post 418

(SSG Michael Wayne Shafer VFW Post 10209)

14736 Edward R. Noll Drive

Spring Hill, FL 34609

Respond by Saturday, March 2, 2024

Menu

Boneless Stuffed
Pork Chops, Mashed
Potatoes & Gravy,
Peas & Carrots,
Salad, Roll,
Apple Pie, & Ice Cream

All Proceeds Benefit

COTA and
Florida Disaster
Relief Fund

Entertainment by
T.J.'s Knuckleheads

To purchase tickets please send a check or money order to:

Bob Matheson, Central Area Commander

1710 Oak Pond Court ♦ Oldsmar, FL 34677

Write "Central Area Ball" in the memo area

For more information contact Commander Matheson at

(813) 478-5909 ♦ centralarea@legionmail.org

