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Questions? [legionlink@floridalegion.org](mailto:legionlink@floridalegion.org)

**BE THE  
ONE**

## A Message from the Department Commander

### Michael "Gambler" Raymond, Commander

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



### Don't let up!

I'd like to start by thanking both the Southern Area Leadership and members for the outstanding show of support as we welcomed our National Commander on his 10-day visit. From our first

dinner at Post 133 through the Four Chaplains' Ceremony, the Southern Area Ball, and everything in between, it was a complete success. I'm sure you will all agree it was a very memorable experience. I'm sure you will all agree that Commander Seehafer will go down as one of our greatest National Commanders in recent history. We must all continue to show the Commander how much we appreciate the time he spent with us as we continue our banner year. I can tell you that Commander Seehafer was very impressed with Florida. I only wish we could have passed his home State (Wisconsin) in membership while he was here in our State. We actually passed the State of Wisconsin the day after he left.

I'd also like to congratulate the 13th District and

Commander Eric Loyd on an outstanding membership revitalization visit by our National Vice Commander, Charlie Aucoin. In 5 days, we accomplished five revitalizations and 11 different Post-visits. Our membership team was responsible for almost 70 new and renewed members during Commander Aucoin's visit, and I can assure you that he was quite impressed with the energy and professionalism of our team. I'd also like to thank all the 8th and 13th District Posts that participated in this event during this very full schedule.

As we enter the final quarter of my year, I'm sure we all realize this is the toughest time of the year for membership. We got all the easy ones, and now it's time to make that extra push to find the stragglers. Last week has proven to us that it's not that difficult. I made six calls and actually got two members to come in right away, and four more promised to come in at a later date. It just takes effort. They say cold calling is difficult, but that is not what we're doing. We're calling our brothers and sisters in arms. We're calling to see how they are and what we can do for them. I called one member, who told me it was a bad time because he had just been in an accident. We ended up having a

Department Commander continued on page 2 >>



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<< Department Commander continued from page 1

20-minute conversation because I made him feel like we really cared. That's why we are here!

Again, thank you all for everything you are doing

this year. Our membership and fundraising are above expectations, and we are doing something I asked us to do when we started the year. We are "Stopping The Slide" and doing it big time. Keep it up! Love you all!

## COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

Disaster Relief and C.O.T.A.

5K

10K

15K

20K

25K

30K

35K

40K

45K

GOAL!

Commander's Goal: \$50,000 (Current funds raised \$68,581.95)

## Mentorship. Training. Continuity.

Chris Hamrick, 1st Vice Commander

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



Good day, fellow Legionnaires. We're coming along really well with everything and all is rocking right along. To reiterate; Mentorship .. Training .. and Continuity. These are the 3 key things for us to continue to grow as a Legion Family not only in numbers but as an organization.

**MENTORSHIP** ... We should always try to be role models for those around us and share our knowledge with others. Leaders should lead and show how to do a good job rather than merely tell others what to do. Titles do not make us leaders. We coming upon Post officer nominations and many candidates will be inexperienced. Have they been mentored by their predecessors?... or anyone at all?

**TRAINING** ... To continue with the previous statements above, this must be a constant. Many Post officers are totally inexperienced in the role that they are seeking. We see literal turmoil within various Posts merely weeks after elections. Districts have training available and Department also has a very good training team that is available to you as well. Also there are manuals and literature free from Department. The resources are there for the choosing.

**CONTINUITY** ... By mentoring others and training we can establish continuity to grow within ourselves and as a National Organization in both scope and size. Let's continue to work together with like minds and hearts. ... For our children, for our Veterans, for our communities, state, and nation .... and let's have fun doing it.



**New Staff Member:** Please welcome **Daniel Albert** to the Department Staff as Senior Staff Accountant. Daniel is a graduate of UCF College of Business, with decades of experience in finance and accounting. He has been working diligently with Bobbi Halle to learn our operations. Please give him a warm welcome and a little patience as he "learns the ropes".

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### MARCH 2024

- 1-31 Military Caregiver Month
- 1-31 Women's History Month
- 1 Scholarship Applications Due \*
- 2 Chapter 316: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 2-3 District 6: Meeting and Flag Disposal \*
- 3 U.S. Navy Reserve Birthday
- 4 Hug a G.I. Day
- 5 U.S. Navy Seabee Birthday
- 5-8 Dept Commander Visits Crystal River \*
- 6 Department Membership Goal 90% \*
- 6 Chapter 136: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 8 International Women's Day
- 9 Dept Commander Visits Pine Island \*
- 9 District 8: Meeting
- 10 Daylight Savings Starts
- 10 District 13: Meeting
- 10 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 10 District 15: E-Board Meeting
- 11 Baseball Rulebook Changes Due \*
- 13 K-9 Veterans day
- 13-17 Dept Commander Visits Tampa \*
- 13 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 15 Legion Link Articles Due \*
- 15 American Legion Birthday \*
- 16 Post 108: American Legion Birthday Picnic
- 16 Chapter 148: ALR Mason Fox Poker Run
- 16 Veterans & Family Benefits Fair
- 16 Central Area Ball
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 19 First Day of Spring
- 19 Start of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2023)
- 20 Boys State Del/Alt Registration Ends \*
- 21 Rosie the Riveter Day
- 23 District 12: Spring Picnic
- 23 Central Area: Ride-In and BeTheOne Event \*
- 24 Palm Sunday
- 25 Medal of Honor Day
- 29 Vietnam War Veterans Day
- 29 Baseball Domicile Deadline \*
- 29 Good Friday
- 29 Department Headquarters Closed \*
- 30 Department Oratorical Contest \* \*
- 30 Eastern Area Ball \*
- 31 Easter

\* Commander attendance tentative.

\* Department of Florida event.

\* National event.

Events are subject to change. More details at [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org).



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## Dates to Remember

**Jessica Moore, 2nd Vice Commander**

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



Celebrating the United States various Veterans' holidays is a way to honor those who served this country. Sometimes, you don't think of all the sacrifices a Veteran made to preserve our freedom for everyone who calls this wonderful country their home. Some may think this is silly, but if you are

a Veteran who served or is currently serving in the Navy, March 3 is Naval Reserve's Day.

For every service dog out there, March 13 is K-9 Veterans Day.

Please celebrate National Medal of Honor Day on March 25. We know we are losing our World War II Veterans every day. I will guarantee you they can tell you on March 26, the anniversary of the United

States' victory at Iwo Jima took place. Lastly, on March 29, we celebrate Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day.

If you know anyone who would fit any of these various holidays, please consider shaking their hand or paw and thanking them for their service. In the meantime, make sure you have reserved your room for the upcoming Department Convention in June and continue doing those buddy checks.

## National Commander Visitation

**Jim Ramos, NEC**

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



The National Commander has visited Florida every year, and our 2024 National Commander, Dan Seehafer, visited the Southern Area, which is the 9th, 11th, and 14th Districts. We started with the 14th District (District Commander Thomas Frank and Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro), and Post 133 began with a steak dinner on Jan 22, 2024, to kick things off with the visitations. On Jan 25, we visited 7 Posts: Post 133 in Palmetto Bay, Post 154 in Marathon for lunch, Post 333 in Key Largo, and Post 43 in Homestead for dinner. On Jan 23, Post 98 in Coral Gables for breakfast, Post 67 in North Miami for lunch, and Post 31 in South Miami for dinner (and 10 Posts gathering with some Post homes to meet and greet the National Commander Dan Seehafer) in all about 200 Legionnaires came to see our National Commander Seehafer—nice time with the 14th District Family. Thanks.

Next, Jan 24, 9th District (District Commander Rico Thomas and Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro helping with the visit) started with Post 310 for breakfast in Hallandale Beach, Post 36 for lunch in Fort Lauderdale, Post 180

in Fort Lauderdale for a meet and greet with National Commander Seehafer, Post 321 in Cooper City for dinner and some awards. Jan 25, fishing excursion, and lunch cooking the catch, the National Commander enjoyed fishing. We will go on to Post 287 in Deerfield Beach for a meet and greet with our National Commander Seehafer and next to Post 142 in Pompano Beach for dinner to end the day. Jan 26, 2024, Post 222 in Oakland Park for Breakfast and a talk with the National Commander Dan Seehafer and going to Post 321 in Cooper City for a visit with school children and a Post program called "Children and Veterans meet" to interchange ideas and get to know more about each other. We are going to Post 157 in Margate for lunch and talk. "Post homes visited 9 and 7 other Posts joined to meet the National Commander Seehafer," and about 125 Legionnaires met the National Commander Dan Seehafer. Good time in the 9th District Family Thanks.

Now to the 11th District (District Commander Toni Sutherland and Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro helping with the visit), Jan 26, Post 268 in Riviera Beach started with a Hawaiian Luau, and yes, it was at night. On Jan 27, at Post 62 in Stuart for breakfast, there will be a meet and greet with National Commander Seehafer. Next District

Oratorical Contest, one winner goes to the Area Contest. Now, on the way to the Southern Area Ball, a good time for all the National Commander Seehafer to enjoy everyone with photo with everyone to a night remember. Jan 28, breakfast and a tour at the VA (Fisher House and with VA Chapel) off to Post 164 in Boynton Beach for lunch and a meet and greet. Next to the Four Chaplains Ceremony at NSC Guy Harvey Oceanographic Center Campus in Dania Beach and after to Post 304 a reception. Meet and greet with the National Commander Seehafer at Post 47 in Lake Worth Beach for dinner. On our last day with National Commander Dan Seehafer, we went to Post 141 for breakfast and a meet and greet with members. Post 12 in West Palm Beach for a meet and greet. Next to the National Cemetery in Lake Worth for a Wreath Laying ceremony with the National Commander Seehafer. Off to Post 65 in Delray Beach for a meet and greet with Legion members. The last Post 199 in West Palm Beach, "one of the best shows for the National Commander Dan Seehafer, will remember this one. You were some video on Facebook. If not, you need to check it out."

Special Thanks to the following Legion Family

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members: Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro, 9th District Commander Rico Thomas, 11th District Commander Toni Sutherland, 11th District

1st Vice Commander Stan Brown, 11th District President Sandy Swafford, and to all the Riders in the Southern Area who help with our National Commander visit. Thank You

Please check out the National Commander Dan Seehafer's visit to our website, [Floridalegion.org](http://Floridalegion.org).



## National Commander and Vice Commander Visitations

**Jerry Brandt, ANEC**

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



Comrades,

What a month, as you know, we had a visit from the National Commander. Twenty-five Posts were visited in the Southern

Area, traveling hundreds of miles, escorted by the 9th and 11th District Riders, and with several tv and newspaper interviews. National Commander Seehafer saw the American Legion, Southern Area,

and was pleased. Again, I would thank those involved in making this a great visit, Southern Area Commander - Johnny Castro, 9th District Commander - Rico Thomas, 11th District Commander - Toni Sutherland, 14th District Commander - Thomas Frank, And all the riders involved with this successful visit.

Of course, as soon as the National Commander completed his tour, the National Vice Commander, Charles D. Aucoin, visited the 13th District, February 5 to the 9th. Eleven Posts were visited, membership rallies were done, 67 renewals and seven new family

members were added to our ranks.

Well done to all the Posts involved, the Riders who escorted us, Area Commander Bud Boyer, and District Commander Eric Loyd. You guys were great.

At the end of the month (February 24 – 28), the Washington Conference will be held. A chance to speak with Florida's Representatives and Senators on what the American Legion would like to change for our brothers and sisters, Veterans, and active duty.

## March Events

**Joe Marcheggiani, Eastern Area Commander**

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



March's calendar of events and initiatives includes activities such as "Be the One Day," the Legion's birthday celebrations, membership drives, community service projects, and advocacy campaigns. Determine which activities align with your interests, skills, and availability. Whether it's volunteering at a local event, participating in advocacy efforts, or spreading awareness through social media, there are many ways to contribute and get involved.

March 1st is "Be the One Day." Each year, the American Legion encourages people to act, whether it's volunteering, supporting Veterans, helping a neighbor, or contributing to a local cause. The "Be the One Day" initiative encourages individuals to step up and make a positive difference in their communities. "Be the One Day" suggests that each person has the power to be the one who initiates change and makes a meaningful impact. It serves as a reminder that even small acts of kindness and service can ripple outward and create positive change in society. The goal is to inspire individuals to take action and contribute to the betterment of their communities, embodying the spirit of service and

citizenship that the American Legion promotes.

March 15th is The American Legion's 105th birthday. As the country's largest Veterans organization, our role in American society is vital. After more than 200 years of war and continuing hostilities, advocating for Veterans' rights, providing support and resources to Veterans and their families, and promoting patriotism and citizenship is job one. Let's not forget our comrades from our previous longest war Vietnam.

March 29th is National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

*Eastern Area Commander continued on page 5 >>*



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<< Eastern Area Commander continued from page 4

The day serves as an opportunity to honor and pay tribute to the millions of men and women who served in the Vietnam War. It recognizes their sacrifices, valor, and dedication to their country during a challenging and tumultuous historical period. Most importantly, it reaffirms

the commitment to providing ongoing support and resources to Vietnam War Veterans. It highlights the importance of ensuring that Veterans receive the care, benefits, and recognition they deserve for their service to the nation. Overall, National Vietnam War Veterans Day is an occasion to recognize, honor, and express gratitude to the brave men and women who

served in the Vietnam War while reflecting on the lessons learned and the ongoing commitment to supporting Veterans and their families.



## Stay Focused

**Lena Heredia-Perez, Northern Area Commander**

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



### Northern Area

It was yet another busy month in the Northern Area, and I know I am preaching to the choir when I say it is only going to get busier with every passing moment. Let's continue to stay focused on meeting our individual membership goals, finalizing details for various Post/District/Area Programs/Events (Boys State, Area Oratorical Contests, School Medals, etc.), continuing to mentor those members who are interested in possibly holding an office this coming Legion Year and lastly, don't forget to start working on your End of the Year Awards! Refer to pages 46 – 68 of the 2023 – 2024 Post Administrative Manual. Let's recognize those members who have gone above and beyond to make our Posts/Districts shine!

As your Northern Area Commander, I want to congratulate ALL our Districts for surpassing their monthly membership goals yet again! Remember, the cutoff date for Race for the Top Competition is

March 31st, 2024, and with what I have witnessed this past year, I firmly believe that we, if not all our Districts in the Northern Area, will qualify for this prestigious award. Let's not get complacent this close to the finish line!

### Post Elections and Awards Deadlines

As we enter the coming months, we, as officers of The American Legion, have a lot of administrative duties to complete.

Many Posts throughout the Department are starting to hold nominations for Post Officers for the upcoming year. Please encourage members who are interested in holding a position to:

- Become familiar with the Post Constitution & Bylaws & House Rules. Encourage them to ask questions if they are uncertain of something they read. Don't be afraid to follow up and ask them questions.
- Make sure that everyone knows and understands what is expected of each position before the nomination ceremony begins.

- Please encourage them to complete The American Legion Basic Training Course online at their leisure.

Also, we are entering the time of year when we submit various applications for members throughout our communities to go above and beyond. Below are a couple of fast-approaching deadlines:

- Medical School Scholarship / Nursing School Scholarship Applications Due April 1, 2024
- Teacher of the Year Awards – April 17, 2024
- Law Officer of the Year Due April 17, 2024
- Fire Fighter of the Year Due April 17, 2024
- EMT/Paramedic of the Year Due April 17, 2024

We also must not forget to include our members, those members who excel at their position, which only makes us look great as an organization. For more information, please refer to the 2023 – 2024 Post Administrative Manual, pages 52 – 68.



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## National Commander Welcomed in Southern Area

**Johnny Castro, Southern Area Commander**

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



In January of this year, we were honored to host National Commander Daniel Seehafer's visit to the Southern Area, accompanied by his Aide, Mike Rohan, husband of PNC Denise Rohan who also visited the Southern Area back in 2018.

Arriving at Miami International Airport on Sunday, the 21st, the Commander was greeted by NEC Jim Ramos, Dept. Commander Michael Gambler, ANEC Jerry Brandt, and Historian Edward Lewis. District 14th First Vice-Commander Benny Benitez organized the pick-up afterwards arriving at Post 133 for a steak dinner. For the next two days, the Commander visited Post 154 in Marathon and was met by representatives of all five Posts in the Keys, ending his day at Post 43 in Homestead, meeting with a local Boys Scout Troop as well as a couple of the Scouts working on their Eagle Scout Badge.

The following morning at Post 98 in Coral Gables, while a school band provided the entertainment, Commander Seehafer spoke with the Post Commander and the many members of the local community. After a brief stop at Post 67, the entourage proceeded to Post 31, the final stop in the District. There, he was introduced to the Boys State Governor for 2023, Martin Seals and Girls State Commissioner and Representative Emma Behar, and Corrine Degazon, Commissioner and Senator for 2023.

After enjoying breakfast, the following morning with members and guests of Post 310 in District 9, the entourage was escorted to the Veterans Nursing Home by District 9 Legion Riders led by Post 321 Post Commander George DeAngelo along with cruisers and motorcycles of the Hallandale Beach P.D.

There, Commander Seehafer spoke to approximately 60 Residents. Many of the Veterans were grateful for the visit and all were excited to be part of an early ice cream social. The day culminated with lunch at Post 36 and dinner at Post 321. Both Posts hosted other Posts during their scheduled visits.

On Thursday, Commander Seehafer and several members of the entourage were treated to a fishing charter in Fort Lauderdale. Their "catch" was cleaned by the crew of the charter and brought to the local Quarter Deck restaurant to be blackened, fried and grilled. Needless to say, everyone enjoyed their lunch. After a quick stop at the hotel, the visit continued at Post 287 in Deerfield Beach. The day ended with dinner at Post 142, where Commander Seehafer took the time to honor Post Commander Dave Sweeney for recently becoming a 60-year member of the American Legion.

Commander Sweeney was extremely grateful for the acknowledgement by the National Commander.

The first stop on Friday of the last day in District 9 was at Post 222 for breakfast. Afterward, the entourage headed to Post 321 where Commander Seehafer was greeted by more than 50 elementary students. He participated in their "Rock Project" where the rocks were painted and messages were placed on the rocks, mostly patriotic. Once completed, the rocks were placed outside the elementary school. The last stop in the District was at Post 157 where lunch was served prior to traveling to District 11.

Commander Seehafer and his entourage began their visit with a Hawaiian Luau at Post 268 in Riviera Beach. Many of the Posts were present including the families of the Legion. Treated to Island food such as Huli-huli chicken, garlic shrimp, pork, lumpia, Calrose rice, etc., the menu ended with individual pineapple upside-down cakes and fresh fruit. Many of the

attendees enjoyed the hula dancers providing the entertainment for the evening.

The first stop of the following day was at Post 62 in Stuart. The Commander was greeted by many members of the Legion family. Note: Post 62 is the only Post in the Southern Area where all family members meet once a month. Following Post 62, Commander Seehafer and his entourage were guests at the District Oratorical Contest held at Bible Church in Stuart. Post 271 in Tequesta provided the entourage with lunch afterwards. Past Department Judge Advocate Bob Jaegers and members of the Post hosted the visit. The Southern Area Ball was held later in the day at Callaway Armed Forces Building in West Palm Beach. Many of the attendees were from both Districts 9 and 11. Some were in attendance from outside the Area.

On Sunday, after breakfast at the Gun Club Café in West Palm Beach, Commander Seehafer and his entourage participated in a tour at the West Palm Beach VA and Fisher House. He was greeted by the hospital Director Corey Price and his staff and escorted to the Dental Clinic where everyone was introduced to a new state of the art dental equipment used daily at the VA. Everyone attended a worship service prior to leaving the VA. The next stop on the agenda was at Post 164 in Boynton Beach. Commander Ed Brown and the Post family welcomed the Commander and his entourage for lunch.

The next stop was to Nova Southeastern University, Guy Harvey Oceanographic Center in Dania Beach where the annual Four Chaplains Ceremony was being held. Many were in attendance. A big Thank You to Past Department Chaplain and current District Chaplain Steve Newman for continuing to chair this great program. Commander "Gunny" Savage and the Post 304 family provided a huge gathering

*Southern Area Commander continued on page 7 >>*



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afterwards. The day ended with a visit to Post 47 for dinner.

On Monday, the day before his departure, the Commander and his entourage visited Post 141 in West Palm Beach for breakfast and Post 12 for a gathering of its members. Commander Seehafer returned to Callaway Armed Forces Center where he was introduced to the 254th Battalion Executive Officer, Major Raymond Nagley. Later that afternoon, the Commander participated in the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the South Florida National Cemetery. The District 11 Color Guard Detail led by District Sgt-At-Arms Edward Manek was on site for the event. Once the visit at Post 65 was completed, the Commander and his entourage proceeded to Post 199 in West Palm Beach for the last event in the area, where they were greeted by Commander William Miller and Adjutant Edna Frazier. Many

of the Post family members were there to meet Commander Seehafer and the rest of his entourage. Prior to dinner, he was interviewed by Mike Trim, local news reporter and a Navy Veteran.

Commander Seehafer and his Aide, Mike Rohan left early the next morning.

As your Area Commander, I could not be prouder of those of you who participated in the National Commander's visit. He visited 25 Posts and met with 43 out of 53 Area Post representatives. For whatever reason, 10 Posts opted not to meet with Commander Seehafer. As many of you know, Commander Seehafer shared his passion of the Legion Mission and the "Be The One" program when he was speaking to every Post. The Commander reminds us that the American Legion is about changing lives and saving lives. That's the bottom line at the end of the day. It's not about the color of your cap or

which family you're a part of. Everyone can make a difference in someone's life. It just begins with the person in mirror.

Thank you to District 9 Commander Rico Thomas and Vice-Commanders Jamie Grinis and Jim Tewes. Thank you to District 11 Commander Toni Sutherland and Vice-Commanders Stan Brown and Maddy Mollach. Thank you to District 14 Commander Thomas Frank and Vice-Commander Benny Benitez and Chaplain Michael Pelton.

Thank you, Commander Raymond, and ANEC Brandt for being the leaders that you are. Thank you, Edward Lewis, for capturing Commander Seehafer's and Mike Rohan's visit. Thank you, Jim Ramos, for being the mentor that you are.

Thank you everyone else for all you've done.

## Western Area Information

**Sonny Decker, Western Area Commander**

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



It has been a long time since I turned in an article; forgive me, but the Western Area is alive and doing well.

This may be the last article I write, and I want to encourage all to work on a couple of issues, including me.

In my travels to the Posts in the first and second Districts, I find two issues common at all Posts. If you are considering running for an office, such as a Post Commander or District Commander, you should do a couple of things before even being

elected. Number one, take the online basic training course. Learn the American Legion's history. We have a history dedicated to fighting for Veterans' rights. Learn to tell the stories.

Read your Post's Constitution & By-Laws (C&BL). Read the Department C&BL and learn the rules that govern your Post. These are the rules that each member goes by. Start looking for your program chairs. Don't just look at your buddies; look who is helping make the program successful at your Post. After all, you want to be successful during your term in office.

Finally, TRAINING. If you have never attended the state convention or conference, you missed a great

opportunity to learn about different positions within your Post and department.

Then, let us not forget that we volunteer to help our Veterans, active duty, and their families.

Then, last but equally important, "Be The One." That saying can go for many different things, but I like to think that "Be The One" helps a fellow Veteran make it one more day.

It has been a great honor for me to serve every member of the Department of Florida as the Western Area Commander for the past two years. Our mission will not change; there is still more to do. *God Bless each one of you.*



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## The Mighty Ninth District

**Rico Thomas, District 9 Commander**

[District9@legionmail.org](mailto:District9@legionmail.org)



My Rucksack was heavy, my feet hurt, and the water was low but still moving.

"The Mighty Ninth District continues to push forward at 89%

membership. National Commander Daniel Seehafer, Department Commander Michael "Gambler" Raymond, NEC Jim Ramos, and ANEC Jerry Brandt visited the District. Commander Seehafer first visited Post 310, Post Commander "Professor Agurs," where the Mayor gave him the "Key To The City." Then the entourage was escorted by police officers and riders around the District. He toured the Sandy Nininger State Veteran Nursing Home, where he gave ice cream and met Veterans, some Legionnaires, living in the facility. He spoke to the local elementary school children, instructed by 321 Post Auxiliary President Jenny, who were having their "Pen Pal"

day at Post 321. Commander Seehafer was one of the guest speakers for the Ninth District Four Chaplains Ceremony, and he spoke and encouraged like the clergy he is. Various JROTC and USMCs presented the colors for the ceremony. Kudos to Post 304 Commander "Gunny" Savage and his Post's family for a great reception. Four Chaplain Chair, Steve Newman, great job.

The District supported Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro at his ball in the West Palm Beach Armory. Thank you to all the Posts that participated in the National Commanders' visit. Thanks to all who support us by attending or purchasing ads for the program for the Southern Area Ball that took place in February. Thank you to Post Commanders Brooks, De Angelo, and Bobby Roberts.

Ninth District staff, I am thankful that we are doing well, even with the challenges, some simple and some perplexing. We will continue to march towards

the goal and meet the challenges as a family unit. Great job to the Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and Riders, as they are meeting their goals.

Great job! Post 287 at 166+%, Post 310 at 106+%, and seven Posts at 90+%.



## District 12 Events

**Bruce Thurber, District 12 Commander**

[District12@legionmail.org](mailto:District12@legionmail.org)



We are getting ready for a new year and will be holding District Training for all those wanting to become officers in the new year. The training will be held at Post 394 on March 16th,

with registration at 9 AM and training at 10 AM. We will cover the Commander, Vice Commander, Adjutant, Finance Officer, Sgt at Arms, and Judge Advocate along with membership. We will also cover the Consolidated Post Report and the Consolidated Squadron report.

On the 23rd, we will have a walk for Suicide

Prevention at Post 344 starting at 0800 and the District Picnic at Post 81 starting at noon. On the 30th, we will have a walk for Suicide prevention hosted by Post 22.

The state-level Oratorical Competition is on the 30th of March at 0900, followed by the Eastern Area Ball at 1700 hours at Post 286 in Pine Castle.

## National Vice Commander visit and Posts revitalization.

**Eric Loyd, District 13 Commander**

[District13@legionmail.org](mailto:District13@legionmail.org)



February 5 through 11, the National Vice Commander, Department Commander, Jim Ramos, Jerry Brandt, Bud Boyer, Bruce Carl, Judith Richards, and I visited 15 Posts in the 13th

District and 2 in the 8th District. We did 5 Post revitalizations, got over 65 renewals, and 6 Post 400 transfers. National Vice Commander Charlie Aucoin was very pleased with District 13 and all our hard work. He was shown Posts 123, 274, 136, 303, 192, and 110 and the devastation they incurred from Hurricane Ian. I want to give the District 13 Legion Riders who escorted the National Vice Commander

around all week a special thank you to Mike Flower; he rode over 800 miles doing escorts.

We are rounding the corner towards year's end. Posts need to start working on CPRs, making reservations for the Department Convention, and getting with their members on their votes and who they are voting for.



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## ALR Summit and Future Events

**Jim Wineland, Legion Riders Chair**

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



Tim Morris is going to be missed by all who knew him. Tim was always ready to help, always had that smile, and was ready to jump in with both feet to help. R.I.P., my friend.

Number 8 went off well. I'm talking about the 8th Annual Summit. Our participation increased by about 10%, and the changes we made seemed to be well attended. This couldn't have happened without our team of volunteers and instructors who helped keep this moving forward. Bev & I would like to thank the instructors and all the volunteers who made this event possible.

What's next? It's the In-State Unity Ride and Rally. Everything is Posted and ready to go. I want to thank our Road Captains, Joe, Jason, and Zane, for all their hard work putting this together again this year. Of course, we can't take a ride without rooms. Thank you, Julie Hughes!

### Don't forget those Bike Raffle Tickets!

### Your 2023 – 2024 Schedule

- Summit
- Round Robin, Month of April 2024
- Children and Youth Picnic, April 6, 2024

- All ticket stubs and checks are to be sent to Bekki Boorman at the Department.
- Please mail your checks and ticket stubs no later than April 15th to:  
ALR Bike Raffle,  
Attn: Bekki Boorman  
1912 A Lee Road  
Orlando, FL 32810
- Do not send cash. The dollars you collect, please deposit the funds into your Chapter or Post's bank account and write a check.
- Make the check payable to the ALR Department of FL.
- On the Memo line, write your Chapter Number/ Bike Raffle. We want to be able to track sales back to the Chapter and District. Don't forget tickets sold and dollars raised are credited to your District towards trophy points for the "Round Robin" competition.
- The cutoff date to mail checks and ticket stubs to the Department is April 15, 2024.
- If you sell tickets past that date, arrange for them to be picked up by one of the three In-State Unity Ride stops or bring them to the Rally

at OCC in Clearwater for the drawing on April 27th at 5:30 PM.

With the New Motorcycle Safety Program, we have additional reporting requirements to support the program. It is simple: about four or five questions, name of the event, number of participants, and safety material handed out. You can email the questionnaire to me or the new Assistant Program Manager, Connie Koonce.

We have more committees coming on board to help us out. As I mentioned, we have grown into a professional riding organization, and we need to delegate more responsibilities to other individuals, which should make a smooth leadership transition in the future.

**NOTE:** Children & Youth Picnic scheduled Ride Safe. I am looking forward to seeing you soon!

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"***

- Rally, OCC in Clearwater, April 27, 2024

## Legion Baseball

**Terry Phillips, Baseball Chair**

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



2024 is shaping up to be a very competitive and exciting year. New teams and Posts are coming on board as we continue to grow our program.

We have made adjustments to meet the needs of the player's, coach's and families that we serve. We are now set up as Northern Division and Southern Division as we break away from area alignments. This will allow more players to participate in the Legion Baseball Program from locations where there are currently no Legion Teams or Post involvement

and support of this vital Americanism Program.

Thanks to all who support what we do. If you are interested in being part of this special mission, please contact me, as team registration is now open.



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## Alumni

**Bekki Boorman, Programs Director**

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

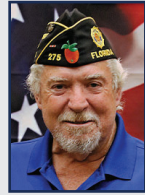
Congratulations to 2023 Boys State alumni Hunter Tillman and Logan Peters for receiving the NROTC Preparatory Program Scholarship at Jacksonville University! Hunter and Logan will graduate from Fleming Island High School on 24 May and are obviously already off to a bright future.



## Children & Youth Upcoming Events

**Rick Johnson, Children & Youth Chair**

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



The next three months will be very busy across the state as we prepare to enter Children and Youth Month.

Department of Florida family has always been greatly involved with the programs and continues to support the causes. As your Department Children and Youth Chairman for this year, we have a few events that are coming up.

March 16th, 2024, will be the 12th District unity ride, starting at Post 318 and ending at Post 189. The proceeds from this event will be given to COTA. April 6th, 2024, will be the Department of Florida Children and Youth picnic at Post 117. See the attached flyer for more information. It will be a fun

day for the kids and all. Proceeds to COTA. April 17th is the deadline for the Teacher of the Year award. Please see the application on the Department website.

May 11th, 2024, will be the Children and youth golf tournament at Post 347. Proceeds will be to Children and Youth programs.

See the attached flyer for sign-up and all the information.

I want to personally thank the SAL and the ALA for all their support for this year. There are a lot of unsung heroes who have gone out of their way to support the programs. I hope to see you at one of the events in the next months. Again, thank you all, and have a great rest of the year.

## Dues Increase

**Larry White, Finance Chair**

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



This is just a reminder to all Posts that as of July 1, 2024, the dues amount will increase, and each Post should reevaluate its dues amount. The Combined National and Department Per Capita will increase from \$29.00 to \$34.00. This is due to the

\$5.00 increase being imposed by National.

As of July 1, 2024, National has increased its per capita dues to \$23.50. The tradition is that the department may increase its dues at the same time; as of this printing, the Finance Committee is still reviewing its budget for next year and has not decided on any amount, so the committee will have to present its recommendation to the DEC in June for

approval. We will keep you updated when a figure is determined.

As a result of the impending dues increases and uncertainty of any additional increase by the Department and/or Posts, 2025 Dues notices will not be printed until after the Department Convention on June 16, 2024.

## Ardie Copas Veterans Nursing Home in need of Volunteers

**Jim Burk, Homeless Veterans Vice**

[District13@legionmail.org](mailto:District13@legionmail.org)



This month, I thought I'd go off script a little bit and share a recent experience I had with my wife, Robin, Chairman of the VA&R committee for the Auxiliary.

We visited the new Ardie Copas Veterans Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie. It was named after a Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam. We walked in and told the receptionist who we were. We were promptly introduced to Sherika Ayers, the activities/volunteer director. After a tour of a very impressive 100-bed all-Veteran facility, we sat down to talk. They are

in critical need of volunteers to assist in many areas, from escorting Veterans on shopping trips and general day outings to calling bingo, attending socials, playing cards, and just being there to talk to Veterans and hear their stories. So take this and run with it. There are several state-owned Veterans homes in Florida. Get involved and volunteer.



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## National Meets

**Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP Chair**

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



### JROTC Program of Accreditation and JSSP Area, State and National Meets

The JROTC Cadets are evaluated for their overall program performance at the beginning of each New

Year. Due to the number of overall programs, this is done on a rotation basis of approximately three years. Depending on the branch of service and number of programs, these are conducted by either the Brigade JROTC Staff or the local DAI/District Staff. I've had the privilege of attending these briefings throughout the years and have always been impressed by our cadet staff and their performances. The agenda varies slightly with each service branch, and the programs are cadet-led and organized. The Cadet Battalion Staff must do a formal Continuous Improvement Briefing for the "Review Board" with the Welcome to the Board, Introductions, Goals, Phases of Operation, and Final Conclusion. The lead is always the Battalion Commander with the support staff of the Battalion XO, CSM, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 and S7 for the Army. The other branches vary; however, they are similar in structure. There is also a "Service-Learning Brief," which is a program that the class has taken up that is beneficial to both the community and the cadets. I had the privilege

of attending the Cypress Bay AJROTC evaluation, and their chosen project was The Soldier Rush 2024. This was a four Team Project, and the cadets explained their chosen program with volunteer work within the community on assisting the Soldier Rush, a 5km obstacle course race held at the Equestrian Center in Parkland, FL, with promoting, supporting and running the event giving back to the Veterans and first responders. In addition, the Cadets are evaluated on their cadet records, Color Guard and Drill Performances. These briefings are open to guests, and I would encourage the Posts to inquire about the JROTC Units that you sponsor and ask to be able to attend at future JPA's.



Mariner AJROTC Marksmanship Team



MSD Service Learning Brief

### JSSP Results and Army State and National Marksmanship Meet

The Army Area and State JROTC Marksmanship Meet were held at Island Coast HS in Cape Coral. These meets have been supported by Post 90, Cape Coral, for several years with medals and trophies. The Post

Cmdr. and Chairman were in attendance, as well as parents, chaperones, and other guests. The AJROTC State Match, which is coordinated by the Army 6th Brigade, is also supported by the Department of Florida, and it has grown in participation and interest within the Cape and teams attending from the farthest distance in Pensacola. The First Place Overall Team was Mariner AJROTC under the direction of SAI, MAJ Bryan Williams, and Coach Mary Ann Williams. The Mariner Team has now advanced by placing First in the Army National Competition held this past week. They returned to the Cape with a police escort and now have one more challenge since they're now qualified for the last event, the biggest of them all...JROTC CMP Nationals at Camp Perry, Ohio, in March. The Legion JSSP Postal First Round has now been Posted on the website. The Mariner Team has placed First in the Sporter Category for the State of Florida, and the Sarasota Military Academy has placed Second. The Sarasota Military Academy has placed First in the Precision Category for the State of Florida, and the Vanguard NJROTC Team has placed Second. Thanks to all the supporters of our youth for these programs, and good luck to all who will be advancing to the Second Round Postal. Targets are mailed out on Feb. 15th and must be fired and returned by the deadline, April 1st. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, and much success to all.

## Law Enforcement Officers Killed in the Line of Duty in 2023

**Daryl Bass, Law & Order Chair**

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



In 2023, a total of 136 Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement Officers, including Tribal, were killed in the line of duty. This represents a significant decrease of approximately 39% compared to the 224 Officers killed in 2022. Here is a reported breakdown of the causes of these

fatalities.

1. Firearm-related fatalities: 47 Officers were shot and killed in the line of duty. Which is a 25% decrease from the 63 Officers killed by firearms in 2022.
2. Traffic-Related Crashes- in 2023, 37 Officers died due to traffic-related crashes, including single-vehicle accidents, vehicle collisions,

struck-by incidents, and motorcycle crashes while working along while working our nation's roadways. This represents a 27% decrease compared to 51 crash-related deaths in 2022.

3. Other Causes: 52 Officers in 2023. such as falling objects, fire-related incidents, and medical-related illnesses/events (including Covid 19, heart attacks, and strokes) suffered

*Law & Order continued on page 12 >>*



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<< Law & Order continued from page 11

while performing their official duties. This represents a 53% decrease from the 110 Officers who died under similar circumstances in 2022.

These statistics highlight the risks and sacrifices Law Enforcement Officers face while protecting our communities. Let us honor their service and remember those who gave their lives in the line of duty.

One Officer Killed in the line of duty is too many. Being the Department Law & Order Chairman is a great honor. Let us all continue to honor all of our First Responders this year. Reward them for a job well done.

## Update on Legislative Issues

**Stuart Scott, Legislative Chair**

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



Legion family, please let me begin this month's article by saying thank you! With all the responses you have sent regarding our call to action, we have positioned ourselves in a manner that our

Legislators have noticed. While the outcomes have not been where we desired, we now have a seat at the table.

So, if you are reading this the day it comes out, we only have two weeks left of our State Legislative Session. These last two weeks are going to be long days, as both chambers will debate on the floor the bills that have made the calendars. We will still work diligently to have our priorities in the best position possible. If you have not already subscribed to the Legislative Update, please go to our Department's website; under News and Events, you will see Legislative News. After clicking on that, you will

notice that on the left side, Subscribe. This will give you updated information on a weekly basis during the Session. After the session has been given out, you can review the progress of the bills over the 60 days of the Legislative Session.

I will update you all about our Washington, DC Conference, and Capitol Hill visitations in April until then.

## Final push for Race to the Top

**Bruce Carl, Membership Chair**

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



Hello, Team Florida! Another month has passed, which means we are into the final month for the District Commanders Race to the Top, with a deadline on March 31st. As of this writing, we are

in 5th place Nationally and sitting at 90.19%, well ahead of the National goals. Every District except one is over 87%, and every Area is over 88%. What an outstanding job done by everyone in the department, from the top to the Post level.

We are looking at finishing the year at 103% in membership, which would be the highest since PDC Jim Ramos hit 102.9% as membership chair in 2013. As he told me this past week, "I am tired of having the record." We can do this, as our momentum has not faltered yet. I don't believe it will. There are 45 Posts at 100% or higher and 33 Posts over 103%. With that being said, we have

30 Posts needing five members or less for 100%. Let's get all those Posts over 100% this month!

We had a great revitalization this past month in the 13th District. Thank you to everyone who attended and assisted with phone calls from the Department and District, as well as the Posts. A special thank you to National Vice Commander Charlie Aucoin, who traveled with us and also made calls. Another thank you goes out to all the Riders who escorted us around the District!

There is a good chance that Florida will have 4 or 5 District Commanders qualify for Race to the Top this year. As of this writing, District 17 needs 194, District 3 needs 125, District 8 needs 550, District 7 needs 249, District 2 needs 92, District 11 needs 324, District 9 needs 302, and District 14 needs 344. There is also a good chance some other Districts can make 100% by the end of the month. Everyone needs to do their part to get renewals, new members, and DMS400 members to come on board.

If you break it down weekly, the numbers are not unattainable. We can also have Area Commanders hitting 100% with some really hard work!

We also need to work with those Posts who are struggling to bring them up if possible. Many of you are aware of the issues at your Posts that are hindering your performance, so it is up to the rest of the Posts in the District to try to offset those struggling Posts by continuing to build your membership. There are still five months left to hit 103%, but it would be great to hit that mark before then. Also, remember in order to get your 100% coins and pins, your Post must be at 100% by May 8th. I still have plenty to pass out!

Let's keep this train rolling, and again, thank you for all you are doing! If you need any assistance, please get in touch with me, and I will be more than happy to help you!



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## Can You Afford Burial or Funeral Cost?

**Rico Thomas, Florida National Cemeteries**

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



One of the goals of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) is to provide eligible Veterans with reasonable access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) burial options. More than 80 percent of those interred in national cemeteries lived within 75 miles of the cemetery at the time of death. To NCA, reasonable access to burial benefits means that a first interment option for casketed or cremated remains in a national or state Veterans cemetery is available within 75 miles of the Veteran's home.

To meet the burial needs of Veterans, NCA builds new national cemeteries in areas where large Veteran populations do not have reasonable

access to burial options. NCA has opened ten new national cemeteries since 2015. Barring significant construction delays, three new national cemeteries (Elko, NV; Cedar City, UT; and Queens, NY) are scheduled to open in 2023.

NCA also seeks to increase the long-term burial capacity of current national cemeteries by acquiring adjacent land, building columbaria where feasible, and using innovative designs that maximize the burial space available. NCA also manages the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, which encourages states, U.S. territories, and tribal governments to build state Veterans cemeteries in areas unserved by a national cemetery. VA has helped establish 122 state, territory, and tribal Veterans cemeteries through its grants program since 1980.

In addition, the Department of the Army transferred eleven cemeteries to NCA in 2019 and 2020.

Though most of these cemeteries are no longer open to first interments, they did provide a small boost to accessibility for Veterans in some areas. The percentage of Veterans with reasonable access to burial benefits at a national or state Veterans cemetery increased from 65 percent in 1995 to approximately 94 percent by the end of 2022.

### National Cemetery Administration

*Am I eligible for allowances to help pay for a Veteran's burial and funeral costs?*

Find out how to get Veterans' burial allowances (sometimes called "Veterans' death benefits") to help cover burial, funeral, and transportation costs. <https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/>

## National Vice Commander Visitation to the 13th District

**Judith Richards, Post Revitalization**

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



Revitalization in action in the 13th District! Many thanks to all who came out to the Posts to visit and/or make phone calls. Assisting with the phone calls were National Vice Commander

Charles Aucoin, NEC Jim Ramos, NECA Jerry Brandt, Department Commander Michael Gambler Raymond, Membership Chair Bruce Carl, and Past Department President Wanda Brandt, among other department, District, and Post leadership. There were 11 Post-visits and 5 Post-revitalizations. From the phone calls made, the District picked up two

new Auxiliary members and five new Legionnaires; 67 renewals, 6 DMS Post 400 transfers, and 6 deceased members were located. There were many phone calls made, lots of voicemails left, and multiple out-of-service numbers. The Posts will keep working with the information received and continue to update the members' records.

The calls were twofold. The first intention is the Buddy Check. How often do we speak of this and how important this is to the members and re-engaging the membership? Once we discovered that the member was doing okay, we reminded them that their Posts were reopened, and we looked forward to seeing them. Then, there was a gentle reminder to

find out if they were aware their dues had expired. Many were not. Several members arrived at the Posts within 30 minutes of the call to renew! Below is a picture of a Legionnaire that NEC Ramos called from Pine Island Post 136. He was at the Post within 10 minutes!

The link shows many photos from one of the day's efforts.

<https://www.ezezbusinessnetwork.com/tal-commd-visit>

NEC Ramos, Membership Chair Bruce Carl, and several others have captured the events on Facebook. Be sure to check it out!

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**FLCON** to **41372**

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## Four Chaplains and MIAs Recovered.

**Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair**

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



February 3rd has come and gone.

Why was 3 February an important day? For those who don't know, it is the day the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*, an Army transport ship, was sunk while en route to Europe with

902 servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers in the cold Atlantic Ocean. Quickly and quietly, the four chaplains spread out among the soldiers. They tried to calm the frightened, tend to the wounded, and guide the disoriented toward safety. When no more lifejackets were in the storage room, the chaplains removed theirs and gave them to four frightened young men. As the ship went down, survivors in nearby rafts could see the four chaplains—arms linked and braced against the slanting deck. Their voices could also be heard offering prayers. Of the 902 men aboard the U.S.A.T. *Dorchester*, 672 died, leaving 230 survivors. When the news reached American shores, the nation was stunned by the magnitude of the tragedy and heroic conduct of the four chaplains. Why am I relaying this saga to you in the POW/MIA Newsletter? They are still and will probably always remain MIA!

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is doing what it can to bring all those missing home. Our National Commander Dan Seehafer knows of their dedication and the difficulty they face in their daily tasking as he was on location with them in Vietnam, helping with a recovery effort last November. The DPAA is always looking for volunteers, so if you are able and inclined to want to help, visit their website for more information.

For FY 2024, the DPAA has repatriated 19 personnel from WW II, three from the Korean War, and one from Vietnam. If you know of any descendants of an MIA individual, please encourage them to contact a

Service Casualty Officer and provide a DNA sample for their library.

The DPAA is proud to report that the following individuals have been accounted for and repatriated during the month of January 2024.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 16, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3645791/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-march-h/>

### **Airman Accounted for from WWII (March, H.)**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Technician 4th Grade (TECH-4) Herbert F. March, 24, of Cook, Washington, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for Aug. 10, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 16, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3646621/pilot-accounted-for-from-wwii-willhite-t/>

### **Pilot Accounted for from WWII (Willhite, T.)**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Major Theodore Willhite, 26, of Muscatine, Iowa, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 19, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 17, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3647209/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-barrow-r/>

### **Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Barrow, R.)**

Washington D.C. —

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Master Sgt. Roy E. Barrow, 39, of Valdosta, Georgia, killed during the

Korean War, was accounted for on Sept. 22, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 18, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3648714/sailor-accounted-for-from-uss-california-hillman-m/>

### **Sailor Accounted for from USS California (Hillman, M.)**

Washington D.C. —

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class (PhM2c) Merle C. J. Hillman, 25, of Holyoke, Massachusetts, killed during World War II, was accounted for on October 20, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 18, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3649142/tanker-accounted-for-from-wwii-cloud-l/>

### **Tanker Accounted for from WWII (Cloud, L.)**

Washington D.C. —

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Leroy C. Cloud, 24, of Thrall, Texas, killed during World War II, was accounted for Aug 29, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 23, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3653220/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-crayton-t/>

### **Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Crayton, T.)**

Washington D.C. —

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Master Sgt. Thomas Crayton, 28, of Austin, Texas, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for Sep. 26, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 29, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News->

POW/MIA continued on page 15 >>



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<< POW/MIA continued from page 14

[Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3658940/soldier-accounted-for-from-wwii-seibert-e/](https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3658940/soldier-accounted-for-from-wwii-seibert-e/)

## Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Seibert, E.)

Washington D.C.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Pvt. Earl E.R. Seibert, 23, of Allentown, Pennsylvania, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for Aug. 10, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | Jan. 30, 2024

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3660329/>

[airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-stevens-h/](https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/News-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3658940/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-stevens-h/)

## Airmen were accounted for from WWII (Stevens, H.)

WASHINGTON D.C.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Henry L. Stevens, 23, of Monroe, Louisiana, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept 15, 2023.

Regarding the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum, Congressman Arron Bean has introduced H.R. 3670, The National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum Act. This Resolution will designate the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum at Cecil Field to

serve as a national landmark to honor, connect, inspire, and educate the American people about the members of the Armed Forces who were held as prisoners of war (POW) and those who became missing in action (MIA) in our nation's conflicts. I encourage all to contact their representatives and urge them to pass this Resolution.

I encourage you to visit the National POW/MIA Memorial website for updates and events: <https://povmiamemorial.org/>

I also encourage you to visit the DPAA website for updates on their efforts in bringing everyone home: <https://www.dpaa.mil/>

## Resolution Deadline

Clarence Hill, Resolutions Chair

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



The deadline for the submission of resolutions to be considered at this year's Department Convention is fast approaching. All resolutions must be received by the Department 40 days before the convention to be compiled, reproduced, and distributed to Posts. The department should have them by the end of April. Those members who will represent their Posts at the Internal Affairs Committee meeting should read and review the resolutions prior to the meeting.

I haven't seen the agenda yet, but the Internal Affairs Committee is usually scheduled to meet on Thursday afternoon around 2 PM. The meeting will receive reports from Constitution and By-Laws, Credentials, Disaster Preparedness, POW-MIA, Resolutions, Time & Place, and Special Rules. When it comes to the Resolutions portion, only the **RESOLVED** clauses will be read, so it is important that the entire resolution be reviewed prior to the meeting. Each Post can have one delegate at this meeting to vote on all matters to be decided. All **voting members must have the appropriate black ribbon** received with the registration package. **Attendees without the ribbon**

**cannot vote.** The results of the vote taken at this meeting become a recommendation to the General Assembly when the Internal Affairs Committee report is presented. **Every delegate to the Convention** has a vote on the final disposition of the resolution.

I have thus far received **NO** resolutions on any topic. Resolutions that do not meet the 40-day deadline will not be considered until the Fall Conference.

## End of Year Reports

Deveron Reaves, School Medals Chair

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



Hello again to all of The American Legion family! Here we are, getting to the end of the Legion year. There is still time to reach out to your local area schools and explain what the School Medals Program is

all about!

Post and/or District Chairman, this is the time to send a reminder email to those schools who have not responded to earlier emails that should have been sent by now. You should have a School Medals List spreadsheet already made up for your local schools that normally participate, as well as ones

that you may have picked up in the process of talking to other schools in your area. This way, you will know when their awards ceremonies will be. Also, if you haven't done it already, order the medals and flags to present at the ceremony by the beginning of April. This way, they should arrive at your Post by the time of the ceremony.

*School Medals continued on page 16 >>*



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<< School Medals continued from page 15

Lastly, make sure you submit your End-of-the-year report for the School Medal program once you get the packet from the Department. This way,

a Post and Post Chairman will be able to receive acknowledgment of having the Best School Medals Program and Chairman and Runner-up School Medals Program and Chairman.

You can always reach me at [schoolmedals@legionmail.org](mailto:schoolmedals@legionmail.org) if you have any questions.

## Scouting Events

Chris Ragusa, Scouting Chair

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



### District 16 Hosts Blue and Gold Banquet:

Every year, the Department of Florida 16th District, in collaboration with Dunedin Post 275 and Safety Harbor Post 238, hosts the Cub Scout Pack 10 Blue and Gold celebration and Crossover ceremony to Scouts BSA Troop 10. Blue and Gold banquets are a tradition in Cub Scout

packs at which they celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910. Many Cub Scout packs take this opportunity for their Arrow of Light Scouts to "crossover" to the Scouts BSA program using a ceremonial bridge between the two programs. The Arrow of Light is the highest rank a boy or girl can achieve in the Cub Scout program. This year's



event occurred on Saturday, February 3, at Camp Soule in Clearwater.

event occurred on Saturday, February 3, at Camp Soule in Clearwater.



**Four Chaplains Day Ceremony:** American Legion Posts nationwide commemorate the selfless acts of four military chaplains on or near February 3, designated "Four Chaplains Day" by Congress in 1948. On Saturday, February 3, Pensacola Post 340 (1st District) members gathered to commemorate Four Chaplains Day with a poignant ceremony to honor the acts of sacrifice of those chaplains during World War II. This year's ceremony featured a significant addition as members of Post 340's chartered BSA units - Scouts BSA Troops 340B and 340G - joined in paying tribute to these heroes.

Scouts stood proud and tall in their Field uniforms as they participated in the ceremony alongside active-duty US Navy Sailors from Naval Technical

Training Center Corry Station, Veterans, and Legionnaires. As the ceremony unfolded, Post 340's Chaplain highlighted the significance of the Four Chaplains' unwavering bravery and unity in the face of adversity, underscoring the timeless values of courage, sacrifice, and camaraderie that continue to inspire generations. In a touching display of reverence and respect, the Scouts of Troops 340B and 340G reaffirmed their commitment to honoring the legacy of service exemplified by the Four Chaplains, embodying the timeless motto of "Be Prepared" not just in Scouting but in life.

Many thanks to the District 16 Scouting Chair (and Commander!!) Eric Nestler and District 1 Scouting Chair Angie Walker for their input. And to those Legionnaire Scouters who promoted the Eagle Scout of the Year program. Those applications were due to the Department on March 1, 2024, and our recipient will be honored at the Department of Florida Annual Convention on June 15, 2024.



## VA Expansions and Information

Alan Cohen, VA&R Chair

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



It almost seems as if it was just yesterday that we were wishing each other a happy new year, and all of a sudden, it's springtime, and plans are being put in place for our Department Convention. It certainly

has been a whirl wind for a couple of months.

The American Legion's National Commander spent several days with us, wrapping up a successful visit by attending the 9th District's award-winning Four Chaplains Memorial.

At the end of January, I had the honor to be part of

a team that spent three days conducting a System Worth Saving visit to the James A. Haley VA Hospital in Tampa. We conducted what was later described to me as one of the best the Legion has seen at Post 5 with our VAVS hospital rep Carlos Gil's invaluable assistance. Click on the link to see a video of the Town Hall:

VA&R continued on page 17 >>



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<< VA&R continued from page 16

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0haVrD9LX-KU&list=PLHMR9MmnivfMvm7Zky886VpOZ1AOnD-NUP>. The next two days were spent speaking with hospital administrators and clinicians, including a tour of the renowned Polytrauma Unit. What incredible rehabilitation work they're doing for Veterans and active duty personnel.

Some information to pass along to those Veterans who have or find the need for trained service dogs. While the VA does not provide trained service dogs, they can begin the process of obtaining one by consulting with their primary care or mental health provider. Once the Veteran has been screened and meets the necessary criteria, they are referred to an accredited agency actually to be paired with their dog. At that point, the Veteran can apply for the benefit of veterinary care for the dog. Two agencies here in Florida that work with Veterans for service dogs are K9 Line and Southeastern Guide Dogs.

In mid-February, a report was issued by the VA

confirming that women Veterans are enrolling to receive VA healthcare at a higher rate than any other segment of the Veteran population. Every VA hospital and CBOC has expanded services to meet the needs of women Veterans. That said, we must continue reaching out to our sisters in arms and welcoming them to the Legion family. Our Women Veterans Chair has been working hard to do just that. Please see her article here and support her efforts.

There is some not-so-inside information now. By the end of fiscal year 2023 over \$2 billion was secured for Florida Veterans in the form of newly filed claims and retroactive pay. To this end, we owe a debt of gratitude to the tireless and skilled efforts of Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and County Service Officers, but please take note that over 25% of those successful claims began with American Legion Post Service Officers responding to a call for assistance and that's only part of what they do! With that, I'm happy to announce that registration is now open for the Post Service Officer class to be conducted June 13-14 at our Department Conven-

tion. Registration must be completed in advance of the class, and the necessary form can be found at: <https://www.floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PSO-2024-Registration-Form-Convention.pdf>.

Lastly, for this month, the VA is putting the finishing touches on a collaboration with Uber so that Veterans who face challenges in getting to appointments for healthcare can do so easily and at no cost to them. More to follow about this valuable benefit.

I look forward to once again seeing everyone in June at the convention, and in closing, I will share with you something I've observed over the course of time: Everything seems to slow down with age except the amount of time it takes for cake and ice cream to reach our hips.



## Be Kind

### Judy Casey, Women Veterans Vice Chair

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

Good afternoon, family. This link has little to do with women Veterans, but about myself. I have been in and out of the local hospital eight different times, with the last time being 12 days with no answers. Four days later my daughter took me to

James A. Haley Hospital and spent 16 days there. I was taken right in and admitted right then. I saw every doctor possible at the hospital, not having to travel anywhere like they wanted me to do at the local hospital. I had the best care ever possible from the CNAs, the nurses, and all the doctors. I am getting better every day, but it will take a minute.

While in the VA hospital, I heard complaints about the healthcare at the hospital, but what I want to say is don't be ugly to these people; they are trying to help you. Where else would you get free healthcare? **BE KIND!!!!**

## Youth & Law Cadet Program Update

### Bud Boyer, Youth Law Cadet Chair

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



We hope you all started to search for Candidates/Applicants at the beginning of February. We are going ahead with the Youth Law Cadet Program, and yes, I am still waiting for a definite confirmation.

I have hope, though. On January 9th, I sent the same Program Packet that the chair folks received to Lt. Spargo. He was kind enough to send me an email stating that he sent the waiver and the other materials to his Major so that he could forward the paperwork to their Legal Department. I am taking this as a good sign—lots of hope.

Please let us remind all that if the program does come to fruition only thirty-two (32) Candidates/Applicants will be accepted. That will be two from each District. The District will have to work out who will be chosen from their District to go, and the District will be responsible for how to get them to the FHP Academy. Here's to a warmer March and a Happy St. Paddy's Day!



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## FLORIDA LEGION RIDERS... RIDING TO END VETERAN SUICIDE

Next month, the Florida Legion Riders ride all month-long to raise funds and awareness for Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI). Chapters host rides, dinners, and other activities to earn points for the coveted District Trophy. The In-State Unity Ride and State Rally also take place: all of which the proceeds benefit PVR/SPI.

### HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE FLORIDA LEGION RIDERS:

► **Join the Ride** - The Ride will be split into three routes: Western, Central and Eastern. All routes will include a Meet & Greet on Sunday, April 21st. The ride will officially begin the next day (April 22nd). Riders will stop at American Legion Posts along the way to collect donations and pay their respects at Veteran Memorial sites to honor our fallen.

We encourage you to register and create a fundraising page for your friends and family to donate to your efforts. The more funds you raise to end veteran suicide the more COOL PRIZES you'll earn.

► **Ride Virtually** - If you can't go on the actual ride, sign up as a Virtual Rider (\$5). Then, ride at least 22 miles and show your efforts by posting a photo on your social media using #iRideforthe22 and #EndVeteranSuicide. Virtual Riders are eligible for the COOL PRIZES, too.

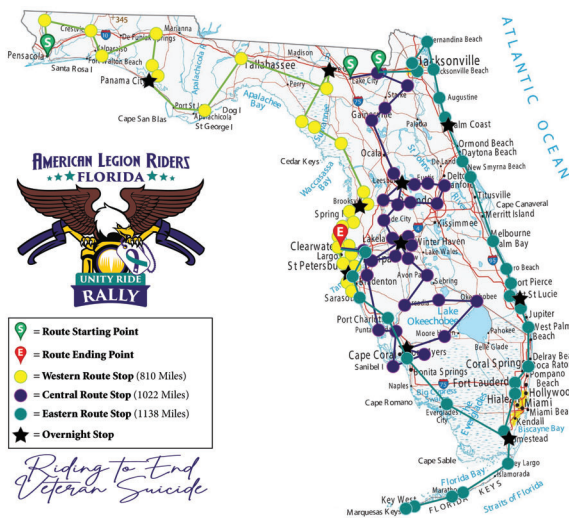
► **Make a Donation** - Make your donation in a variety of ways: individual's page, Chapter's Team page, or donate directly to the entire event. However you choose to support, your generosity will be applied towards the joint cause of ending veteran suicide!

► **Visit a Post Stop** - Our riders would love to see your smiling faces as they make it to their next pit-stop along their journey. Check out the route agendas and plan to welcome them in from the road!

► **Attend the State Rally** - Upon completion of the In-State Unity Ride, April 27th, a Rally will be held in celebration at the OCC Road House & Museum in Clearwater. There will be live music, vendors, and raffles. The Rally is open to the public at no cost!

### Register, Donate, and Details:

<https://give.floridalegion.org/2024UnityRide>



**Current Year: July 2023 - January 2024**

**205**

Veterans Received  
Financial Support

**\$276,297**

Provided as  
Emergency Assistance

**16**

Suicide Prevention  
Strategic Partners

**\$102,000**

Given towards  
Veteran Suicide Prevention



## Children & Youth Legion Conferences

Dennis Boland, Child Welfare Foundation

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



### Children & Youth Legion Conferences

- 341 Legion family members attended the annual national Children and Youth and Combined Americanism

Conferences Virtually or in person, including the programs of American Legion Baseball, Boys State, Oratorical, Junior Shooting Sport, Children & Youth, and Department Chaplains.

### Youth Welfare and Safety

- The 2022-2023 Consolidated Post Report reflects that 8,513 activities promoting health and safety took place, while 8,512 activities were conducted for Halloween safety by Legion Posts nationwide.

## Post 296 Davis-Sikes: A cornucopia of community outreach...

Jim Remsburg, District 1 Historian

This article for the March 2024 Legion Link newsletter was compiled by The District One Historian, Jim Remsburg, from two sources: The first source was from an interview with Corlene Ziegler, who is the current Post 296 Commander, and the second was a centennial article from [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org). Post 296 Namesake: from [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org)



Davis-Sikes: American Legion Post 296 of Destin, Florida, was chartered in 1955. The Post was Named after Two of Our Fallen World War II American Heroes. Elborn M. Davis and Rolan C. Sikes. The following is a summary of their lives: Elborn M. Davis was born to Mary Ann Hardy and Hilary

### American Legion Child Welfare Foundation (CWF)

- \$737,782\* was received in total CWF donations; the Sons of The American Legion contributed \$393,388\*.
- In 2023, the CWF Board of Directors awarded \$684,050 in grants to 4 non-profit organizations that contribute to children and youth's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs.

As of 2/09/2024, we have received \$342,078.11 in contributions to CWF. Presently the top 4 Contributors to the CWF are 1st place Arizona with \$59,282.00, 2nd place Pennsylvania with \$35,387.53, 3rd place Ohio with \$32,835.00 and 4th place Florida with \$28,071.72

Mathew Davis on September 4, 1912, in Point Washington, Walton County, Florida, USA. He was the only survivor of a set of triplets; Elborn lived, and the other two were stillborn and buried in Holmes County in the Hardy Cemetery. He had one sister (Ethel Davis, d;2002) and two brothers (Elton James Davis, d;1993 and Earnest Davis, b;1925). Staff Sergeant Davis was killed in action on July 17, 1944, at the invasion of Normandy, France. He is buried in Hardy Cemetery, Millers Ferry, Washington County, Florida, USA. Rolan C. Sikes Jr. was born to Mr. and Mrs. Rolan Clarence Sikes, d;1959, of Destin, Florida. He was a Motor Machinist Mate First Class and Mustered aboard The LCI 219 (Landing Craft Infantry ) on March 31, 1944. He is included in the Le Mur Virtual Normandy Memorial " Floride." He was awarded the Purple Heart and a Bronze Star. He was initially listed as Missing in Action and then was changed to Killed in Action on June 11, 1944, at the Invasion of Normandy, France. His body was never recovered. He was an only child. His parents

### American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF)

- \$1,003,852\* was received in donations to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.
- The American Legion Endowment Fund Corporation, doing business as the Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF), Contributed \$62,327\* to fund child & youth programs.
- Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA)
- 56 minor children of 22 Veterans throughout 14 states received \$29,030\* in non-repayable cash grant assistance from the National Temporary Financial Assistance program to help support those children's basic needs of shelter, utilities, food, and clothing.

divorced but continued to live in the same house for the rest of their lives. His body was washed out to sea. His parents didn't get a body to grieve or a grave to tend. The sacrifice of the men & their families can't be overstated.

### Corleen Ziegler interview:

Post 296 is the sponsor for Cub & Boy Scout Troops 504. We have conducted an Oratorical contest for two years running. Last year's winner placed 5th in the State. This year's winner has won District & moving on! We have presented school medals every year for many years. We support the Veterans at Clifford Chester Sims VA nursing home with cash donations and by filling wish lists for Christmas.

We serve breakfast every Sunday for the community. Our bingo fundraiser brings in money to support our programs. We use every opportunity to reach the community to inform them about membership

"Post 375 - L.E. Thomas" continued on page 18 >>



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& volunteer opportunities. We have high school students helping with Sunday breakfast. They learn service skills & earn Bright Futures volunteer hours. We conduct a monthly blood drive. When we started monthly drives, I was asked why we do it. The person said, "We did it once a year so we could check the box." I'm not interested in checking boxes. I want the Post to help the community. Wreaths Across America has been a program for the past five years. We honor 235 Veterans in the local cemeteries. The Sheriff's station stores our wreaths from the time they are delivered until placement day. We offer extra wreaths for their family members who are buried in other locations in the area.

Our Auxiliary supports Fresh Start & Shelter House locally as well as the other Department programs.

### Other 296 outreach events:

- Each year, the city of Destin, FL, hosts a Christmas parade. The entry fee is a new toy for a child. Our Post donates 3 or 4 bikes every year.
- The Snowbirds organizations in Walton and Okaloosa counties hold weekly dart tournaments, euchre games, & ballroom dancing at the Post. One of the images shows Wednesday night Bingo with the snowbirds raising their hands.
- A 4 Chaplains event was held on Feb. 3rd.

Vietnam Bronze Star awardee Ron Springer was the speaker. Ret. LtCol Tom Godbold, the Vietnam pilot with over 4500 hours, gave the invocation.

- We host Veteran's Day 5 K. The money raised goes to Homes for Heroes.
- We are sending four boys to 2024 Boys State.
- The Community Garden is a cooperative effort with the Post & the garden club.



## Post Everlasting

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



### Joe Maichle

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of 5th District 1st Vice Commander Joseph "Joe" A. Maichle of Jacksonville, Florida. Joe passed away on Monday, February 26, 2024, at the age of 75. Dennis is survived by his wife, Ute Bruland.

Joe was a dedicated member of the New Castle County Division of Police, from 1972 to 1996. Senior Corporal Maichle was highly respected by his colleagues, described as a wonderful friend,

always willing to help, incredibly funny, and a great investigator.

In addition to his service in law enforcement, Joe proudly served his country as a United States Air Force Vietnam War Era Veteran. He was a member of Jacksonville Post 129, with 17 continuous years of membership. Joe held various leadership positions within the American Legion, including Post Commander from 2017-2024 and 5th District Vice Commander from 2022-2024. He also served as Department Credentials Chair from 2022-2024 at the Department level.

At this time, details regarding services have not been finalized. Any new updates will be communicated via email and Posted on the Department website.

If you wish to extend your condolences, you may do so through his wife, Ute Bruland, at 12474 Collinswood Dr. S., Jacksonville, FL 32225.

Please keep Joe's family and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.



### Timothy Morris

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of ALR Sergeant-at-Arms, Timothy Scott Morris or Palm Bay, FL. Tim passed away on Thursday, December 14, 2023.

Unfortunately, we do not have many details regarding Tim's family and those he left behind.

Tim was a an Air Force Veteran who served in teh Lebanon/Grenada war era. He was a celebrated and well-loved member of The American Legion for more

than fifteen years and an avid participant with the American Legion Riders.

Tim was laid to rest at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery. We will Post more details on our department website as they become available.



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## MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

February 22, 2024 (91.41%)

District 3	Stuart Scott	99.12%
District 17	Jim Bowers	96.31%
District 7	Rick Orzechowski	94.01%
District 8	John Rauh	93.04%
District 2	Doyle Combs Jr.	93.02%
District 1	Shelby Windham	92.31%
District 11	Toni Sutherland	91.95%
District 6	Peter Gregory	91.21%
District 15	Randy Holeyfield	91.20%
District 13	Eric Loyd	91.20%
District 12	Bruce Thurber	90.96%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	89.88%
District 16	Eric Nestler	89.76%
District 9	Rico Thomas	89.74%
District 4	Doug Hockenberry	88.89%
District 14	Thomas Frank	86.14%
Western	Sonny Decker	92.41%
Northern	Lena Heredia-Perez	92.04%
Southwestern	Harold "Bud" Boyer	92.02%
Eastern	Joe Marcheggiani	91.10%
Central	Bob Matheson	90.75%
Southern	Johnny Castro	89.77%
Post 400		91.90%
Post 208		92.99%

NEXT GOAL: March 6, 2024

90%

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★ ★ ★ BI-WEEKLY DRAWINGS ★ ★ ★

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High School Oratorical  
Scholarship Program

Support Your Area's Competitor  
at State Finals

March 30, 2024  
Competition begins at 9:00 am

Dept. of Florida HQ  
Orlando, FL



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Thursday.....\$140 **FULL**

Friday.....\$140

Saturday.....\$140

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 **800-782-4414**  
RESERVATIONS

For complete convention details visit our website at [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org)



### USE GROUP CODE

Be sure to mention  
"LEG"



### BOOKING DEADLINE

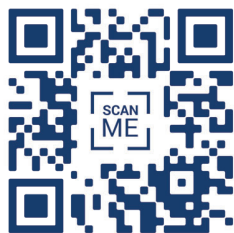
To receive special rate you  
must book by **May 31, 2024**



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Department  
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LEGION FAMILY**

\*\*\* Deadline May 15, 2024 \*\*\*

**105<sup>th</sup> Annual Department Convention, June 13-16, 2024**

Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista – Disney Springs Area, 1751 Hotel Plaza Blvd; Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Name of Member, Post, Unit, or Squadron

Contact Person

Title

Email

Phone

**PROGRAM ADVERTISEMENT OPTIONS FOR LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS, POSTS, UNITS, AND SQUADRONS ONLY**

<b>FULL PAGE</b> \$175  7.5" X 10"	<b>HALF PAGE</b> \$100  7.5" X 5"	<b>QUARTER PAGE</b> \$50  3.75" X 5"	<b>QUARTER PAGE</b> \$50  3.75" X 5"
	<b>HALF PAGE</b> \$100  7.5" X 5"	<b>QUARTER PAGE</b> \$50  3.75" X 5"	<b>QUARTER PAGE</b> \$50  3.75" X 5"

☐ Full Page (7.5" x 10") \$175    ☐ Half Page (7.5" x 5") \$100    ☐ Quarter Page (3.75" x 5") \$50    ☐ Custom Design Fee \$25

**Program advertisements must be submitted no later than May 15, 2024 to be included in the program.** Please submit your advertisement artwork via email in one of the following image file types: .ai, .eps, .psd, .pdf, .tif, .jpeg, .jpg, .png. All artwork must be digital: no scanned or printed artwork will be accepted. All advertisements are printed in grayscale. All imagery must be legally licensed. For an additional \$25 Custom Design Fee, we will design your advertisement for you. You'll be contacted for details at the email provided. Please email artwork to: [events@floridalegion.org](mailto:events@floridalegion.org).

**PAYMENT METHOD**

☐ Credit Card    ☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Make checks payable to *The American Legion, Dept of FL*

**CREDIT CARD INFORMATION**

☐ Visa    ☐ Mastercard    ☐ American Express    ☐ Discover

Total to Charge: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize The American Legion, Department of Florida to charge the amount listed above to the credit card provided herein. I agree to pay for this purchase in accordance with the issuing bank cardholder agreement.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit to:** The American Legion, Department of Florida, Attention: Event Coordinator; PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854-7859.

P.O. BOX 547859  
ORLANDO, FL 32854-7859

[www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org)

TOLL FREE 800-393-3378  
FAX 407-295-2631



**LIVE BAND • DANCING**

**POST 103**

2101 Taylor Rd; Punta Gorda FL 33950  
(941) 639-6337

**\$40 EA**  
MAIL CHECKS  
TO POST 103

**MAY**  
**18**<sub>2024</sub>

**5:00 PM**

COCKTAILS THEN  
DINNER AT 6:00 PM

YOUR CHOICE OF

**PRIME RIB • FISH • SHRIMP**

• Dress in Island Casual •

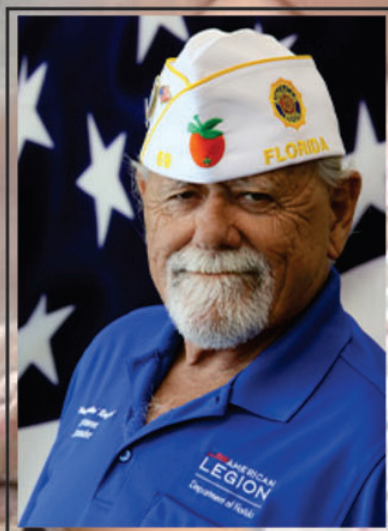
**Accommodations at Sleep Inn & Suites (941) 613-6300**

Rate: \$120+tax | 806 Kings Highway, Port Charlotte, FL 33980

Proceeds to benefit Disaster Relief fund and C.O.T.A.



Ponytail cutting to support Commander Raymond's Charity  
Children's Organ Transplant Association.  
\$25,000 raised at the event for the hair cutting to take place  
Bring your Donations to the Commander's Homecoming  
on May 18, 2024 at American Legion Post 103  
Punta Gorda



Commander  
Mike "Gambler" Raymond



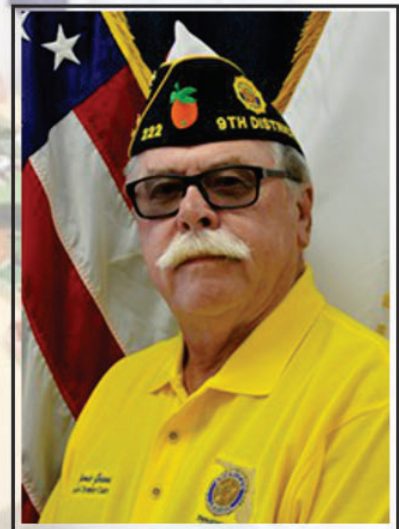
Look who's getting their hair cut



Sgt-at-Arms  
Les Martin



Eastern Area Comm.  
Joe Marcheggiani



Blood Donor Chair  
Jamie Grinis



# 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 = 63 CHILDREN UNDER 12 = \$315

**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**



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



Nationally known Singer/Songwriter

Neal James

"LIVE" at 8pm

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 & comedy roast*

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

(Online tickets & shirt sales coming soon)

CALL JEANIE HENSON AT 850-445-9186 FOR MORE INFO

American Legion Post 382 is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c)(19) of the internal revenue code. Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. No contributions or purchase is necessary. EIN# 90-0130668



# 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*



# AMERICAN LEGION EASTERN AREA BALL

**Get your Grunge on**

March 30<sup>th</sup> 5:00PM  
Post 286 Pine Castle  
529 Fairlane Ave, Orlando, FL 32809

RSVP by March 17<sup>th</sup>  
Text 3214433338 or use QR code to purchase tickets (preferred)

**Wear your best (worst) flannel,  
jeans, boots etc.**

Live music, 50/50 Raffles  
BBQ Brisket & Chicken platter  
w/fixins  
\$40.00 per person \$70.00 per  
couple

Profits will 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-\$999

**\*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**

**The American Legion Family is Donating**  
**All Proceeds to 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**

**George Worton – (410)382-0473**

# BE THE ONE

TO PUT VETERANS 1<sup>ST</sup>



★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
DETACHMENT OF FLORIDA COMMANDER

## GERARD SAMBETS HOMECOMING



# SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024

### LOCATION

AMERICAN LEGION POST 275  
360 WILSON ST  
DUNEDIN, FL 34698

### ATTIRE

"BE THE ONE"  
OR  
LEGION CASUAL

### TIMES

START TIME: 5PM  
DINNER SERVED  
6PM TO 8PM

#### TICKETS

GERARD SAMBETS  
29250 US HWY 19 LOT 142  
CLEARWATER FL 33761  
MEMO: HOMECOMING  
VENMO: @ERIN-CROSS-10

**\$30**  
SINGLE  
**\$50**  
DOUBLE

YOU MAY PAY AT THE DOOR.. PLEASE EMAIL ERIN YOUR **RSVP BY**  
**APRIL 28** IN ORDER SO WE HAVE AN ACCURATE HEAD COUNT

IF PAYING BY CHECK, PLEASE PROVIDE THE NAMES  
OF THE GUESTS THAT YOU ARE PAYING FOR.

#### HOTEL

HAMPTON INN DUNEDIN  
2641 MICHAEL PLACE  
DUNEDIN, FL 34698

CAILAN MASON  
(727) 733-1400 EXT 1400  
**MENTION GERARD'S HOMECOMING**



SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO BOOK ROOM ON  
HOTEL WEBSITE

ANY QUESTIONS OR TO RSVP, CONTACT ERIN SAMBETS AT  
ERINLCROSS@AOL.COM

## ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS EVENT BENEFIT



**SUNDAY MARCH 24, 2024**

**HONOR GUARD PRESENTS 1ST ANNUAL**



# **Chilli** **Cook-Off Contest**

**FUNDRAISER- ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT HONOR GUARD TEAM**

**PRESALE \$15 | AT THE DOOR \$20 | \$30 CONTESTANT ENTRY**

**EVENT STARTS AT 4PM-9PM \*\*NO FREE ENTRY TO POST MEMBERS\*\***

◆◆◆◆◆  
**AMERICAN LEGION POST 331**

**4325 FAIRMONT ST ORLANDO, FL 32805**

**FOR MORE INFO: CALL 407-234-4753**





# AMERICAN LEGION CHALLENGE 22 EVENT & WALK

Join Us To Help End Veteran Suicide  
SUPPORT OUR VETERANS



SATURDAY, MARCH

**23RD**

Seawalk Pavilion

**75 1ST STREET N, JAX BEACH**

GUEST SPEAKERS  
VENDOR BOOTHS  
FOOD TRUCKS  
LIVE MUSIC BY THE MATT  
ALTMAN BAND  
(10 A.M. – 1 P.M.)

**8 A.M. REGISTRATION**

**9 A.M. WALK**

**Register Today**

[www.give.floridalegion.org/ch22jax](http://www.give.floridalegion.org/ch22jax)

FOLLOWED BY RAFFLES AND SILENT AUCTION ITEMS FROM  
4 TO 8 P.M. AT AMERICAN LEGION POST 129,  
LOCATED AT 1151 4TH ST. IN JACKSONVILLE BEACH.