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

#oneteamonedream

A Message from the Department Commander

Jessica Moore, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



We recently had the honor of hosting our American Legion National Commander, and I want to personally thank everyone who helped make the visit truly exceptional.

Through careful planning, outstanding hospitality, and seamless coordination, our Legionnaires demonstrated the strength and unity of the Department of Florida. This visit was a true example of what Team Florida can accomplish when we come together as The American Legion Family.

Legionnaires, Auxiliary members, Sons of the American Legion, and Riders all stepped up and showed exactly what teamwork, dedication, and pride look like in action. Your efforts reflected the professionalism and commitment that define the Department of Florida and left a lasting impression on our national leadership.

Thank you for your hard work, cooperation, and continued service. You proved once again that when Team Florida answers the call, we deliver.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2026

- 1 BE THE ONE Day
- 1-28 Americanism Month
- 1-28 Black History Month
- 1-28 District 13: ALR Winter Passport Tour
- 26-1 National Commander Visit ★
- 1 JSSP 1st Round Targets Due to the CMP ★
- 1 District 9: 4 Chaplains Ceremony ☼
- 1 Post 303: Blessing of the Bikes
- 2 Youth Law Cadet Applications/Fees Open ☼
- 2 National Freedom Day
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 3 Four Chaplains Day
- 4 Dept Membership 85% Goal ☼
- 4 USO Birthday (1941)
- 4 Chapter 136: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 5 Dept Membership Zoom Meeting ☼
- 6-8 District 2: Dept Commander's Tour ☼
- 7 Western Area Ball ☼
- 7 Chapter 316: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 7 District 2: Meeting
- 7 District 15: Meeting
- 7 Post 243: 4 Chaplains Ceremony
- 7 District 11: Meeting
- 7 District 3: Meeting
- 7 Southwestern Area: ALR Rider Rally
- 8 Oratorical District Competitions Completed
- 8 Super Bowl LX
- 8-14 National Salute to Veteran Patients
- 8 District 4: Meeting
- 8 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 8 District 5: Meeting
- 11 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 12 Lincoln's Birthday (1809)
- 12-15 District 4: Dept Commander's Tour ☼
- 14 Valentine's Day

Service Before Self: Running for Office in the American Legion

Bob Matheson, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



Running for office in the American Legion, Department of Florida, is an honor that carries meaningful responsibility at every level—Post, District, and Area. One of the most important things to remember is that all American Legion officers are volunteers. These roles are filled by Legionnaires who are willing to give their time, energy, and experience to serve Veterans, their families, and their communities. No one is paid to do this work; it is done out of dedication to the mission and the values of the American Legion.

Before deciding to run for any elected position, it is critical to understand the specific duties and expectations of that office. Each level of leadership has its own scope and challenges. Review your Post Constitution and Bylaws to see what the requirements for the office entail. Post officers work directly with members and the local community and are often the backbone of Legion activity. District officers support and coordinate multiple

Posts, provide guidance, and help ensure programs and initiatives are successful. Area officers serve in a broader leadership role, assisting Districts, supporting Department goals, and helping maintain communication and consistency across a larger geographic region. Knowing the time commitment, travel requirements, and responsibilities of each position is essential before placing your name on the ballot.

It is also important to recognize that being elected often means being asked to do more than what is written in the job description. Situations arise where additional help is needed, Posts struggle, events require support, or fellow Legionnaires need guidance. Officers are frequently called upon to step outside their defined roles and lead where needed.

Running for office in the American Legion is a commitment to serve selflessly. Those who choose to run should do so with open eyes, a servant's heart, and a willingness to go above and beyond for the good of the organization and the Veterans we proudly serve.

Our Fourth Pillar: Children and Youth

Bruce Carl, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



What a great year it has been so far for Team Florida! I have traveled with the Department Commander and

attended numerous events, promoting membership, training, and our programs. I am thankful for all the Districts that have reached out and asked for training this year!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2026 (Continued)

- 14 District 3: ALR Bike 4 A Vet
- 14 District 7: Meeting/Picnic
- 14 District 11: Training
- 14 Post 183: Valentine's Party
- 15 Legion Link Articles Due for March *
- 15 JSSP 2nd Round Targets Mailed ★
- 15 Baseball Insurance Available ★
- 16 President's Day
- 16 Dept Headquarters Closed *
- 17 Mardi Gras
- 17 Washington's Birthday (1732)
- 18 ALR Summit Meet & Greet ⚡
- 19-21 ALR Summit ⚡
- 19 Coast Guard Reserve Birthday (1941)
- 21 District 14: Meeting
- 21 District 17: Meeting
- 21 District 1: Meeting
- 22 Oratorical Area Competitions Complete
- 28-4 Washington Conference ★ ⚡
- 28 District 12: Meeting
- 28 District 9: Meeting
- 28 Chapter 10 Bike Night

⚡ Commander attendance tentative.

* Department of Florida event.

★ National event.

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

<< 2nd Vice Commander continued from page 2

This month I will focus on the last of the American Legion Pillars, Children and Youth. Today's young people face an array of societal pressures. The dissolution of the traditional American family, illegal drug use, TV shows and movies filled with obscenities and indecencies. There is an alarming increase in bullying, aided by the spread of smartphones and social media.

Gone are the carefree days when children spent their summers playing baseball on vacant lots, lounging in tree houses, and riding bikes around town.

The American Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth is guided by three main objectives: to strengthen the family unit, work with quality organizations that provide services for children, and provide communities with well-rounded programs that meet the needs of young people.

Since its founding in 1919, The American Legion has been a staunch supporter of children and youth. The National Commission on Children & Youth continues that commitment today, as it seeks to improve the well-being of all children. The key to the future of a free and prosperous country, expressed by every generation of veterans, is held by the children and youth of today. The Legion strongly supports traditional family values, assistance for at-risk children, and

activities that promote their healthy and wholesome development. While there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow, our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training that we, as parents and citizens, provide for the young people of today.

The American Legion's Children & Youth pillar's most critical issues are: Child Pornography. The Legion opposes any attempts to weaken U.S. laws governing the production, sale, and distribution of pornographic materials.

Catastrophic Illness. The American Legion supports legislation to provide financial assistance to families with children who suffer catastrophic illnesses.

Intellectual Disabilities. The Legion supports research and early intervention efforts to prevent intellectual disabilities, to include research on the development and function of the nervous system, fetal treatments, and gene therapy to correct abnormalities from defective genes; and early intervention programs with high-risk infants and kids.

Immunization for Needy Children. The Legion urges federal funding for state and local health agencies to ensure that medically indigent children are afforded the opportunity to receive needed

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**DO YOU
HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES?**

SEE PAGE 30



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<< 2nd Vice Commander continued from page 3
vaccines and treatment.

Family Integrity. The Legion promotes the family as the cornerstone of society and supports National Family Week each November. The Legion further recognizes that the natural family is a fundamental unit, inscribed in human nature and centered on the voluntary union of a man and woman in a lifelong covenant of marriage.

Media Violence. The American Legion supports appropriate state and federal legislation to restrict the excessive use of violence, vulgarity, and immoral expressions in movies, television programs, news

broadcasts, video games, and the Internet.

Drug Abuse. The American Legion fully supports adequate funding for border, state, federal, and military drug-trafficking prevention programs to keep illegal substances from reaching our nation's youth.

Child Sexual Exploitation. The Legion supports appropriate laws aimed at the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of child sexual exploitation, and seeks to empower the public to take urgent and direct action to enforce a zero-tolerance policy.

Some of the key programs under this pillar are the Temporary

Financial Assistance, Family Support Network, The Child Well-Being Foundation, and Legacy Scholarships.

For over 100 years we have followed the same Four Pillars, although the programs may have changed and new ones added. These are the basis of our organization and always will be! There are 27 programs in the Department of Florida that fall under our Four Pillars. It is not expected for every Post to work all those programs, but take on what you can and work them to the best of your ability, even if it is only one or two of them.

Building Stronger Posts Through Leadership, Service, and Knowledge

Jim Ramos, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



The strength of The American Legion is built through leadership, volunteerism, and informed membership.

As we look ahead, there are three key areas that deserve our collective focus: welcoming national leadership, strengthening our Posts through volunteer service, and encouraging members to ask questions and seek accurate information.

Welcoming National Commander Dan Wiley to Florida

In January, the Department of

Florida will have the honor of hosting our National Commander, Dan Wiley, during a seven-day visit from Monday, January 26, through Sunday, February 1. His visit will focus on the Eastern Area, with stops in both the 12th and 6th Districts.

The visit will begin in the 12th District, where several Posts will be visited during the first portion of the schedule. The tour will then move to the 6th District, concluding on February 1 with lunch at Post 35. At the end of the visit, the National Commander will depart from Orlando International Airport (MCO).

For those unable to attend in person,

daily updates, photos, and highlights will be available on the Department of Florida Facebook page and the Department website under the National Commander Visit section. A full recap, including photos and detailed updates, will be published in the next issue of Legion Link.

National Commander visits rotate annually throughout the state as follows:

- 2026–2027: Southwestern Area
- 2027–2028: Central Area
- 2028–2029: Western Area
- 2029–2030: Southern Area
- 2030–2031: Northern Area
- 2031–2032: Eastern Area

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<< NEC continued from page 4

What Truly Makes a Better Post

A better Post starts with its members. Each of us is a volunteer, and the success of our Posts depends on members stepping forward to help. There is an old saying: *"If some members did half of what they expect others to do, what a wonderful Post this would be."* Though the author is unknown, the message is clear.

A volunteer is someone who willingly gives their time and effort without obligation or personal gain. In a Post setting, that can be as simple as asking, "Can I help?" When members take initiative, Posts become stronger, more active, and more welcoming. If you want a better Post, be part of the solution. One volunteer can make a significant difference, and collective effort can transform an entire Post.

The Importance of Asking Questions and Staying Informed

Members often have questions but

hesitate to ask them. Asking questions is essential, not only for personal understanding but for the health of the organization. If you have a question, someone else likely has the same one.

When seeking answers, ensure they are accurate and supported by official references. The *Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies* and other current publications should always be used, with specific page references whenever possible. Today, many of these resources are available online and can be saved to a phone or computer for easy access.

Members should follow the chain of command when seeking answers and rely on knowledgeable leaders who can provide accurate, documented information. Every Post should maintain an up-to-date reference library and review it regularly to ensure compliance with current policies and procedures.

Essential reference materials include:

- Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
- Post Commander's Guide
- Post Adjutant's Guide
- Department Membership Manual
- Department Constitution and By-Laws
- National Constitution and By-Laws
- Uniform Code of Procedure for National Conventions
- Rules of the National Executive Committee

The same care should be taken to maintain current references for all branches of the American Legion Family.

By welcoming leadership, embracing volunteer service, and staying informed, we strengthen our Posts and ensure the continued success of The American Legion.

Time to Review Important Annual Post Filing Requirements

Shirley Douglas, Finance Officer

finance@legionmail.org



Now is a good time to perform an annual review of several important Post filing requirements and annual reviews to ensure your Post is in compliance with often overlooked requirements.

- Sunbiz.org State of Florida

Incorporation Certificate

– The Post must be listed as an incorporation by the State of Florida for the calendar year January–December. You must renew the Post's incorporation papers with the state sometime between January 1, 2026, and May 1, 2026. If your Post is NOT incorporated, every member of your Post can be open to a lawsuit.

- **IRS Form 8822-B – Change of Address or Responsible Party Form.** Whenever there is a change of address or a change of the person in charge, a new IRS Form 8822-B must be filed with the IRS. This is a basic form that looks like a "Change of Address" form. The "responsible party" can be the Post Commander, Adjutant, or

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<< Finance Officer continued from page 5

Finance Officer.

- This is also a good time to check your Post's tax-exempt status. You can check the Post's status at **Tax Exempt Organization Search | Internal Revenue Service ([irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov))**.
- **Post Insurance** – Time to review your Post's insurance coverage. Make sure the policy coverage is sufficient to cover any loss that might occur. Every

Post should have some type of liability insurance. This insurance should also cover your members to and from a meeting if you don't have a Post home.

- **Review your Liquor License** – For information, go to **Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco – [MyFloridaLicense.com](https://www.myfloridalicense.com)**.
- **DR-5 R. 01-17 TC.pdf** – Check the expiration date on your Post's Consumer's Certificate

of Exemption form. Sales tax exemption certificates expire after five years. The Department reviews each exemption certificate sixty (60) days before the current certificate expires. It is recommended the Post Commander, Adjutant, and Finance Officer review the above requirements together, since they will be the most likely Post officers responsible for filing the forms and answering questions about the Post's status.

American Legion Goals for 2026

Rick Orzechowski, Central Area Cmdr
central@legionmail.org



Happy New Year to all my brothers and sisters in the American Legion. I have compiled a list of goals to strive for in the year ahead of me. First

and foremost, support and advocate for veterans' benefits, healthcare, and quality of life improvements. We can do this by assisting our great Service Officers and supporting fundraisers for the various programs the Legion endorses. Enhance youth programs and scholarship opportunities to foster leadership and patriotism among younger generations. Boys State, Oratorical, Boy Scouts, and Baseball are all programs that enrich the lives of our future leaders. We also have scholarships to offer students who want to go to

college or trade schools. Promote Americanism through community service, civic education, and national remembrance initiatives. Strengthen national security by supporting the U.S. military, advocating for defense readiness, and engaging in homeland security efforts. Expand membership and increase community outreach to ensure the organization's vitality and continued impact.

We have over 1.4 million veterans in the State of Florida, and almost every local community has a National Guard armory close to them. Visit them and offer them a free or reduced-price breakfast, dinner, or supper, and show them what we have to offer them as members.

Remind them that most of the veterans' benefits they are now

entitled to are because the American Legion supported legislation such as the Veterans Bill of Rights, the original GI Bill, and the Montgomery GI Bill. Encourage veteran entrepreneurship and employment initiatives to help veterans transition successfully into civilian careers. Advance legislative priorities that protect and elevate the rights of veterans, active-duty service members, and their families. The American Legion has a great supporting cast, from Headquarters staff, Department leadership, Area Officers, and District Officers all the way down to Post officers who constantly strive to better the American Legion members' lives by offering assistance and helping them find the assistance they need. Now the most exciting part of all this is we have FUN while doing all this.



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A Common Goal

Doug Hockenberry, Northern Area Cmdr
northern@legionmail.org



It's hard to believe that we are already more than halfway through the 2025–2026 Legion year. Over the past seven months, time has flown by as I have had the privilege of visiting multiple Posts throughout the Northern Area and across the state. During this period, I have also attended a wide variety of events throughout the Department, each offering new opportunities to connect with others while supporting a common goal.

During my visits, one thing has stood

out above all others: the unwavering commitment that each of you invests in making these events successful while supporting your Posts. Whether it's a Sons Pizza Night, a Friday Night Fish Fry, an Auxiliary Breakfast, a Riders Benefit Ride, or gathering to honor a fallen comrade, our shared dedication is evident. In every situation, everyone pulls together to fulfill our mission—and to me, that is what matters most. Again, supporting a common goal.

When we work together, there is nothing that can hold us back. Our unity and teamwork are the driving force behind our collective achievements, progress,

and continued success. So, let's continue to uphold the values of this great organization, which truly lends credence to our Department Commander's theme of "One Team One Dream."

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for your ongoing support. Let's continue our commitment to taking care of our veterans, supporting their families, and serving our communities. As always, feel free to email me at northern@legionmail.org or give me a call at 727-514-3742. Again, thank you, and have an amazing month. **"Hang Tough."**

#OneTeamOneDream

Making the Case for the Reestablishment of the 10th District

Geo Bograkos, Southern Area Cmdr
southern@legionmail.org



Many, many years ago, the Department of Florida combined the 10th District with the 14th District through an amendment to the Department of Florida's Constitution.

The old 10th District's boundaries were the Broward–Miami-Dade County line south to the north side of SW 8th St. in downtown Miami.

The old 14th District's boundaries were the south side of SW 8th St. in Miami south to Key West.

This decision to combine the 10th

and the 14th Districts at the time was based solely upon the total number of Posts within the two Districts, without regard for the unworkable geography and sheer unmanageability of such a large District—just shy of 200 miles from end to end.

More importantly, this resulted in a limited 14th District leadership pool of candidates for District leadership that continues to this day, since few have the desire and wherewithal to administer such a large, 200-mile-long 14th District with 17 Posts.

We believe reestablishing the 10th District will provide better representation for the many

Legionnaires within the area. It will also give the new 10th and 14th Districts their own identity, since they are two unique areas.

To that end, we are proposing a constitutional amendment that is slated to be on the agenda before the General Membership at the upcoming Department of Florida Convention this June. This amendment to the Constitution seeks to reestablish the 10th District but with different, more workable boundaries.

The amendment's proposed 10th District boundaries will be from the Broward–Miami-Dade County line

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<< Southern Area Cmdr continued from page 7

south to the north side of Campbell Drive (SW 312th St.) in Homestead and will include Posts 29, 31, 32, 67, 98, 133, 144, 165, 182, 346, and 374.

The amendment's proposed 14th District boundaries will be the south side of SW 312th St. in Homestead south to Key West and will include Posts 43, 333, 145, 154, 28, and 168.

This proposed amendment was drafted by Post 43 in Homestead, approved by the General Membership, and signed by the Post Commander. While they are technically in Miami-Dade County, they are closer to the Keys than they are to mainland Miami.

We believe the reestablishment of the 10th District with these new, manageable boundaries will help attract new District leadership candidates, increase membership opportunities for both the 10th and 14th Districts, and better serve The American Legion and its members.

I have traveled throughout the current 14th District presenting this idea and have encountered nothing but positive comments and support for this proposed constitutional amendment.

Let's improve the Southern Area for the thousands of Legionnaires in the new, proposed 10th and 14th Districts by voting to support this

important constitutional amendment at the Department Convention.

Big thanks to Post 43 Commander Jason Nimark and 14th District 1st Vice Commander Wayne Schorr for their invaluable assistance in bringing this long-overdue matter before the Department Convention.

The 14th District Constitutional Conference (DCC), scheduled for May 16, 2026, at 09:00 at Post 31, will look to elect a potential new 10th District Commander and two Vice Commanders.

Two weeks prior to the DCC, there will be an unofficial "Mini-DCC" on May 3, 2026, at Post 154 in Marathon, FL, to field willing candidates for new 14th District Commander and two Vice Commanders.

Upon passage of the constitutional amendment to reestablish the 10th District, the incoming Department Commander will appoint the respective 10th and 14th District Commanders and Vice Commanders at the DEC on June 14.

They will be installed as soon as possible and move forward with our reestablished 10th District and reconfigured 14th District. Please support this important amendment at the Convention.

Remember to **#BETHEONE**

Noteworthy events coming up in the

Southern Area:

Remember our last Southern Area Training Session for 2025–2026 is set for District 11 at Post 268 on February 14. All sessions focus on: MyLegion.org, Conflict Resolution, and How to Conduct a Post Meeting.

Department Convention trainers

traveling to the Southern Area to deliver this training may include, but are not limited to:

- Department of Florida 1st Vice Commander Bob Matheson,
- Department of Florida 2nd Vice Commander Bruce Carl,
- Department of Florida Southern Area Commander Geo Bograkos,
- Department of Florida Membership Chair Lena Heredia-Perez,
- Department of Florida Membership Vice Chair Isaac White,
- and other guest trainers.

See the Southern Area Training flyer on page 32.

The award-winning District 9 Four Chaplains Commemoration Ceremony will be held on February 1, 2026, at 14:00 hours at the I.T. Parker Center, 901 NE 3rd St., Dania Beach, FL 33004.

Immediately following the Four

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<< Southern Area Cmdr continued from page 8

Chaplains Ceremony, American Legion Post 304 Commander Kevin "Gunny" Savage cordially invites you to join him at the official Four Chaplains After Party and Dinner, to be held at the host location, American Legion Post 304, 41 NE 1st Ct., Dania Beach, FL 33004. Finally, if you have not already done so, please visit and follow the

first-ever **Southern Area Facebook page**, where you may share your event posts with everyone in Districts 9, 11, 14, and beyond:

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAreaFL>

Or use the QR code to go directly to the page.



Wishing you and yours a very Happy Valentine's Day.

#OneTeamOneDream

Membership, Constitution and Bylaws, and Elections

Eric Loyd, Southwestern Area Cmdr

southwestern@legionmail.org



Membership is the key to all Posts' success. Recruiting new members is a must. When it comes to membership, think outside the box. You need

to go after them, not have them come to you. In July, when you receive your new cards for the year, that's when you start making calls, advertising at the Post, and recruiting new members. Don't wait until the end of the year to worry about membership. Set up a recruiting table at your local Wal-Mart, grocery store, Home

Depot, Ace Hardware, and at your Post. Every Post has visitors, and we need to be recruiting them.

My suggestion is to get a team of four to five people who can make calls. Pick one day a week and start with A and work to Z. Call your members, see how they are doing, and ask them if they would like to renew their membership. It works; it's a personal, friendly reminder.

The other thing we need to do is review our Constitution and Bylaws every three years. If no changes need to be made, just send a letter

to the Department stating that the membership approved no changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. Keep them current.

Soon we will be electing officers for the 2026–2027 year. Anyone running for an officer position has to show their DD-214. Even if you know them, you have to see proof that they are eligible to run for an officer position. I recommend anyone running for a position should job shadow to learn the position, to make sure they can and want to do it for a year.

The "WHY" for Boys State

Darcy Bockman-Wright, District 4 Cmdr

district4@legionmail.org



Where were you in June of 2014? Department Convention? On vacation? I was still in Washington State, working for the Department of Defense, and had no clue that a young man's journey

exploring the world would be starting in Tallahassee at the 71st session of Florida American Legion Boys State (FALBS).

Javan Latson was a junior at Belleview High School and had always thrived as a kid. His first encounter with Belleview Post 284 was when he won a school medal

in 5th grade at Madison Street Elementary School. In elementary, middle, and high school, he diligently submitted essays in the "Governor's Essay Competition" and finally won in 2014, becoming the first EVER winner in Marion County. In 2015, he won the Post 284 Oratorical Contest, only to

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<< District 4 Cmdr continued from page 9

place runner-up to the National 1st Place winner, Geeta Minocha from Post 27, at District.

At Boys State, Javan utilized and fine-tuned the tools he already had through an experience that only Boys State can provide. As a Port Feacher delegate (named after past Boys State Director and current Daytona Beach City Manager Deric C. Feacher), he was elected City Fire Chief and later worked as an Attaché for the Forum. He said the unceasing opportunities, networking, and critical thinking from diverse backgrounds expanded his horizon beyond our beautiful state lines. He learned to stay calm, slow down, and not overthink various situations during walks to the Tucker Center or in the lunchroom amongst fellow delegates. He stayed connected with a few delegates throughout his studies at Vanderbilt, where he obtained his bachelor's degree. A fellow delegate advised Javan about an opportunity as a Department of State diplomat, where he is currently employed.

Ironically, his first duty was in China, where he created a mock constitutional convention for over

one hundred Chinese diplomats, utilizing the knowledge he had gained from his Boys State and Oratorical experiences. He learned that "big ideas need simple and concise explanations in order to achieve success." In our culture, we do not realize the world is the same diverse situation Boys State provided; lack of time and too much explanation are not always available with every happening. He continues to expand his desire to learn languages as he fulfilled obligations in Morocco, multiple European countries, and currently is stationed in Havana, Cuba.

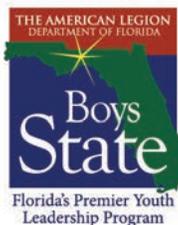
Javan is not just the son of a veteran, a Floridian, 4th District, Marion County, or Belleview High School success. He is a Department of Florida American Legion success. Our programs started excelling this young man's life in fifth grade with school medals, thanks to the support from Post 284 and the wide variety of programs they provide. Javan, through the Legion's programs, can pursue dreams beyond Florida that expand the globe. The impact of FALBS is not just at our military academies, our local colleges, in the White House, or abroad. It is in a classroom right now, waiting for your Post to provide a once-in-a-

lifetime opportunity to the Premier Leadership Program, June 21 –27, 2026, in Tallahassee, Florida.

Javan is one of countless delegates impacting a world where communication seems limited, ideas are becoming narrower, and voices are either too loud or mute. I look forward to meeting and engaging with the anticipated five hundred-plus delegates you have or will choose. Who knows—another Mayor, Senator, Pastor, Doctor, Educator, or President will be in attendance.

Please order your tickets to the third annual Boys State Dinner, located at Department Headquarters, on May 9, 2026, at 5 pm. Your support is appreciated and needed to aid with enhancements and technology provided to all our delegates.

Check out the flier on page 33 and linked issues.



FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE DINNER

MAY 9 | DEPT HEADQUARTERS | **ALL SUPPORTERS ARE WELCOME!**
5:00PM | 1912 LEE RD | Dinner, auction, raffle, camaraderie.
 ORLANDO, FL 32810

SPECIAL GUEST: SENATOR DANNY BURGESS

▶▶▶▶▶ **TICKETS AT** <https://givebutter.com/c/adv5nW> **DETAILS ON PAGE 33**



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Membership Renewals and 7th District Family Meeting

Kalvin Thompson, District 7 Cmdr

district7@legionmail.org



It is time once again to address membership renewals, as 2025 memberships have now expired. Proactive outreach is key; Buddy

Checks remain the most effective tool for engaging our members. We encourage reaching out beyond our own Post, including Post 400 members, to demonstrate that they are valued and to assist in their

transition to local Posts.

You are invited to attend our inaugural 7th District Family Meeting and Picnic, taking place on Sunday, February 15, at Mulberry Memorial Post 72. The event will commence with a joint opening ceremony at 11:00 AM, followed by food, entertainment, and activities for all members of the American Legion Family. This gathering also serves as an opportunity to raise funds for District initiatives supporting the

Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders. Guests can look forward to an assortment of food, games, and raffles—including baskets, 50/50 draws, and occasional bottle raffles. Please bring your family and join us for a memorable day.

Let us work together to make 2026 an outstanding year for the 7th District and the Department of Florida.

Summit Time at the Beach

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders

alr@legionmail.org



Wow—February already! That can only mean one thing: it is time for the Summit!

This year, in addition to a new location, we are fulfilling everyone’s wish to return to the beach. We truly could not be any closer—the Daytona Hilton is right on the beach. Even better, we are scheduled perfectly between two major events: Daytona Bike Week and the Daytona 500, so there should be plenty of activities around town.

The Summit itself will feature our standard classes, plus the return of “Stop the Bleed,” along with a brand-new, in-house, hands-on Group Riding Course developed by Boddy Greer and Wayne Parrot.

The Group Riding Course will be offered Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, depending on interest, at no charge. The course will cover:

- Proper use of communications (Comms)
- Lane-changing techniques
- Group acceleration
- Turning as a group
- The critical importance of a proper ride briefing

Riders will depart from the hotel (exact location to be determined) and travel through Daytona to Teddy Moore’s Harley-Davidson at the junction of I-95 and US-1; depending on traffic conditions, the group may make a short run on I-95 before returning through the Loop. Two groups of 10 bikes may be formed depending on the mix of two-wheelers and trikes.

Important Reminder: Opening Ceremonies will take place at 5:30 PM on February 18, immediately followed by our Meet & Greet.

Safety Support: We are available to support your upcoming events and to promote motorcycle safety throughout the year. To schedule participation or to request safety materials and brochures, please contact us so we can add your event to the calendar and ensure all resources are prepared in advance.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, please share them—we would love to hear from you!

Upcoming Events:

- **Summit, Meet & Greet**
February 18, 2026
- **Summit Classes**

continued on page 12 >>



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<< American Legion Riders continued from page 11

February 19–21, 2026

- Round Robin
April 2026

- Children & Youth Picnic
April 11, 2026

- State Unity Ride
April 20–24, 2026

- Rally
April 25, 2026

Thank you for all that you do. Bev & I are proud to be part of such an outstanding leadership team!



FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS | SUMMIT & EXPO

FEBRUARY 18-21, 2026 | HILTON DAYTONA BEACH OCEANFRONT RESORT

DETAILS AT floridalegion.org/summit



February: A Month of Americanism, Advocacy, and Service

Joe Marcheggiani, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org



In February, The American Legion emphasizes its commitment to the “Four Pillars” through a month defined by historical remembrance, legislative advocacy, and community service. While the month is designated as Americanism Month, it serves as a multifaceted period where the organization honors the past while actively securing the future for veterans and their families.

The central theme of February is Americanism Month, a tradition established in 1960. During this time, local Posts are tasked with fostering “100 percent Americanism” by promoting civic responsibility and youth development. This patriotic focus is intertwined with Black History Month, during which the Legion highlights the valor and contributions of African American servicemembers who have served in every conflict since the Revolutionary War.

A significant spiritual and historical anchor for the month occurs on

February 3, Four Chaplains Day. This solemn observance commemorates the selfless sacrifice of four Army chaplains of different faiths who gave up their life jackets to save others during the sinking of the USAT Dorchester in 1943. Across the country, American Legion Posts hold interfaith memorial services to honor this legacy of “unity without uniformity.”

Beyond historical remembrance, February 2026 is a period of intense operational focus. The Legion will continue to prioritize its “Be the One” campaign, an initiative dedicated to ending veteran suicide by encouraging members and the public to take direct action in supporting veterans in crisis. This mission is reinforced

during the annual Washington Conference in late February, where Legionnaires meet with members of Congress to advocate for critical veterans’ legislation and healthcare improvements.

Community engagement is also a cornerstone of the month. On a local level, Posts frequently utilize Valentine’s Day and Presidents Day (observed February 16, 2026) as themes for social fundraisers and “Buddy Checks” to ensure no veteran is left behind. Simultaneously, the Legion’s youth programs reach a fever pitch, with students competing in Oratorical Contests and applying for the upcoming sessions of Boys State and Girls State.

Through this blend of patriotic education, advocacy, and community support, The American Legion ensures that February 2026 remains a month of action, honoring the diversity of the veteran experience while strengthening the bonds of the communities they serve.



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National Blood Month: A Call to Action

Jamie Grinis, Blood Donor

blooddonor@legionmail.org

January was National Blood Month with great success in Florida. Post 103 had a huge turnout for their 100th anniversary Blood Drive. I am sure many other Posts were just as successful.

I keep getting phone calls and emails on how to report Blood Donor activities to the Department. It's quite easy. Go to the Department website, look for Programs, and go to Blood Donor. Click on that tab and find the fill-in form, then just fill in the blanks.

It only takes a few minutes. Fill it out with each Blood Drive. This way, we can keep track of your total pint count at the end of the year.

I challenged everyone on the Convention Floor to double last year's total of 3,800 pints statewide. We all know this is not an impossible goal to meet. Keep scheduling those blood buses to help us make that goal of 7,600 pints of blood.

This is the time of year when every Post is hustling to raise funds for their programs. For the Posts without a

program, might I suggest that your Post select Blood Donor as your program of choice. You may contact one of the three collection facilities listed on the Department website. Each Post must support at least one program to keep their charter active.

I look forward to seeing your progress as we feverishly work to help our fellow man with the Elixir of Love. One pint can help save three lives. Who knows—you may need to use a pint or two one day.

Flying Higher in 2026

Rico Thomas, Civil Air Patrol

civilairpatrol@legionmail.org



Happy New Year! The past year has passed, and the New Year is here. Let's continue to support our youth programs. We had a great turnout at the Fall Conference, but few are supporting CAP Cadet squadrons. In this new year, our youth need more support. How

can you support a squadron in your area? Below, you will find a link to a local squadron. Reach out to their leadership and express your Post's availability to support the cadets. If you are hosting Post, District, and Area events, reach out to your local squadron and invite them to participate. Also, take part in their awards ceremonies. As always, reach out to me with any questions. Please send me any correspondence

regarding your activities, support, and involvement. Make 2026 a great new year!

Find your local squadron here:

- <https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/members/cap-unit-web-sites>
- <https://flwg.cap.gov/>

#OneTeamOneDream

Supporting JROTC Programs and Upcoming Deadlines

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP

jrotc@legionmail.org



Now the holiday season is over, school has resumed, and the semester is moving forward with all year-end events and deadlines.

For the JROTC Program, I would

encourage all Posts to contact the schools that you support to make sure you have the opportunity to encourage this valuable youth program. The JROTC Performance Accreditation (JPA) reviews are held during the first couple of weeks of February each year and rotate throughout the entire state with each

JROTC military service branch. This is the formal review of all records for drill performance, in-rank review, personal cadet interviews, uniform records, and formal briefing of the Cadet Battalion Staff. There is also a community service project that the cadets have undertaken to support

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<< JRTOC/JSSP continued from page 13

and partner with the community that will benefit some aspect of the community, including health, seniors, veterans, and others. Contact with the Senior Instructors is best by email, as there is always a very full daily agenda and phone calls are difficult to answer.

The deadline for the Cadet of the Year is March 1 and is available to one outstanding cadet for each JROTC unit. The individual is chosen by the instructors, and the application is on the Department website and can be emailed to the school. Contacting the schools should be done as soon as possible to allow them time to complete the full application.

As a final “heads up,” please make sure that you have the JROTC Scholastic Medal and Military Excellence Medal already ordered. The medals are usually presented at the year-end ceremony or Military Ball in April and May, but some may be as early as March. You must reach out to the schools, as waiting for the instructors to contact the Post might be too late to get an order processed from Emblem Sales. Please make every effort to have a Legionnaire make the personal presentations rather than just dropping off or sending the medals and certificates by mail. This is something that the cadets take much pride in, being recognized for their yearlong efforts. The JSSP National Postal Competition

is underway, and the postal targets have a deadline to be returned by Feb. 2, and I should have the information on the teams that completed and returned targets by the next issue. They are scored by CMP and returned by Feb. 16 to the team coaches. The second-round winners will be notified, and the final deadline to return those targets will be April 1. Good luck to all the teams, and thanks to all the Posts that have supported this very valuable program. Please forward to me any outstanding events that your sponsored JROTC units may be involved with in the community and share any pictures you may have. Let’s have a great year-end semester.

Down to the Wire – Selection of the Final Six Competitors

Doug Hockenberry, Oratorical

oratorical@legionmail.org



Over the past six months, Post, District, and Area Oratorical Chairs have been actively engaged in promoting The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program within their respective cities, towns, and communities. This effort requires significant dedication, and I want to express my gratitude to everyone for their ongoing support of this important program.

February marks a pivotal time for the Oratorical Program, with

Area-level contests scheduled to take place from February 9 to February 22, 2026. Each contest will determine one student from each of the six areas throughout Florida, who will then advance to compete in the Department of Florida Oratorical Contest in Orlando on March 14, 2026.

Since January 1, 2026, five additional students have reached out to inquire about the Oratorical Program scholarship, which is a fantastic development. As mentioned in previous articles, we have received a record number of student inquiries this year.

It is crucial to engage with these students, as many are currently in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. This means they are eligible to compete not only this year but also in future years, providing a valuable opportunity to build momentum for next year’s program.

By working with these students as they develop their speeches and refine their oratory skills, we set ourselves up for continued success—a true win-win situation.

Thank you once again for your continued support. I look forward to seeing many of you at the

continued on page 15 >>



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<< Oratorical continued from page 14

Department Contest on March 14, 2026, where we will have

the privilege of hearing from six outstanding students. If you have any questions, please

feel free to email me at oratorical@legionmail.org or call me at 727-514-3742. **"Hang Tough."**

The Night of Sacrifice: Remembering the Four Chaplains

Denny Luke, POW/MIA

pawmia@legionmail.org



It is midnight on 3 February 1943.

If you were not on watch, you were likely asleep in your warm rack when—without warning—an

explosion shattered the night.

You are aboard the USAT Dorchester, a transport ship steaming silently through the icy waters of the North Atlantic, en route from New York to Greenland as part of Convoy SG-19. Escorted by the Coast Guard cutters Tampa, Escanaba, and Comanche, the Dorchester carries critical supplies for the war effort—60 bags of mail, lumber, 1,069 tons of general cargo—and, most importantly, 904 souls.

Built to carry just over 400 passengers and crew as a coastal passenger steamship, the Dorchester had been hastily converted for wartime service. Comfort had given way to mission. Extra bunks replaced amenities. War does not allow luxury.

At 0055 hours, approximately 150 miles west of Cape Farewell, Greenland, German submarine U-223 fired a spread of torpedoes at the convoy. One struck the

Dorchester on the starboard side, ripping through the machinery space. The engines stopped. The ship listed sharply. Six blasts of the whistle signaled disaster.

Within minutes, chaos reigned.

Three of the ship's fourteen lifeboats were destroyed in the blast. Only two overcrowded boats were successfully launched. Many aboard failed to grasp the severity of the situation. Others became trapped below decks as passageways twisted and collapsed. Just thirty minutes after being hit, the Dorchester slipped beneath the freezing Atlantic.

Rescue efforts began almost immediately. The Coast Guard cutters Escanaba and Comanche pulled survivors from the water, rafts, and lifeboats—some rescued by swimmers who jumped directly into the icy sea with wetsuits and lines tied around their waists. Despite their heroic efforts, the toll was devastating.

Of the 904 aboard, 675 perished.

First Sergeant Michael Warish was one of those cast into the freezing water. Floating helplessly, surrounded by hundreds of doomed shipmates, he believed his end was near. Life expectancy in those waters

was barely twenty minutes. As he drifted, the blinking red lights of life preservers reminded him of Christmas lights.

In those final moments, his thoughts turned not to fear—but to four men he had witnessed just before abandoning ship.

Calm amid the panic, these four chaplains moved through the chaos distributing life preservers, guiding men to safety, and offering prayers. When the life jackets ran out, they removed their own and gave them away—fully aware of what that meant. Witnesses later recalled seeing them standing together, arms linked, praying as the ship disappeared beneath the waves.

They were **Army Chaplains:**

- Father John P. Washington (Catholic)
- Rabbi Alexander D. Goode (Jewish)
- Reverend George L. Fox (Methodist)
- Reverend Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church in America)

Four men of different faiths, united by service, sacrifice, and love of their fellow man.

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<< POW/MIA continued from page 15

They were posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross. In 1948, the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative stamp in their honor. Congress designated 3 February as Four Chaplains Day and later established the Four Chaplains Medal, presented to their families.

Why do we remember the Four Chaplains?

Because they remind us that leadership is service.

That courage is calm in the face of fear.

That faith, whatever its form, is proven through action.

As members of The American Legion, we are the living continuation of that legacy. Their sacrifice challenges us to ask ourselves:

- How do we serve when it is inconvenient?
- How do we lead when there is no recognition?
- How do we put others before

ourselves?

Let us honor the Four Chaplains not only with words, but with action—by supporting our Post, strengthening our Squadron and Auxiliary, serving our community, caring for our veterans, and standing shoulder to shoulder with one another in unity and purpose.

They have no known grave, for they are listed as Missing in Action, but they have an eternal legacy.

Stay Connected

- Florida POW/MIA Facebook Page: facebook.com/falpowmia
- Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA): dpaa.mil
- National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum: powmiamemorial.org

DPAA Missing Personnel Identified in FY 2026 as of 7 January 2026

- World War II: 45
- Korean War: 9
- Cold War: 0
- Vietnam War: 0

Accounted For During December 2025

Dec. 2, 2025

- Orr, W. — World War II

Dec. 3, 2025

- Brewer, M. — World War II
- Hagie, G. — Korean War
- Thompson, R. — World War II
- Neely, A. — World War II
- Proctor, D. — World War II

Dec. 4, 2025

- Gibson, A. — Korean War
- Summers, R. — World War II

Dec. 9, 2025

- Ellingson, I. — World War II

Dec. 10, 2025

- Bianchi, W. — World War II
- Cyr, R. — World War II

Dec. 11, 2025

- Stewart, O. — Korean War
- Ginzl, J. — World War II
- Johnston, D. — World War II

Dec. 12, 2025

- Farrell, W. — Korean War

Dec. 29, 2025

- Calfee, J. — Vietnam War



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR OUR LEGION FAMILY!

ADVERTISE IN THE DEPT CONVENTION PROGRAM BOOK

DISCOUNTED RATES FOR LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS

SEE PAGE 26



FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

FEBRUARY 2026 EDITION

CURRENT YEAR FIGURES : SINCE JULY 2025



90 VETS RECEIVED FUNDS



\$147,962 PROVIDED AS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE



14 SPI PARTNERS



\$103,500 GIVEN TOWARDS SUICIDE PREVENTION

SUPPORT US - HOST OR ATTEND AN EVENT!

PROJECT VetRelief is here for veterans facing urgent financial hardship and suicide risk. **When a crisis hits, there isn't time to wait!** Right now, you can help make sure immediate support is available by joining an upcoming fundraiser or hosting one in your community.

Why Your Support Matters

Too many veterans are navigating unexpected emergencies: rent or utilities past due, medical costs, job loss, and mental health challenges that can escalate quickly. PROJECT VetRelief provides rapid, direct assistance helping veterans stabilize in the moment and connect to life-saving support. When you give, you're helping veterans get help now, *not later*.

Join an Upcoming Fundraising Event

Fundraising events in the coming months will bring neighbors, friends, and local organizations together for one mission: supporting veterans in need. Whether you attend, sponsor, volunteer, or help spread the word, your participation does more than raise funds. It

reminds veterans that their community stands with them, too.

Host Your Own Fundraiser

No event nearby? Hosting one is easier than you think, and every effort counts. Whether it's a community BBQ, golf tournament, chili cook-off, donation jar, or a letter to your members, each effort helps strengthen the safety net for veterans in need. PROJECT VetRelief can provide guidance, ideas, and support to help you plan a successful fundraiser. Reach out and we'll help you get started.

Already Hosting an Event? Tell Us So We Can Share It

If your post, organization, or business already has an event in the works, let us know the details (*date, location, event type, and a contact person*). We'll help spread the word through our channels to boost attendance and support, because the more people who show up, the more veterans we can help.

UPCOMING EVENTS:



Rockin' for Vets

MAR 7 @ Winter Haven Post 8 (ALR)



Central Area Ride-In

MAR 29 @ Mulberry Post 72 (ALR)



Benefits Fair

MAR 7 @ Bartow Post 3



ALR Round Robin

APRIL - Month-long event, entire state



Suicide Prevention Event

MAR 21 @ Jacksonville Beach Pavilion



ALR Unity Ride

APR 20-24 - Statewide Ride on 3 routes



!! NEW WEBSITE DESIGN ALERT !!

Our team is busy working on a refreshed site with a better user experience: easier navigation and quicker access to the details you need. Stay tuned for the official launch in the coming weeks!



Guidelines for Submitting Proposed Resolutions

Clarence Hill, Resolutions

resolutions@legionmail.org



If you are considering transmitting a proposed resolution beyond your Post, you should ensure that the subject matter is truly relevant to the principles of The American Legion. The Preamble to the Constitution can be used as a general guide as to the boundaries within which subject matters should be kept. Posts should also be wary of becoming a channel through which non-Legion organizations seek to achieve their own goals. Some things to consider:

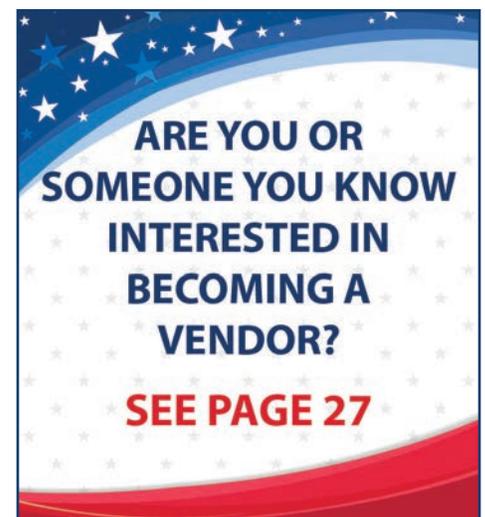
- **Is it relevant?** A resolution that calls for saving the environment of the spotted woodpecker might make some people happy, but what does it have to do with the mission of The American Legion? The American Legion might support legislation that would open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain for oil exploration since it impacts our national security and economic well-being as a nation.
- **Does The American Legion already have a position on the subject?** If so, the proposed resolution will be "received and recorded."
- **Can the subject matter be taken care of administratively without the need for a resolution?** If so, there is no need for the proposed resolution.

- **Does the resolution involve a local issue?** If so, again, there is no need for the proposed resolution.
- **What legislation is involved?** Avoid quoting references to the numbers or titles used in proposed legislation, whether the bills proposed are at the local, county, state, or national level. The text of these bills may change to such an extent that you end up appearing to support legislation that is not good for veterans or your particular cause. Always write directly about the subject, not a title or bill number.
- **Is it reasonable that the intent of the resolution can be realistically attained?** Calling for the elimination of terrorism sounds great, but why draft such a resolution if it cannot be realistically accomplished, unless there are sound ideas and suggestions in the resolution as to how this can be done?
- **Does the resolution deal with a politically sensitive issue?** Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution states: "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpartisan and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment." The Corporate Charter, 36 U.S.C. Section 21706, states: "The corporation shall be nonpolitical and may not promote

the candidacy of an individual seeking public office."

- **Should The American Legion be involved in the issue?** Because we do not have research physicians on staff, we should not recommend or advocate for a specific medication. However, you can certainly call upon the VA to use the most appropriate medication to treat the patients under their care, regardless of cost.
- **Is it simple or complex?** Remember to keep the resolution to one subject. Submit two separate resolutions in the case of two different objectives.

We are approaching five months from Convention. Please don't wait until the last minute to submit proposed resolutions for review. Keep in mind that the Department must ensure that proposed resolutions are received by each Post at least 40 days prior to Convention.





Off to a Great Start

Randy Holeyfield, School Medals

schoolmedals@legionmail.org



Well, we've dashed into a new year, and this is the time to approach the schools your Post services to determine the extent or estimated number of medals that you will be awarding. Ordering early will not only ensure that you will not have any out-of-stock issues or delays in shipping. You are projecting both previous years' numbers and promoting additional medals such as Scholastic, Music, Essay, Oratory (not part of the Oratorical Program), Citizenship, and Americanism. There are two different school categories as well.

Although the deadline for the "School Award" is two weeks prior to a school's scheduled graduation date, and that award requires the name of the One Boy and One Girl, at this time we are only ordering the awards to ensure we have enough on hand. This applies only to that particular medal. Right now, we are simply ascertaining what level of participation each school is requesting from your Post.

The Post's School Medals Chair is the "promoter" for providing some of these additional medals. Take the Athletic Medal, for example: if a school wins or advances to divisional games and/or has an MVP, you can see the potential statewide—do I hear "SPORTS"? Yes! How about Oratory? There are two types: one for debate teams or if a school has its own oratorical contest, and the other for drama and speech clubs, again with Gold, Silver, or Bronze levels.

Most of our Posts support JROTC, which has two specific medals. Some Posts also promote other medals within the School Medals Program, such as Americanism, Athletic, and the Marksmanship Medal.

Let me ask this: does any Post provide scholarships to their JROTC cadets or other students? If so, are you utilizing The American Legion Scholarship Medal for those recipients? If you are providing a scholarship, use this medal along with the certificate and present it in front of their parents, classmates, and the community.

Let's shine within our communities by grasping every opportunity to promote The American Legion and show that we care.

Working across the board with each other—School Medals and JROTC—sometimes one person serves as chair for both. Work closely with schools and communicate through the school principal or vice principal if you are having difficulty working through other school staff.

Another option is the new Custom Wreath Medal (717.330), where your Post can have specific inscriptions on both the front and back of the medal. This can be used for a wide array of commendations for those around your Post, especially volunteers who help many times but are ineligible to belong to one of our three families, yet are always there supporting us. Let's commend them with an award presented in front of the Post, saying thank you—because they deserve it.

Let's start gathering the numbers and promoting recognition, showing our youth that we notice them and how they are growing as the citizens of the future. Next month, we will look at specifics. I am only a phone call away, or you can email me.

Don't forget to start laying the groundwork for the End of the Year Award, **"Best Post School Medal Program."**

AMERICAN LEGION
Department of Florida

ORATORICAL STATE FINALS

JOIN US
MARCH 14, 2026
9:00 AM

DEPT HEADQUARTERS
1912 LEE RD
ORLANDO, FL 32810

SEE PAGE 29



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The Power of Social Media for the American Legion Family

Seven BeeBe, Social Media

socialmedia@legionmail.org



Social media is often viewed as a tool reserved for influencers and major brands. However, for the American Legion Family, it is one of the most valuable communication tools available to us today.

Whether the goal is to grow membership, engage current members, or remain visible in an increasingly crowded digital space, social media platforms provide an effective solution. They offer something that was once difficult to achieve: daily, real-time access to our audience.

Instead of waiting for newsletters or annual events, members and potential members can stay connected to the American Legion as events, updates, and stories unfold. This consistent access delivers several important benefits.

First, regular posts help members feel connected to the organization and to one another. Social media creates opportunities for interaction through likes, comments, and shares, fostering a strong sense of community and belonging.

Second, active-duty service members, veterans, their families, and our broader community want to be involved in organizations that reflect their values and commitment to continued service. When our social media presence highlights the core values of the American Legion, it strengthens credibility, encourages membership growth, and reminds current members why they joined. It also invites others to become part of our extraordinary American Legion Family.

Third, social media is an effective way to promote events, causes, and Post activities. It allows important information to reach a wider audience quickly, while also

enabling members and followers to help amplify the message through sharing.

Additionally, social platforms allow for timely communication. Announcements, updates, and important news can be shared efficiently, ensuring members stay informed and engaged.

Finally, social media provides an opportunity to highlight the people behind our mission. Showcasing members, volunteers, and community involvement strengthens trust and deepens personal connections within the American Legion Family.

When used effectively, social media increases visibility, builds trust, and keeps members—and potential members—engaged throughout the year.

Ooh Rah & Semper Fi, American Legion Family. Keep being extraordinary.

Coast Guard Eligibility for American Legion Grants & Benefits

Dennis Boland, Child Well Being Fdn Pres

pdcboland@legionmail.org



Resolution #2

WHEREAS, The American Legion extends benefits of certain grants and other programs to United States Armed Forces members serving on federal orders under Title 10 of the

United States Code, inclusive of all its components, and

WHEREAS, these benefits are not conditional on membership in The American Legion, and

WHEREAS, the Coast Guard is established under U.S.C. Title 14 as a military service and a branch of the armed forces of the United States at

all times, and

WHEREAS, Coast Guard members only serve on Title 10 federal orders when temporarily transferred to the Department of the Navy under Presidential Proclamation or by a Congressional Declaration of War, and

continued on page 21 >>



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<< Child Well Being Fdn Pres continued from page 20

WHEREAS, active-duty members of the Coast Guard experience the same degree of deployment, family separation, and hardship that other branches of the Armed Forces experience, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, by The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, August 26, 27,

and 28, 2025, that members of the Coast Guard serving on active duty under U.S.C. Title 14 federal orders have access to and are eligible for all American Legion grants and benefits that other active-duty Armed Forces branches receive.

* * * In 2019, junior enlisted officers of the U.S. Coast Guard had their pay delayed more than 30 days

during the government shutdown. Those with children at home received more than \$1.2 million in American Legion Temporary Financial Assistance grants to help them through the hardship.

THAT'S WHAT WE DO BECAUSE WE AS LEGIONNAIRES CARE ABOUT OUR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

A Message from the Detachment of Florida Commander

Michael Nigbor, Detachment Cmdr

commander@floridasons.org



Thank you to everyone who is taking the time to contribute articles to OUR newsletter, The Source. I try not to be too repetitive with the information I pass along because of the knowledge and devotion shown by our other authors and their areas of expertise.

There is a lot of time, energy, and thought put into publishing this newsletter. That's why we would like to see more participation from all our members on the events they are having and the accomplishments of their squadrons. It would be nice if we all sent a thank-you email to adjutant@floridasons.org for everything Detachment Adjutant Christian Rapp is doing to help us be the best we can be with all of the information he shares for our squadrons and the entire American Legion organization.

Remember, if your Squadron only does one thing, it needs to be

reported on the CSR. What our Squadrons do every day matters. It needs to be documented. The CSR is one of the most important documents a Squadron can complete. Every volunteer hour and every dollar donated turns good intentions into verifiable proof of impact. The CSR shows how we support veterans, youth, military families, and our communities. It demonstrates transparency, accountability, and charitable purpose. This is all essential when facing audits, regulatory reviews, and public scrutiny. Service that is not documented cannot be defended, validated, or verified.

December 14th was the day Bonita Springs Post 303 Commander Adam Prentki III created to be our Family Fun Day. It started with a poker run to a couple of local businesses and ended at Post 303, all to support our Detachment charity, C.O.T.A. The three winners of the 50/50s donated their winnings back, and after all the auctions and donations were accounted for, over \$3,800.00 was collected.

Some recent highlights for me were traveling District 13 with Department Commander Jessica Moore. Starting Thursday, December 18th, and ending Sunday, December 21st, we went to Posts 110, 103, 136, 351, 90, 415, 192, 130, 135, 303, 38, 123, 274, 323, and on day four ended at 336.

After a few New Year's Day events, January 7th through Sunday, January 11th was the District 8 tour. Commander Moore and I, along with several Department dignitaries, all escorted by the American Legion Riders, visited Posts 24, 309, 325, 266, 30, 69, 2, 113, 159, and ended at 254.

January 9th and 10th included the wonderful Veterans Expo at Post 69. Saturday night was an event at ANEC Gerard Sambets' Post 275 that supported their charities. It was very well attended, and very generous donations were collected. Squadron 69 and District 8 S.A.L. Commander Mark Kahn presented a check for \$500.00 to C.O.T.A.

continued on page 22 >>



PLEASE SUPPORT
Special Olympics

HONOR SERVICE  **INSPIRE FUTURE**

www.floridalegion.org
legionlink@floridalegion.org

<< Detachment Commander continued from page 21

At the June Convention, I put out a challenge to every Squadron member to recruit at least one new member. Squadron Commanders, please get back to me and let me know how your members are doing. As you do your "Buddy Checks" by calling your members, this is when you can get them engaged—something for them to get involved in and try to make a difference. Reach out to your fellow Sons, especially those who have not renewed for 2026. A simple phone call ensures no brother is left behind. Membership is an invitation to be remembered as a builder, a leader, a steward, and a mentor. Whether you help grow our numbers, mentor our youth, or expand community and service projects, you matter. Your

support matters. Encourage your members to see that their participation is a chance to shape our future.

Our strength is in our "Family" approach. By working with the American Legion and the Auxiliary, we are "Better Together" in serving our communities. Service is our mission, and it's how we light the way for others to follow. "Legacy is not leaving something for people. It's leaving something in people." We are a growing and influential force, dedicated to serving our veterans, supporting our communities, and children and youth. Every renewal and recruitment helps extend our impact across the state.

Communication and teamwork are always the key to our success. The

time is now to show our mission is rooted in service, patriotism, kindness, and community engagement, honoring all who served and are continuing to serve.

Thank you for all you do to prove the Detachment of Florida is an unwavering force. Please send me an invitation to your meetings and events. I would like to attend. Get out and communicate with your neighboring Squadrons. Promote each other. We are a team. We are stronger together.

Always keep in mind, the dignity of being a Son of The American Legion is non-negotiable. Duty, Honor, Country is what we stand for—what we are about.



Post 26 Is "Berry" Active

Jerry Harrold, Post 26

commander@alpost26fl.org

Plant City's Norman McLeod Post 26 has started the new year on a run. While busy with the Post-level Oratorical Contest and preparing for Boys and Girls State, we have also been busy establishing a new Auxiliary Unit—Plant City Norman McLeod American Legion Auxiliary Unit 26! Thanks to the diligent efforts

of Kathleen VanMiddlesworth, Post 26 Service Officer and the new Unit President, Unit 26 was chartered with 26 inaugural members—26 for 26! Andrea Sherman, 15th District Auxiliary President, was also instrumental in this process and presented the new charter during our January General Membership Meeting.

When you think of Plant City, you automatically think of strawberries (the Winter Strawberry Capital of the World). Post 26 is once again parking cars for the festival, as our lot is only one block north of the main gates. So, when you visit the festival this



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<< Post 26 continued from page 22

year—and you know you will—make sure you park your vehicle at Post 26. This is the Post’s main fundraising event each year and is relied on heavily to support and fund all the programs in which we are involved. Our Post Legionnaires volunteer their time to run the event,

while providing opportunities for the Plant City JROTC cadets to help out and earn valuable community service hours as well. Be sure to visit our Scout Hut at the same time and pick up your flat(s) of fresh Plant City strawberries while supporting the scouting program.

The festival runs from Thursday, February 26, through Sunday, March 8. Make plans now to park at Post 26 (2207 W. Baker St., Plant City, FL 33563). We would love to say hello and be a part of your festival experience.



American Legion Helps Veterans Bridge the Digital Divide

Joseph Hardy, Post 275
dunedincommander@yahoo.com

The American Legion is once again demonstrating its commitment to veterans by helping bridge the digital divide through a laptop donation program based in Dunedin, Florida. American Legion Post 275 established the Veterans Technology Program in 2021 to assist veterans and active-duty service members who need reliable technology to pursue education, training, and career opportunities.

The program provides laptops to veterans who may not be able to afford the cost of the technology required for today’s academic and professional environments. On average, Post 275 is able to award approximately one laptop per

month to a deserving recipient. Each applicant is carefully reviewed by a selection committee to ensure the assistance goes to those who will benefit most.

One recent recipient, Army veteran Luke Olson, is currently studying cybersecurity. He shared that having an up-to-date laptop is essential for running specialized software and completing coursework. Before receiving assistance from the American Legion, he struggled with outdated equipment that could no longer support required updates.

While veterans using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits receive an annual stipend for books and supplies, many find that it does not fully cover the cost of modern computers needed

for certain fields of study. Programs like the Veterans Technology Program help close that gap and provide veterans with the tools they need to succeed beyond their military service.

This initiative reflects the core mission of The American Legion—serving veterans and helping them thrive in civilian life. By providing practical, meaningful support, American Legion Post 275 is making a direct and lasting impact in the lives of local veterans.

Source Information

- *Spectrum Bay News 9*
“American Legion gives laptops to veterans who need them”
Published December 29, 2025
<https://baynews9.com/fl/tampa/news/2025/12/29/american-legion-laptops-veterans->



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Key Dates and Requirements for the Close of the Legion Year

Bruce E. Comer, Department Adjutant
bcomer@floridalegion.org



As we move into the final months of the current Legion Year, I want to take a moment to highlight several important dates and requirements that all Posts should have on their calendars.

End-of-Year Packets will be mailed to each Post on **March 1, 2026**. These packets contain essential information and documents related to the **Department Convention** and preparations for the upcoming Legion Year. Please review the contents carefully upon receipt, as they include key guidance and deadlines.

Posts planning to submit **Convention Award applications** should note that all submissions must be **received at Department Headquarters no later than May 4, 2026**. In order to be eligible for consideration,

Posts must also have their Consolidated Post Report (CPR) and Department Addendum on file with the Department.

The **2026 Department Convention** will be held **June 11–14, 2026**, at the **Hilton Orlando in Lake Buena Vista**. Additional convention details are available on the Department website at: <https://www.floridalegion.org/flcon>.

Both Wednesday, June 10, and Thursday, June 11, 2026, are fully booked at the Hilton Orlando. Overflow hotel options are available and may be accessed through the Convention page on the Department website.

To register for Convention, Posts must have the following documents on file at Department Headquarters:

- Consolidated Post Report

- Department Addendum
- Post Officer & Information Report
- Certification of Officers

Convention post pre-registration will open on **April 8, 2026**, and will close on **June 7, 2026**.

The **2025–2026 Consolidated Post Report and Department Addendum fillable forms** are available for download on floridalegion.org. In addition, the **CPR is available online at mylegion.org**. Posts are encouraged to complete and submit these forms as early as possible to avoid delays or issues with award eligibility and convention registration.

Thank you for your continued dedication to your Posts and to The American Legion, Department of Florida.

Post Everlasting

*"To be remembered is to never be truly gone
—only reassigned to serve among the best."*

In Memoriam: Past National Chaplain, Robert A. "Bob" Vick, III

Here is a respectful, shortened version that preserves the key details and tone:

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Past National Chaplain Robert A. "Bob" Vick, III, of New Port Richey, Florida. Bob passed away on January 4, 2026, at the age of 90.

He is survived by his wife, Marion Vick; four sons—Robert, Carl, Aaron, and Dale—and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held in his honor on January 24 at Post 79.

A proud U.S. Navy veteran of the Korean War era, Bob was a

devoted member of New Port Richey Post 79 and served The American Legion continuously for 44 years. An ordained minister, he served as Department Chaplain (2009–2013) and National Chaplain (2017–2018), providing steadfast spiritual guidance to Legionnaires and their families.

More details at floridalegion.org.





MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

January 29, 2026 (85% Target)

District 3	Rick Cabrera	91.40%
District 4	Darcy Bockman-Wright	90.94%
District 2	Roxann Dressel	90.31%
District 13	Laurene Allen-Flower	90.17%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	89.11%
District 16	Michael Harley	88.12%
District 1	Robert Osmon	87.62%
District 9	Jim Tewes	87.20%
District 12	Daniel Martin	86.56%
District 6	David Musser	86.53%
District 11	Stanley Brown, Jr.	86.53%
District 15	Drew Davis	85.74%
District 8	Charlie Magnus	85.46%
District 17	Jim Bowers	85.26%
District 7	Kalvin Thompson	83.67%
District 14	Thomas Frank	81.41%
Northern	Doug Hockenberry	88.98%
Southwestern	Eric Loyd	88.08%
Western	Shelby Windham	87.99%
Central	Rick Orzechowski	86.80%
Eastern	Joan Suelter	86.54%
Southern	Geo Bograkos	85.34%
Post 400		77.88%

DEPARTMENT TRUSTED. LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.

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



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

www.thelit.com



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

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




50/50 RAFFLE 4 VETERANS

www.florida5050.org

WIN CASH WIN MORE CASH WIN LOTS OF CASH

More Chances. More Winners. More Cash!

Questions: 1-800-393-3378. Florida participants only.

AMERICAN LEGION Department of Florida

ONE OF DEPARTMENT'S LARGEST FUNDRAISERS!



FLORIDA SAMPL

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

The American Legion official license plate.




PLEASE SUPPORT
Special Olympics

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legionlink@floridalegion.org



Department of Florida

PROGRAM ADVERTISING

LEGION FAMILY

*** Deadline May 8, 2026 ***

107th Annual Department Convention, June 11-14, 2026

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Post, Unit, or Squadron Name

Name of Member

Member ID #

Email

Phone

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

FULL PAGE
\$175

7.5" X 10"

HALF PAGE
\$100

7.5" X 5"

HALF PAGE
\$100

7.5" X 5"

QUARTER PAGE \$50 3.75" X 5"	QUARTER PAGE \$50 3.75" X 5"
QUARTER PAGE \$50 3.75" X 5"	QUARTER PAGE \$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 8, 2026 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.

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: \$ 0.00

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.



107th Annual Department Convention, June 11-14, 2026

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Business or Organization

Contact Person

Job Title

Email

Phone

Website

PREMIER SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Choose one or more (optional):

- Delegate Bags \$3,000
- Delegate Badges \$3,000
- Kick-Off Party \$2,000
- Commander's and President's Banquet \$1,000
- Service Officer School \$1,000

EXHIBITOR PACKAGES

Choose one (optional):

- General's Exhibitor \$800
- Colonel's Exhibitor \$550
- Lieutenant's Exhibitor \$300
- None

Banquet Door Prize / Raffle Item and Approximate Value - ***Required for all levels.**

EXHIBITOR PROGRAM ADVERTISEMENT UPGRADE

Advertisements are included with sponsorship; upgrades available for Lieutenant's and Colonel's levels.

Colonel's: Upgrade to Full Page \$150 No Upgrade

Lieutenant's: Upgrade to Full Page \$250 Upgrade to Half Page \$100 No Upgrade

Program advertisements MUST be submitted no later than May 8, 2026. 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. Advertisements are printed in grayscale. All imagery must be legally licensed. Please email artwork to: events@floridalegion.org.



Department of Florida

SPONSOR AND EXHIBITOR APPLICATION

*** Deadline May 8, 2026 ***

Register online at floridalegion.org/flcon

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: \$ 0.00

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

See our website at floridalegion.org/flcon for detailed benefits and deadlines.

Submit completed application, with full payment to:

The American Legion
Department of Florida
Attention: Event Coordinator
PO Box 547859
Orlando, FL 32854-7859

DEADLINE REMINDER: To ensure inclusion of your advertisement in the convention book, all final artwork must be submitted no later than **May 8, 2026**. Discounts or credits will not be issued for missed deadlines or applications received after this date.

Exhibitor registration will close once available space is filled or shortly before the Convention, whichever occurs first. Exhibitor placement is assigned and determined by the exhibit level selected.

We reserve the right to deny sponsor/exhibitor participation at our sole discretion if a sponsor/exhibitor does not align with our mission, values, or event relevance.

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

www.floridalegion.org

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



Department
of Florida

The American Legion
High School Oratorical
Scholarship Program

Support Your Area's Competitor
at State Finals

March 14, 2026
Competition begins at 9:00 am

Dept. of Florida HQ
Orlando, FL

**DO YOU
HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES?**

**BECOME A
DEPARTMENT
CHAIR!**

**MAKE AN
2026**



**IMPACT
2027**

YEARS IN LEGION



Department
of Florida

DISTRICT

POST

AREA

NAME

POSITION INTERESTED IN

EXPLAIN YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIR _____

LEGION SCHOOLS ATTENDED: ALEI Florida Legion College National Legion College Sgt-at-Arms Chaplain
 National LEAD Classes _____ _____

POSITIONS HELD	YEARS AT POST LEVEL	YEARS AT DISTRICT LEVEL	YEARS AT AREA LEVEL	YEARS AT DEPT LEVEL
Commander				
Vice Commander				
Adjutant				
Sgt-at-Arms				
Historian				
Chaplain				
Membership				
Americanism				
Baseball				
Blood Donor				
Boy Scouts				

POSITIONS HELD	YEARS AT POST LEVEL	YEARS AT DISTRICT LEVEL	YEARS AT AREA LEVEL	YEARS AT DEPT LEVEL
Boys State				
Children & Youth				
JROTC				
Shooting Sports				
Law & Order				
Oratorical				
POW/MIA				
School Medals				
Women Veterans Advocate				
Youth Law Cadet				
Other				

PLEASE RETURN TO: The American Legion, Dept of Florida, Attention: Bob Matheson, P.O. Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854

AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY

AMERICAN
LEGION

SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

THE CENTRAL AREA LEADERSHIP PRESENTS:

2026
CENTRAL AREA
Mangaritaville
Casino Party!

MARCH 7, 2026

AT CLEARWATER AMERICAN LEGION POST 7

5 PM - COCKTAILS/GAMES

6 PM - JIMMY BUFFETT INSPIRED BUFFET

LIVE DJ - CASINO GAMES - RAFFLES - BASKETS

**PUT ON YOUR BEST JIMMY BUFFETT OUTFIT
AND ENJOY A FUN NIGHT IN PARADISE!**

**PROCEEDS BENEFIT: SPECIAL OLYMPICS,
C.O.T.A., & ALA DISASTER RELIEF**

**\$45 PER PERSON
\$80 PER COUPLE**

**RSVP/MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MICHAEL SHERMAN
(813) 541-3452 | VCCENTRAL@FLORIDASONS.ORG
MAIL TO: 7519 WINGING WAY DR, TAMPA, FL 33615**

American Legion Department Of Florida



Presents

SOUTHERN AREA TRAINING

TOPICS TO INCLUDE:

MYLEGION.ORG ~ CONFLICT RESOLUTION

HOW TO CONDUCT A POST MEETING

ALL LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS WELCOME!

ATTEND ONE OR ALL SESSIONS! ~ BRING LAPTOPS & NOTEPADS

WHO SHOULD ATTEND? ALL POST, UNIT & SQUADRON OFFICERS

Meet Your Dept. of Florida Convention Training Team:

Dept. of Florida 1st Vice Commander: Bob Matheson

Dept. of Florida 2nd Vice Commander: Bruce Carl

Dept. of Florida Southern Area Commander: Geo Bograkos

Dept. of Florida Membership Chair: Lena Heredia-Perez

Dept. of Florida Membership Vice Chair: Isaac White

And Other Guest Trainers

DISTRICT 14 ~ (MAINLAND)

SATURDAY OCT. 18, 2025 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 31

7710 SW 59TH AVE., S. MIAMI, FL 33143

DISTRICT 14 ~ (FLORIDA KEYS)

SATURDAY JAN. 10, 2026 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 154

4115 OVERSEAS HWY., MARATHON, FL 33050

DISTRICT 9

SATURDAY JAN. 24, 2026 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 304

41 NE 1ST CT., DANIA BEACH, FL 33004

DISTRICT 11

SATURDAY FEB. 14, 2026 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 268

1690 AVENUE H W, RIVIERA BEACH, FL 33404

Kindly RSVP Via Email: southern@legionmail.org

FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE DINNER



This dinner is for **ALL** supporters of the **FALBS** program.

Auction and raffles tickets will be available for purchase.

Casual business attire suggested

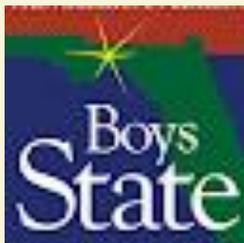
Guest speaker: Senator Danny Burgess
(Delegate from 2009 session).

May 9, 2026 Time: 5:00 pm

1912 Lee RD Orlando, FL. 32810 (Department HQ)

Tickets are \$35 single and \$65 per couple
<https://givebutter.com/c/adv5nW>

**Hotels available for \$109.00 per night Marriott
Courtyard Orlando Altamonte Springs/Maitland**



FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE

Facebook: Florida American Legion Boys State

Instagram: Floridaboysstate

TikTok: @falbssocialmedia

To Donate Auction items contact Bekki at bboarman@floridalegion.org or Darcy at Darcyb_Wright.al@yahoo.com

American Legion
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CHILDREN & YOUTH PICNIC

Music by
Doc Holiday

Raffle Baskets
50/50
Carnival Games
+ More!



Poker Run

Registration
10am
KSU 11am

Location:
American Legion Post 117
189 Veterans Drive
Palm Bay, Fl. 32909

Saturday April 11th 2026 12-5PM

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

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

All Meals Served with Sides

Questions: Contact

AL Dept C&Y Chaiman Chris Hamerick 321-313-3469

MaryAnn Spellman 917-834-5763

All Proceeds go to
Commander Charites



Questions: Contact

AL Dept C&Y Chaiman Chris Hamerick 321-313-3489

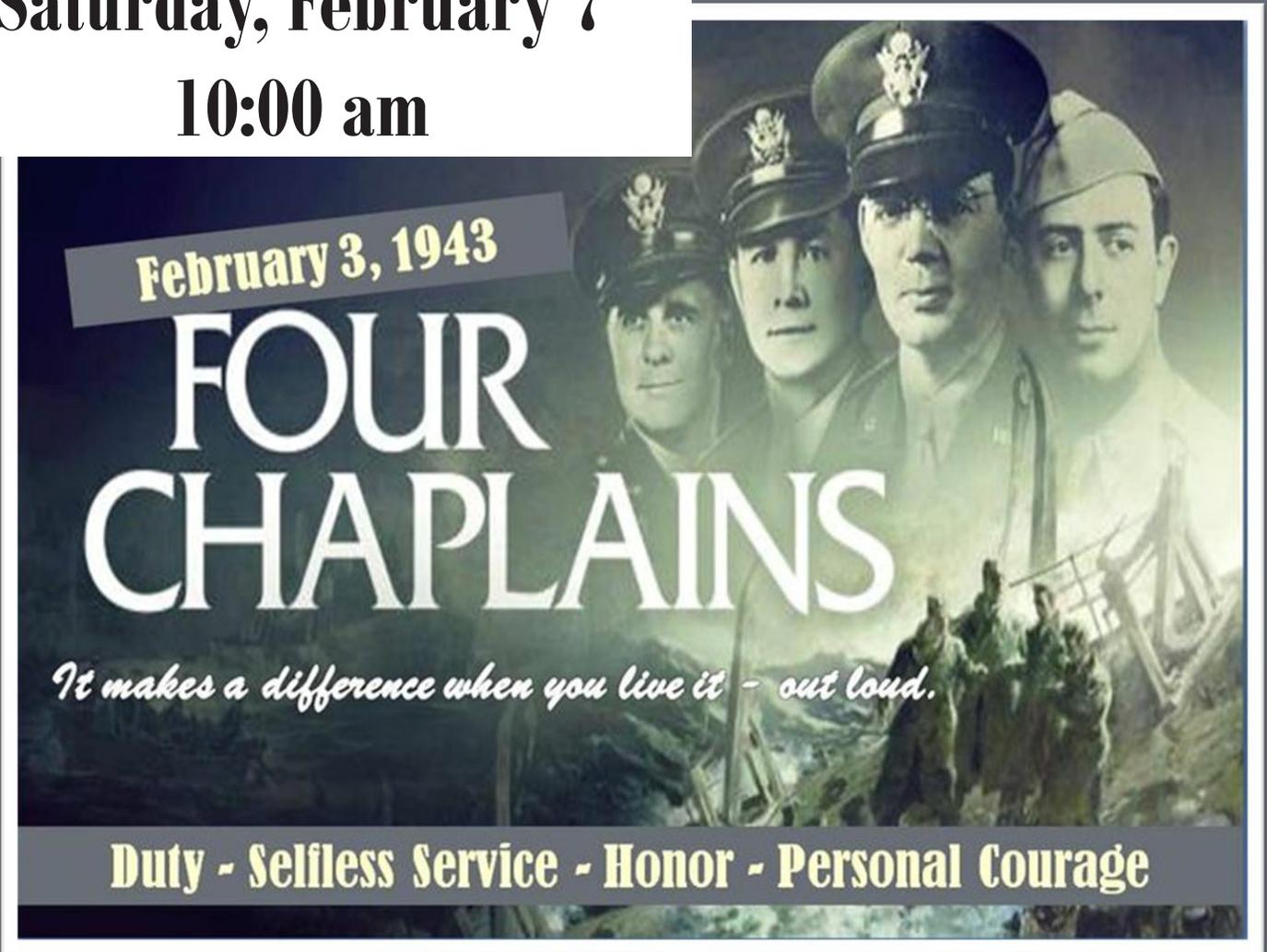
MaryAnn Spellman 917-834-5763

2026 Four Chaplains Ceremony

Hear the incredible account of self sacrifice and personal courage

Saturday, February 7

10:00 am



Rain or shine | Please bring a lawn chair | To learn more, visit:

<https://fourchaplains.org/the-four-chaplains/>

Oviedo Memorial Post 243, 491 W. Broadway Street, Oviedo, FL 32765

Celebrate America

with the

USA250 CHALLENGE!



What: The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge is a yearlong celebration of the nation's 250th birthday. It offers participants three challenge categories — community service, physical activities and mental health awareness — to pursue goals such as 250 hours, miles, Buddy Checks or other measurables.

When: Through July 4, 2026.

Who: American Legion Family members and anyone else. Participants may pursue their goals individually or as part of a team.

Why: In addition to celebrating America, proceeds from the \$30 registration fee and all donations go to the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation, which supports disabled veterans and military families in need.

How: Scan the QR code to learn more and register. Or visit legion.org/usa250/challenge

Scan to
register





Seeking Qualified Legionnaires: Assistant Judge Advocate Appointment (2026–2027)

R. Curtis McNeil, Asst. Judge Advocate
assistantja@legionmail.org



The American Legion Department of Florida is now accepting interest from qualified Legionnaires for appointment as Department Assistant Judge Advocate for the 2026–2027 term.

Attorneys (active or retired) are preferred.

If you are interested, please submit the following information:

- Name
- Post number
- Brief summary of qualifications

Send responses to the current Department Assistant Judge Advocate, R. Curtis McNeil (incoming Department Judge Advocate), at: assistantja@legionmail.org

Thank you for your continued dedication and support of Florida’s veterans!

