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## A Message from the Department Commander

### Jessica Moore, Commander

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



Happy May, Team Florida!

As we are approaching the end of our calendar year, it's time to pause and reflect on the

goals we set at the beginning of our journey. These goals are never just personal, they are rooted in a shared commitment to service, commitment and country.

At the start of the year, many of us outlined plans to strengthen our posts, expand community outreach and involvement, and support our veterans and families. Now we look back to see how much we have accomplished, and how did we get there? Hosting events, mentoring, engaging in community

service, buddy checks, each effort contributed to something greater than ourselves!

Of course, not every goal may have been fully met. Challenges arise with time constraints, limited resources, and unexpected obstacles, and this can all shift our course. But even with these challenges, progress was made and dedication to our mission.

We realize new needs, priorities, initiatives, and notice new opportunities to serve present themselves. These changes are not setbacks; they are signs of growth and responsiveness to our mission.

Remember that each and every goal, whether fully achieved or still in progress, has brought us closer to the mission of the American Legion, to serve our Veterans, our communities and our nation.

**#OneTeamOneDream**

### COMMANDER'S CHARITY: **Special Olympics**

**\$102,789.44 RAISED**



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## MAY 2026

- 1-31 Military Appreciation Month
- 1-31 Month of the Military Caregiver
- 1 BE THE ONE
- 2 District 5: DCC
- 2 District 11: DCC
- 2 District 15: DCC
- 3 Amendments & Resolutions Due ✨
- 3 Wall Escort in Melbourne
- 3-9 National Correctional Officers Week
- 3-9 Public Service Recognition Week
- 4 CPR & Addendums Due ✨★
- 4 Special Olympics Report & Questionnaire Due★
- 4 End of Year Award Nominations Due ★
- 4-7 National Spring Meetings ★
- 6 Membership 100% Department Goal ✨
- 6 Membership Nat/Dept Awards Due ✨★
- 6-12 National Nurses Week
- 6 Chapter 136: ALR Meeting
- 7 Membership Department Zoom Meeting ✨
- 7 National Day of Prayer
- 8 VE Day
- 8 Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- 8 Post 80: Special Olympics Purse Auction
- 9 Boys State Alumni Dinner ✨
- 9 Post 9: Annual Boots on the Ground
- 9 District 6: DCC
- 9 District 7: DCC
- 9 District 17: DCC
- 9-17 Armed Forces Week
- 10 Mother's Day
- 10 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 13 Membership 100% National Goal ★

(Continued on Page 3)

## Bridging Generations: Strengthening Engagement

**Bob Matheson, 1st Vice Commander**

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



Many posts across the American Legion are working to address a common challenge: how to attract and retain younger veterans.

While younger members often join with enthusiasm and a desire to contribute, some find themselves feeling overlooked or discouraged when their ideas or approaches differ from long-standing expectations. Although this is rarely intentional, it can create barriers to involvement and long-term membership.

The American Legion's century-long history is one of its greatest strengths. Its traditions, structure, and established practices provide stability and identity. However, these same traditions can sometimes feel rigid to younger veterans who are accustomed to more modern, flexible ways of operating. Senior members bring decades of experience and a deep respect for the organization's heritage, while younger veterans bring fresh perspectives shaped by contemporary military service and evolving community needs. Without open communication, these differences can lead to misunderstandings.

Another factor is that many posts rely on a small group of long-serving members to manage most responsibilities. Their dedication is invaluable, yet it can unintentionally signal to new members that leadership opportunities are limited.

Additionally, while mentorship is a core value of the Legion, it does not always occur naturally. Without guidance, younger members may struggle to find their place within the post.

The broader Legion Family, including the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) and the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA), plays a vital role in addressing these challenges. Collaboration among all three groups strengthens engagement and creates a more welcoming environment. SAL members often bring creativity, energy, and a willingness to support community initiatives, making them excellent partners for younger Legionnaires. The Auxiliary contributes strong organizational skills, communication networks, and experience working with families and youth programs, offering additional avenues for involvement.

By focusing on the Four Pillars, establishing intentional mentorship, offering meaningful responsibilities early, and encouraging cooperation across the Legion Family, posts can create an environment where everyone feels valued and included. The American Legion was founded by veterans seeking purpose and service. Today's veterans share the same commitment. When all generations and all branches of the Legion Family work together, the organization becomes stronger, more unified, and better prepared for the future.



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

**MAY 2026**

(Continued from Page 2)

- 13 Children of Fallen Patriots Day
- 13 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 14 U.S. Flag Day
- 15 Legion Link Articles Due for June ✨
- 15 Peace Officers Memorial Day
- 16 National Defense Transportation Day
- 16 District 1: DCC
- 16 District 2: DCC
- 16 District 3: DCC
- 16 District 4: DCC
- 16 District 9: DCC
- 16 District 14: DCC
- 16 District 16: DCC
- 17 District 8: DCC
- 17 District 13: DCC
- 21-24 District 14: Dept Commander Visit 🗳️
- 22 National Poppy Day
- 22 Maritime Day
- 25 Missing Children's Day
- 25 Memorial Day
- 25 Dept HQ Closed ✨
- 25 Florida's Fallen Memorial Ceremony
- 28 Post Voting Delegate Cut-Off ✨
- 30 Veteran Wellness & Resource Fair
- 30 Denim & Diamonds SW Area Ball
- 31 Membership 100%+1 Department Goal ✨
- 31 Membership Final Awards (Dept/Nat) ✨★
- 31 Baseball Reg/Ins/Fee/Bckgrnd Deadline ✨
- 31-5 National Veteran Golden Age Games

🗳️ Commander attendance tentative.

✨ Department of Florida event.

★ National event.

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

## Finishing Strong: Closing Out the Year in the Department of Florida

**Bruce Carl, 2nd Vice Commander**

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It is hard to believe this year is coming to an end already! Once again, the Department of Florida has proven we are the best in the Nation! Our work is not done yet, though, as we still have some time left to increase our membership, finish our reports, and attend any upcoming events.

May is also a big month for the election of new officers at our Posts. Please ensure you are following your Post CBL for your election process! Failure to do so could cause issues that may possibly require a re-election. This is a problem that we want to avoid.

Once you have finished your election, please fill out the required

paperwork (Post Officer Certification and Post Report) and send them to Department. These documents are very important, as the information is used by both Department and National to update rosters, provide access to [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org), and send out information to the Posts. It also provides potential new members and transfers an idea of what your Post has and does when they look online for a place to join.

Your CPRs and addendums are also due now. They are available online as fillable PDFs to make it easier for you. Please get those in by the due date, the first one being May 4th. Our goal is 100% CPR reporting to National, and we will achieve that! If you are having an issue with filling out the CPR, please contact your District Commander for assistance.

## Informed Members, Stronger Legion Leadership

**Jim Ramos, NEC**

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**What influences the American Legion Department of Florida? Every member.**

Each member has a vote at the Department Convention general session. That vote helps shape decisions that impact all of us. Making the right decisions starts with being informed. As the saying goes, "Knowing is half the battle — making the right choice is the next step."

Strong communication and collaboration with leadership are essential to ensuring we are doing the best possible job for our members. This effort begins at the Post level, where every member plays a role in planning and improving programs and events.

When it comes time to vote, we must understand the importance of what's being proposed. *Ask yourself:*

- Do we really need this?
- How does it affect our members?
- Are we being responsible with

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<< NEC continued from page 3  
our resources?

For example, questions often come up about dues increases or system changes like MyLegion.org. If something works well, why change it? But if change is necessary, it should be done to make things simpler and better for our members.

### What Is the Responsibility of Each Member?

*Stay Informed and Engaged, but who manages that?*

The responsibility is shared between leadership and membership. Leaders at the Post, District, and Department levels must communicate clearly through emails, phone calls, and personal contact. But members must also take initiative. Ask questions. If you don't ask, you won't know what's going on. And informed members make better decisions.

### Who Oversees the Department of Florida?

**You do — every member does.**

Oversight starts at the Post level, moves through the District, and reaches the Department. It all begins with members staying informed and engaged.

If you don't receive answers to your

questions at one level, move up the chain. Keep asking until you get clarity. Sometimes even rephrasing or writing your question down can help get better responses.

### Stay Connected and Informed

Use available resources:

- [Officer Guide and Manual of Ceremonies](#)
- Department website: [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org)
- National website: [legion.org](http://legion.org)

Always look for updates and stay engaged.

### Post Excellence Award Updates

The criteria for the Post Excellence Award now focuses on four key areas:

- 1. Membership.** Post membership must be at least one member greater than the previous year. At least one post officer attends district meetings.
- 2. Consolidated Post Report (CPR).** CPRs must be sent by July 1. The American Legion's federal charter requires the submission of an annual report to Congress on activities for the year. MyLegion.org has made it simple for a post to send its CPR on time.
- 3. Sharing Post History.** Contribute to the Legion's Centennial page

([www.legion.org/centennial](http://www.legion.org/centennial)).

Help tell the story of your post and the organization with the intent of collecting pieces to tell the larger story of The American Legion's first century.

- 4. Community Activity.** An event must be conducted that connects the local community with The American Legion post. The goal is to open the post doors, welcome the community in, and educate them on what The American Legion is about and how the post is an asset to the community. Posts do not need to have a physical building to conduct this. This activity can be held in a park, a community center, or anywhere the post can welcome and interact with the local community.

### Training Opportunities

Take advantage of Basic Training at [legion.org](http://legion.org), covering:

- History and Organization
- Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
- National Security
- Americanism
- Children & Youth

### Final Thought

Stay informed. Knowledge is power. But don't keep it to yourself — share it, pass it on, and strengthen the Legion together.

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## Statement of Functional Expenses aids in financial management

Shirley Douglas, Finance Officer

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**Do you know the mission of your Post, Unit, Squadron, or Chapter (Post+ signifies all 4 groups)?** It is important that all officers of the

nonprofit organization know and understand their mission. A nonprofit organization will not survive if members, donors, and stakeholders lose trust in where their funds are going.

An effective way to tell your financial story to Post+ members, donors, and other stakeholders is by preparing a quarterly Statement of Functional Expenses. A functional expense schedule is a financial report that categorizes a nonprofit's expenses based on their functions, such as program services, management and general administration, and fundraising. This schedule is crucial for understanding how resources are allocated and is often required for IRS Form 990 submissions (Section IX on the Form 990).

### Here are 3 core functional expense categories:

1. Program Services: Costs directly associated with executing the Post+ mission, such as salaries for program staff, materials, and other expenses related to program services.
2. Management and General Administration: These are overhead costs that support the organization's general operations but do not contribute to program services. Examples include office rent, utilities, and administrative salaries.
3. Fundraising: This category encompasses expenses related to raising funds, such as event costs, marketing, and salaries for fundraising staff.

### Here are 4 best practices for creating a Functional Expense Schedule:

1. Disaggregate Expenses: Clearly separate expenses into the three core categories to provide a transparent view of how funds

are utilized. This helps everyone understand Post+ priorities and efficiency.

2. Limit Detail to the User Needs: It is important to provide a clear picture of the expenses but avoid overwhelming the report with excessive categories. Aim for 5 to 10 expense categories that are meaningful and relevant.
3. Tell Your Post+ Story: Use the schedule to highlight how different programs contribute to the mission. This narrative can help in fundraising.
4. Allocate Shared Expenses: For expenses that benefit multiple functions (like salaries), develop a fair allocation method to distribute costs appropriately among program, management, and fundraising

Normally, the statement appears as a matrix, where the rows show types of expenses and the columns display different functional categories.

### POST+ STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR 2025

	Boys State	Children & Youth	Management & General	Fundraising	Total
Salaries	\$15,000	\$10,000	\$8,000	\$2,000	\$35,000
Utilities	\$2,000	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$7,500
Printing & Supplies	\$500	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$3,500
Deprecitation	\$0	\$0	\$600	\$100	\$700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,500</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$12,600</b>	<b>\$4,600</b>	<b>\$46,700</b>

**Note:** Example only for format. Column and Row titles can be changed to Post+ Chart of Account expense headings.

Functional expense reporting not only fulfills regulatory requirements but also enhances transparency and

accountability. It allows members, donors, and other stakeholders to see how effectively the organization

is using its resources to achieve its mission.



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## Building Tomorrow's Leaders Through Mentorship

**Rick Orzechowski, Central Area Cmdr**  
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Mentorship within the American Legion is essential to maintaining continuity of command and fostering leadership development throughout all levels of the organization. To achieve this, it is recommended that each officer, from the post level up to the department level, actively mentor at least one individual who could succeed them when they

decide to step down or are unable to continue in their role. This approach ensures that valuable experience, advice, and support are consistently shared, allowing for a smoother transition and preserving institutional knowledge. Mentoring is simply about relationships. Being valuable to someone is intrinsically rewarding to you, the person you are mentoring, and the organization you are representing.

At its core, this professional

development strategy emphasizes proactive contribution, where officers invest in the growth of others by sharing their expertise and guidance. By doing so, they not only strengthen the Legion's leadership pipeline but also build reciprocal relationships that enhance their own professional network and reputation. This concept encourages officers to become recognized contributors and trusted professionals within the organization, laying the foundation for long-term success and stability.

## Preparing the Next Leader: Mentorship and Transition in May

**Geo Bograkos, Southern Area Cmdr**  
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Just like that, it's May already! May means it's Election Time!

Are you planning on relinquishing your office to a successor? Are they prepared? Will they pick up where you left off and continue your legacy, or will they not?

In The American Legion, mentoring a successor is considered essential for maintaining the organization's legacy and ensuring that "trial by fire" leadership transitions or electing someone unqualified who just wants the title are avoided. Effective mentoring involves preparing a replacement to carry on your work by sharing both practical resources and personal insights into the role.

### Core Mentorship Strategies

- **Share Experience and Insight:** Be transparent about what worked and what didn't during your tenure. Offer the best advice you received and share any regrets to help them avoid similar pitfalls.
- **Provide Essential Resources:** Ensure your successor has access to critical training materials, including:
  - **The Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies:** The principal handbook for post operations and procedures.
  - **ALA Academy and Online Training:** Resources like ALA Academy provide structured learning for new leaders.
  - **Parliamentary Authority:** Provide a copy of the latest Robert's Rules of Order for conducting formal meetings.
- **Gradual Integration:** Find "bright-

eyed" individuals in your post and bring them along slowly to build their confidence and skills before they take over the role.

- **Foster a Culture of Care:** Effective leadership is built on knowing and caring for your team. Encourage your successor to prioritize relationships, such as implementing regular "Buddy Checks" to support members.

### Key Qualities of a Legion Mentor

- **Knowledgeable but Approachable:** You don't need to be an expert on everything, but you should know where to find resources, such as the National website or your specific Department's site.
- **Selfless Motivation:** A good mentor works for the successor's good and the organization's

*continued on page 7 >>*





<< Southern Area Cmdr continued from page 6

health, rather than using the relationship to further their own agenda.

- Visionary and Inspirational: Help the next leader see the future of the post and create enthusiasm for that direction.

### Practical Transition Steps

1. Hand Over Program Publications: Pass along all specific program manuals and action plans relevant to their new position.

2. Facilitate Introductions: Connect them with District Officers and Department Headquarters for ongoing advice and policy clarification.
3. Encourage Lifelong Learning: Frame the transition as an opportunity for them to make their own mark while expanding their responsibilities

Finally, if you have not already done so, please visit and 'FOLLOW' the first ever Southern Area Facebook

page, where you may share all your Facebook posts of your events with everyone in Districts 9, 11, 14, and beyond: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAreaFL>

Or just use this QR code to take you right to the page:



Wishing you and yours a very Happy Mother's Day!

## Finishing Strong in District 12

**Daniel Martin, District 12 Cmdr**

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I want to thank everyone for a great year with picnics at Post 81 in the district and sending Boys to Boys State. Membership was hard

this year for some American Legion posts, but we worked hard to get where we are. Keep going, the year isn't done yet. Our goal is 100% in District 12. Get those renewals done. Find out why veterans are not coming back? We need better training going forward for duty descriptions of your

own post. Reach out to us for training, and we can set up a date to get it done.

On a side note, I will be moving at the end of my duty as District Commander, and I will miss this District and the State of Florida.

## Excellence in Leadership: Cadet Vidyarth Sathya Honored as 2026 Cadet of the Year

**Drew Davis, District 15 Cmdr**

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American Legion Carmichael-Legree Post 167 would like to recognize the 2026 Hillsborough County Cadet of the Year

winner, Cadet Vidyarth Sathya from the Post 167-sponsored Middleton High School Air Force JROTC Program. He has proven himself to be a distinguished leader in all areas and a member of the prestigious Magnet Engineering Department. Cadet Sathya, for

the past four years, has served as Operations Squadron Commander, C Captain, and Lead Command Trainer for the Varsity Color Guard Team, Co-Captain of the Stellar Xplorers Orbital Mechanics Competition Team, Captain of the Joint Leadership Academic Bowl Team (JLAB), Flight Commander, Commander of the Kitty Hawk Honor Society, and a founding member of our Model Rocketry Team, while also donating 937 hours of community service to the Cadet Corps, Middleton High School, and his local community, earning him

the prestigious AFJROTC Silver Star Community Service with Excellence Award.

Last year, as Captain of the AFJROTC JLAB Team, he led our team to place in the top 16 of 700+ teams (top 2% worldwide), securing a spot to compete at the national level in Washington, DC. As Co-Captain of the Stellar Xplorers and a founding member of Middleton's first-ever team, Vidyarth led them to the semifinal rounds two years in a row. He hopes to lead the team

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<< District 15 Cmdr continued from page 7

to a first-ever finals round invitation this year as they enter the next stage of competition as #22 out of 386 teams.

Vidarth was awarded the American Legion Scholastic Excellence Award in addition to the American Legion Military

Excellence Award due to his outstanding leadership and academic excellence as a cadet leader. He demonstrates himself to be a superb citizen every



day and continues to make an exceedingly positive impact on his fellow cadets, our unit, and the school overall.



## Honoring Service and Sacrifice: May in The American Legion

### Joe Marcheggiani, Americanism

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Across the nation, The American Legion marks the month of May with a series of meaningful observances that pay tribute not only to active-duty service members, veterans, and the fallen, but also to the families who stand beside them. As spring arrives, Legion posts and communities unite in remembrance, recognition, and service, reinforcing the enduring values of patriotism and national pride.

May is designated as Military Appreciation Month, setting the tone for a full calendar of events and outreach efforts. Throughout the month, Legionnaires expand initiatives such as "Buddy Checks," ensuring veterans remain connected and supported, while also organizing programs that assist military families and those currently serving.

The month begins with Loyalty Day on May 1, a reaffirmation of Americans' dedication to the country

and its founding principles. Local Posts often host flag ceremonies, patriotic programs, and educational outreach designed to inspire civic pride among citizens of all ages.

On May 8, Victory in Europe Day commemorates the end of World War II in Europe in 1945. While more passive in modern times, the observance remains significant for honoring the courage and sacrifice of the Greatest Generation, many of whom are remembered through Legion-led ceremonies.

A key highlight of the month is Armed Forces Day, observed on the third Saturday in May. This celebration recognizes those currently serving in the United States military. American Legion posts frequently host community gatherings, open houses, and recognition ceremonies that strengthen the bond between civilians and service members, often welcoming entire military families to participate.

Military families, especially spouses, are an essential part of May's

observances. Military Spouse Appreciation Day, observed on the Friday before Mother's Day, highlights the resilience and sacrifice of military spouses. Many Legion posts honor them through appreciation events, certificates, and public recognition, acknowledging the vital role they play in supporting service members through deployments, relocations, and daily challenges.

The month culminates with Memorial Day, observed on the last Monday in May. As one of the nation's most solemn occasions, it honors the men and women who gave their lives in military service. Members of The American Legion lead efforts across the country, organizing wreath-laying ceremonies, placing flags on veterans' graves, and guiding communities in moments of remembrance, including the National Moment of Remembrance at 3:00 p.m. Many ceremonies also recognize Gold Star families, including surviving spouses, whose sacrifices endure long after the loss of their loved ones.

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<< *Americanism continued from page 8*

We also work closely with the American Legion Auxiliary to provide year-round support for military families. Through community programs, scholarships, and outreach initiatives, the Auxiliary plays a vital role in ensuring spouses and families remain supported and connected.

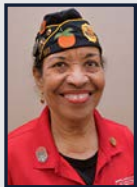
For The American Legion, May is more than a series of dates. It is a call to action. Through remembrance, recognition, and service, the organization ensures that the sacrifices of the past are honored, the contributions of the present are celebrated, and the strength of military families is acknowledged.

As flags wave proudly and communities gather in gratitude, May stands as a powerful reminder that the legacy of service extends beyond the uniform, embracing families, communities, and a nation united in appreciation. For God and Country...

### **Cadet McKinley Castillo Inspires with Autism Safety Initiative**

**Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP**

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Cadet McKinley Castillo is more than just a junior at Western HS JROTC Program with a very busy schedule for everyday activities

for the program, but also an inspiring cadet who, through the love and admiration of her younger 7-year-old brother with autism who is nonverbal, has developed a program for "Protect the Child with Autism." I had the pleasure of attending the City of Sunrise Commission Meeting, where she was invited by City Mayor Michael Ryan to give a presentation in honor of Autism Awareness Month. Cadet Castillo explained how, through the love of her brother, who requires constant monitoring just to make a "House a Home," she developed a program to keep him safe from escaping through doors and windows. She informed us that there is one child in 31 in the US who is diagnosed with autism

of varying degrees. Some children require constant monitoring from families, educators, the general public, and communities. The "Safe at Home on the Spectrum" program works in partnership with families, the community, businesses, and organizations to provide funding for home improvements such as high-mounted key and lock systems and other devices to keep children safe from doors and windows and from getting outside the home or into locations with pools. It is a pilot project that she has implemented and is reaching out to cities and communities to help protect children and families. She gave a PowerPoint presentation with details and statistics that clearly explained the importance of care and concern for those children with autism. Cadet Castillo was presented with a Proclamation from the City of Sunrise for her outstanding initiative, which truly exemplifies the JROTC motto: "to make better citizens." With much gratitude, we congratulate Cadet Castillo on "a job well done" and

may she have a very successful future.

The JSSP 2nd Round Postal Targets were due on April 1st, and we should be getting the results posted on the Legion National website very shortly. The top 15 winners in each category of Precision and Sporter will advance to the Final National Championship In-Person Individual Tournament in Hillsdale, Michigan, in July. Congratulations and good luck to all the winners, and thanks to the Legion Posts that help make this a continued successful program that is part of the scholarships given by National American Legion.



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## The Aftermath of an Unfinished Legislative Session

Stuart Scott, Legislative

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While the Florida Legislature did, in fact, **sine die on time**, the mission itself was not complete. The one constitutional responsibility that must be accomplished each session—the passage of a state budget—was left unfinished.

As a result, both chambers must now return to complete their work. At this time, we await direction on **when the House and Senate will reconvene** to finalize the budget and bring closure to this session.

### What This Means for Us

In practical terms, this delay places all **appropriation requests on hold**, including funding for key programs such as **Boys State and Girls State**. Until a final budget agreement is reached, none of these items can be confirmed or secured.

This uncertainty impacts not only our organization, but many others across the state who rely on these appropriations to plan and execute

their programs.

### The Reality of the Situation

As we look ahead, there is growing discussion that leadership in both chambers **does not currently see eye to eye**, contributing to the delay in reaching a final agreement. The reported gap—now around **\$1.6 billion**—remains a significant hurdle. This session was moved earlier due to it being an election year. Traditionally, that environment encourages collaboration, as those seeking office tend to work toward consensus. However, the current situation suggests otherwise.

With rumors continuing that key leaders in both chambers are not seeking higher office, it raises a fair question: *what drives decision-making when political incentives shift?*

When there is no immediate political consequence, the risk becomes that **personal or institutional battles take priority over the needs of the people**.

### A Lesson Close to Home

This is not just a lesson for elected

officials—it is one we can reflect on within our own organization as well.

Within The American Legion, we have all seen moments when individuals pursue leadership roles. The principle should always remain the same: **it is about the people you represent, not the position you seek**.

Leadership is not about stepping on the shoulders of those who supported you to reach the next level. It is about standing on that foundation and lifting others as you move forward.

### Moving Forward

As we await the Legislature's return to complete the budget, our role remains unchanged. We continue to advocate, remain engaged, and stay prepared to act when needed.

The work is not finished—and neither are we.

Thank you for your continued commitment to The American Legion, to our programs, and to the veterans and communities we serve.

## Honoring Their Sacrifice: POW/MIA Recognition in May

Denny Luke, POW/MIA

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



While National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed each September, the month of May also carries special

significance for honoring those who were prisoners of war or remain missing in action.

Federal law requires the POW/MIA flag to be displayed at designated federal facilities on two important

observances: Armed Forces Day (the third Saturday of May) and Memorial Day (the last Monday of May). The American Legion proudly reinforces this commitment by flying the POW/MIA flag beneath the

*continued on page 11 >>*



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<< POW/MIA continued from page 10

American flag each day as a visible reminder that we will never forget.

### Welcome Home

After more than 80 years, a World War II U.S. Navy sailor with ties to the Jacksonville area has finally been accounted for and laid to rest. Welcome home, John Campbell. His identification was made possible through modern technology, including DNA testing, after his nephew, Edward Campbell, submitted a sample to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

If you know of a family with a loved one still listed as missing in action, please encourage them to submit a DNA sample to the DPAA. This simple act can help bring long-awaited answers and closure to families.

### Some May Highlights, Observances, and Upcoming Events in Florida

- The National League of POW/MIA Families was incorporated on May 28, 1970.
- May 7, 2026 – National Day of Prayer – (See flyer below)
- National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum, Jacksonville (9:00 AM – 11:30 AM)
- May 23, 2026 – Memorial Day Ruck, starting at 8:30 at 217 SE 1st Ave #100, Ocala, Florida
- May 24-25, Miami Beach/South Florida, The Hyundai Air & Sea

Show (May 24-25) at Lummus Park

- May 25, 2026 – Memorial Day Events. City of Sunrise tribute (wreath placement and honor guard) at 10610 West Oakland Park Blvd at 9:00 AM.

### Stay Connected

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

### DPAA Missing Personnel Identified in FY 2026 as of February 10, 2026

- World War II: 69
- Korean War: 18
- Cold War: 0
- Vietnam War: 0

During March, the DPAA accounted for numerous service members from World War II and the Korean War. These brave Americans are now being returned to their families with the honor and dignity they deserve.

#### March 4, 2026

- Norton V. Retzsch – World War II

#### March 10, 2026

- St. Clair M. Gibson - World War II

#### March 12, 2026

- Marvin S. Patton – Korean War
- Joseph A. L. Richer – Korean War

#### March 13, 2026

- Lawrence L. Burleigh – Korean War

- Obert B. Flowers – Korean War
- Lewis B. Bolton – Korean War
- Clyde C. McMeans – World War II
- Joseph P. Karnaghan – World War II
- Irvin T. Crews – Korean War
- Robert G. Shove – World War II
- Marvin E. Lancaster – World War II

#### March 16, 2026

- Rae G. DeMatteis – World War II
- William P. Butler – World War II
- Elmer F. Blonien – World War II
- Marvin N. Everts – World War II
- Carl F. Abbott – World War II

#### March 18, 2026

- Andrew J. Litz – World War II
- Richard A. Meech – World War II
- Edward T. Mossman – World War II

#### March 19, 2026

- James A. Reinhart – World War II
- Henry L. Huber – Korean War

#### March 20, 2026

- Charles C. Palmer, Jr. – World War II
- Charles K. Adam – World War II
- Vito Luceno – World War II

#### March 23, 2026

- Mike R. McDowell – World War II
- Richard W. Young – Korean War

#### March 24, 2026

- William E. Archer, Jr – World War II
- Robert C. Pierce – World War II
- Howard L. Adkins – World War II
- Guido G. Giaquinta – World War II

#### March 25, 2026

- Bennett H. Water – World War II, Hometown – Blackshear Georgia





# FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

MAY 2026 EDITION

CURRENT YEAR FIGURES : SINCE JULY 2025



150

VETS RECEIVED FUNDS



\$254,841

PROVIDED AS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE



14

SPI PARTNERS



\$153,500

GIVEN TOWARDS SUICIDE PREVENTION

## FLORIDA LEGION RIDERS DRIVE IMPACT IN APRIL

Throughout April, the Florida American Legion Riders (ALR) took to the road with one mission: **to end veteran suicide**. Through rides, dinners, and community events, including the In-State Unity Ride and State Rally, Riders raised critical funds and awareness in support of our Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI).

Following last year's incredible milestone of surpassing \$1,000,000 total funds raised from this event over the years, the Riders set their sights even higher for 2025. While final totals are still being calculated, early indicators show they are on track for another record-setting year!

This success is made possible by the dedication of Riders across the state, many of whom created personal fundraising pages and contributed their own time and resources to participate. Their commitment—often

covering travel, lodging, and registration costs out of pocket—reflects a deep passion for the mission.

We extend our sincere gratitude to ALR leadership, including Department Chairman and PVR Vice President Jim Wineland, Adjutant Beverly Wooten, and their team, for their outstanding efforts in organizing this impactful initiative. We also appreciate our Strategic Partners who joined along the routes, reinforcing the meaningful difference these efforts make in the lives of veterans.

The Florida American Legion Riders remain a driving force behind the success of the Suicide Prevention Initiative. Because of their unwavering support, we are able to continue providing critical resources to veterans in need. Together, we move closer to a future free from veteran suicide.

## THREE ROUTES. HUNDREDS OF RIDERS. 2,500 MILES OF PURPOSE. ONE MISSION.

### CENTRAL ROUTE



### NORTHERN ROUTE



### SOUTHERN ROUTE



## NEXT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The Department Convention is coming up in June, offering a great opportunity to learn more about our program, connect with fellow members, and meet the PVR team. This year is especially exciting as it will be your first chance to meet our newest team members, Doug and Caitlin!

Join us for a session on **Friday, June 12 at 3:15 PM\***,

where we'll take a deeper dive into financial assistance eligibility, our SPI Strategic Partners, the application process, and how you can become a valuable resource in your community.

**The entire Legion Family is invited!** We look forward to seeing you all there!

*\*Time is subject to change.*



## Resolution Submission Deadline Approaching for Department Convention

Clarence Hill, Resolutions

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



**All resolutions shall be presented to the Department Adjutant at least forty (40) days prior to the Department**

**Convention. Therefore, all resolutions are due by May 3, 2025.** The Internal Affairs Committee is usually scheduled to meet on Thursday afternoon, June 11. Check the agenda for time and location. Internal Affairs receives reports from the following Convention

Committees: Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws, Credentials, Resolutions, and Time & Place. When it comes to the Resolutions report portion, only the **RESOLVED clauses** of each resolution will be read prior to a motion being made and a vote being taken, so it is important that the entire resolution be reviewed prior to the meeting. Each Post can have **one** voting delegate at this meeting to vote on all matters to be decided. All **voting members must have the appropriate black ribbon in order to vote** which was received

by the delegation chairman with the convention registration package. We ask that voting members please sit in the center section. **Attendees without the black ribbon have no voice and no vote.** We ask that non-voting members do not sit in the center section. The results of any vote taken at this meeting becomes a recommendation to the General Assembly when the Internal Affairs Committee report is presented. **Every delegate to the Convention** has a vote on the convention floor for the final disposition of these resolutions.

## A Remarkable Year for Scholarships

Michael Raymond, Scholarships

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



What an amazing year we've had with scholarships! It wasn't easy, but after reviewing 168 applications for the General, Nursing, and Medical scholarships, we

somehow narrowed it down to 8 General, 1 Nursing, and 1 Medical winner. This was probably one of the hardest tasks I've taken on, but it was so rewarding! I could not have done it without the help of some very special people. Shirley Douglas was the previous Chairman and was invaluable in her mentorship and

assistance. I'd also like to thank Ian Lilly, Rick O., and Jim Ramos for their assistance. I've been asked to chair the Scholarship program again next year and gladly accepted. How could I say no with such a great team? See you at Convention.

## Celebrate Excellence in Scouting and Honor Our Flag

Chris Ragusa, Scouting

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



Submit Your Outstanding Post Scouting Program Applications by May 7th!!! Reminder that your Outstanding Post Scouting Program

application must be received by May 7, 2026, for consideration. Help us recognize excellence in support of the Scouting movement by nominating your post. Complete

the application form and provide a one-to-two-page narrative that describes how your post contributes to this important program. Please.... one to two pages only! We're looking for quality, not necessarily quantity, in the narratives. Focus on the opportunities that your Post, Squadron, and Unit have provided either to the Scouting America units that you charter, those that you sponsor, or ideally both! The application form can be found on

the Department Scouting program Resource page at <https://www.floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Outstanding-Post-Scouting-Program-2025-26.pdf>.pdf and must either be snail mailed (to arrive by May 7th) to Department HQs, Attn: Scouting Program, or emailed to [programs@floridalegion.org](mailto:programs@floridalegion.org).

Unserviceable U.S. Flag Retirement

*continued on page 14 >>*



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<< Scouting continued from page 13

Ceremony at MacDill AFB. As part of a fun-filled weekend of camping at MacDill AFB in Tampa from March 6 to 8, 2026, two Cub Scout packs chartered to American Legion District 15 posts took part in a ceremony conducted by Scouts BSA Troop 109 to retire U.S. flags. Cub Scout Pack 9, chartered to American Legion Post 147 in Odessa, and Cub Scout Pack 1381, chartered to American Legion Post 138 in Port Tampa City, participated in this solemn ritual, which treats the U.S. flag not as a piece of discarded fabric, but as a "living symbol" that

has honorably reached the end of its life. Adopting this official ritual in 1937, the American Legion designed it to foster public respect and ensure that flags which have become "worn and faded in a tribute of service and love" receive a final, honorable farewell. To assist the public, many American Legion posts provide dedicated drop-off boxes for worn flags and conduct formal retirement ceremonies to ensure they are handled with proper respect. The dedicated fire pit featured in this photograph was purchased exclusively for use in unserviceable U.S. flag

retirement ceremonies by Sons of the American Legion Squadron 138. A dedicated pit ensures that the flag is never burned in a place where a trash or cooking fire has been. It creates a "clean, purging flame" solely for the dignified destruction of unserviceable flags.



### Close Enough Is Not Good Enough: Protecting The American Legion Emblem

Carrie Kolze, Creative Services Mgr  
[ckolze@floridalegion.org](mailto:ckolze@floridalegion.org)



As we continue exploring the benefits and responsibilities that come with using Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is important

to take a closer look at one area that requires particular care: **maintaining the integrity of The American Legion Emblem and using our branding correctly.**

The American Legion's name, emblem, and visual identity are not just design elements. They represent more than a century of service, sacrifice, and commitment to veterans, our communities, and our nation. Because of this, their use follows specific guidelines that must always be respected.

With the growth of AI-generated content, especially tools that create images and graphics, a new challenge has started to appear. AI can quickly produce flyers, social media graphics, and promotional materials, but it often gets important details wrong. Logos may look slightly off, proportions can be uneven, colors may not match, and text inside the emblem can be incorrect or distorted. At a glance, these designs might seem acceptable, but they are not accurate.

Even when unintentional, this kind of misuse is not allowed.

The American Legion Emblem is protected, and it must always be used in its correct form. AI-generated versions, altered images, or recreated emblems do not meet these standards and should never be used in official

materials. Using incorrect imagery can reduce the professionalism of your Post and weaken the identity that members have worked hard to build over many years.

This does not mean AI has no place in your workflow. It can still be a helpful tool for brainstorming ideas, building layouts, or creating the foundation of a flyer. The key is understanding where to draw the line. AI can support your design process, but it should not be used to generate official branding elements.

The best approach is simple. You can create your flyer or graphic using AI if you choose, then manually add the official American Legion emblem and branding afterward.

*continued on page 15 >>*





<< Creative Services continued from page 14

This keeps your work efficient while also making sure it follows proper guidelines.

Official logos, emblems, and branding resources are available and should always be downloaded directly from The American Legion's brand guidelines. These resources include approved versions of the emblem, correct colors, spacing, and examples of proper use. You can find everything here:

<https://www.legion.org/brand/>

Taking a few extra minutes to use the correct assets makes a big difference. It helps protect the organization's image, keeps materials consistent across all levels, and ensures every Post, District, and Department presents a professional and unified appearance.

As Legionnaires, we are responsible for carrying forward the legacy of this organization. That includes

not only what we do, but how we present who we are.

AI can help you move faster and be more creative, but it cannot replace the responsibility to represent The American Legion correctly.

Use AI as a tool, but always finish your work with care and accuracy.

When it comes to our emblem, **close enough is not good enough.**

## Supporting Veterans and Families: The Impact of the Veterans and Children Foundation

Dennis Boland, Child Well Being Fdn Pres  
[pdcboland@legionmail.org](mailto:pdcboland@legionmail.org)



The American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation, formerly known as The American Legion Endowment

Fund, provides financial resources for the organization's Temporary Financial Assistance Program and Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation support, including training for accredited service officers.

The Temporary Financial Assistance Program helps military and veteran families with minor children at home who face unexpected financial hardship, from sudden health care emergencies to delayed military pay.

Over \$6 million in Temporary Financial Assistance grants have been provided over the last decade alone.

More than 3,000 trained American Legion service officers provide VA

benefits representation and other forms of assistance to some 750,000 veterans at any one time, free of charge.

American Legion service officers are directly responsible for veterans' disability compensation of more than \$14 billion per year.

During the last government shutdown, Temporary Financial Assistance provided over \$1.2 million to Coast Guard families in need.

## Stronger Together: A Call to Communicate, Recruit, and Engage

Michael Nigbor, Detachment Cmdr  
[commander@floridasons.org](mailto:commander@floridasons.org)



Greetings from your Detachment of Florida Commander!

I would like to begin this article by checking in with our Detachment Vice Commanders. Please get back to me in regard to our recruiting competition. I asked

every member to recruit at least one new person this year. We are coming close to the end of this service year. How are the numbers adding up in your area? Who is taking our membership seriously? Please call or text me at 262-370-8733, or email at [commander@floridasons.org](mailto:commander@floridasons.org). Thank you for your efforts and dedication to our organization. Keep reaching out to those who have yet to renew. Let them

know you appreciate their continued support. Get them engaged so they will come to your post to support your programs and events.

District Officers, the same request applies, as well as getting in touch with your squadrons. I will take calls from anyone in our organization. It's called communication. Recently, I sent

*continued on page 16 >>*



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<< Detachment Commander continued from page 15  
21 test emails out to our Detachment and District Officers. I only received 8 replies back. We are working on this to see what the issues are. As you are reading these articles, please get in contact with me as to how we are all doing. I appreciate feedback. We are a team, and this newsletter is for all of us. As members of the Sons of The American Legion, show some C.A.R.E. - Communicate, Act, Recruit, Educate. Continue to share the great things our squadrons are doing.

This is your newsletter. Share your events with us so we might be able to come and support you. We would like to see more engagement with our members in The Source. Communication and teamwork are the foundation to our success. The time is now to show our mission

is cemented in service, patriotism, kindness, and community engagement, honoring all those who served and continue to serve.

March 19, 20, 21, and 22, I attended The American Legion College. I would recommend this class to everyone. Excellent training and instructors, giving information to help us be better, knowledgeable leaders. April 4th was the District 13 Picnic at Post 323. It was very well attended, and we had generous donations for our charities. April 10th and 11th were fantastic days at Posts 394 and 117, all supporting April Military Month of the Child and Children and Youth Picnic. The children performed their Military Child Table Setting. It was so wonderful to have so many junior members present and showing their respect.

By now, we are all working on our

year-end reports. Remember to send in your SIR report after your elections. Let's work hard and accomplish 100% completion this year. Stay in contact with your neighboring squadrons and see if they need help. Reach out to your Detachment and District staff if you have any questions. Communicate, engage, and let's get it done.

Thank you for all you do to prove The Detachment of Florida is an unwavering force. Send me invitations to your meetings and events. I would love to meet your members. Keep the lines of communication and engagement thriving. Help promote each other's events.

*We Are a Team We Are Stronger Together*



# DEPARTMENT MERCHANDISE



**NEW 2026 Department Convention Tees**  
**NEW Department USA 250 Tees**

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## 2026 District Constitutional Conferences (DCC Meetings)

Date	District	Location	Time
May 16	1	Post 75 Crestview	Registration: 12:00 PM CST Start: 1:00 PM CST
May 16	2	Post 241 Sneads	Registration: 8:00 AM CST Start: 9:00 AM CST
May 16	3	Post 57 Lake City	Registration: 4:00 PM Start: 5:00 PM
May 16	4	Post 155 Crystal River	Registration: 9:00 AM Start: 10:00 AM
May 2	5	Post 137 Jacksonville	Registration: 8:30 AM Start: 9:30 AM
May 9	6	Post 80 Saint Cloud	Registration: 9:00 AM Start: 10:00 AM
May 9	7	Post 8 Winter Haven	Registration: 12:00 PM Start: 1:00 PM
May 17	8	Post 113 Rotonda West	Registration: 9:00 AM Start: 10:00 AM
May 16	9	Post 142 Pompano Beach	Registration: 12:30 PM Start: 1:30 PM
May 2	11	Post 268 Rivera Beach	Registration: 9:00 AM Start: 10:00 AM
April 18	12	Post 81 Melbourne	Registration: 9:00 AM Start: 10:00 AM
May 17	13	Post 103 Punta Gorda	Registration: 12:30 PM Start: 1:30 PM
May 16	14	Post 31 South Miami	Registration: 8:30 AM Start: 9:30 AM
May 2	15	Post 111 Tampa	Registration: 8:30 AM Start: 9:30 AM
May 16	16	Post 273 Madeira Beach	Registration: 9:00 AM Start: 10:00 AM
May 9	17	Post 17 New Smyrna Beach	Registration: 10:00 AM Start: 11:00 AM

*All dates are tentative and subject to change without notice.*

If you are an authorized Post representative, and need to make a change, please email [events@floridalegion.org](mailto:events@floridalegion.org).

## 2026-2027 Endorsements On File (As of April 30, 2026)

### Officers

Robert "Bob" W. Matheson	Dept Commander
Bruce Carl	1st Vice Cmdr
Troy Horsley	2nd Vice Cmdr
Rick Orzechowski	2nd Vice Cmdr
Michael A. Raymond	NEC
Jessica Moore	ANEC
Eric R. Linthicum	Chaplain
Diane Schmidt	Chaplain
Kimberly Ann "Seven" Beebe	Historian
Sonny Decker	Sgt-at-Arms

### Area Commanders

Kalvin Thompson	Central Area Cmdr
Dennis Mallon	Eastern Area Cmdr
Miguel Garcia	Northern Area Cmdr
George "Geo" Bograkos	Southern Area Cmdr
Doug Deierlein	Southwestern Area Cmdr
E. Fred Pierce	Southwestern Area Cmdr
Robert "Oz" Osmon	Western Area Cmdr

### District Commanders

Donald "Don" Westfall	District 1 Cmdr
Roxana "Roxann" Dressel	District 2 Cmdr
Enrique "Rick" Cabrera	District 3 Cmdr
Darcy Bockman-Wright	District 4 Cmdr
Ken White	District 5 Cmdr
Alan Adams	District 6 Cmdr
Karen Warren	District 7 Cmdr
Robert Patierno Sr.	District 8 Cmdr
David "Dave" Hurst	District 9 Cmdr
Daniel J. Ciesielski	District 12 Cmdr
Laurene Allen-Flower	District 13 Cmdr
Andrew Davis	District 15 Cmdr
Michael G. Harley	District 16 Cmdr
Robert Ordner	District 16 Cmdr
Jim Bowers	District 17 Cmdr

For endorsement letters and updates, visit our website at <https://www.floridalegion.org/news-events/department-convention/endorsement-letters/>



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# MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

April 30, 2026 (100% Target)

District 3	Rick Cabrera	104.63%
District 2	Roxann Dressel	103.95%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	100.13%
District 13	Laurene Allen-Flower	99.34%
District 1	Robert Osmon	99.18%
District 12	Daniel Martin	98.80%
District 4	Darcy Bockman-Wright	98.80%
District 16	Michael Harley	98.29%
District 17	Jim Bowers	97.57%
District 9	Jim Tewes	97.41%
District 15	Drew Davis	96.74%
District 6	David Musser	95.58%
District 11	Stanley Brown, Jr.	95.11%
District 8	Charlie Magnus	94.97%
District 7	Kalvin Thompson	93.28%
District 14	Thomas Frank	92.38%
Northern	Doug Hockenberry	99.85%
Western	Shelby Windham	99.84%
Southwestern	Eric Loyd	97.39%
Central	Rick Orzechowski	97.11%
Eastern	Joan Suelter	97.04%
Southern	Geo Bograkovs	95.08%
Post 400		85.77%

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**The American Legion, Department of Florida  
is proud to announce the  
2026 Scholarship Winners**

**The General Scholarship:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, receiving a \$2,500.00 scholarship is Jasmine Gaines of Clermont.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, receiving a \$1,500.00 scholarship is Matthew Ngo of Middleton.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, receiving a \$1,000.00 scholarship is Isaac Smith of Anthony.

4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> Place, receiving a \$500.00 scholarship each:

- Karen Hoefler of Winter Park
- Matthew McDonald of Casselberry
- Alexis Cole of Niceville
- Nolan Alford of Apalachicola

**The JROTC Cadet of the Year Scholarship:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, receiving a \$2,500.00 scholarship is Leah VanArsdale of Seminole.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, receiving a \$1,500.00 scholarship is Misty Sandhosh of Ocala.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, receiving a \$1,000.00 scholarship is Daniella Cobb of Cooper City.

4<sup>th</sup> Place, receiving a \$500.00 scholarship is Kaiya Peters of Parrish.

**The Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, receiving a \$2,500.00 scholarship is William Churchill of Punta Gorda.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, receiving a \$1,500.00 scholarship is Hannah Hewett of Riverview.

3<sup>rd</sup> Place, receiving a \$1,000.00 scholarship is Michael Carlin of Merritt Island.

4<sup>th</sup> Place, receiving a \$500.00 scholarship is Alexander Maloof of Winter Park.

**Medical School Scholarship:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, receiving a \$2,750.00 scholarship is Lillian McBee of Rockledge.

**Nursing School Scholarship:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place, receiving a \$2,750.00 scholarship is Catherine Rowland of Boca Raton.

Jasmine Gaines, Matthew Ngo, Leah VanArsdale, William Churchill, Lillian McBee, and Catherine Rowland will be invited to The Department Convention in June to receive their scholarships. All others will receive their scholarship via mail within the next few weeks.



# 107<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:events@floridalegion.org).



Department of Florida

SPONSOR AND EXHIBITOR APPLICATION

\*\*\* Deadline May 8, 2026 \*\*\*

Register online at [floridalegion.org/flcon](http://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](http://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](http://www.floridalegion.org)

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



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"

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**HALF PAGE**  
\$100  
7.5" X 5"

<b>QUARTER PAGE</b> \$50 3.75" X 5"	<b>QUARTER PAGE</b> \$50 3.75" 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 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](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: \$ 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.



Order by **May 10th** for Free Dept Convention Pickup

# COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM

## 2026-2027



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Post: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### DELIVERY METHOD

Pick Up at HQ Orlando  Pick Up at Dept Convention  Delivery\*

*\*An additional shipping fee of \$10 is required for delivery.  
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. You will be notified before shipment.*

Shipping Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: FL Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### SHIRT OPTIONS *Enter Quantity for each style/size.*

Style	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Cost
Men's	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X		\$ 0.00
Ladies	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X		\$ 0.00

### TOTAL

Shirts are **\$40 each\*** with two lines of personalization\* included. \*Up to 20 characters per line, including spaces and special characters. See next page for options.

If tax-exempt, provide an exemption form if not already on file.

Check here if tax exempt.

Subtotal	\$ 0.00
Tax (6.5%)	\$ 0.00
Shipping	\$ 0.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>

### PAYMENT

Please return form and payment to Department Headquarters: **Email** ([emblemsales@floridalegion.org](mailto:emblemsales@floridalegion.org)) | **Fax** (407-299-0901)  
**Mail** (The American Legion, Dept of FL; Attn: Emblem Sales, PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854)

Cash  Check # \_\_\_\_\_  Credit Card

Card Type:  Visa  Mastercard  Discover  American Express

Card Holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Reset Page

# COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2026-2027

**PERSONALIZATION** You are allowed up to **two lines** of personalization, with up to **20 characters** on each line, including spaces and special characters. (Line 1 example: First Name Last Name. Line 2 example: Post # Title)

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: Select Style Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: Size Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

*By signing below, I agree that I have verified the information provided as correct and free of errors. I acknowledge that The American Legion, Department of Florida is NOT responsible for incorrect information provided.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Join us for the 3rd Annual Florida American Legion Boys State Alumni Dinner

**Saturday, May 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM**

Department of Florida American Legion Headquarters  
1912 Lee Road, Orlando, Florida 32810



\$35 for (1) Ticket  
\$65 for (2) Tickets

Your support—through buying tickets or donating—helps  
fund Delegates:

- Housing • Scholarships • Program Enhancements • Leadership Development • and More!

Room block available at Marriott Courtyard Orlando Altamonte Springs/Maitland starting at \$109.00. For more information, please call (407) 659-9100



PROUD SPONSOR OF THE

# Sunshine State



# 250 Showdown

**1 NATION INVITES AMERICAN LEGION POSTS ACROSS FLORIDA TO LEAD MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN RECOGNITION OF AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY.**

**OUR GOAL IS TO INSPIRE POSTS TO COMPETE, INNOVATE, AND ENGAGE THEIR COMMUNITIES SO FULLY THAT PEOPLE WAKE UP ON JULY 5 AND SAY IT WAS THE BEST INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION EVER AND WHAT MY LOCAL LEGION POST DID WAS REALLY COOL.**



**REGISTRATION  
OPEN!**

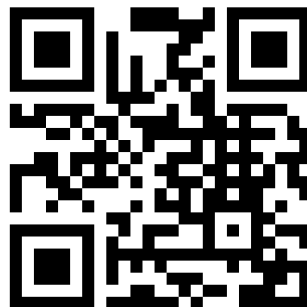


**VOLUNTEER SUPPORT  
FOR PARTICIPATING POSTS**



**HUGE PRIZES FOR  
TOP PERFORMING POSTS**

**REGISTER. PARTICIPATE. LEAD.**



**SCAN OR VISIT [1NATION.ORG](http://1NATION.ORG) or EMAIL [CHARLES@1NATION.ORG](mailto:CHARLES@1NATION.ORG)**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# MAY IS MENTAL HEALTH MONTH



## ***WHO UNDERSTANDS VETERANS BETTER THAN OTHER VETERANS?***

This Mental Health Month, hear from hundreds of Veterans who explain openly and honestly, in their own words:

- How certain symptoms made them realize they could benefit from mental health care
- What held them back from asking for help—and how they overcame their hesitation
- Which mental health treatments worked best for them, and how it changed their lives
- What they want other Veterans to know about mental health care

*Veterans of all ages, branches, and backgrounds are sharing their stories of military and civilian life experiences and challenges. Find a story that speaks to you.*

## ***HEAR VETERAN STORIES***

**[MakeTheConnection.net/MHM](https://MakeTheConnection.net/MHM)**

