The Legion Link

April 2013 Vol. 20 Issue 9



AIMING HIGH FOR VETERANS



NEVER FORGOTTEN

Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

E-mail: mail@floridalegion.org

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Al 'Gunner' Dudley Department Commander Commander@floridalegion.org 407.247.5232

It's getting that time of year to toot your own horn by letting everyone know the fantastic job you do for the Legion, our veterans and the community. Consolidated Post Reports (CPRs) are available on line. You can file electronically, so let's get 100% reporting from all our Posts. Let's insure our status of No. 1 Department in the Nation!

Now is also the time to do the big push for Retention & Recruitment (R&R). We are presently at 97%! By everyone putting forth their effort over the next few months, Florida will obtain 100% !!!

Last month we held the Department Oratorical Contest and we were proud of the talent of these young men and women. I am confident our selection has a great chance at winning the National Oratorical!

I will be out visiting Posts as usual and hope to see you in my travels and Thank you for all you do. For God and Country

Art Schwabe
Department Vice Commander
Vicecommander@floridalegion.org
386.235.9990

IN THE HOUSE!!!

We are still not done. We are so close to making 100 % in membership. Lets finish the job. We need to get the word out about the Legion. We do so much but only a few people hear

about it. Be the voice for the Post, make people aware of what we do for Veterans and the Community. Now is the time to prepare for School medals, ROTC medals, Law and Order programs. Make sure the paperwork reflects the Post efforts. Recognize all the hard work members put into programs by completing the necessary paperwork and send it to Department. Let the local newspaper know of the Posts efforts. "Toot" your horn because your members deserve it for all the hard work.

I had an opportunity to visit our new Post. Post 398 Indiantown, Fl. Veterans and Son of the Legion working for the betterment of America and the American Legion. They celebrated the Legion Birthday with a big cake. A good time was had by all. Thanks for all you do and will do in the Future. Commanders please remember to get ready for the CPR reports . Have members of the Post help with the report as well. Get them involved in what the Post has done. Maybe things that would be missed could be added to the report by the members you had help with the report! The more the members know about what the Post has done the better the Post will be over all. continued next page



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Ole Corner

OLE AND SVEN were on their very first train ride. They had brought along bananas for lunch. Just as they began to peel them, the train entered a long, dark tunnel. "Have you eaten your banana yet?" Ole asked excitedly. "No," replied Sven.

"Well don't touch it," Ole exclaimed, "I just took one bite and went blind!"

For God and Country and The American Legion



95th Annual Department Convention June 6-9, 2013 Renaissance Orlando by SeaWorld

800-380-7917 or local at 407-351-5555 to reserve your room in advance

Deluxe King Room \$129
Deluxe Queen-Queen Room \$129
Hospitality Parlors/Suite Upon Request
(Contact Mary at Headquarters407.295.2631 ext 232)

Jay Conti, Sr.
Department Sgt.-at-Arms

Hi Fellow Legionnaires;

Attention ALL Sgt-at-Arms! Attention ALL Sgt-at-Arms! Attention ALL Sgt-at-Arms!

We need your help as Sgt-at-Arms during the Department Convention. We will need your help during our General Session both Friday & Saturday of the Convention. The hours are Friday from 7:30 AM till about 4:30 PM and Saturday from 7:30 AM till about 3:30 PM . If you can help out please let me know the days and time by email or phone: Sgt-at-Arms@floridalegion.org or jconti3547@aol.com or please call me at 352-287-1400. We will hold a meeting at 7am on Friday to go over duties as well as distributing the Dept. Assistant Sgt-at-Arms Badges.

A total of 540+ members have participated in the Department Sgt-at-Arms classes within the Districts which not only included Legionnaires, but Auxiliary members, Sons of The American Legion and ALR Members. I Thank each and every one of you that attended the classes. I appreciate the positive feedback received on the class and the Sgt-at-Arms Manual. So far over 750 copies have been distributed throughout the State and I have traveled over 25,000 miles and crisscrossed the State of Florida many times since June 2012. What a lot of fun I've had meeting many Great Legionnaires! I want to personally thank Carol Polk for her help in getting the Sgt-at-Arms Manuals printed in order to get them in our Department Legionnaires hands! I thank you Carol!

By now your Post has received your End of Year Reports & Awards package. Post, District and Area Commanders please put out the word that we will be having the "Eddie Humer Award" for a Post Sgt-at-Arms with the recommendation by the Post Commander for his/her contribution to the success of the Post. This award will be presented at the Department Convention. A narrative will be required and the form will be published and emailed to all District and Area Commanders as well as sent in the package with your Consolidated Post Report. Commanders please ensure that it gets sent to the Post level..

Another award will be given for the outstanding District Sergeant-At-Arms for his/her contribution to the success of the District. A narrative is required from the District Commander. This award will also be presented at the Department Convention and new this year a "Runner Up" Department Sgt-at-Arms "BRAVO ZULU" awards will also be given! Speaking of: BRAVO ZULU! A "Job Well Done" goes out to the Honor Guard of Post #138 for a very Professional job in support of the Department Oratorical Contest; keep up the great work! For God and Country





TAPS



It is with deep regret we report the passing of Past Department Commander, William "Bill" P. Seemann, of Tampa, FL on Thursday, March 21st, 2013 at the age of 80.

Bill Seemann was a Korean Air Force Veteran and a member of Post #152 with 43 continuous years of membership. Bill is survived by his wife Patricia. Bill served many roles during his impressive career in The American Legion. Post positions include Post Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander, Chaplain and School Awards Chairman. District positions include 15th District Commander, Chaplain, and School Awards Chairman. Department positions include Department Commander (1997-1998), Central Area Vice Commander, Chaplain, Membership Chairman and School Awards Chairman for 7 years with the Department of Florida winning the Ralph T. O' Neil Education Trophy four times. On a National level, Bill served on the Membership Committee, Post Activities Committee and Foreign Relations Committee.

If you would like to send your condolences please do so through his wife Patricia at 8313 W. Elm Street, Tampa, FL 33615-2805.





TAPS

It is with deep regret to report the passing of Past 17th District Commander, James "Jim" R. Baker, of Edgewater, Florida on Wednesday, March 27th, 2013 at the age of 66.

Jim is survived by his wife Linda.

Jim Baker was a Vietnam NAVY Veteran and a member of Post #285 with 14 continuous years of membership. As a Department Resolutions Chairman; Past 17th District Commander; Past 17th District Vice Commander; Past 17th District Sgt-at-Arms, Jim will be remembered by many as a dedicated and genuine individual.

If you would like to send your condolences, please do so through his wife, Linda, at 3319 Lime Tree Drive, Edgewater, Florida 32141-6835.



Legislative Issues Stanley Gold, Department Legislative Chairman The American Flag

The American Legion remains committed to protecting Old Glory, and continues to support legislation that safeguards our nation's flag from physical desecration. (H.J. RES. 19)

End Veteran Homelessness

The American Legion strongly supports the Administration's goal of eliminating veterans' homelessness by 2015 and calls on Congress to pledge whatever resources are necessary to accomplish this goal, to include medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families. (S.62/H.R.385)

Disabled Veterans tax/Widows Tax

VA disability compensation should not be offset from military retired pay regardless of the VA rating percentage, nor should VA survivor benefits (DIC) from military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities. The American Legion supports legislation that would completely repeal these unjust offsets (H.R.333/H.R.303/H.R.32).

<u>Protecting Veterans and DOD from the harmful cuts imposed through sequestration</u>

The American Legion recognizes and supports the need for a fiscally responsible government, and looks forward to working with the new Congress to develop deficit reducing strategies that do not degrade the nation's ability to defend itself, or further assault the earned benefits currently being received by our nation's military veterans (H.R.55).

Quality Education through Post 9/11 GI Bill

As one of the founding authors of the original GI Bill, The American Legion wants to protect our veterans with oversight that include provisions to evaluate post-secondary education institutions on quality factors such as accreditation, transferability, cost, graduation rates, and acceptance in the job market. State Approving Agencies should be returned their original power to protect the GI Bill along with adequate funding to execute their mandate. Student veterans should be allowed in -state tuition rates regardless of residency status (J.R.357/S.257).

Stolen Valor Act

In United States V. Alvarez the Supreme Court ruled the 2005 Stolen Valor Act was unconstitutional, yet left the door open for a more carefully tailored law to criminalize profiting from lies about military service. The American Legion supports legislation to restore the criminality of lying about military service and received decorations (H.R.258/S.210)

100% Goal May 1, 2013

Membership Report as of April 1, 2013

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
6	Robert Kiley	10,193	10,549	103.49
15	Eunice Butts	5,178	5,189	100.21
5	Henry Combs	7,681	7,498	97.62
12	Albert Diaz	8,424	8,154	96.80
17	Michael Wolohan	4,135	4,000	96.73
7	Nancy Thomas	3,863	3,732	96.61
1	Verna Joyce	6,256	6,015	96.15
16	James Burgess	11,977	11,487	95.91
11	Richard Smith	4,094	3,917	95.68
8	Debra Roush	8,218	7,848	95.50
13	William Hauser	8,783	8,363	95.22
2	Homer Frailey	1,365	1,297	95.02
3	M.E Christians	1,712	1,609	93.98
4	Charles Ferguson	4,160	3,907	93.92
9	William Johnson	4,342	4,076	93.87
14	Gary Decker	3,021	2,788	92.29
Eastern	Mark Johnson	18,617	18,703	100.46
Central	James Zipler	21,018	20,408	97.10
Northern	Robert Brewster	17,688	17,014	96.19
Western	Charles Lecroy	7,621	7,312	95.94
SW	Steven Slachta	17,001	16,211	95.35
Southern	George Rafajko	11,457	10,781	94.10
Dept			90,429	
Post 400		11,977	11,585	96.73
Post 208		2,141	3,064	143.11
Totals		107,775	105,078	97.50

Jim Ramos Membership Chairman membership@floridalegion.org

Florida Legionnaires we are doing well on membership but we have to do a little bit more! Now is the time when membership starts to get harder for Post, Districts and Area. All Post pull away from each other and some goal get harder to do. Congratulation, to all the District and Area for making the 90% goal, But we still have Post under the goal if we can begin does Post up to at least to 90% we will be doing better. And the good news is we have win the BIG 12nd from National the second time in a roll Thanks Florida Legionnaires GO Florida.

We also have the 6th District to be the first District to get 100% plus and I hope first in the Nation again Thanks 6th District and keep going we have until March 31, 2013. We have 9 more Districts who can also win a National Award too. All Post should be helping with getting membership as soon as opposable up to Department HQ to help your District. Let do something to have National know where Florida on the Map.

Please continue to send in your membership an let's make the 100% as soon as we can because I know we can do it Florida Legionnaires. If you need some help just get with your District Commander, Area Commander or me and we can suggests idea and get you some help as need it.

PR is for Public Relation, Please get someone to assist you and your Post get the word out to the media, member and in the community for your entire Post event. Also don't forget your volunteer to just say Thank you from time to time. We need volunteer to help out with all the programs we do in the Post and out in the community.

As the American Legion continues its drive to protect and preserve veteran benefit programs - especially in the area of medical care—the numerical strength of the organization is very important. Make sure your Post is doing its part in the nationwide drive to increase the Legion's position of power. I am here to assist you in your recruitment and retention efforts, please contact me at your convenience by e-mail jramos149@bellsouth.net or membership@florida.org or at 352-226-4370.

Membership in The American Legion
is a matter of PRIDE ~
Tradition
Heritage
Accomplishment
Serving and Belonging
to the National Largest Veteran's Organization

We the, Department of Florida, have been informed that we have won the "Big Twelve Award" from National Headquarters. The Big Twelve means one of the 12 largest Departments in the American Legion. Congratulations to all. Because of your efforts "Florida Shines" again. Also the 6th District won the "Race to the Top" for the second year -BACK to BACK. It has never been done in the history of the Legion for category (V) Congratulations on a job well done!



LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATE LEGION-RELATED LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS Stanley Gold, Department Legislative Chr

On February 27, 2013 we had our 6th Annual Congressional Luncheon in the House Cannon Building in Washington, D.C. All our members of the House plus our two Senators were invited. We are glad to say 23 of our members showed up in person. All of the rest did send their aides. We discussed our top legislative goals with all of them. We thank Congressman Jeff Miller who set up the meeting room for us. He also announced that he introduced a new Flag bill H.J. Res. 19 that will safeguard our nation's flag from physical desecration. He asked all the members present to co-sign this bill.



AMENDMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT CONSTITUTION AND BY LAWS Larry Sheets, Department Internal Affairs Chairman

With the annual Department Convention approaching it is important to remember the proper procedure for amending the Department Constitution and By Laws:

Article XVI of the Department Constitution, section 1 states: "This Constitution may be amended at any Department Convention by a vote of two-thirds of the total authorized representation thereat. Provided however, that no amendments to this Constitution shall be made except as herein provided unless a copy of such proposed amendments shall be typewritten, prepared in triplicate on forms supplied by Department Headquarters, and submitted to the Department Adjutant at least forty (40) days prior to the date of the Annual Department Convention. The Department will then send a copy of each proposed amendment to teach Post in the Department at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Convention." That being said, the deadline for a Post to submit a proposed amendment to the Department Constitution is April 26, 2013.

Section 2 says that any proposed amendment that is not submitted by the deadline required by section 1 can only be acted on by a unanimous consent of all delegates present at the Convention at which such amendments are voted upon.

Article VII of the Department By Laws, section 1 states: "These By Laws may be amended and changed at any Department Convention by a two-thirds vote; all changes and amendments must be in writing. Provided however, that no amendments to these By Laws shall be made exception as in section 2 of this article prepared in triplicate on forms supplied by Department Headquarters, and be submitted forty (40) days prior to the date of the Annual Convention, to the Department Adjutant, who shall send a copy thereof to each Post in the Department at least thirty (30) days prior to such Annual Convention, provided that proposed amendments shall not be submitted through the office of the Department Adjutant, submitted by a Post, the Department Executive Committee or the Standing Committee on Constitution and By Laws." That being said the deadline for a Post to send a proposed amendment to the Department is April 26, 2013.

Section 2 says that any proposed amendment that is not submitted by the deadline required by section 1 requires a unanimous consent of all delegates present at the convention at which such amendments are voted upon.

It is important that a Post who wishes to propose a change to the Department Constitution and By Laws pay particular attention to the above, and make sure that proposed amendments are submitted in a timely manner. Should a member have any questions regarding the above, please contact your Post or District Judge Advocate.

Often I am approached by a member of a Post complaining about something that happened in the Post club Room, Lounge or Bar. Please note that problems in those areas are to be handled by your Post Club Room, Lounge, or Bar Chairman or Committee.

Should there be a legitimate problem within the Post itself, the procedure to follow is to first contact your District Commander. If the District Commander cannot solve the problem, he or she will in turn contact the Area Commander. If the problem cannot be solved by the Area Commander, a letter should be written to the Department who will in turn contact the Internal Affairs Committee.

The 50-50-90 rule: Any time you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.

~ Andy Rooney ~

Got Tagline?

Part of every company's identity is its tagline. What company do you think of when you read: "Semper Fidelis"; "Where's The Beef?"; "Don't Leave Home Without It"; "No One Does More For Veterans" (yes, even VFW has a tagline); "We've Got Your Back"; or "The UnCola"?

One task of the Membership and Post Activities Committee is to suggest a corporate tagline, which after approval by the NEC, will be used for the foreseeable future in all of our advertisements, letterheads, publications, press releases, and so forth as a description of who we are and what we do.

The goal is to adopt a tagline which is so significant that all of the public will recognize it, associate it with The American Legion, and know what is our "reason for being." Even though it must be short and pithy, it must be filled with content and phrased in a memorable and catchy way.

You can help us craft an American Legion tagline by submitting your ideas by email to tagline@legion.org Submissions may be submitted by individuals (membership is not required), posts, districts, counties or departments; there is no limit to the number that may submitted but each submission must be contained in a single email. We encourage Departments and Posts to give this information the widest dissemination, as we will do in your national publications. All submissions must be received no later than April 19, 2013, in order to be considered.

The Internal Affairs Commission will be the final reviewer of submissions, and will draft a resolution recommending a permanent tagline. The decision of the National Executive Committee is final.

If your tagline is the one recommended to the NEC, and adopted exactly as submitted, you will receive a \$500 check, and a Certificate of Appreciation plaque signed by the National Commander in recognition of your winning entry. The winning entry will be posted on www.Legion.org after the NEC meets in mid-May 2013. In the event of duplicate winning entries, the earliest received will be declared the winner.

Remember: April 19, 2013, is the deadline, and the email address is: tagline@legion.org Please include your name and phone number on each entry. Only one entry per email submission. All entries will be acknowledged by a return email. Save that return receipt as proof of your submission.







Mike 'Goat' Kirchoff ALR Department Chairman

The first Florida In-State Legacy Run was a huge success. There were four goals established for the ride at the very beginning: first was riding safely, second was raise money for the Legacy Scholarship Fund, third was to bring awareness to the Legion Riders within the State of Florida and fourth was to have fun. All the goals were not only accomplished but exceeded all our expeditions. There was not a single incident or accident in the 1,815 miles that we traveled. Total money taken in from registration, T-shirts, pins and donations was \$11,781.00. A total of 150 people registered for the ride that was made up of Legionnaires, SONS and Auxiliary members stopping at 31 Posts.

There were 19 bikes and 21 people who departed Post 392 Panama City on Saturday morning February 23rd in a dense fog for the run. As planned, riders from different chapters joined in; some just for one leg of the ride, some for several days and some just joined us for the evening at one of the posts. The T-shirts were a big success and I know we will not have any trouble selling the remaining ones at Convention along with the pins. On any given day there were between 20 and 45 riders that joined in. We had 10 riders and 11 people complete the entire route. Several riders were from Deland and Port St Lucie that rode to Panama City to start the ride and rode the entire ride back to Panama City.

As we stopped at the different Posts each one welcomed us with amazing support. Food was provided each day for lunch and dinner. I can't say enough about the support at each Post. Everyone did an outstanding job of supporting the run. As we stopped at the different posts a Certificate of Appreciation was presented to the Commander or a post officer recognizing their post in support of the Legacy Run. Additionally, Tina Kirchoff Department of Florida Membership Chairman for the Auxiliary presented Membership Certificates to the President or an officer of the unit. These two presentations made the stop very special for the posts and units. Presenting both certificates to the Posts and Units it showed that the Legion Riders bring together the Legion Family.

Our next event for the Legion Riders will be the ALR Rally planned for May 17 – 19, 2013 at Post 69 in Avon Park. I look forward to seeing riders from across the State at the Rally for some good times. The agenda will be coming out within a couple of weeks. So far there are vendors, music, food, bike games, area rides and other good times.

Roster Changes up until March 15, 2013

Post # Title-Name

395 Adjutant, Fletcher Williams, Jr.

395 Post Email Address 1st Dist. Vice Cmdr, David Miller Dept. ALR Chairman, Mike Kirchoff 1st Dist. ALR Chairman, Tim TK Johnson- email 5th Dist. ALR Chairman, Gerald Giecko-email 6th Dist. ALR Chairman, Daryl Bass-phone 12th Dist. ALR Chairman, Jim Burk-phone 15th Dist. ALR Chairman, Jose Romeu-phone 17th Dist. ALR Chairman, Jim Medcalf-phone 164 Adjutant, Edward Brown Jr.

381 Adjutant, Ralph Kniselv 222 Commander, Paul Flanagan 222 Adjutant, John Newstreet- phone #



New Information

5908 Meadow Lane N, Crestview, FL 32539 P: 850-699-2202 pdcwilliams@floridalegion.org

jmccollough395@yahoo.com dmilleral1356@gmail.com

2458 Taylor Avenue, Panama City, FL 32403

tkjohnson45@gmail.com igalr5th@gmail.com

P: 321-766-7039

P: 772-812-2495

P: 386-316-9390

P: 404-664-6455

5112 Mirror Cakes Blvd, Boynton Beach, 33472 561-398-6046 nickored41@aol.com

17100 Tamiami Trail, Lot 275, Punta Gorda, 33955 1961 SW 52nd Ave, Plantation, 33317 (954) 565-6501 407.252.1307





I hope you worked your plans this month to enhance, support, attend, and contribute to your local and area Children & Youth Activities during April. Your month of May plans should be in place and ready to activate. You may want to consider at least Armed Forces Day, Mother's Day, and Memorial Day. Remember, the summer is also rapidly approaching us and this means our Children & Youth will be out of school soon and actively seeking activities to support/attend in your areas, so please be prepared.

There are several tri-fold CY materials that you can take to the schools and have them distributed to the children. You can also use them to participate in some local city/county fairs or public activities. You can get your Post to set up a booth to pass out cold refreshments and with them, a bag of materials for parents to read over at their leisure. That will serve many positive purposes and potentially draw in new members to your Post. Remember to stamp your post address and telephone number or website on these materials (in the back) so the public can contact you with questions.

Children and youth face many challenges in today's society, but one constantly remains in the media spotlight — bullying. The American Legion has created an educational comic book, "Bridging the Gap" to help middle school age children recognize, prevent and stop bullying. "Bridging the Gap" features six main characters and includes two stories that are interwoven throughout the book. One story focuses on physical bullying and the other on cyber bulling. Each story focuses on how to: Define and recognize bullying; behavior; Understand and protect the rights of others; Prevent and stop bullying of yourself; Prevent and stop bullying of others; Stop cyber bullying

Legion posts and family members are encouraged to raise awareness about bullying in their community by distributing copies of "Bridging the Gap" to local schools. The comic book can be purchased online for 75 cents apiece, or 59 cents apiece for the purchase of 100 or more.

The Legion's four other educational comic books for children and youth include: "Our Country's Veterans," "Our Country's Flag," "I Pledge Allegiance" and "Light of Liberty."

The two current Department CY Fundraisers are in full swing. The 2012-2013 FAL CY Pin is \$5 and a 2013 FAL CY Challenge Coin representing The American Legion Family is \$10. Contact either Steve Shuga at CY@floridalegion.org to inquire about these unique keepsakes or your District CY Chairman.

Monthly Program Reminders

Plan your C&Y activities at least two months ahead & order your resources early. If products are in short supply, go to National website under "Media" then "Programs" and download the materials you need, printing them at your leisure.

In order to be recognized for your monthly Children & Youth Post participation, monthly reports should be sent to your District CY Chairman. The Semi-Annual Report is PAST DUE. The Annual "final" report is due May 15th. This form is available on the Department of Florida website under "Forms and Documents". This is in addition but will enhance your annual recording on the CPR for Department and National. Report your monthly activities and be recognized!

Important C&Y Program Dates

Posts are encouraged to seek out Florida's Senior High School candidates to apply for the American Legion General Scholarship. See your Post Administrative Manual for application. Candidate applications are due at Dept. HQ no later than March 1, 2013.

Florida's Children & Youth Fund Grant applications due to Dept. HQ no later than May 1, 2013. Grant requirements are located under Department of Florida Programs Link – Children and Youth Fund on Department website.

