

The Legion Link

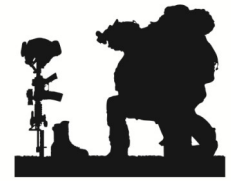
May 2013

Vol. 20 Issue 10



AIMING HIGH FOR VETERANS

FALLEN SOLDIER



NEVER FORGOTTEN

Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

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Al 'Gunner' Dudley
Department Commander
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Each and every one of you make being the Florida Legion State Commander so rewarding! You all work so hard at making Florida look so good! We are currently at 99.8% in membership and 3rd in the Nation, Thank You!

CPR's were due to Department the 25th of April. Even though the deadline has passed, you still need to get them in ASAP. Thank you in advance for your corporation.

May is a busy month. I'll be out visiting after Spring Meeting in Indianapolis. Don't forget important dates in May as follows: May 10th - Military Spouses Day; May 12th - Mother's Day; May 18th - Armed Forces Day; May 27th - Memorial Day! I hope to see you in my travels. I am always traveling, however, one year is just not enough time to see all of you, but trust me, I think of you all everyday! God Bless, keep on marching because all of you look good and should be very proud!

Art Schwabe
Department Vice Commander
Vicecommander@floridalegion.org
386.235.9990

Wow!! Where has this year gone!!! It seems like last week we were installed. Time truly does fly when your having fun. Florida Rocks!
Everyone has stepped up to the plate in mak-

ing this an outstanding year. You have put Florida on the map again.

The membership has been outstanding. A lot of work has been done to get Florida in the ranks again, achieving #3 in the Nation, #1 in the "Big Twelve" category, with 2 Districts winning the "Race to the Top" (the 15th and the 6th) with the 6th District winning it back to back. You are truly "IN THE HOUSE."

Post Commanders, as the year is coming to the close, make sure the year end reports are completed and turned in to Department on time. CPR's, plus individual programs: Law and Order, Adjutant of the year, Post of the Year, ETC.

Let everyone know how proud you are of your POST and the accomplishments your volunteers have completed. Please make the year complete by reporting it all! **On Time Please.**

Trivia

1. Who wrote the song "God Bless America" A. John Philip Sousa B. Irving Berlin C. Francis Scott Key
2. What year did it make it debut ? A. 1934 B. 1938 C. 1941
3. Who was the person who first sung the song? A. Doris Day B. Martha Ray C. Kate Smith

Trivia Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. C
See y'all in June at Convention.



POW/MIA Empty Chair

Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th American Legion National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States.

**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 Headquarters-
407.295.2631 ext 232)

May Fun Facts

- 1, 1931 Empire State Building opens at 1250 ft high
- 3, 1973 Sears Tower opens at 1454 feet high
- 6, 1941 Bob Hope gives his first USO show
- 8, 1886 Coca Cola is invented by John S. Pemberton. He called it, "Esteemed Brain Tonic and Intellectual Beverage"
- 14, 1316 Birth day of Charles IV; Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Bohemia
- 15, 1940 first successful helicopter flight
- 17, 1875 First Kentucky Derby
- 24, 1883 Brooklyn Bridge opens
- 25, 1935 Babe Ruth hits his last home run; 714
- 29, 1953 the summit of Mount Everest is first reached
- 30, 1911 first running of the Indianapolis 500
- 31, 1678 Lady Godiva made her famous nude horse ride through Coventry

**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 **Assistant Department Sgt-at-Arms** during the Department Convention General sessions on both Friday & Saturday; Friday from 7:30 AM till about 4:30 PM and Saturday from 7:30 AM till about 3:30PM. If you can help out please let me know by email or phone and the day(s) / time able to: 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 and as well as **distributing the Dept. Assistant Sgt-at-Arms Badges.**

As Sgt-at-Arms you are very important in the success in supporting you Post - District events this month that include: Mothers Day on May 12th, Armed Forces Day on May 18th and **Memorial Day** on Monday the 27th. Get with your Post Commanders and event coordinators to ensure that everyone is on the same page.

I thank all that have attended the Department Sgt-at-Arms Classes this year as a total of **750+ members** have participated in them and the positive feedback received on the class and the Sgt-at-Arms Manual; so far over 1,000 copies have been distributed throughout the State and **traveled over 30,000 miles** crisscrossing the State of Florida training my fellow Legionnaires.

As I write this article, the day after the Department Commanders Homecoming, if you were there you know what an GREAT time had by all. What an awesome display of professionalism and Patriotism by Post #1 Color Guard (Auxiliary Unit #1) by Posting and retrieving the Colors for the event. **Great job ALA Unit #1!**

AWARDS! End of Year "**Eddie Humer Award**" for a District and Post Sgt-at-Arms with the recommendation by the District and Post Commanders for his/her contribution to the success of the District/Post. These awards will be presented at the Department Convention, a narrative will be required and the form has been published and emailed to all District and Area Commanders as well as sent in the package with your Consolidated Post Report, Commanders please ensure the word gets to the Post level; **JUST ASK!** In addition there will be an "OUTSTANDING" American Legion Rider Sgt-at-Arms this year, Chapters please submit your ALR Sgt-at-Arms for this award.

These awards will be presented at the Department Convention and new this year a "**Runner Up**" Department **Sgt-at-Arms** "**BRAVO ZULU**" Award will also be given! Speaking of: **BRAVO ZULU!** A "**Job Well Done**" goes out to the **Honor Guard of Post #119** for a very Professional job in displaying the Colors of our Great Nation during a Tampa Rays game on April 4, 2013. **BRAVO ZULU!** Keep up the great work! **For God and Country"**

Mike (Goat) Kirchoff
Department of Florida
ALR Chairman

The Florida ALR Rally is in full swing and Post 69 Avon Park is doing a great job getting the event organized. The following is the agenda: Now is the time to make your reservations and plans to attend. Post 69 has camping sites available on a first come bases. These are bare camp sites; no power or water.

ALR FLORIDA STATE RALLY
May 17-19, 2013
American Legion Post 69
Avon Park, FL

Friday - 2:00 pm Kick Off

ALR Chapter 69 Welcome and opening of the Rally
Vendors open for Merchandise and food
5:00 - ALR Department Welcome and Introductions
6:00 - 10:00 Music by TJ & The Cruisers

Saturday - All Day

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast by SAL Squadron 69
Vendors open all day for Merchandise and Food
10:00 Bike Games (Weenie bite, Slow Roll, Ball Drop)
1:00 - 6:00 Music by Cory & Brutis
3:00 - ALR District Chairman meeting
4:00 - Bike Games (continued)
6:00 - 10:00 Music by Ransom

Sunday - Pull Out

8:00 - 9:00 Breakfast Highlands Moose Lodge
ALR Chaplains Blessing of Bikes and close of the Rally
After the ALR Rally it's time to get ready for Department Convention. Check out the Department web site for the information on the ALR meeting times and locations. It's also time for the End of the Year Reports get with your Post Commander and Adjutant and make sure the Legion Riders End of the Year Report is completed. Don't forget to include all your ALR miles and hours in the Post EOY report as well. Chapter of the Year Award packages are also due. Make sure you send your package to: Mike (Goat) Kirchoff, P.O. Box 392 Panama City, FL 32402

Legislative Issues

Stanley Gold, Department Legislative Chairman

I want to mention thanks to those Department people who came to our Congressional lunch with special thanks to Paul Martel PDC and Rachel Castleberry for the extra work they both put into this.

The American Legion Washington DC Office

LEGISLATIVE HOT ISSUES

ISSUES -

VA BUDGET REQUEST 2014

The House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees have both held hearings focusing on the FY 2014 VA Budget Proposal. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are holding hearings today on Military Construction and VA Budget requests.

DOD BUDGET REQUEST 2014

The House and Senate Armed Services Committees have both held hearings focusing on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) DoD Budget Request for FY 2014.

IMMIGRATION

The Senate "Gang of Eight" revealed details of immigration reform plan on Tuesday. Staff will be in attendance at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing Friday. Background <http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/294085->

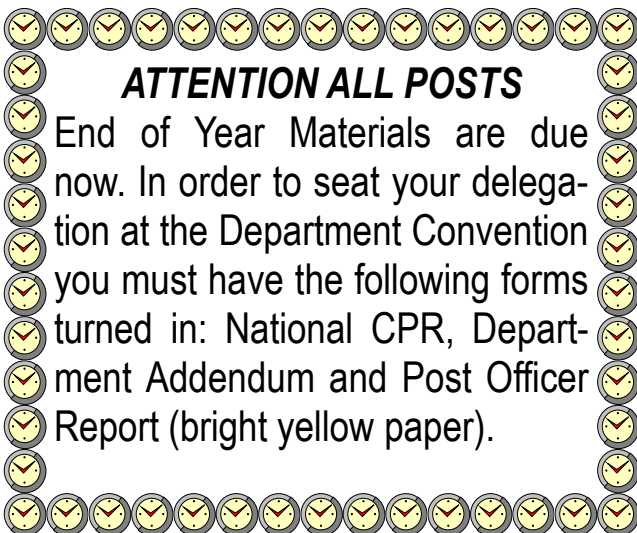
EVENTS -

Staff participated in a Congressional Veteran Leadership Roundtable hosted by House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller. The Roundtable included members of the HVAC as well as representatives from various MSO's and VSO's. The majority of the discussion was relative to the VA Disability Claims backlog and VA leadership's inability to explain how they plan to reduce the backlog by 2015. Chairman Miller made it clear that the Committee will provide stronger oversight of VA and require VA Leadership to report milestones achieved in the attempt to reduce the backlog wait time to 125 days by 2015. The clear message from The American Legion was that VA and the Committee must understand the challenges at the Regional Office level. Before Central Office can actually improve the wait times they must hear directly from the Service Officers and VA Regional Office staff.

Staff met with Frank DiGiovanni, Director, Training and Readiness and Strategy, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, other senior Department of Defense members, and senior leadership of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), to discuss progress made since February 2013 on our joint state-by-state initiatives, as well as tackling remaining barriers to credentialing service members and veterans.

Staff met with Beau Walker, Chief of Staff, Rep. Womack, to discuss the Legion's legislative agenda, along with allocation of appropriations to programs that address education, employment, and homelessness.

The American Legion was invited by the White House to participate in a bill signing at the Maryland State House with Governor Martin O'Malley and the First Lady. **The Veterans Full Employment Act** which Requires specified licensing units and boards to give credit to former service members for relevant military training, education, and experience in connection with the issuance of occupational and professional licenses, certificates, and registrations; repealing and re-codifying provisions of law regarding the renewal of occupational or professional licenses and the completion of continuing education or continuing competency requirements for specified members of an armed force deployed outside the State. The American Legion was a key partner in the creation of this legislation and its passage. The Legion was the only VSO invited to participate in the bill signing.



100% Goal

May 1, 2013

Membership Report as of May 3, 2013

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
6	Robert Kiley	10,193	10,721	105.18
15	Eunice Butts	5,178	5,328	102.90
5	Henry Combs	7,681	7,755	100.96
1	Verna Joyce	6,256	6,298	100.67
2	Homer Frailey	1,365	1,366	100.07
12	Albert Diaz	8,424	8,388	99.57
17	Michael Wolohan	4,135	4,090	98.91
7	Nancy Thomas	3,863	3,817	98.81
13	William Hauser	8,783	8,676	98.78
16	James Burgess	11,977	11,763	98.21
4	Charles Ferguson	4,160	4,076	97.98
3	M.E Christians	1,712	1,677	97.96
11	Richard Smith	4,094	4,010	97.95
8	Debra Roush	8,218	8,002	97.37
9	William Johnson	4,342	4,187	96.43
14	Gary Decker	3,021	2,877	95.23
Eastern	Mark Johnson	18,617	19,109	102.64
Western	Charles Lecroy	7,621	7,664	100.56
Northern	Robert Brewster	17,688	17,598	99.49
Central	James Zipler	21,018	20,908	99.48
SW	Steven Slachta	17,001	16,678	98.10
Southern	George Rafajko	11,457	11,074	96.66
Department			93,031	
Post 400		11,977	11,857	99.00
Post 208		2,141	3,140	146.66
Totals		107,775	108,028	100.23

Jim Ramos
Membership Chairman
membership@floridalegion.org

Florida Legionnaires, let's say congratulation to the 6th District and District Commander Bob Kiley for once again winning the Category 5 "Race to the Top" and the 15th District and District Commander Eunice Butts for winning 2nd Place in Category 4. Legion PRIDE! Go Florida!

We are in third place at National but we still need to push membership so all Posts can be at 100% by the time of the Department Convention. I am pleased to tell you that we have won the BIG 12nd from National for the second time in a row. Thanks Florida Legionnaires. The Department of Florida can stand strong for the first time in four year and we can make it happen with some Legion PRIDE.

Congratulations to the Posts, Districts and Areas who have achieved their 100% membership goal. Now it is time for the rest of you to make your 100%. If you need some help just get with your District Commander, Area Commander or me and we can suggest ideas and get you some help as needed. We can do it. Let's Go Florida! Please get the word out to the media, members and the community for your Post events. Also don't forget your volunteers – show your appreciation for their work. One more reason for Legion PRIDE is a quote from Samuel Johnson, "Pride is seldom delicate: it will please itself with very mean advantages".

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.**

Memorial Day



Roster Changes up until April 16, 2013

Post # Title-Name

296 email address
125 Adjutant- Raymond Cartmell

401 Commander- Charles 'Kevin' Sherwood
401 Post Info
259 Adjutant
395 Commander- Raymond Nelson #
8th Dist. Commander- Debbie Roush
(Deceased PDC)

New Info

post296destin@centurylink.net
401-59th St. So, St. Petersburg, 33707 727-347-5578
legion125@tampabay.rr.com
15862 CR 108, Hilliard, 32046 (h) 904-675-9032 atctron@gmail.com
15862 CR 108, Hilliard, 32046, Meeting: 2nd Fri 7pm,
VACANT- No Adjutant at this time
(p) 850-420-0706
Mailing Address: 2525 Gulf City Road, Lot 18, Ruskin FL 33570
William P Seemann

*Patriotism is supporting your country all the time,
and your government when it deserves it.*

~ Mark Twain ~



Steve Shuga

Children & Youth Program Chairman
CY@floridalegion.org



During the month of **May** promote **good nutrition and physical activity** for Children & Youth. The weather is changing, encouraging our Children & Youth to become active as they begin to explore their surroundings. Physical activity includes play, games, sports, transportation, chores, recreation, physical education, or planned exercise, in the context of family, school, and community activities. Seek out local venues to provide suggestions regarding good nutrition, diet, and explanation of the food pyramid that would be essential in "**giving every child a square deal**".

May events to consider planning for include: Nurses Week (1st week), National Bike Week (3rd Week), National Police Week (3rd Week), National Emergency Medical Services Week (4th Week), 1st – May Day, 5th Cinco de Mayo, 6th National Teacher's Day, 8th V-E Day WWII, 12th Mother's Day, 18th Armed Forces Day, and 27th Memorial Day.

Have you purchased your Department CY Pin and/or Challenge Coin? If not, please do so and soon. All funds collected go directly to the Children & Youth Fund to support the variety of activities and grants that are passed along during the year. The 2012-2013 FAL CY Pin is \$5 and the 2013 FAL CY Challenge Coin representing The American Legion Family is \$10. If your post, unit, squadron, or chapter are interested in purchasing these articles in bulk to resell back home, please contact Steve Shuga at CY@floridalegion.org to inquire about these unique keepsakes. These will also be available during the **annual convention June 6-9, 2013**.

As we end this term as your Florida American Legion Department Children & Youth Commission Chairman, I thank all of you for supporting our Fourth Pillar through your efforts of making a difference – one child at a time. I hope the articles in the Legion Link have provided ideas to brighten up your planned activities. Your unyielding support for the Children & Youth fundraisers and your support to me as your Commission Chairman have been awesome. You made my year exciting and I thank you all for making it one to remember.

Monthly Program Reminders

Plan your C&Y activities in advance, order your resources early, work your plan. 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 the Department CY Commission Chairman. Report your monthly activities and be recognized!

Important C&Y Program Dates

Florida's Children & Youth Fund Grant applications are 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 the Department website.

Department Children & Youth Annual Report due to Dept. HQ NLT **May 15, 2013**. This form is available on the Department of Florida website under "**Forms and Documents**".

Department of Florida American Legion Annual Convention – June 6 – 9th, 2013 at the **Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld**.