



# The Legion Link

## Full Speed Ahead for Veterans

### In this Issue...

#### Page 1-2

Dept. Commander

#### Page 2

Dept. Vice Commanders

#### Page 3

NEC

Bravo Zulu Corner

Dept Historian

#### Page 4

Dept. Judge Advocate

Dept Chaplain

#### Page 5

Membership

#### Page 6

Dept CY Chairman

Nat'l Commander

TAPS

#### Page 7

Oratorical

School Awards

Post Development Chr

#### Page 8

Social Media

Baseball

ROTC/Shooting Sports

LIT

#### Page 9

Law & Order

POW/MIA

#### Page 10

Central Area

Northern Area

SW Area

#### Page 11

Southern Area

District 17

12th District

#### Page 12

5th District

Project: VetRelief

Jay Conti Sr.  
 Department Commander  
 Commander@floridalegion.org  
**BRAVO-ZULU**  
 407.247.5232

### FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR VETERANS

WOW! Area Training completed in ALL 6 Areas of Florida. I was very amazed at the awesome attendance not only by the Legionnaires but the Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary members who wanted to learn about TAL. We trained 826 Legion Family members on The American Legion Programs, Officers duties and other information including Tax liabilities and Post Operations. Over 80 ALA members attended (Including Madam President Erna Schwabe) and 40 SAL members (including Detachment Commander Kirk Miller), members stated they went away with a better understanding on how The American Legion is supposed to operate.

I thank everyone for the great feedback from these classes as it's something we can build on from year to year. We are working on the Fall Conference 'Training Package' as you the Legionnaires asked for it and it will be a Training Conference for The American Legion and is open to the entire family. More information on the classes will be posted on the Department website.

We recently held Area Commander Membership Tiger-Team Training for 2 days at Department. The idea was to go over what each of them had learned at the National

Membership workshop and utilize the expired member listings of Post 400 & 208 in calling them and trying to get them to renew. This worked out fantastic as in 1 1/2 days they re-instated 25 Legionnaires back on the books. They will be bringing what they had learned back to you in your Districts and Posts. Thanks to my wife Toni Conti for providing a home-made Lasagna Lunch for the entire crew and office Staff!

On August 17, 2014 Auxiliary Unit 323 and President Vickie Leventhal invited me to a Breast Cancer Fundraiser with the PINK Fire Truck. I cannot tell you how much fun I had and we did raise a lot of money for the CURE! I think my nails are still PINK! We need to do more things like this to help with the CURE for Breast Cancer. The day prior we had OVER 400 Legion Family members at the New York Yankees -vs- Tampa Rays Baseball game with 85% of them wearing PINK in support of Breast Cancer Awareness! We also had a Community Awareness Table where the Auxiliary helped out with Dee Bell; Dorothy Walsh and others. This is the "TEAM WORK" we need in all of our Posts!

*continued on next page.....*

### National POW/MIA Recognition Day



Commander's column, continued from page 1....

Next month I will be visiting the VA Hospital in Biloxi, MS as the Veterans of 7 of Florida's 67 counties use this VA hospital as their primary means for health care! I had invited Mississippi State Commander Ronnie Bennett and Alabama State Commander Wayne Stacey on this tour so we can ask the questions as a group!

As I get ready to leave for the National Convention in the morning, your Department Officers and I are looking forward to executing the Plan when we return. Since the Department Convention we have been conducting Training "Work-Ups" and now we are getting ready to deploy and execute the Plan.

Many of you remember what I am saying, as in the Military you train before you are deployed and then when you are deployed you execute what you were just training on. As you could see during the training sessions, all the officers and I are on the same page and we are all looking forward to working as a "TEAM" and get that big "BRAVO-ZULU" come June 2015! "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY"

Department Legion College will be from October 9-12, 2014 at Department Headquarters, a registration fee of \$200 is required for the Hotel room and lunches served at Department headquarters. Applications are located on the Dept. website and must be submitted NLT September 10, 2014.

**Bob Brewster**  
**Department 3rd Vice Commander**  
**3rdvicecommander@legionmail.org**

Like a lot of you, I am heading up to Charlotte, NC for The American Legion National Convention where I hope to meet up with a lot of old friends and make new ones. Why is this important? Well, this gives us a chance to learn what is working for other Departments and what is not. I will be attending many sessions and hope to bring back a lot of new information. Upon my return home, I will be sending out a letter to all Program Chairmen, Area and District Commanders for the purpose of improving our communication to make our programs successful. I wish to be involved with each and every one of you to make our programs successful. Communications is a must. Schools have started up and every Post Program Chairman has got to get into the schools to make contacts with those who will be involved with our programs. Boy's State, ROTC, Shooting Sports, Oratorical, Boy Scouts, Halloween coloring books, etc. We can't wait until the last minute and hope to be successful. As you have heard quite often, the early bird gets the worm.

Getting members involved in our programs not only insures the success of these programs but also makes it easier to retain our members in our local Posts. If members are involved in Post programs, they stay with us. We must get our new members involved in a program that they are interested in. If any Post, District, Area, etc. wants me to attend any function whatsoever, don't wait until the last minute. Let me know what, where, and when as soon as possible. I am here for one purpose – to help you and your Post to have a very successful year. I am not here to bug you. I am here to work with you. For God and Country

**Jim Ramos**  
**1st Vice Commander**

**1stvicecommander@legionmail.org**

Hello Florida Legionnaires: Thanks for all your assistance with the Area Training, all went very good and I hope the Area Training helped all of our Legion Families.

Just some notes:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander is Joe Magee, he is in charge of training, so should you need some training please let Joe know.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander is Bob Brewster; he is in charge of programs. Please let him know if you need assistance with your program.

I'm the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander a part of my job is membership, but the Membership Chairman is Steve Shuga. Please let him know if you need assistance with membership first. Steve will let me know, if I (Jim Ramos) need to go and help out. Remember, please read the Membership plan. It was created to provide a month by month list of ideas and suggestions to help you and your Post improve your membership.

Please plan 2 or 3 months (Oct., Nov. & Dec.) ahead to make your events go a lot easier and successful. Look over the membership plan and use it to make some events at your Post. Start with a membership team of 2 or 3 Legionnaires that want to help with membership. This team is responsible for obtaining, retaining, and increasing post membership

- Specifically renewals, enrollment of new members, transfers, and reinstatements. The first vice commander is often the chairman for the membership team. Remember "Membership is everybody's job" within your Post. Let's do it with Legion PRIDE.

For assistance please call: 352-226-4370 or email: 1stvicecommander@legionmail.org

**Joe Magee**  
**2nd Vice Commander**  
**2ndvicecommander@legionmail.org**

Legion Family, by the time you receive this edition of The Link, those of us who attended the National Convention, will have returned home. Charlotte is not a bad town, however, requires much walking to shops, restaurants, etc.

The Area Training Program has come to its conclusion in August with the Western and Central Areas. Kudu's to both Areas with overwhelming response and enthusiasm, from not only the Legion side, but the Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders. All in all, this year's Area Training sessions were a huge success and I would like to extend a heartfelt Thank You to all who took time out of their schedules to attend.

Oct 9-12 we have the Legion College and I would like to let you know that we have extended the registration deadline to Sept. 10. For any further information, please contact me or Department.

## **BRAVO ZULU PIN AWARDS CORNER**

The "BRAVO ZULU" award is the Department Commanders Version of the "Billy Award" and is awarded to a Legion Family member for Outstanding Service of Excellence!

In the United States Navy, it is a common practice for the Commodore or Fleet Admiral to signal ships that have performed exceptionally well with the "BRAVO and ZULU" flags. These two flags displayed together mean "Well Done"!

**BRAVO ZULU AWARDS to Date:**

Larry Sheets, Jim Ramos, Steve Newman, Mike Seidel, Ruth Burgess, Mike McDaniel, Richard Izzy, Tom Gora, Post 238 Family, Bill Hamblin & Rene Stachelrodt Jr.



**Shelli Romeu**  
**Department Historian**  
**historian@legionmail.org**

I want to share with you a quote by Aidan Chambers that I really think is relative: "History dies without the present. There is no future without the path made to it by the past." Each and every Post no matter the size or location, is part of that path – and an equal contributor to the success and historical reverberation of our own Florida American Legion. We are integrated together as part of our mutual future. We need to share this fantastic journey from past-to-present-to-future with everyone! We are being offered an opportunity to do just that through the Centennial Celebration website. (<http://centennial.legion.org/histories/florida>). Please look over the information that is currently out there for YOUR Post. Do you have more stories, pictures, events, etc. that can make your history more robust or colorful? Let me know! I can add you as an editor for your Post and/or assist you in any way. I am here to serve you, and I do so proudly.

**Dennis R. Boland**  
**National Executive Committeeman**  
**NEC@legionmail.org**

Veteran - Owned Small Business

Congress has generally broad authority to impose requirements upon the process whereby federal agencies obtain goods and services from the private sector. One of the many ways in which Congress has exercised this authority is by enacting measures intended to promote contracting and subcontracting with "small businesses" by federal agencies.

Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, included veteran-owned small businesses within federal contracting and subcontracting goals for small business owners. It required the head of each federal agency to establish goals in the utilization of small businesses owned and controlled by service disabled veterans, within their procurement contracts. Currently a minimum of 3 percent is set as the agency-wide base goal for the utilization of Service Disabled Veterans Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB).

Unfortunately, agency compliance with PL 106-50 has been uneven. In 2011, only the Small Business Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Homeland Security met the minimum small business goal of 3 percent for SDVOSB.

Agency leadership must be held responsible for meeting the 3 percent congressionally mandated goal. The American Legion recommends that the committee schedule a hearing with all federal agencies that consistently do not meet their federal procurement goals with SDVOBS.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has dramatically increased its contracting with small businesses owned by veterans, since 2006 - from \$616 million to \$3.6 billion in fiscal year 2001. Since 2011, veteran business owners wishing to take advantage of these contracting opportunities with the VA must not only be registered in the VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE) VetBiz.gov registry, but must now be "verified" as veteran-owned businesses as well. The American Legion endorses the VA's attempt to ensure every small business verified is in fact eligible to be a SDVOSB, however, glitches in the VA's system for verifying their qualifications are holding back the program and many veterans have found the verification process to be overly burdensome, lengthy and too troublesome to undergo.

The American Legion supports (1) legislation that would require federal agencies to adhere to the 3 percent minimum in SFVOSB utilization goals as set by the SBA; (2) Legislation that will simplify and streamline VA's verification of SDVOSBs and VOSBs interested in participating in the agency's Veterans First Contracting Program; (3) legislation that calls for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Small Business Administration to share responsibilities for the verification of SDVOSBs and VOSBs; and this responsibility should be divided accordingly to each agency's expertise and record of past performance; and lastly, (4) the implementation of a program comparable to Veterans First Contracting Program with-in the Department of Defense.

Reference:

Resolution No. 321: Support Reasonable Set-Aside of Federal Procurement and Contracts for Business Owned and Operated by Veterans.

Resolution No. 108: Support Verification Improvements for Veteran's Businesses within the Department of Veterans Affairs

Resolution No. 73: Support verification improvements for veterans' business within the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.



**Larry Sheets**  
**Department Judge Advocate**

Recently, the Department has received questions regarding the function and authority of the post executive committee. Very little is mentioned about the post executive committee in the National and Department constitution and by-laws. The reason for this is to allow each individual Post to assign duties and responsibilities to the Post Executive Committee as the post sees fit.

The National publication "Post Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies" provides a "suggested post constitution and by-laws" on pages 106-111. In this section of the manual it states that *the government and management of the post is entrusted to the executive committee, that it should meet regularly, and that the executive committee is charged with hiring such employees as may be necessary, authorizing and approving all expenditures, requiring adequate bonds from those with custody of post funds, hearing reports of post committee chairpersons, and generally managing post affairs.*

So, does this mean the post executive committee has full control the activities of the Post? Do they make all the decisions? Does the membership not have a say in what happens?

In short, no. The delegation of these functions to the executive committee is in no way intended to usurp the powers of the membership through regular post meetings. Rather, this allows the routine operational affairs of the post to be handled outside of post meetings. Committee reports of general interest to members should still be given at post meetings. The key to interesting post meetings is using the executive committee effectively. The post meeting that becomes bogged down in arguments on petty details is interesting only to those doing the talking.

It's also important to note the phrase "suggested post constitution and by-laws" as stated above and in the Officers Guide. The post constitution and by-laws may read differently than the "suggested" format provided in the Officers Guide. Roberts Rules of Order state that, "If a society is to have an executive board, the by-laws should specify the number of board members and how they are to be determined, should define the board's duties and powers, and should make provision for meetings of the board as state above." [RONR (11<sup>th</sup> ed.), p.482, XVI. 49. 8-12] Check with your Post Judge Advocate or read your post constitution and by-laws to determine the duties and powers of the executive committee at your post.

National constitution and by-laws can be downloaded at: <http://www.legion.org/constitutionandbylaws>

Department constitution and by-laws can be downloaded at: <http://members.floridalegion.org/resources/forms-docs/dept-docs>

The Post Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies can be downloaded at: <http://www.legion.org/publications/160963/post-officer-guide-and-manual-ceremonies>

You can receive a copy of your post constitution and by-laws from your Post Judge Advocate or the Department at 407-295-2631.



**Steven Newman**  
**Department Chaplain**  
**Chaplain@legionmail.org**



Hello again my fellow Legionnaires. I hope that last month brought you good blessings and happy times. I was very fortunate to be able to participate in some Department Commanders Area Training. There are copies of my Chaplains Course and Prayer Book I can send you if you would like to have them. Just e-mail me with your name and address and I will make sure that you get a copy.

I am going to provide training to some districts who did not get any this past year, however, if districts would like me to provide training I am available. During the November conference I will have a Chaplains class. One area that will be concentrated on will be the Post Everlasting ceremonies at both the post and district levels.

I want to speak a little on a service animal program that is here in the state of Florida which provides service animals to those in need. It's a great program and available to those veterans with a need for them. The organization is called New Horizons which is located in Orange City. My wife and I had the opportunity to visit their facility. The facility is beautiful, spacious, and a great place to train service dogs. It takes approximately two years to train these dogs which are mostly golden retrievers with some Labradors mixed in. This facility breeds them and from the time they are born they begin their training. It costs approximately \$25,000 to train them over the two year period, however, the end result is it costs nothing for the veteran to have these dogs. A New Horizon service dog gives a lifetime of unconditional love, independence, mobility, and service to a veteran with a disability. If you would like more information about obtaining a service dog all you have to do is call them at 386-456-0408. You can also e-mail them at [info@nhsdi.org](mailto:info@nhsdi.org). My wife and I also had the pleasure of attending one of their functions in Orlando. We met the founder and Executive Director of New Horizons, a lady named Janet Severt coupled with her knowledge, love and compassion she lives by her motto of "Training Miracles One Puppy at a Time. Also, during these trying times in our country remember this "Be strong and courageous, Do not be afraid or discouraged, for God is with you wherever you go" Joshua 1-9. So my fellow veterans have a blessed and safe month and may God bless you in every way. "For God and Country"

# 65% Goal

## October 1, 2014

Membership Report as of August 27, 2014

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rec'd	% Goal
4	Sherry Hayes-Luzader	3,924	2,200	56.06
6	Thomas Biddle	11,734	6,218	52.99
9	James Tewes	4,111	2,171	52.81
8	Douglas Deierlein	8,266	4,296	51.97
7	Charles Giffin	3,848	1,998	51.92
15	Jose Romeu	5,509	2,843	51.61
16	Thomas Zbikowski	12,099	6,229	51.48
17	Michael Wolohan	4,113	2,116	51.45
12	Ronald Saxby	8,938	4,532	50.70
2	Willie Jackson	1,416	715	50.49
5	Thomas Gora	8,127	3,987	49.06
13	Andrew Burkett	9,421	4,597	48.80
1	Lawrence Carpenter	6,417	3,080	48.00
14	Gary Decker	3,139	1,381	43.99
3	Randall White	1,797	776	43.18
11	Arie Bruce	4,028	1,605	39.85
Eastern	Albert Diaz	20,672	10,750	52.00
Central	Eunice Butts	21,456	11,070	51.59
Northern	Jerry Brandt	17,961	9,079	50.55
SW	John Dollinger	17,687	8,893	50.28
Western	Verna Joyce	7,833	3,795	48.45
Southern	William Johnson	11,278	5,157	45.73
<b>Dept</b>			<b>48,744</b>	
<b>Post 400</b>		<b>12,067</b>	<b>8,065</b>	<b>66.84</b>
<b>Post 208</b>		<b>3,181</b>	<b>1,752</b>	<b>55.08</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>113,101</b>	<b>58,561</b>	<b>51.78</b>

Steve Shuga  
 Department Membership Chairman  
[membership@legionmail.org](mailto:membership@legionmail.org)

Rise-n-Shine with Membership! The National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina has passed and our new National Commander is already focusing on membership. We have reached the first Bravo Zulu (BZ) standard of 60% as of September 3, 2014 and the first BZ Special Incentive of 63% is targeted for September 18, 2014. October 1, 2014 is the 65% goal. Will your Post meet the goal?

No Post should be showing any 0.00%. If Posts don't have cards and have still not submitted their Post Officer Report (POR, you are hurting your membership of your Post. Reminders have been sent twice – so it's up to those at the Post level to get the form completed, sent in so the cards can be mailed out.

Membership Resources are online, as promised and under Department Membership Reports, Forms, Manuals and Reference Materials tab. You don't have to search all over to gain the references and resources that you may need to be successful. Everything is printable and I strongly suggest that you search, discover, and share.

BZ / Turn 2 pins are making their way out to the Legionnaire family. It's slowly beginning to become an epidemic! Over 300 BZ Pins have been issued and the numbers are edging up daily. Remember that any Legionnaire family member (Legion, Aux, Sons) can receive a BZ / Turn 2 Pin for being credited with two (2) new members into The American Legion. This credit will be acknowledged by your Post Adjutant/Membership Chairman.

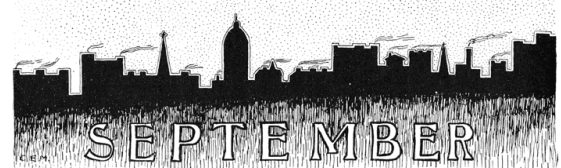
Besides the membership chairman's transmittal form, please use the BZ Voucher form provided in the manual, on the website and in the training addendum. Ensure that you list the names of the new members on the back. The transmittal forms, once received will be discarded. The BZ Voucher form is the requested record that is needed from this point on to claim your BZ Tickets/Chances. Get the word out to all Posts.

Be prepared by planning at least two months in advance. Remember to be flexible as situations and events do change on short notice. Do your best to express who you are, represent, and what your all about at every event, inside or outside.

Promote the \$25 Gift Membership application! Everyone gains with this option!

Qualifying US Veterans deserve to be part of The American Legion. "Just Ask" may be enough to encourage them to join. And for those that previously been part of our organization or yet need to renew, "Ask Again". You and I have a lot of work to do and we can accomplish together.

Rise-n-Shine with Membership!



**Jerry Brandt**  
**Children & Youth Program Chairman**  
**CY@floridalegion.org**

Legionnaires, have you kept track of all the great things you done so far this year? Track it and Report it, not only to the Department, but also to your Post and Community. Remember, do not be THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN YOUR COMMUNITY. .

Remember to work with the Legion Family, the Auxiliary is now planning Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, can the Legion assist? Marines is planning Toys for Tots, can the rest of the Post help? Get the Riders on board to help, maybe escorting Santa Claus, make the Children & Youth program at your Post a family event.

Last Month I indicated you should be planning your C&Y activities at least two months ahead and 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. Currently you should be planning for October and November.

Important dates in September

1st - Labor Day  
3rd- Uncle Sam's Birthday  
7th- National Grandparents Day  
11th- Patriot Day  
15th- American Legion Day  
18th - US Air Force Birthday  
18th- National POW/MIA Recognition Day  
28th - Gold Star Mother's Day

Important Dates in October

13th US Continental Navy Birthday  
13th Columbus Day  
27th US Navy Birthday (Go Navy)  
31st Halloween (do you have your Coloring  
Books -100 for \$20, 500 for \$100  
See Elizabeth at Department)

Please let me know if you have any Ideals or suggestions to make this year a great year for our program. Yours in Service

**American Legion National Commander:  
Military lost a friend in Robin Williams**

WASHINGTON (August 13, 2014) – The American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger issued the following statement in reaction to the passing of comedian Robin Williams: "The U.S. military and veterans who served in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan, lost a true friend and supporter. Like the great Bob Hope, Robin Williams used his special brand of comedy to entertain troops stationed in 13 countries, while traveling on multiple USO tours. By all accounts, he was warm, engaging and accessible to every service member who met him. The American Legion does not wish to dwell on how he died, but we want to encourage anyone who is depressed, to seek help immediately. Last year, the United States lost one member of its military every 18 hours to suicide. Veterans and their family members who feel that they may harm themselves should call the Veterans Crisis Hotline, 1-800-273-8255, press 1. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Mr. Williams' family and friends."



**TAPS**

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Past Department Historian, Mary Johnson, of St. Petersburg FL on Saturday, July 26, 2014 at the age of 90. Mary was a

WWII Army veteran and a member of St. Petersburg American Legion Post 14, with 34 continuous years of membership. Mary served many roles during her impressive career in The American Legion. Mary was former Post Commander of Safety Harbor Post 238 (1990-1991), 16th District Commander (1992-1993), Department Historian (1994-1995), and Post Adjutant of St. Petersburg Post 14 (2004-2008). There will be a service for Mary on Friday, August 15th 2014 at 1:30pm held at Bay Pines National Cemetery, 10000 Bay Pines, St. Petersburg, FL 33708. Memorial service to follow at 3:00 pm held at American Legion Post 14, 1520 4th St N., St. Petersburg, FL 33704.

*Wrinkles should only indicate  
where smiles have been.*

*~ Mark Twain ~*

**Oratorical**  
**Ron Musselwhite, Department Chairman**  
**oratorical@legionmail.org**

The new year is off and running. School is back in session. Now is the time for all Post Oratorical chairs. to go to the school and hand out the new brochures. All Post Oratorical contest have to be completed by Jan. 18, 2015. NO District contest can be held before then.

All District contest have to be completed by Feb. 1, 2015. All Area contest have to be completed by Feb.22, 2015. The Department Oratorical finals will be held March 14, 2015 at Department headquarters, at 9 A.M. Last years' Department finals was a huge success. I know we can have a great contest this year. All District Chairs need to work with the Post Chairs. Anybody can reach me at 904-759-6137. Let's get rolling.



**SCHOOL AWARDS**  
**ANDREW W. NAGY**  
**813-7825-5032**

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Andrew W. Nagy, I am the School Awards Chairman for this year. Last year we had 107 Post involved with this program. This year we are hoping to improve on this. So far we have only a partial list of District Chairman. District Commanders keep in mind if you don't appoint a chairman you are it.

We are expecting the chairman to check with the post in their districts to help them with this program. You are our eyes and ears for this program. Keep in mind awards include 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Department wants to help you maximize your potential.

I am here to help you. I can be reached any time by either email or phone.



**Nancy L. Thomas**  
**Post Development/Revitalization Chairperson**  
**863-618-6738**

How important is it to maintain good copies of your By-Laws, minutes of your meetings, and of course, your financial report? It is very important to your Post to maintain those documents.

This is an example: Your Finance Officer gives the report on the Post expenditures, a member of the Post asked when was the expenditure approved by your membership? Or the member asks why was it approved.. Do you have the documentation giving the approval?

When during your meeting the financial report is read, do you just approve the report, and go on or do you make the following motion? "I make a motion to approve the finance report pending audit." And, do you have a yearly audit? Do you have a yearly meeting to approve your budget for the year? When it is essential that your Post purchase something, repair something, or spending goes over the approved Budget, should you have documentation where someone has called your Executive Committee and/or there was a meeting to approve such expenditure?

Do you have copies, either paper or a PDF, from the Department web site or National's web site of the Officer's Guide, Membership Manual, Post Operation Manual, Post Adjutant Manual, Administrative Manual, National's Constitution and By-Laws, Department of Florida's Constitution and By-Laws, your District's Constitution and By-Laws, your Post Constitution and By-Laws, the Sgt-at-Arms Manual, and any Standing Operating Procedure that has been approved? I might have missed some manuals that would be beneficial, so, if you wish go to [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org) or [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) and those documents are available in a PDF. My computer is loaded with this information!!! Allot of this information was given to those who attended the Area Training. For those who missed those training sessions, you missed allot of great information.

Do you record your meeting on a tape recorder and tell your members you are doing so? If you don't advise your membership that you are recording the meeting it is in violation of a Florida State Law. It is a great idea to record your meetings, and if you do, you actually have a clear documentation of what transpired in your meeting.

Since it may be inconvenient for female Legionnaires to remove their caps, it is permissible to conduct themselves as if they were not wearing a cap, i.e., place the right hand over the heart to recite the Pledge and during the National Anthem, and stand in proper manner during prayer. A female Legionnaire should place her hand over her heart when the male Legionnaire places his cap on his hand and places it over his heart. Also, you should salute during the pledge or prayer, and you must remain silent. This information came from the National Americanism Commission and various military manuals.

It is also important to know that should you have a question regarding procedures you have this information available to you, and/or call and talk to one of the Department Officers. This includes calling your Department Post Development and Revitalization Chairperson.

Should you need to contact me, my mailing address is P. O. Box 3312, Lake Wales, FL 33869-3312, my e-mail address is: [geldsprechens@gmail.com](mailto:geldsprechens@gmail.com), and my phone number is 863-618-6738. Please leave me a message if I am unable to answer the phone right away.

**Roy Havekost,  
Social Media Chairman  
socialmedia@legionmail.org**

Last month, I sent a memo to all of the Florida District Commanders detailing the American Legion social media presence on Facebook™ for the state of Florida. In the memo I asked the Commanders to appoint a social media chairman or manager for each district. Of the 16 districts in the state, only one district has no (searchable) presence on Facebook™ for either the district or any posts within that district.

I am again asking the commanders to assign a member to social media.

For those districts and posts that do have a presence on Facebook™, I would ask that if you have not yet received a visit on your site and a official Social Media registration stamp, one of the reasons could be that the words 'American Legion' are not in your page title. This makes finding you in a search a little more difficult. If you haven't yet received your official stamp, but you do have a page or group, please email the url (facebook™ address) to you page to me at [socialmedia@legionmail.org](mailto:socialmedia@legionmail.org).

In the 2014-2015 term of office, it is the goal Department Commander Jay Conti Sr. for Florida to have 100% presence on Social Media using Facebook™.

*Have a safe Labor Day*



**Benny Combs  
Baseball Chairmen  
PLAY BALL!!!!**

Congratulations to Dept. of Fl. State Champs. For the juniors it was Post 390 Wellington and for the seniors it was Post 88 Jacksonville. Great job! Post 88 Braves then traveled to Asheboro, N.C for the Southeastern Regionals. They were named Southeastern Champs.

So many congratulations go to all of the young men who took the time and played with the American Legion. I would also like to thank all of the coaches and their staff. Job well done! A special thanks to Commander Jay Conti and Carol Polk for all they have done for American Legion Baseball. Thank You.

Now that this season is over let's start working on the next season. For next year if you are interested in participating in some way please feel free to contact me at [benny.combs73@yahoo.com](mailto:benny.combs73@yahoo.com) or 904-210-2236. For God and Country

**Legionnaires Insurance Trust (LIT) – Good News!**

The good news is that we do have the on-line enrollment capability up and running. In other words, any Legionnaire can go to the LIT web site effective August First and enroll. The internet address is: <http://www.thelit.com/no-cost-legioncare?tab1=Sign%20Up%20Now>

**Loretta Young  
ROTC/Shooting Sports Chair**

The summer has quickly passed and now that the schools are back in session, it is time for all District Chairmen to contact your posts and verify that the schools in your area are being supported and sponsored by an American Legion Post. The season passes quickly for the programs so you must make those visits now to meet the instructors and introduce yourself and let them know what the American Legion has to offer their programs.

The Department sends out each year in the fall a packet for the Cadet of the Year Application which is due on March 1st. This is something the Post Chairman has to follow up with the Senior Instructor to make sure that it has been received. The easiest way to contact the instructor is by email. You should then make an appointment to go to visit the school. Always follow up with the instructors because communication is a key to the success of your program. Again this year, it is the goal of the Department of Florida that every school is represented. This will only happen if the Chairmen are proactive with the JROTC/ROTC Units. I will be contacting all District Chairmen to make sure that the lists that we have at Department is up to date and shows all schools having a program in the State of Florida has a post that is their sponsor.

It's an honor and a privilege to once again serve as the Department Chair for the ROTC/Shooting Sports Program and I look forward to much success this year. Thank each and every one for all that you do for our youth and our programs.

**UPDATE!**

**Throw out all old materials.**

Communication is the key to keeping our programs active.

Make sure your program chairmen have all the material they need.

Send in the Packet Request forms;

**Administrative Manual  
pages 12-14.**



**Law and Order**  
**Thomas J. Gora, Chairman**

I am honored to serve the Department of Florida for a second consecutive year as the Law and Order Chairman. This year I plan to attend more Law and Order ceremonies at the Post/District level around the state, and I encourage any Post or District Chairs to contact me if I can be of any help with the program.

Congratulations to the recipients of the 2014 Department Awards who were: Deputy Sheriff Ben Adams, Marion County Sheriff's Department who was the nominee of Post 284, and Leslie Williams, Fire Fighter, Pensacola Fire Department, the nominee of Post 102. As always, the selection process was tough as there were at least a dozen nominations for both Law Enforcement and Fire Fighter-EMT annual awards.

The application materials for this year will be mailed to all Post/District Chairs and it will also be available on the Department's web site and this year's deadline for applications is May 7, 2015. Plenty of time to get out there and find the best candidates from around the state.

Also, the Department Commander has asked that I research the start of a Youth Law Enforcement Cadet program in the Department. There are currently 17 Departments that have such a program. This is not an Explorer's program, this is an intense week long program during the summer of select youth at a law enforcement academy. They program includes training in certain law enforcement techniques and extensive physical training. For now I am conducting more research with other Departments and letters have been sent out to law enforcement academies and agencies around the state to see if we can find a law enforcement agency to partner with the Department on the development of such a program. I will be meeting with members from other Departments with a program at the National Convention. I hope to have some further news to deliver at the Fall Conference.



**John Dolinger**  
**Department POW/MIA Chairman**  
**[POWMIA@legionmail.org](mailto:POWMIA@legionmail.org)**

POW/MIA Committee Report  
Recently Accounted for:

1st Lts. William D. Bernier and Bryant E. Poulsen, U.S. Army Air Forces, 321st Bombardment Squadron, 90th Bombardment Group, 5th Army Air Forces, was lost April 10, 1944, in Papua New Guinea. They were accounted for July 18, 2014, and July 16, 2014, respectively. They will be buried with full military honors.

Activities:

September 19<sup>th</sup> is POW/MIA Recognition Day, a special day for each of us to remember the plight of our unaccounted for comrades. In August, Posts within the Department of Florida will receive a packet from the Department of Florida containing a copy of the POW/MIA Recognition Day poster, POW/MIA Memorial Service and a copy of the POW/MIA Table Service. I would request that each Post take some time out of busy schedules on this special day to remember these special veterans, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice to preserve our freedom. Although this is their special day, the American Legion requires us to remember them at all our official Post monthly meetings so that their sacrifice is always remembered and respected.

THE RIDE HOME is a program that was founded by the Rolling Thunder Chapters in Georgia and Florida. The program brings together former POWs and the families of many MIAs as a time to pay tribute to the POWs and remember those that remain MIAs. All of these participants are invited guests of THE RIDE HOME. The weekend event is held at the National Historic Site at Andersonville, GA, home of the National Prisoners of War Museum. This year's weekend event starts on September 19<sup>th</sup> with a remembrance service for Col. F. J. "Jimmy" Thompson a Prisoner of War from March 26, 1964 to March 16, 1973. Col. Thompson is the longest serving American Prisoner of War, from any conflict.

Please take time on September 19<sup>th</sup> to recognize the service of our POWs and MIAs.

**NOW AVAILABLE**  
**HALLOWEEN and PATRIOTIC**  
**COLORING BOOKS**

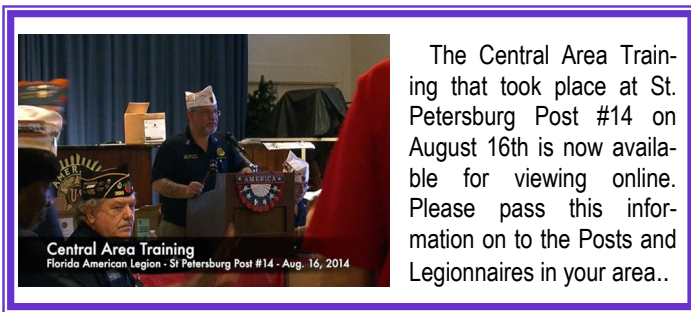
Department has Halloween and Patriotic Coloring Books available for purchase and distribution to the Elementary classrooms in your area. The order form is on page 11 of the Post Administrative Manual. Supplies are limited—get them while they last! The cost remains \$20.00 per 100 books. Send orders to Department Headquarters with attention to Elizabeth Inherst by mail or by email:

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

**Eunice Butts**  
**Central Area Commander**

I would like to thank the post and district members that participated in the Department Training Program. In the 7th District, Post 8, Winter Haven held their Annual Family Luau. The family of Post 138 in the 15th District chartered a bus and all enjoyed. The 16th District was honored to have the Department Commander, Jay Conti, come and surprisingly present Post 238, Safety Harbor, and Ruth Burgess of the Auxillary, for their AWE-SOME 4th of July Parade, His Commander's Award. Everyone should focus on MEMBERSHIP. ("Let's go Team"). The Central Area Commander Eunice Butts and Southwestern Area Commander John Dollinger are competing for the "Race to the Top". We can do it 7th, 15th & 16th Districts.

The Central Area Ball will be held on February 28, 2015 at Post 8, Winter Haven, FL. More information will follow. Thanks to everyone for all of your hard work.



The Central Area Training that took place at St. Petersburg Post #14 on August 16th is now available for viewing online. Please pass this information on to the Posts and Legionnaires in your area..

**Jerry Brandt**  
**Northern Area Commander**

Fellow Legionnaires, we have a busy year in front of us, as you know, our country and our returning service members need us more than ever. Look at the number of wars involving the United States and wars in which we are not yet involved in. The VA backlog and our service members returning home with limited job opportunity. We need to let the returning Veterans know we are available to assist them in their return to civilian life.

As a fellow Legionnaire, I will do anything within my powers to assist, not only fellow Legionnaires, their Post, but also all active/inactive duty members of our military. Please reach out to me any time; I will be there to assist. Yours in Service

I would like to congratulate the following Posts: 153, 58, 155, 401, 293, 187, 127, and 259, for achieving the 60% goal. Well done! Please remember, the 60% BZ goal has a September 3<sup>rd</sup> cutoff date.

If you did not know, American Legion Post 88, American Legion Baseball Team won the Department of Florida title, and made it the American Legion World Series.

Also the American Legion Department of Florida, held Post Training at American Legion Post 16 and 129 in the Northern Area. Thanks to all who came out for the training. Speaking of training, good luck to those who are requesting Florida Legion College training starting October 9<sup>th</sup>. Yours in Service

**Southwestern Area**

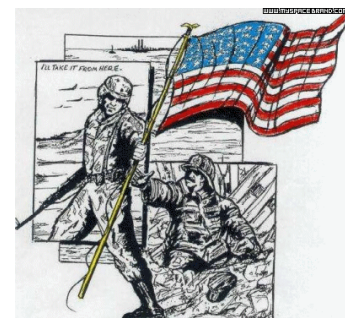
**John Dollinger, Southwestern Area Commander**

District 8 — August was a great month here in the "GREAT EIGHT". We were close to number 1 in Department Membership during the month. WAY TO GO MEMBERSHIP TEAM! Being # 1 is what I am talking about.

We look forward to September as I am hoping that we will be #1 all month long. Remember the 60% goal is coming up October 1<sup>st</sup> and I trust that everyone is working towards those critical goals. We, here in the "GREAT EIGHT" had two super Installations of Officers in August. We were able to install both Post 2, Wauchula, and Post 11, Arcadia. Congrats to their new Officers and I look forward to working with them here in the "GREAT EIGHT". Please remember the "GREAT EIGHT" has a District Service Officer Larry Roberts. He can be contacted at (850) 718-7773 or by email at gunhunter1966@yahoo.com. The "GREAT EIGHT" will hold our first District Meeting on September 20, 2014 at Post 266 beginning at 11:00am. As I close please remember the District staff are here to assist you in all your needs "Just Ask". Doug Deierlein, 8<sup>th</sup> Dist. Commander

District 13 — We are on our way to a good year. I want to thank everyone for what we have done so far in membership, but we still have a long way to go. Please talk to your friends and get them to renew or become a member. We need all we can get. District 13<sup>th</sup> meeting is on September 14<sup>th</sup> at American Legion 323 in Lehigh Acres. Andy Burkett, 13<sup>th</sup> District Commander.

The Southwestern Area is focused primarily on membership since the Central Area Commander challenged us to get to 100% before they do. Moving forward the Area will remain committed to membership renewals, Post 400 transfers and expired member reactivation. I want to applaud the efforts of the Post Membership Teams in both Districts. Each District has a District Meeting in September: the 13<sup>th</sup> District on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> at Post 323 begins at 1:00pm and the 8<sup>th</sup> District on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> at Post 266 begins at 11:00am. Prior to both of these meetings, Centennial Training by the Department Historian, Shelli Romeu, will be conducted. Any questions ask your District Commander. *While we continue to stress membership, it is also critical that our Posts focus attention on our less fortunate veterans, their families and your Post activities in our communities. At a recent meeting it was asked, "If your Post closed tomorrow, would anyone in your community notice". Think about it!*



**William Rick Johnson**  
**Southern Area Commander**

Hello Southern Area. Well we have two months under our belts and we are moving forward. A lot has happened in the last two months. We had our Southern Area Training and had a great turn out. We had our NEC Dennis Boland visit the 14th District and attended three installations. Thank you Posts 145, 28, 154 and 43 for your hospitality during the visit.

As you know we always talk about membership, so let's start working the expired members within your post and try to get them to rejoin your post. Send a nice letter out and invite them back as you will be surprised on the return that you get. Let's get out there and recruit new members. Remember when you do receive a new member, turn that information over to the SAL and Auxiliary as they might have family members who could be members also.

Well September 11th is coming up and there is a great program put on by the 9th District in Pompano Beach. Contact the District Commander, Jim Tewes, or visit their website for more information.

September 16th is American Legion Day. September 19th is POW/MIA Day. September 20th at Post 271 will be the roast for Past National Detachment Commander Jimmy Roberts at 6:00 PM and tickets are \$15.00. Come by and support a great event. September 25th-28 the Department Commander will be in the 14th District for a visitation. Waiting on the 14th District for a schedule. Contact Gary Decker for more information.

District Commanders please get me information by the 15th of the month so we can get the word out. Be proud of what your District is doing. Post commanders, start getting more involved with your community and now is a great time to get in the schools and teach our younger kids the meaning of a veteran and the flag. Department has the veterans coloring books on sale and get in those schools prior to Veterans Day. Remember the easiest way to get new members is to JUST ASK. If that don't work JUST ASK AGAIN. I challenge the whole family to have on them an application from all three organization's and also the legion members to take the Legion Institute class to learn more about our great organization. So family have fun, take care and have a great month.

**Mike Wolohan**  
**Commander District 17**

Every year, week after week, month after month we all hear about "membership" over and over again. Are we sick of it yet? Do we need to hear about it on a daily/weekly/monthly/annual basis? The answer is easy! It's a resounding YES!

The main reason we hear about it so often is simple, it's the lifeblood of our organization and our leaders in Indianapolis need the numbers when they go before Congress. How impressed do you think they would be if Commander Delinger went before the House and stated he represents 200,000 members? Or do you think he would be heard better and get more attention from the "good old boys" in D.C. if he stated he represented nearly 3 million members? It's not rocket science my fellow Legionnaires, get those cards in today! Make your turn around time no more than 24 hours when it comes to membership. Do not allow them to sit at the Post for days/weeks at a time. We have some great teams out there in our District. Utilize the talents of each Adjutant and Vice Commander. Hold them accountable to the membership of your Post and make sure you reward them for a "job well done" when they are successful. For God and Country

**Jesse Figueroa**  
**12th District Adjutant**  
**Adjutant, Post 117**

Greetings from Charlotte!

The 96th Annual National Convention of the American Legion is off to a great start. However, we lost a dedicated Legionnaire, NEC Jerry Hedrick of North Carolina to natural causes this past Monday, August 25th. He will be missed. The Department of Florida presented a check for \$36,013.13 towards the Legacy Fund. Our national total is now at \$900K. Great job ALR! Today, our Department donated \$5000 towards the National Emergency Fund. Florida was also recognized as runner-up categories in membership. Tomorrow is the last day as we elect new national officers for the 2014-2015 term and then return home.

Thank You for your dedication and tireless effort in the Department of Florida.

Safe Travels to our delegates and alternates heading home. For GOD and Country



**The American Legion, Department of Florida proudly announces the backing of  
PROJECT: VetRelief.**

PROJECT: VetRelief, formally known as PROJECT: Homefront, ensures that our service men and women have the backing necessary to live successful and thriving civilian lives. While the original ideals that guided the creation of PROJECT: Homefront remain intact, a concerted rebranding effort has now placed a high level of attention on three specific areas of service: assisting during times of immediate need, working to secure benefits earned with service, and providing encouragement through mentorship.

Overall, it is our vision to one day live in a nation where no service member stands alone. We invite you to join us as we fight the good fight! They fought for us. We fight for them.

Look for the launch of [www.ProjectVetRelief.org](http://www.ProjectVetRelief.org) in early November 2014 with a full rollout to our Members at Fall Conference!



**5<sup>th</sup> District  
Tom Gora**

**[5thDistrict@legionmail.org](mailto:5thDistrict@legionmail.org)**

Congratulations to all of the 5<sup>th</sup> District Posts and members who were recognized for their accomplishments at the recent 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Department Convention! Shortly after the convention the District began a full calendar of installation ceremonies in June and July. The week after the convention the District held Post Operations training for 40 Post members from around the District and then on July 27 another 59 post members from the 5<sup>th</sup> District attended Northern Area Training.

Congratulations to the American Legion Baseball Team from Post 88 who won their second consecutive Department Baseball Championship on July 27<sup>th</sup>, and advanced to the World Series by winning the Southeast Regional Tournament! On July 25<sup>th</sup> there were 67 Legion families from the 5<sup>th</sup> District and the Northern Area trainers attending the Jacksonville Suns baseball game. Post 137 presented the colors and Department Commander Jay Conti threw out the first pitch which looked like a strike to us! It was a very good game and the dugouts emptied for two brawls in the 9<sup>th</sup> inning and we had great ringside seats! The annual District picnic is scheduled for Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at Post 137 with their in-the-ground pool.

The District held its first District meeting August 10<sup>th</sup> and we heard from speakers representing the Duval County Veteran's Treatment Court and the Northern Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The 5<sup>th</sup> District continues to meet on a monthly basis, our members would not have it any other way. Our next meeting is Sunday, September 14 at Post 401 in Hilliard, Florida, and we always welcome visitors from the Legion Family, doesn't matter if you are from our District or not.

**Ball/Homecoming Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Post</b>	<b>Event</b>
September 20, 2014	271	Roast for SAL Past National CDR, Jimmy Roberts, III
January 24, 2015	103	Southwestern Area Ball
February 7, 2015	TBD	Southern Area Ball
February 21, 2015	1	Eastern Area Ball
February 28, 2015	TBD	Central Area Ball
March 7, 2015	TBD	Northern Area Ball
April 25, 2015	103	Legion Family Homecoming