



THE LEGION LINK

Full Speed Ahead for Veterans

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JAY CONTI, SR.
 Department Commander
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"Toot Your Own Horn"

As I write this Commanders Corner we have started our **ALR In-State Legacy Run**, I hope that everyone has followed us on Facebook or came out and cheered your American Legion Riders on!

It's that Time of year again to do the End of Year Reports as the "CPR" **Consolidated Post Reports (Can be filed electronic through MyLegion.org)** and end of year Award Reports have been sent to ALL Posts. With this year awards there will be two additional awards: Social Media and Best Homeless Veterans Out Reach Awards; "Lets Toot your Horn"! Please ensure that all deadlines for awards are followed and the CPR Reports are due by May 1, 2015 ALL before the District Constitutional Conferences Start. **Let's show National we are ON-TIME and Number ONE!**

Speaking of National, right after we get back from the Legacy Run we will be taking our National Commander Mike Helm around the state for a few days. I know he will get a big Florida welcome where ever he goes. As of today, we have 2 Districts that have secured **"RACE-TO-THE-TOP" Status**; Congratulations to Both the 6th & 13th Districts, with another 8 days to go we also have 8 more Districts on the edge of winning National **RACE-TO-THE-TOP Honors** and I hope they all do!

We are so close to 100% **Little Stevie** can smell it (he thinks its Lasagna)! Let's finish the job with that final Push for Membership as Department is currently 93.5% of our Goal with just 7,500 Cards away from reaching Nationals 100%. I hope that your Post reaches 100%+1 member and not only will your Post receive all the awards in the Membership Manual but you will indeed receive this new **100%+1 Plaque!** If your Post needs any Help, please contact your **Membership Chairman "Little Stevie" Shuga**. Reinstate, Recruit and Lets hold Open Houses and tell your Community know who we are. Last month we held a calling Party of Post 400 members at Department, I would like to thank all the Volunteers who attended and help where we renewed over 40 members back into The American Legion.

Department Adjutant Mike McDaniel, Jessica Solis of Project Vet-Relief and myself were in our State Capital Lobbying for Veterans Rights, Funding for Boys & Girls State as well as Funding for Project Vet-Relief! By the Time we left Tallahassee the State Lawmakers know who we were and what The American Legion and Project Vet-Relief was about!

What an Oratorical Contest we had last month! Again, I had a toss-up between 3 of



Ball/Homecoming Schedule

Eastern Area Ball
April 4, 2015
Post 1

Northern Area Ball
March 7, 2015
Location TBD

Legion Family Homecoming
April 25, 2015
Post 103



Patriotic Coloring Books Now Available!

Department has Halloween and Patriotic coloring books available for purchase and distribution to the elementary classrooms in your area. An order form is located on page 11 of the Post Admin Manual. Supplies are limited - get them while they last! The cost is \$20 per 100 books. Send your orders to:

American Legion, Dept of FL
ATTN: Elizabeth Inherst
P.O. Box 547859
Orlando, FL 32854-7859

or by email:

Linherst@floridalegion.org



the 6 contestants and our winner Geeta Minocha sponsored by Ocala Post 27 from the 4th District won the State Finals. Congratulations Ms. Geeta and do The American Legion Department of Florida Proud at the National Finals! We also had the State Commander from Oklahoma; Tim Smith stop on by for a tour of our State Headquarters as well as picking Florida's brain on Programs, Membership etc. **And why NOT!** As of yesterday The Department of Florida was **3rd in the NATION!** Keep up the Great Job TEAM FLORIDA!

Time is nearing down towards the end of the year, The Legion Family Homecoming will take place this month on April 25, 2015 at Post 103 Punta Gorda. It's just about a sellout, I am looking to have a good time with all. The Theme is casual **Red-White & Blue Dress!** I hope to see a lot of smiling faces.

"BRAVO-ZULU"
"FOR GOD AND COUNTRY"
Jay Conti Sr.
Department Commander
"FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR VETERANS"



JIM RAMOS
Department 1st Vice Commander
1stvicecommander@legionmail.org
(352) 226-4370

Florida Legionnaires, we need to continue working on Membership and help the Department of Florida stand up to the changes set by National of 113,013 by doing the following: Retain, Reinstate, Recruit, and Renew of our members who have NOT renew up to now. **(Yes we can)** In March, the Department of Florida we have already won the BIG 12 competition four years in a row. **An Excellent job Florida!**

Now, April is Children and Young month every Post should do some activities with our school and community as a Legion family. Whatever you do make it BIG! Moreover, let the communities know what is going on at your local Post. Always let the community know we help our Veterans and their families and support our Troops each and every day.

Some Suggestion:

1. Award your members who work hard
2. Remember they are volunteer
3. Help the ones who help at the Post
4. Be Nice

Some more Suggestion:

1. Get a good Public Relation from the schools and community
2. Start NOW! Be Creative, Be Different, and Be Flexible
- 3. Reward your works all of them**
4. Keep your members info all the times

The membership Chairman is Steve Shuga and he is willing to help you and your Post. We are a part of the Department membership team. We work for YOU.

If you or your Post needs help just call (352-226-4370) or email me at 1stvicecommander@legionmail.org

Jim Ramos
1st Vice Commander



JOE MAGEE
 Department 2nd Vice Commander
 2ndViceCommander@legionmail.org

March..one of my favorite months. Why you ask? Two good reasons, 1) the month of St. Patrick's Day, the patron Saint of Ireland and 2) the month of my birth. Now, if they are not two good reasons, what else can one say!

On March 5, there was a staff meeting and phone bank at Dept. H.Q. Following that on to Jacksonville. Visited posts and discussed membership. Attended the Northern Area Ball

and, also, the 5th District Meeting in St. Augustine. I would like to thank Dist. Commander Tom Gora for his invite to attend. Next up was the very exciting Department Oratorical Competition, however, prior to leaving for Orlando on Thursday and Friday, I cooked the corned beef for the St. Patrick's Day dinner at Post 254 in North Port. As mentioned, the Oratorical was an exciting and suspenseful one and, also, my corned beef was well received as they sold out (such a shame I was not there to enjoy it).

Following the Oratorical was the 13th District Picnic at Port Charlotte, Post 110, had a great time and thanks to all who worked so hard to make it the success it was. This past weekend, it was off to Hollywood (no, not California) Florida, for the 9th District Meeting at Post 92. I spoke about the License Plate and various points on Protocol and answered some questions.

Will be participating in the ALR Legacy Run in some manner this coming week and the following week, looking forward to meeting our National Commander. Both latter comments, I will have some type of report on next month.

For God and Country
Joseph Magee
 2nd Vice Commander
 Department of Florida



DENNIS R. BOLAND
 National Executive Committeeman
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 239-963-8383

Protect Transition Assistance Program (TAP) Funding

The new Transition Assistance Program (TAP), authorized as part of the VOW to hire Heroes Act of 2011 – now Public Law 112-56 – is an

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., John Dollinger, Dusty Douglas, Shirley Douglas, Jim "Radar" Henry, Karen Henry, Sherry Hayes-Luzader, SAL PNC Jim Roberts, Doug Deierlein, Larry Roberts, Sandy White, Eunice Butts, MaryLou Hamblin, Andy Anderson and the entire Department of Florida American Legion College Class of 2014, Larry White, Jimmy Roberts, Kirk Miller, Squadron 72 CDR & JJ Jennings, Roy Havekost, Post 54 Family,, Tim Teirney, Bob Johnson, Terry Briggs, Dennis Storey and Johnny Gibbons, Ann King Smith, Rick Johnson, Dorothy Walsh, Jimmie Stewart, Karen Cole, Steve Shuga, Gerald Kaufman, Eric Hench. Elbert "EZ" Ziglier, Larry White, Arnold Makovsky, Ray "Bouncer" Leventhal, Steve Gordon, Andrew Burkett and Steven Slachta. John Taylor, Eugene Thomas, Bob Schmidt, Bernard James, Stu Weisbaum, Ed Jaworski, Pam Styx, Sue Harvey, Francine Jeffords, John Rose, Chuck Ferguson, Kenny DeChamps, Vickie VanBuren, Fred Daniels and Bob Koch.



step toward providing transitioning service members with the information and skills they need to successfully transition into civilian life.

TAP coordinates the efforts of the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Department of Labor (DOL), and the Small Business Administration (SBA), as well as VSO partners, to provide an overview of the benefits available to separating service members, as well as training in how to successfully acquire and maintain civilian employment. As such this program is an important asset to our veterans.

However, with the advent of the mandatory budget cuts known as “sequestration,” defense spending has become severely limited. Because of this, DOD is forced to reallocate funds toward readiness and training. This means that TAP is facing the potential of budget shortfalls, even as a drawing down of the military is pushing many service members from active duty.

Some estimate that as many as 250,000 service members will be transitioning annually from military service over the next several years. Many military personnel have little or no civilian experience, and little knowledge of how to acquire appropriate civilian employment.

TAP helps to fill some of these gaps, by connecting transitioning service members with resources to assist in finding employment, and by providing training on basic skills such as resume writing, and interviewing for jobs.

Cuts to TAP, coupled with the massive military drawdown, could prove disastrous for separating service members who need the information and training provided by TAP.

For info on TAP go to www.military.com and then to veterans jobs

Dennis R. Boland
National Executive Committeeman



SHELLI ROMEU
Department Historian
Historian@legionmail.org

Do you know which Posts will be having their 96th Anniversary this year? There are 40 Posts in Florida with their initial Charters granted in 1919! Bartow Post 3 and Arcadia Post 11 will kick-off the 96th Year Anniversaries beginning on 31 May. Then we have the following:

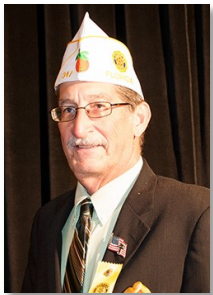
- June 1st: Post 2 in Wauchula, Post 4 in Lakeland, Post 33 in Pensacola.
- June 2nd: Post 5 in Tampa, Post 17 in New Smyrna Beach
- June 3rd: Post 6 in Deland, Post 7 in Clearwater, Post 8 in Winter Haven, Post 9 in Jacksonville, Post 10 in Kissimmee, Post 22 in Cocoa.
- June 5th: Post 1 in Titusville, Post 12 in West Palm Beach, Post 24 in Bradenton
- June 7th: Post 15 in Dade City, Post 30 in Sarasota
- June 9th: Post 13 in Tallahassee
- June 11th: Post 16 in Gainesville, Post 36 in Ft. Lauderdale
- June 12th: Post 14 in St. Petersburg
- June 19th: Post 19 in Orlando, Post 26 in Plant City, Post 27 in Ocala
- July 15th: Post 37 in St. Augustine
- July 24: Post 28 in Key West
- Aug 16th: Post 29 in Miami
- Sep 5th: Post 38 in Ft. Myers
- Sep 15th: Post 39 in Vero Beach
- Sep 18th: Post 40 in Ft. Pierce, Post 41 in Eustis
- Sep 29th: Post 43 in Homestead



- Oct 6th: Post 45 in Palatka
- Oct 9th: Post 49 in Monticello
- Oct 16th: Post 46 in Tarpon Springs, Post 47 in Lake Worth
- Nov 26th: Post 53 in Sanford
- Dec 19th: Post 54 in Fernandina Beach
- Dec 27th: Post 52 in Leesburg

Happy 96th to each of these Posts! Please let me know if you are planning a celebration event at your Post so this can be captured for the Centennial site!! Another reminder for those folks that will be entering a Narrative or Year Book History into the History Contest at Convention: Please have your submissions to Department Headquarters no later than the 1st of June! Please contact me if you have any questions.

Shelli Romeu
Department Historian



WILLIAM C. HOPPNER
Department Sgt-At-Arms
Sgt-At-Arms@legionmail.org
305-968-7979

In last month's Legion Link information was given out on color guard training to be given at department headquarters. I have not yet received any calls or emails from individuals interested in taking the course. Here is the information once again.

The training will take place at department headquarters on April 18, 2015 at 11:00 A.M. It is a pleasure to have Mr. Tracy Bullard National Assistant Chief Judge to teach the class and also answer any questions. There have been some changes in the national competition rules so this would be a good time to go over changes and to train new units.

Those who are interested in the training please contact me at one of the following emails or by phone. Sgt-At-Arms@legionmail.org, Gonepost1@aol.com or (305)968-7979

This information is being sent out in advance so everyone wanting to attend has the opportunity to do so.

I am looking forward to hearing from everyone interested and also the number of people who wish to attend the class. I would also like to have individuals who have judged completion in the past to attend.

God bless you, your families, our veterans and God Bless America!

For God and Country,
William C. Hoppner, Sgt-At-Arms



LARRY SHEETS
Department Judge Advocate
Judgeadvocate@legionmail.org
305-467-7713

Going through proposed Post Constitution and By-Laws I have noticed that many Post are making the same mistake regarding how Post meetings are conducted. Most Posts Constitution and By-Laws say that all proceedings of this Post shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules Of Order.

The Department Constitution in Article X, Section 18 states, " Each Post shall use and follow The American Legion Post Officers Guide in conducting its meetings, initiation of new members and other ceremonies prescribed therein."

It is important to note that should there be a question on procedure, the steps to follow would be to refer to (1) Post Constitution and By-Laws, (2) Department Constitution and By-Laws, (3) National Constitution and By-Laws, and as a last resort refer to Robert's Rules Of Order.

Another thing I have noticed is that most Posts do not have any reference to those who have access to and handle funds of the Post being bonded. Any Post officer, member, or employee who has access to and handles money should be bonded.

This is a no brainer, it protects the Post in case someone gets "sticky fingers." Most insurance policies have coverage available for the bonding of those with access to Post funds. A Post should check with their Insurance Agent before they go to a Bonding Company to obtain bonding of those individuals.

One more problem that I have noticed lately is that some Posts believe that the Post Executive Committee can suspend, or sanction a member for various reasons, I would remind you that the Department Constitution in Article X, Section 14 specifically states: "**Members or Post Officers may be reprimanded, suspended or expelled from the American Legion only upon proper showing or cause. Charges shall be based upon disloyalty, neglect of duty, dishonesty and conduct unbecoming a member of The American Legion. Charges must be made under oath and in writing by the accusers, and no member or officer shall lose his membership or office until given a fair trial.**"

Larry Sheets
Department Judge Advocate





JERRY BRANDT
Children & Youth Program Chairman
CY@Floridalegion.org
(904) 910-5201

Commanders, there will be a Department of Florida Children & Youth Golf Tournament on April 18th, 2015. This will be hosted by American Legion Post 129, in Jacksonville Beach, FL. All proceeds will go to the Department of Florida Children & Youth Fund.

The Oratorical Contests at the Department of Florida Headquarters on March 14th was a great contest and all contestants were great. A special Congratulations to Geeta Minocha, the American Legion Department of Florida, Oratorical Winner for 2015.

School Medals, ROTC Certificates should have been order for schools in your area in fact by the end of April, your School Medal Chairman, should have the dates of the presentations of the medals. Any Commanders and JROTC Chairmen, should have attended the banquet and presentation.

Scholarships for JROTC and American Legion are being review. Chairmen, for next year, please remind the candidates to provide all the information. When grading several hundred applications 1 or 2 points makes a difference. If they do not provide all the requested information....they lose those points.

Chairmen, please ensure the information you have obtained for this past year is being added to the Year End Reports, to be turned into Department. Make all your hard work count. You did the work, make sure everyone knows.

Important Dates in April

- 1st – April Fool Day
- 5th – EASTER
- 15th – Tax Day
- 18th – Department of Florida, C & Y Golf Tournament
- 20th – Patriot’s Day

Important Dates in May

- 1st – May Day
- 8th – V.E. Day
- 25th – Memorial Day

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

Yours in Service
Jerry Brandt
Department of Florida
Children & Youth Chairman 2014 - 2015



JOHN DOLLINGER
Department Blood Donor Chairman
BloodDonor@legionmail.org
(941) 661-8086 Blood Donor Committee

The numbers are still coming in because some held there blood drives the week or 2 after the schedule. I expect the report will be out in the middle of March. I know we had a good turnout but how many were able to donate is always the question. I want to thank everyone for the time and effort they put into making this happen. From the District Blood Donor Chairman,

Auxiliary Support and the Sons of the American Legion workers, it was great to see the support for our veterans from the Legion Family. I also want to thank the Department Staff for all their efforts, answering calls and directing people where to find information, it truly takes everyone to make things happen. My April report will have the final results and I will have the Post breakdown completed.

John Dollinger, Department Blood Donor Chairman

**Legionnaires
Insurance Trust**

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**Good news! Online enrollment
is now available.**

**Any Legion member can go to
the LIT website to enroll. To
sign up online, go to:
<http://www.thelit.com> and
follow the links.**



STANLEY GOLD
National Legislative Chairman
NatLegislative@legionmail.org
(786) 423-2458

On Feb 24th our Department held its 9th annual luncheon at the famous Gold Room in Rayburn House Office Building in Washington and invited all Florida members of the House and Senate to come. Last year we had 23 members show up. Two weeks prior the House changed their start time to arrive on that Tuesday from 9 am to 7 pm. So nine members that was supposed to go to our luncheon had to see their legislative aides. We did see every member or their aides that day or the next. Again, I would like to thank all the Department Delegates who gave me a helping hand.

Again we thank Jeff Miller, Chairman of House Veterans Affairs Committee to be the first Florida congressman to cosponsor H.J.R.9 legislation proposed constitutional amendment to protect the American Flag from physical desecration.

Stanley Gold
National Legislative Chairman



At the closing ceremony of the NAPS conference, the executive Vice President read off a report concerning Stanley Gold on the work the hurricane bill since 1964 and he continued to work on it 36 years until 2003 when it was passed into law under President Bush's signature. In addition, Stanley is National Vice Chairman of the Legislative Commission of The American Legion. He continues on an almost daily basis to interact with members of Congress for the good of postal supervisors on the one hand and veterans of the Armed Forces on the other hand, often wearing two hats simultaneously. The award that Stanley received today is been renamed for future recipients will be called the Gold Standard Achievement award.



National Commander Helm's 4x4 Program

American Legion National Commander Mike Helm's fundraising goal during his year-long tenure as national commander is to raise \$4 million in Legion Family charity program donations.

Donations will support The American Legion's six charities: Operation Comfort Warriors, Legacy Scholarship Fund, National Emergency Fund, Child Welfare Foundation, Endowment Fund and Soldier's Wish. Several Auxiliary charities are also a part of Helm's \$4 million fundraising goal, including the Emergency Fund, Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund, Children of Warriors National President's Workshop and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

Helm is rewarding those who make a donation to American Legion Charities with his "Stay On Course" fundraising pin. Any individual who donates \$100 or more to the funds will receive a pin. Three pins will be awarded to any Legion post, Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron or Legion Riders chapter that donates \$500 or more. Below is a image of the pin that will awarded.

To support Helm's 4x4 program, the Legion recently launched the web page www.legion.org/4x4



Certificates being presented to Congressman Ted Yoho and Congressman Patrick Murphy for their action against sale of illegal U.S. Military Medals.



JESSE FIGUEROA
District Adjutant
 adjutant@fal12thdistrict.org

The 3rd quarter of the current team has come to an end. Post commanders, now is the time to reach that 100% membership goal in order for the 12th district to obtain 100% race to the top by the 3pm deadline on Tuesday March 31st. After the 12th district meeting, I had the pleasure of attending the Central Area Ball at post 8 in Winter Haven on Saturday February 28th as we were dressed in a Luau style. There were 10 legionnaires who assisted Department membership Chairman Steve Shuga in working on the Post 400 Call-up that took place on Thursday March 5th at the Department Headquarters. Congratulations to the participants of the Department Oratorical Contest that took place at Department Headquarters on Saturday March 14th. I had the pleasure of participating in the 12th district spring picnic that took place on Saturday March 21st at the American Legion Post 117 in Palm Bay to support Boys State and Girls transportation. Several Dignitaries and 30 students from the 2015 Florida SAL college, hosted by SAL Detachment Adjutant, Ed Sheubrooks. SAL Past National Commander Jim Roberts and SAL NEC John Jennings were also present. This month is also the time to conduct the 1st round of Post Officer Nominations as described in the individual Post's constitution & Bylaws. I now prepare to ride with the Florida ALR as they go on the State Legacy Run from Post 57 in Lake City on Monday March 23rd and end at Post 155 in Crystal River on Saturday March 28th. The Department Commander "Little Stevie" will be doing a membership Pony Express to achieve our March 31st goal. Thank you for your support and see you on the Legacy Run!

Jesse Figueroa
 12th District Adjutant



POST EXCELLENCE AWARD



To qualify for the Post Excellence Award, a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, youth activities, community service and support to currently serving troops or veterans.

The purposes of this award are membership growth, exposure of American Legion values to the youth of the community, and increased visibility of the American Legion Family through service projects. A post achieving this qualification will have had numerous post members involved in planning and achieving these goals.

Many posts are most likely already active in these areas and will qualify without extra effort. Others, however, will need to increase their efforts in one or more areas to qualify for the award.

The standard to be achieved in each area:

- **Membership.** Must be at least one member greater than the previous year. At least one post officer attends district meetings.
- **Youth activities.** Must sponsor and actively participate in at least one primary youth program: Boys State, American Legion Baseball, Oratorical, Boy Scouts or Junior Shooting Sports.
- **Community service.** Must accomplish a community service project with members of the Legion Family actively working in the community outside the post home. A wide range of potential projects exists, such as a project centered on one of Children & Youth's emphasis areas to fulfilling a strictly local need. A monetary donation may be part of the project but may not constitute the entire project.
- **Service to troops/veterans.** Must accomplish a project supporting troops or veterans in the community with Legion Family members outside the post home. Potential projects include the Family Support Network, Heroes to Hometowns, or simply helping a local veteran with necessary updates to his or her home. Again, a monetary donation may be part of the project but may not constitute the entire project.

The district commander responsible for the post will certify a post as having achieved the four specified criteria. The district commander will submit a list of posts meeting the criteria to the department headquarters. That list should include the post name, post number, post address and post commander's name. Ideally, the last two criteria are accompanied by copies of press releases submitted to the local media about the projects. That method ensures the projects were not only accomplished but that an attempt was made to enhance the image of The American Legion through local media. The copy submitted should include a date and time stamp showing receipt by the media outlet.

All Posts that Submit for this award will also receive a Department Commanders "**BRAVO-ZULU**" Streamer. The department adjutant will transmit information as posts qualify to:

The American Legion National Headquarters
ATTN: Membership
P.O. Box 105
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055

LORETTA YOUNG
Department JROTC/Shooting Sports Chairman
jrotc@legionmail.org
954-257-6763

It is now time for all posts to have your Year End Medals ordered from Emblem Sales for the ROTC/JROTC Year End Awards ceremony and Military Balls. They will be held starting next month for some schools. You **MUST** be proactive and contact the individual schools to get the dates for the presentations. Don't wait until they contact you. Remember only 4 year college/university programs get a gold medal. Two year programs get the silver medal and all High School Medals are bronze including the Charter and Academy Schools. There are 2 Medals. One for Academic Excellence and one for Scholastic Excellence. Let's make sure every program in the state of Florida is sponsored by a post. Once you attend one of these functions, I know you will want this to be part of your annual Legion programs.

I want to thank all posts that promoted the Cadet of the Year program. We had a very good response. It shows that we have some outstanding youth in our JROTC Program. There are some upcoming youth that will assure that our country has a bright future. Thanks for your interest in our youth and always remember to pray for our troops for their safe return.

Loretta Young, JROTC/Shooting Sports Chairman



NANCY L. THOMAS
 Department Post Development and Revitalization Chairman
PostDevelopment@legionmail.org
 (863) 618-6738

This month is Children and Youth Month. It would be a great time to do something for our youth, have a fundraiser for the wonderful programs, have a picnic, or event to bring in the children and grandchildren of your members, etc.

In March it was my pleasure to work with Sean Sparks at National on a revitalization event. He sent me a file of the Post 400's and ones who have not renewed their memberships (Over 6,600 names.) There is a need for all Post to get motivated and if your Post is not registered for mylegion.org, and/or you are not utilizing the "Members in my Area" you may be losing great members. Although some may only want to be a member, don't forget that

there are those who would like to get involved and work with your Post. It was an honor to go help Steve Shuga and Department on the 5th of March with calling members who have not renewed their memberships and talk to those members. Great job for all of us who attended this event.

If your Post is not registered and not using mylegion.org, please get with someone to help walk you through the process of getting on board. If you would like to use this program, you may have a monthly membership drive, semi-annual or quarterly membership drive. Offer the ones who work with you a lunch, even if you need to order out, make sure you have them have their cell phones and chargers with them.

Burl, (my spouse) and I spent many hours (even working on this list on our Anniversary) going through the list from National of Post 400 members to locate phone numbers so we could make more calls and find the ones who have already gone to the High Commander, and it is so important to use mylegion.org and if you could get a couple of people together with their phones and a list, you could increase your membership and possibly get some really fantastic people in your Post and bring their spouses, children, and if they ride motorcycles, that's a plus for those of you who have a ALR. This effort could bring members into the Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion. So, it really needs to be accomplished on a regular basis.

We have been using whitepages.com to look up telephone numbers, and familysearch.org and legacy.com to locate information regarding those who have passed. But, please know that some of the members are like myself and won't have a land line, so, there might not be a phone number available. If you know of another program other than 411.com, please let me know, it would help me in my duties.

Also, when you have a transfer or new member come in and you fill out the paperwork for them, **please, please, please** get a phone number for the member, get their correct address, and if they have an e-mail, please get that, too. Also, those member's with common names it is nice to have a middle initial for that person. It is also nice to make sure that you have the war era, and the branch of service. Please help us out by making sure you have this information.

Please don't forget that Wednesday's are Pink Shirt Day and Fridays are Red Shirt Day, so let's not only support Breast Cancer Awareness on Wednesday's, and our Troops on Friday.

Should you need to contact me, my mailing address is 122 Alvina Ave., Lake Wales, FL 33853-4605, my e-mail address is: geldsprechens@gmail.com, and my phone number is 863-978-7720. Please leave me a message if I am unable to answer the phone right away.

For God and Country

Nancy Thomas
 Post Development/Revitalization Chairperson

Florida American Legion Specialty License Plate

Don't forget to purchase your Florida American Legion specialty license plate. We need your support to reach our goal of 1,000 pre-sales by July 1, 2015.



Visit <http://members.floridalegion.org/> for more information.



TOM GORA
Department Law and Order Chairman
5thdistrict@legionmail.org

This is a reminder that the applications for the Department of Florida Law Enforcement Officer and Fire Fighter/EMT are due to me no later than May 7, 2015. I have already received several applications and hope to get many more! Award information has been sent to all District Law and Order Chairs to get the word out to their posts. If you need more information or have questions you can e-mail me at www.laworder@legionmail.org.

At nomination deadline a committee made up of District Law and Order Chairs meets to recommend the 2014-15 award recipients to the Department. Recipients of the annual Department of Florida awards are also submitted as applicants for National Awards.

Please do something to honor your local law enforcement officers and fire fighter/EMTs at your post. I recently attended a ceremony on March 7, 2015, at Post 104 in Pinellas Park and it was a great event! This Post has been doing this ceremony for many years and based on participation and comments made by visiting city dignitaries, Law and Order is being supported by Post 104, and the city appreciates what the post does for them. Award recipients all received a trophy and a check from Post 104 to the award winner's favorite local charity. At this ceremony the post also honored the retiring Chief of Police for her 35 years of service to the community. Congratulations to all the Pinellas Park first responders who were honored and to the Post Commander and Post Law and Order Chairman for a job well done! Post 137 recognized local first responders in Jacksonville by providing a meal to all first responders and their families on March 29, 2015. Squad cars and fire trucks dominate the Post 137 parking lot on this day as the post serves over 600 meals to our first responders and their families that day! I would be happy to visit any post that is honoring your local first responders as my travel schedule allows.

The week of May 11-17, 2015 is National Law Enforcement Officers Week. This is a great time to have a ceremony at your Post to celebrate and recognize local law enforcement. Sadly some of those who swear to "serve and protect" fall in the line of duty and the names of 6 fallen Florida Law Enforcement Officers who died in the line of duty in 2014 will be added to the Fallen Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C. Over history, 778 Florida Law Enforcement Officers have given their lives in the line of duty. Remember, when a citizen dials 9-1-1, in their time of need they wait hoping a hero will respond soon, and that is what they get when that fire truck, ambulance or squad car arrives, true American heroes. Every time a 9-1-1 call comes in and a Floridian wearing a badge responds, regardless of the nature of the call, their lives are in danger, they accept this as part of the job TO SERVE AND PROTECT US! Please take the time to honor them!

Send applications to:

Thomas Gora
 Department Law and Order Chairman
 96022 Stoney Glen Court
 Yulee, FL. 32097





STEPHEN SHUGA
 Dept. Membership Chairman
 membership@Legionmail.org
 407-394-5534

Rise-n-Shine with Membership!

Congratulations to those Florida American Legion Posts who achieved 100% membership. We are days out from learning who our Race-to-the-Top finishers are for this year and identifying those Posts who

were seen **Breaking Legs** to the finish line. Every card counts so keep them coming in.

April 1st is Department's **100%** goal. We had "over **60 Posts**" who hit the mark. The *ALR State Legacy Run* and the *Pony Express Membership Rally* ended the month of March in style.

While we were working the roads and trails, **National Membership Representative Sean Sparks** has been supporting the *15th District with a Membership Revitalization* effort March 25th thru March 29th. The emphasis was "No Membership Card Left Behind".

We still have a couple of months to secure Florida as a Top Gun Finisher. Two more months to pursue a variety of membership incentives are still to be had.

Stephen Shuga
 Department Membership Chairman

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA SCHOOL AWARDS

Now is the time to start contacting the schools to find out the dates for their awards, our goal this year is to have each district increase by 1 post doing this program. It can be accomplished; will take a little work, time and effort. District Chairman please contact the post in your District and see if they need any help or have any questions.

Most post has at least 1 school in their AOR. This should make it easier. I have done school awards for many years, it is not difficult, and many schools you can leave right after your presentation.

I am here to help you. If you're not sure how to work the program just reach out to me. I can be reached anytime by either email or phone.

ANDREW W. NAGY
 813-782-5032
 amerlegp118_oratorical@yahoo.com

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rcvd	% of Goal
13	A. Burkett	9372	9279	99.01
6	T. Biddle	11734	11472	97.77
12	R. Saxby	8938	8667	96.97
7	I. Anderson	3848	3668	95.32
8	D. Deierlein	8266	7740	93.64
17	M. Wolohan	4102	3834	93.47
16	R. McNabb	12099	11294	93.35
5	T. Gora	8127	7561	93.04
4	C. Ferguson	3924	3629	92.48
9	J. Tewes	4111	3764	91.56
15	J. Romeu	5509	5032	91.34
2	W. Jackson	1416	1276	90.11
11	A. Bruce	4011	3600	89.75
3	H. Perry	1797	1599	88.98
1	L. Carpenter	6417	5704	88.89
14	G. Decker	3139	2591	82.54
Eastern	A. Diaz	20672	20139	97.42
South-western	J. Dollinger	17638	17019	96.49
Central	E. Butts	21456	19994	93.19
Northern	J. Brandt	17961	16623	92.61
Western	V. Joyce	7833	6980	89.11
Southern	W. Johnson	11261	9955	88.40

JERRY BRANDT
Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org
904-910-5201

I would like to thank everyone who attended the Northern Area Homecoming. It has been some time since I have seen so many past Northern Area Commanders in one spot, thank you.

Upcoming Events:

- April 12th, 5th District Meeting, Post 54
- April 18th, Seafood Festival Steinhatchee Post 291.
- April 25th, 3rd District Meeting, Lake City
- April 25th, Legion Family Homecoming,

Team; Congratulations to the following for achieving the 95% Goal

3rd District

- Post 83, MacClenny 115.789%
- Post 59, Branford, 115.625%
- Post 322, Lake City, 104.762%
- Post 234, Monticello, 104.348%
- Post 107, Live Oak, 100%
- Post 49, Monticello, 97.674%
- Post 68, Madison, 96.774%
- Post 195, Madison, 95%

4th District

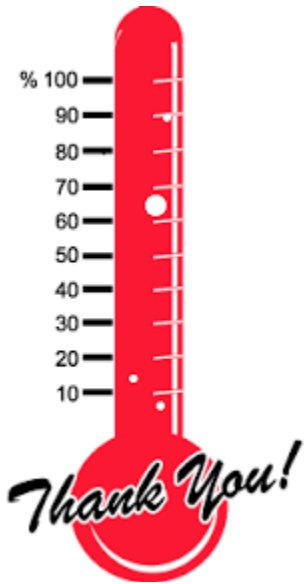
- Post 237, Beverly Hills, 107.589%
- Post 210, Ocala, 104.762%
- Post 58, Dunnellon, 100.330
- Post 230, Hawthorne, 98.718%

5th District

- Post 401, Hilliard, 110.909%
- Post 233, Ponte Vedra Beach, 106.161%
- Post 102, Hastings, 105.882%
- Post 373, Orange Park, 105.714%
- Post 174, Fernandina Beach, 100%
- Post 194, St Augustine, 100%
- Post 129, Jacksonville Beach, 97.311%

17th District

- Post 255, Deltona 110.909%
- Post 120, Holly Hill, 100.783%
- Post 380, Daytona Beach, 100%
- Post 293, Interlachen, 100%
- Post 285, Edgewater, 99.320%
- Post 45, Palatka, 95.028%



We also have 22 Posts with 90% or higher in the Area that are not listed above, which is great. However the goal is now 100%.

Commanders, for those Post who reach the 100% goal, Let us not forget the Post Excellence Award for those Posts. They earn it, let's ensure they apply for the award.

3rd District now has a Face Book Page; please reach out to them at <https://www.facebook.com/floridadistrict3>

Jerry Brandt
Northern Area Commander

SOUTHWESTERN AREA - APRIL 2015

DISTRICT 8 – No Report

DISTRICT 13 is on the top where we hope to stay. We need 160 more members to make it to 100% I know that is where we all want to be. Keep working on membership please. The district picnic whet well if you were there you know if not you missed a good time. Let's stay in the hunt and have fun. **Andrew Burkett, 13th District Commander**

SOUTHWESTERN AREA- National Commander is in the Area the first few days of April. 13th District is focused on **“Race to the Top”** as we close out March so let's make it happen. **Boys State Orientation** is coming up so let's make sure we get not only the Boys to orientation but that one parent that must attend. Consolidated Post Reports or CPR's are in your Post's get them filled out and turned in now. If the Post does not have a CPR contact your District Commander immediately. Membership and Post Awards submittal dates are coming up quickly. Get your Membership Teams and Adjutants to turn in the paperwork to Department before the due dates. Also there is Bravo Zulu Award awards that need to be reviewed and applied for. Let's have 8 and 13 shine at Convention.

John Dollinger, Southwestern Area Commander

POW MIA MARCH 2015

Since back in January and February we have had not been able to provide reports on those recently accounted for, below is a list for this period. The new Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency can be found on the web at www.dpaa.mil

Sgt.	Floyd J.R. Jackson	U.S. Army	Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division	12/12/1950	North Korea	1/27/2015
Pfc.	Lotchie J.R. Jones	U.S. Army	Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division	2/28/1951	North Korea	2/26/2015
Staff Sgt.	Bunyan D. Price Jr.	U.S. Army	2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division	5/2/1970	Vietnam	2/25/2015
Pfc.	John R. Bowers	U.S. Army	Company L, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division	2/14/1951	South Korea	2/20/2015
2nd Lt.	John W. Herb	U.S. Army Air Forces	1st Air Division, 359th Fighter Group, 368th Fighter Squadron	4/13/1945	Germany	2/19/2015
2nd Lt.	Stephen V. Biezis	U.S. Army Air Forces	575th Bombardment Squadron, 391st Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force	12/23/1944	Germany	2/3/2015
Sgt.	Arnold V. Andring	U.S. Army	Company L, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 8th Army	2/4/1951	North Korea	1/28/2015
2nd Lt.	Alvin Beethe	U.S. Army Air Forces	393rd Fighter Squadron, 367th Fighter Group, 9th Air Force	11/26/1944	Germany	1/28/2015
1st Lt.	James F. Gatlin, Jr.	U.S. Army Air Forces	575th Bombardment Squadron, 391st Bombardment Group, 9th Air Force	12/23/1944	Germany	1/26/2015
Cpl.	Lindsey C. Lockett	U.S. Army	Medical Detachment, Headquarters Battery, 503rd Field Artillery Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division	12/1/1950	North Korea	1/26/2015
Capt.	David Chorlins	U.S. Air Force	602nd Special Operations Squadron, 34th Tactical Group	1/11/1970	Laos	1/17/2015
Cpl.	C.G. Bolden	U.S. Army	Company C, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division	1/5/1951	North Korea	1/16/2015
Sgt. 1st Class	Donald R. Strum	U.S. Army	Company C, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division	11/4/1950	North Korea	1/13/2015
Sgt. 1st Class	James W. Holt	U.S. Army	Company C, 5th Special Forces Group	2/7/1968	Vietnam	1/10/2015

OMER "GENE" SMITH
Immigration/Naturalization Committee Chairman
Oesmith@Earthlink.net

Legionnaires of Florida, I need your help. Department Commander Conti has asked me to chair a committee to identify and locate immigrants who are serving or have served in the United States Military and for one reason or another are not Naturalized Citizens. I believe it is our responsibility and of utmost importance to identify and locate these individuals and assist them in beginning the Naturalization process. To wait could result in adverse action for our fellow veterans since we do not know the full scope of the legislative action pending in the US Congress on the national immigration issue.

I ask every member of the Department of Florida American Legion to assist me in helping these immigrants and fellow veterans become Naturalized Citizens. I suggest Posts place a Public Service Announcement in the local newspaper that The American Legion, Department of Florida is offering information and limited assistance to an individual who meets the requirements for naturalized citizenship under Sections 328 and 329 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Department is in contact with the Local Field Office of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services and a legal expert in Naturalization. For more information, my E-mail address is immigration@legionmail.org.

In future months, I plan to have a seminar in Orlando at Department Headquarters for those immigrants who meet military service requirements of Sections 328 and 329 of the INA. I hope to have a representative from the USCIS and an expert from legal services for immigration. Further information shall be forthcoming as the seminar develops.

Omer "Gene" Smith
Immigration/Naturalization Committee Chairman



ROY HAVEKOST
Social Media Chairman
socialmedia@legionmail.org

At this time, American Legion **Posts** in the Department of Florida now have a **85.86%** presence on *Facebook*™. This percentage is on the rise, keep up the good work. If you have not received the official registration stamp to display on your page or group, there is still time to register and be entered into the Social Media awards presentation at the annual convention in June. The cutoff for registering is May 15th. Simply email the link to your Facebook™ page or group along with the number of 'likes' or 'members' in your group, and a short explanation as to how you use *Facebook*™ to promote the purposes and aims of the American Legion. Address all emails to socialmedia@legionmail.org.

There are still some Posts that maintain a closed group whereby a member must be approved to join. As Social Media chairman I have requested to join several of these groups and to date have not yet been approved. Not being allowed membership is prohibiting your Post from receiving the official registration stamp.

Awards are tentatively scheduled to be issued at the convention on Saturday, June 27th during the General Session for Commission & Committee Reports and Awards. Your page or group will be judged on presentation and content at the Post and District level.

Roy Havekost
Social Media Chairman





MIKE KIRCHOFF
In-State Legacy Ride Chairman

The Third Annual In State Legacy Ride is completed, what a trip over 100 people register and 25 rode the entire route, somewhere around 825 miles, enjoyed stopping at 26 different American Legion Posts, plus stopping in Pensacola to visit the Vietnam Wall South and a stop in Apalachicola to see the Three Soldiers Statue. Only one day of rain from Destin to Panama City, everyone was soaked when we stopped at Post 402. I want to thank all the Posts that welcomed us and provided great hospitality. Also a big thanks to the Department Commander Jay Conti, Department SONS Commander Kirk

Miller and all the Legion Riders that participated in the ride. As we rode through the Panhandle I could only think about all the Legion Family Members that have never ventured up into this neck of the woods. Just in District 1 we have 21 Posts and we stopped at 14 of them along the way. The welcoming in Crystal River was great over 30 Riders from Chapter 392 in Panama City welcomed us, which just happens to be my Chapter. When we rode into Post 155 in Crystal River there were over 125 motorcycles riding in. We took up a lot of the highway. So proud of everyone and every Post that supported this Ride. We finished the Ride by raising over \$36,600.00 plus or the Legacy Scholarship Fund as well as over \$2,000.00 for Commander Jay Conti's Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Awareness Fund. Stay tuned for next years ride plans.

Mike (Goat) Kirchoff
In State Legacy Ride Chairman



STEVEN NEWMAN
Department Chaplain
Chaplain@legionmail.org
(954) 865-1026

Greetings my fellow Legionnaires. Springtime has finally arrived. You could not ask for more beautiful weather in our sunshine state. I hope everyone had a wonderful Easter season with families and friends. With all this goodness and beauty we have our heavenly father to thank. Along with his guidance and direction we can tackle any issue that is thrown at us small or large. This month I would like to talk a little on prayers. (Prayers are very important to our spiritual growth and understanding. Prayer is a duty and a discipline, it is conversing with GOD. Prayer is adoration, confession, thanks, and supplication. It is the heart engaged in loving awe and accepting one's weakness and dependence. In perspective prayer reorients your view toward GOD. It is a spiritual union with GOD and seeks a heart sense of the presence of GOD. In the self-knowledge arena prayer requires and creates honesty and self-knowledge. Prayer requires and creates both restful trust and confident hope, and finally prayer requires and creates surrender of the whole life in love to GOD.) (Timothy Keller, Prayer, Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with GOD, 2014) Blessings to all of you, your families, and friends.

"For God and Country" Chaplain Steven Newman

Steven Newman
Department Chaplain





2015 STATE ORATORICAL WINNERS



March 14, 2015

Congratulations to all of our State Oratorical Contestants!

1st Place - \$2,500

Represents Florida at National Oratorical Contest

Geeta Minocha

Northern Area, Post 27

4th Place - \$500

Hannah Stephens

Western Area, Post 84

2nd Place - \$1,500

David Enriquez

Central Area, Post 138

5th Place - \$500

Sera Holland

Southern Area, Post 269

3rd Place - \$1,000

Natalie Morgan

Eastern Area, Post 53

6th Place - \$500

Mariah Alvarez

Southwestern Area, Post 74

Special Thank You To:

All the Posts, Districts,
and Area Chairmen that
helped support these
students with their
journey to the State
Contest.

Department
Oratorical Chairman,
Ronald Musselwhite,
for his dedication and
support for the
Oratorical Program.

The Judges,
Tabulators, and
Time Keepers for
your help and
support at the State
Contest.