



# THE LEGION LINK

*Full Speed Ahead for Veterans*



[www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org) | 407-295-2631 | [mail@floridalegion.org](mailto:mail@floridalegion.org)

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**JAY CONTI, SR.**  
**Department Commander**  
**[commander@floridalegion.org](mailto:commander@floridalegion.org)**  
**(407) 247-5232**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!** Fellow Legionnaires, I hope everyone had as wonderful Christmas and a great Start to the New 2015 Year as I did! I brought in the New Year with Fellow Legionnaires at Post 274 Fort Myers Beach, what a great time that was!

**THE SNOWBIRDS ARE BACK!** We are neck and neck with last year's pace in membership, but there is still major strides we need to take to make 100% in membership. Please ensure that your Membership Teams are planning an Open House in January and/or February and your Contact Teams are calling or even stopping by those Legionnaires homes who have yet to renew for 2015. We just may have a fellow COMRADE in distress and needs our help. Please contact your Membership Chairman Steve Shuga for any questions or help.

December was awesome as we Remembered **Pearl Harbor Day** at Naval Station Mayport on the USS Taylor FFG-50, I gave a speech at the Boynton Beach Veterans Park Ceremony for "**The Battle of The Bulge**" 70th Anniversary, visited many VA Hospitals including visiting patients at the VA Gainesville Hospital as I was dressed as Santa which made their day.

By now you may have held or getting ready to hold your Post Oratorical Contest; this and Boys State programs are our most outstanding programs along with JROTC & Shooting Sports are some of our outstanding programs for our future leaders of our Nation. I encourage you to get more Legionnaires involved not only with these programs but other Legion programs, always try to train yourself out of a job!

National will be down for a "**Veteran Benefit Center**" at the Bay Pines



**BRAVO ZULU**  
 "A Job Well Done"



## Ball/Homecoming Schedule

Southwestern Area Ball  
January 24, 2015  
Post 271

Southern Area Ball  
February 7, 2015  
Location TBD

Eastern Area Ball  
February 21, 2015  
Post 1

Central Area Ball  
February 28, 2015  
Location TBD

Northern Area Ball  
March 7, 2015  
Location TBD

Legion Family Homecoming  
April 25, 2015  
Post 103

## Patriotic Coloring Books Now Available!

Department has 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 Administrative 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**

VA Hospital from January 12-16, 2015. On January 12, 2015 at 7pm; there will be a Veterans Benefit **"Town Hall Meeting"** at Madeira Beach Post 273 for all Veterans to attend on issues of the VA. A Flyer is located on the Department website as well as emailed to the District & Area Commanders for distribution. I want to thank ALL of you for supporting my quest to help end Breast Cancer; your donations will help many in need of screenings as well as finding the cure!

## BRAVO-ZULU"

### "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY"

Jay Conti Sr.  
Department Commander  
**"FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR VETERANS"**



**BOB BREWSTER**  
**Department 3rd Vice Commander**  
**3rdViceCommander@legionmail.org**  
**(904) 635-4492**

First off, I want to wish everyone of you out there a Happy and Healthy New Year! As we all know in January, we have the Oratorical programs at Posts, Areas, and next month at Department. Also in January, we have the Department-wide blood drive on January 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.

From my experience as a Post Commander, membership, along with other programs, often get neglected in December due to all the activity surrounding the Christmas holidays. Starting the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, we should all be checking our membership cards to ensure we have the 2015 card in our pocket. A lot of Posts check their membership cards all through January every time you enter the building. That is a pain for some who have already paid their dues. For some of the others we have to light a fire. No card – no service.

Shooting sports and ROTC programs should be in place. We should look at all of the other programs our Posts are involved in. See if your appointed chairmen are doing their jobs. If not, you the Commander, should either get another person involved or you should get involved yourself, not to take over the program, but to see that the program is being implemented correctly.

January and February are really your last great chances holding membership drives, not just talking about it at your

Post, but get 2 or 3 members and a table out in the community where people will see it, have it stocked with applications for all 4 groups in your Post, and have things like why you should belong, TFA pamphlets, and other information available. Be prepared to brag about your Post, your District, Area, Department, and National. Make sure you brag about your V.S.O., who is a very important reason why young vets will join. All of us must do a much better job of letting veterans in our area know all the good that we do, and that their membership money is not wasted. We really only have one major thing to do, and that is VETERANS HELPING VETERANS!

I want to make this very clear. Whatever problems you are having, and all Posts have them, feel free to call on me at (904) 272-1619. I will return your call and then see what we should do to solve your problem. I am here to help you in any way that I can, and that is not a slogan. A lot of you have asked me for help in the past, and I have never turned anyone away who needed help.

**For God and Country,  
Bob Brewster  
Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander**



For God and Country

★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ PO BOX 1055 ★ INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46206-1055 ★  
(317) 630-1200 ★ FAX (317) 630-1223 ★

As you celebrate this holiday season, I ask you to pause and think about those who are unable to be with their spouses, children, parents and other family members at this time. Please remember all of our deployed military personnel who keep our nation safe every day, no matter what corner of the planet they are stationed.

And please join me in saying a special prayer for our comrades who remain MIA or held as POWs, as well as those I recently met in Vietnam who work every day to repatriate remains and bring closure to families and veterans alike.

Many others deserve American Legion gratitude and the blessings of the season for the work they performed so admirably in the past year. Let's give thanks to those who compassionately care for our nation's military personnel and veterans, no matter their needs, from DoD transition units, homeless shelters, VA medical centers and nursing homes.

Last but not least, I want to thank all the members of The American Legion Family for all they do every day to keep our communities, states and nation strong. Our veterans advocacy, legislative efforts, youth programs and patriotic values are the backbone of this country. That backbone would not exist without you.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year to you.

Mike Helm  
National Commander





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

Greetings and Happy New Year my fellow veterans, families, and friends. This year I know will be filled with exciting and fun adventures for everyone. I look forward to being on the road after the time off for the holidays. Its already shaping up to be a busy season. There will be

numerous Four Chaplain memorials conducted throughout the state this coming February to honor those four brave Chaplains who gave their own lives so others could live during World War II. We also have to remember that January 19th is Martin Luther King Jr. Day. He was a great individual who stood for so much for this nation of ours. To get you started for the upcoming year, here's an old Irish blessing: **May the road rise up to meet you, May the wind be always at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, And the rains fall soft upon your fields, And, until we meet again, May God hold you in the hollow of His hand. I hope and pray that all of you will be filled with the blessings of God and that your forthcoming days be that of love, peace, and happiness.**

**For "God and Country"**

Steven Newman  
 Department Chaplain



**SHELLI ROMEU**  
 Department Historian  
 historian@legionmail.org

For those who attended the Historian/Centennial Training session at the Fall Conference, I have certificates for you! So if you have not already contacted me and received one, please send me an email to let me know where to send this to you! I also have the materials from the session that I can send as well – even if you

were not able to attend and would like these, please send me a request and I will get these to you.

Is your Post coming up on a big Anniversary or Milestone for its years in service from Charter date? For instance, will you

**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.

be hitting your 50yr, 75yr, 90yr to 96yr Post anniversary in 2015? Are you planning a celebration: If not, why not? If so, send me an invite! I would be honored to attend this and take photos and do a write-up for you. These are only some of the type events we should share and put out on the Centennial sites, LegionTown, your Post's Webpage, Department's website/calendar, etc.

I wanted to point out that on the Centennial Site your Post's "Charter date" is the first granted Charter. Yes, this is your "Temporary Charter Date" – it means your Post was "chartered" on that date by National with a probationary period of at least 90 days, but not to exceed 1 year for the Post's Department to certify/review for the Permanent Charter. I realize most Posts would still like to use their "Permanent Charter" dates as this is the actual Charter that is "displayed in the Post Home", and since I have not found any mandate that states that is not an acceptable date to use, I would say "carry on" and use what your Post prefers.

Let's kick-start 2015 and get more of our Post information on the Centennial site. Let's make our Posts visible, because what we show as our history either past, present, or future is only a glimpse of what we can actually do as "Veterans for Veterans". An old Chinese Proverb says "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."

**Shelli Romeu, Department of Florida Historian**  
**historian@legionmail.org**



**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

**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 the links.

This month is a busy month, Oratorical Contests and Boys State candidates selections, School Medals, ROTC Certificates need to be order for schools in your area. However Spring is around the corner, Easter, School Graduations, have you look into the American Legion Scholarship Programs? Scholarship applications must be submitted no later than 1 March 2015.

**Important Dates in January**

- 1st - Happy New Year
- 18th- Post Oratorical Contests are completed
- 19th - Martin Luther King JR Day
- 30th - State Wide Blood Drive

**Important Dates in February**

- 12th - Lincoln's Birthday
- 14th - Valentine's Day
- 17th - President's Birthday
- 20th - Washington's Birthday

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

**ROY HAVEKOST**  
**Social Media Chairman**  
**904-287-6909**

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO MY LEGION FAMILY!

First, I would like to congratulate Jesse Figueroa, District 12 Adjutant, for his help with registering Posts in his district on *Facebook*™. District 12 increased their presence from 52.17% to 82.61% since my last report. As Commander Conti would say, BRAVO ZULU.

As of this writing, American Legion **Posts** in the Department of Florida now have a **55.02%** presence on *Facebook*™. This percentage increases to **56.75%** when the Department of Florida pages are included. Again, Posts that do not yet have a presence on *Facebook*™ are missing the opportunity to recruit the younger generation of veterans. A *Facebook*™ presence alerts your community of activities at your Post. It keeps the community informed of the work we do for veterans, veterans families and children and youth in the area.

We need to strive to get all Posts signed up and get our social media presence to 100%.

**“Full Speed Ahead for Veterans”.**

Here are the current **Post & District** percentages on *Facebook*™ :

\*Credit is applied to percentages for entity pages within each Post & District

Standing	District #	District Presence %	Post Presence %
1 <sup>st</sup> Place	5	100	136.84*
2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	12	50	82.61
3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	4	0	57.89
4 <sup>th</sup> Place	1	50	56.52*
5 <sup>th</sup> Place	17	0	46.67*
6 <sup>th</sup> Place	8	50	43.75*
7 <sup>th</sup> Place	11	0	42.86
8 <sup>th</sup> Place	3/9/16	25.0 / 25.0 / 25.0	40.0* / 40.0* / 40.0*
9 <sup>th</sup> Place	6	75	35.71*
10 <sup>th</sup> Place	2	0	33.33*
11 <sup>th</sup> Place	13	25	31.58*
12 <sup>th</sup> Place	14	25	25.0*
13 <sup>th</sup> Place	7	0	25
14 <sup>th</sup> Place	15	25	5.88*

Now that the Holidays are behind us, let’s make an effort to reach the Department Commanders goal of a 100% Facebook presence. We can do this. Let’s be the FIRST Department in the American Legion to reach this goal.

For answers to any questions, my home office number is 904-287-6909. Leave a message, I will get back to you.

If you are already on Facebook and have not received a confirming registration graphic/logo, email your page link to me for review and update.

Roy Havekost, Social Media Chairman

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

### **Blood Donor Committee**

## **The American Legion Department of Florida Statewide Blood Drive, January 30 & 31**

Make an appointment, donate Blood, and help us make this an outstanding achievement for the veterans in the State of Florida. We have asked that our donations be used at our VA Hospitals but we all know of veterans in our public/private hospitals that need help also. On the Department Website is a link to our webpage where you will find all the locations for OneBlood, LifeSouth and The Blood Alliance, our three Blood Center partners. When you donate please make certain you sign-in on the special American Legion Blood Drive form so we can insure credit gets provided to the correct Post/Unit/Squadron for your year-end reports. We also have Bloodmobile sites at some Posts. They are, or will be reflected on the webpage as they are confirmed. I plan to have all the sites defined by the 8<sup>th</sup> of January. **Every Post/Unit/Squadron has been supplied with information on the Blood Drive. Please distribute this information in your Posts and newsletters so everyone can become involved.** I want to thank everyone who has helped make this Blood Drive become a reality, the District Blood Donor Chairman, the Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion representatives, and the Department Officers and Staff. **Now we come to our Legionnaires, Auxiliary members and Sons of the American Legion members with one request, please donate blood on January 30 and 31 to save a life.**

*Together we can do great things.*

John Dollinger  
 Department Blood Donor Chairman

Jesse Figuero  
 Department Assistant Blood Donor Chair

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

The new Congress will continue on January 6, 2015. Now is the time to ask your member of Congress to co-sponsor a new Flag Amendment Bill and maybe this will be the year. Letters were sent to all our members regarding this.

Congress finally wrapped up its pending work for the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress on Tuesday, December 16. This work included funding the government for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2015 On December 13, and the U.S. Senate

### **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 1st.



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





voted 56-40 to approve H.R. 83, the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Omnibus funding measure. The bill includes funding for key military infrastructure projects to support our troops and their families at home and abroad. It also includes increased funding to meet our obligations to our nation's veterans-including helping to increase the efficiency and interoperability of the combined Department of Defense (DOD)/ Veteran Affairs (VA) medical records system, and to reduce the claims backlog at the VA. The measure was signed by the President later the same evening.

The discretionary total for the Military Construction/VA portion of the Omnibus is \$71.8 billion- \$1.5 billion below the enacted FY 2014 level- reflecting a decline in military construction, while funding for VA programs and services is increased. The bill also includes \$221 million in Overseas Contingency Operations funds for military construction.

- **VA Mandatory Funding** – The agreement fulfills mandatory funding requirements such as: veteran disability compensation programs for 4.6 million veterans and their survivors; post 9-1-1 GI bill education benefits for more than 851,000 veterans; and vocational rehabilitation and employment training for more than 149,000 veterans.
- **Oversight** – The legislation includes provisions to increase oversight of taxpayer dollars at the VA, including requiring the agency to report on construction expenditures and savings, forbidding changes in the scope of construction projects, and restricting the agency from taking certain spending actions without notifying Congress.

To help address issues related to the “wait list” scandal at the VA, funding for the VA Office of Inspector General is increased by \$5 million over the FY 2014 level to provide the resources necessary to continue the office the Office's audits of hospital appointment scheduling and lapses in patient care. The legislation also includes language directing the VA Office of the Medical Inspector to report on problems or deficiencies in the implementation of its recommendations, and on any violations of the law by VA employees.

- **Advance Appropriations for Veterans Medical Programs** – The agreement contains \$58.7 billion in advance FY 2016 funding for the VA – the same level provided in the House budget resolution. This funding will provide for medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities, and ensure that our veterans have continued, full access to their medical care.

Stanley Gold  
National Legislative Chairman



## 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 1055

Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055



**NANCY L. THOMAS**

**Department Post Development and Revitalization Chairman**

**PostDevelopment@legionmail.org**

**(863) 618-6738**

It is my sincere hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday. Hope you all got what you wished for at Christmas. My wish was for peace, health, and happiness.

As Legionnaires, we should all know that our positions, elected or appointed are there for the good of the American Legion. When you have a position, I would recommend that you research the Constitution and By-Laws, the manuals that are available and learn what you are suppose to do

in that position. Please don't be afraid to ask questions, don't be afraid to ask for manuals, guides, or other documents, and please don't be afraid to go on line to [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org) and download those items, please don't be afraid to learn.

The Department of Florida offers training at the Convention and Fall Conference that will help you allot in your positions. Please attend those training sessions.

As a Ordained Clergy, I enjoyed taking the Chaplains training, and although I am not a Post Chaplain, I thought the training was excellent. Although I am not a Post Judge Advocate, I also enjoyed the training at Fall Conference, and although I am not a Post Finance Officer, I really learned allot at the 990 Rules training. These sessions will teach you, and assist you in doing your job better.

Should you have a individual in your Post who has taken the time to be trained and has had the opportunity to learn and knows the American Legion and its programs, please use that knowledge to your advantage, ask questions of that person. When that individual shakes their heads "no", please ask them why, ask them if there is a policy, or if there is a State or Federal Law that makes them shake their heads "no". And, if you are one of those individuals with the knowledge, please do not be afraid to advise your Post where they can find the information themselves. What By-Law, what SOP, what State Law, etc. Please respect those who have the knowledge, use that knowledge to your advantage.

Please do not forget that the 2014 year has ended, 2015 dues should already be paid, get out there and talk to your members, call them, and/or go visit with them, but, make sure they know that their 2014 membership expired on December 31, 2014.

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 863-978-7720. Please leave me a message if I am unable to answer the phone right away.

Nancy Thomas  
Dept. of Florida Post Development/Revitalization Chairperson



### ***Rise-n-Shine with Membership!***

***Happy New Year as we Rise-n-Shine with Membership!*** I hope every one of us can look upon our American Legion Membership Card and see that bold **2015** centered and near the top. If not, get to your American Legion Post quickly so you can be removed from being delinquent. Your membership is more important than what it may cost you outright. We need every member current and our Posts need us to continue the good work in our communities as we move forward this year.

***January 7<sup>th</sup>*** is the **85% / 90 %** membership goal. This is the month when membership counts more than ever. The goals are posted and our effort depends on our members to renew or reinstate.

This is a great opportunity to work your area rosters drawn from [MyLegion.org](http://MyLegion.org) by calling those veterans and encourage them to join The American Legion. You will be surprised just by telling them a few pointers about The American Legion. Express what your Post does for the Community, the activities that the Post is engaged in, and why its important for them to join us. Just ASK is all it takes.

## 85% Membership Target Report

(as of December 23, 2014)

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rcvd	% of Goal
6	T. Biddle	11,734	9,670	82.41
4	C. Ferguson	3,924	3,171	80.81
12	R. Saxby	8,938	7,203	80.59
13	A. Burkett	9,372	7,535	80.40
17	M. Wolohan	4,113	3,282	79.80
7	I. Anderson	3,848	3,034	78.85
8	D. Deierlein	8,266	6,495	78.58
16	R. McNabb	12,099	9,444	78.06
9	J. Tewes	4,111	3,163	76.94
15	J. Romeu	5,509	4,193	76.11
2	W. Jackson	1,416	1,076	75.99
5	T. Gora	8,127	6,138	75.53
11	A. Bruce	4,011	2,984	74.39
3	H. Perry	1,797	1,327	73.84
1	L. Carpenter	6,417	4,635	72.23
14	G. Decker	3,139	2,226	70.91
Eastern	A. Diaz	20,672	16,873	81.62
South- western	J. Dollinger	17,638	14,030	79.54
Central	E. Butts	21,456	16,671	77.70
Northern	J. Brandt	17,961	13,918	77.49
Southern	W. Johnson	11,261	8,373	74.35
Western	V. Joyce	7,833	5,711	72.91

Congrats to those that achieved the various posted goals over the past 6 months. Let's continue to better ourselves with our membership growth and to lend a hand with those posts nearby that might need an extra boost to get them over the hurdle. It's time for teamwork to kick into high gear. We can do it as we have shown our "Can Do Attitude" over the past several years.

Review the **Membership Incentives and Awards Manual**. It provides you a boat load of ideas, suggestions, and goals that the Post Membership can take advantage of.

We have a critical path to migrate through over the next three months and it will require every one of us to achieve success. Let's buckle down and keep our members, gain new members, reinstate members who we can reflect our need for them to return, and become stronger than we began.

If you need assistance, use your Post, District Membership Chairman. Contact your District and Area Commanders to provide additional resources if necessary to achieve your goal. Your Department has an assortment of products that can enhance your overall effectiveness and a Membership Chairman that supplements a Vice Squad to help us all become successful.

Steve Shuga  
Department Membership Chairman

**JOHN DOLLINGER**  
POW/MIA Chairman  
[SouthwesternArea@legionmail.org](mailto:SouthwesternArea@legionmail.org)

### POW/MIA January 2015

The following were identified recently:

- **Army Cpl. Donald D. Skeens**, 19, of Denver, Ky., will be buried Nov. 30, in Paintsville, Ky. On Sept. 3, 1950, Skeens and elements of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, were overrun by enemy forces near Haman, South Korea.
- **1st Lt. Raymond O. Ball**, U.S. Marine Corps, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, was lost Nov. 27, 1950, in North

Korea. He was accounted for Nov. 13, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

- **Pfc. Paul L. Tingle**, U.S. Army, Company I, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, was lost Nov. 26, 1950, in North Korea. He was accounted for Nov. 12, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors.

**Reorganization** of the POW/MIA functions is to begin January 15<sup>th</sup> but announcements on the changes have not been forthcoming.

John Dollinger  
Department POW/MIA Chairman

**A Message from The American Legion, Department of Florida Adjutant in Support of PROJECT: VetRelief.**

PROJECT: VetRelief is the future of our organization and has the ability to assist our service members and their families in a whole new way.

We know that our service men and women confront major issues on a daily basis - unemployment, homelessness, poverty, difficulties accessing benefits, and feelings of isolation, to name a few. PROJECT: VetRelief confronts these problems by addressing a service member's need in a time of crisis, working to secure benefits to get them back on track, and having a support system, all serving to lessen the burden carried by our service men and women and deter these major issues from affecting their lives.

Through PROJECT: VetRelief we offer a hand up, not a hand out, to strengthen our service members with dignity.

Join us as we "Fight the Good Fight."



Michael McDaniel  
American Legion, Department of Florida  
Department Adjutant



**THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA  
SCHOOL AWARDS**

Remember, ROTC Awards also are part of this program, 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.

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](mailto:amerlegp118_oratorical@yahoo.com)

P.S. – Sign up for the PROJECT: VetRelief Newsletter "The Bulletin" and stay up to date on the progress of this very important initiative. [www.ProjectVetRelief.org](http://www.ProjectVetRelief.org)



**JESSE FIGUERO**  
**12th District Adjutant**  
**adjutant@fal12thdistrict.org**

The true meaning of Christmas is not just about Santa and Mrs. Claus with the elves and reindeer from

the North Pole, it's about the season of Advent as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Also, Christmas

is a time to spend with our families, friends and our veterans. I dedicate this time of year to our brothers

and sisters-in-arms who are still on the frontlines and are unable to spend Christmas with their families

and friends on the home front. Keep Christ in Christmas!

Happy Holidays! For God and Country.  
 Jesse Figueroa 12th District Adjutant



### **SOUTHWESTERN AREA**

**Southwestern Area Ball is January 24 at Post 103 in Punta Gorda. Cocktails begin at 5pm.**

**The Great Eight - 8<sup>th</sup> District** We missed out 75% goal so we need to play catch up. As of the 12/18 report we need 579 renewals, new members or paying transfers to get to our 83% goal. That is our goal, due in Department by January 7<sup>th</sup>. Let's show everyone what the "Great Eight" can do. Also, I would like to welcome our newest Post, Michael Campbell Post 370 The American Legion located in the "Newtown" section of downtown Sarasota. ***Douglas Deierlein , 8<sup>th</sup> District Commander***

**13<sup>th</sup> District** Well it's a new year I think that the last one was good but I know this will be better. Now is the time to push for membership. Members, Members, Members look at every one's cards let's get our 100% by March and then take it easy. If you need me I will be there to help you. Post Visitation have started I will be coming by to see you I will give you a heads up on date and time. The Southwestern Area Ball is 24 January at Post 103 let have a good showing. 13th District meeting is 25 January at 110 see you there. ***Andy Burkett, 13<sup>th</sup> District Commander***

**Southwestern Area: Membership, Membership, Membership**, the lifeblood of your Post, our organization and it requires everyone's attention. All those members that has been telling you, "my dues isn't due until the end of December", well it is now due. Please get all the dues processed and to Department to meet our January 7 goal. Need help?? Each District has a District Commander and 2 Vice Commanders who are there to provide assistance. Call your District Commander to get help.

**Programs, Programs, Programs**, is that critical element of The American Legion that we must focus on now. Boys State Chairman should start identifying potential candidates and working with your High Schools. Oratorical Chairman should be well underway. Post level contests must be done by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in January with the District contests by the end of January or first week of February. Area Contest is February 14 and I will choose a central location when we know where the 2 District Champions are from. Thank you for your continued support of the Southwestern Area.

***John Dollinger, Southwestern Area Commander***

**JERRY BRANDT**  
**Department of Florida**  
**Northern Area Commander**

Fellow Legionnaires,

I would like to let everyone know that the Northern Area Homecoming will be on March 7th, at American Legion Post 129, in Jacksonville Beach Fl.

Upcoming Events:

January 7th, Post Membership Goal is 90% for the BZ Award

January 11th, 5th District Meeting at Post 250

January 18th, Post Oratorical Contests must be completed

January 18th, 17th District Picnic at Post 6

January 24th, 5th District Oratorical Contest

January 24th, 4th District Oratorical Contest

Team; Congratulations to the following for achieving the 85% Goal

**3rd District**

Post 83, MacClenny 115.789%

Post 234, Monticello 104.348%

Post 68, Madison 96.774%

Post 96, Perry, 85%

**4th District**

Post 210, Ocala, 95.238%

Post 230, Hawthorne 94.872%

Post 58, Dunnellon 88.779%

**5th District**

Post 174, Fernandina Beach 91.667%

Post 373, Orange Park 90.286

Post 194, St Augustine 87.671%

**17th District**

Post 255, Deltona 100%

Post 293, Interlachen 90.566

Post 259, Debary/Orange City 88.496%

District Commanders should now be visiting your Posts. Commanders, please open up and let them know if there is any problems within your Posts that you need assistance with. Too often, as commanders, we feel we can handle any problem. However, we often find out, we can. The District Commanders are there to assist, if they do not have the answer, they will reach out to someone who does. Commanders, you do not need to feel alone, we are there to help.

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

Jerry Brandt  
 Department of Florida Northern Area Commander

**WILLIAM RICK JOHNSON**  
**Southern Area/Public Relations**

Well I hope that everyone had a great holiday and Santa brought everything that you wanted. Well it is time to really start working a little bit harder on the membership. Let's get letters put out to those who have not renewed. It is also time to get the oratorical contest done at Post and District levels. Congrats to all Post that exceeded their goals and achieved 100%. Thank you for the hard work. In February there will be a revitalization in the 14<sup>th</sup> District Feb 4-7 probably at Post 43. Also during the same dates, our National Vice Commander will be visiting the Southern Area and attending the

Southern Area Ball Feb 7<sup>th</sup> at Post 142. The flyer is on the Department website and I will be putting out a schedule of where we will be bringing him.

Thank you all of the District Officers for all you do as we are a volunteer organization and we are doing well. Let's make the next six months great ones and get out within your communities and let them know who we are. Let's not keep the American Legion the best kept secret and be proud of who we are. A family is only as strong as everyone within the family. Let the papers and news media know who we are as it will not cost you anything for them to report on us. Let's keep moving forward and if anyone needs help please contact us. Let's make the Department Commander proud of us and for him to have a great remaining year. Again thanks for all you do and I'm proud to be involved in such a great organization.

William Rick Johnson  
rickjtank@hotmail.com

**JOHN BURROUGHS**  
**Children & Youth Fund Chairman**  
**johnabd08@aol.com**

First off we are looking some one in the legion family to apply for a grant from the children and youth fund. At the present we have about one hundred thousand dollar in the fund. You can find the guides lines of how to apply for the grant on the legion web page. Just click on the florida c&y fund.

We haven't gave out any grant money in about four years. So don't you think it about time we found an non-profit tax-exempt organization that could use some help for our children's.. The cut of date for paper work to be at dept is may 1st.

If i can be of any help to any one please give a call. I can be reach at 904 641 7358 home 904 635 1481 cell or email at [johnabd08@aol.com](mailto:johnabd08@aol.com).

FOR GOD AND COUNRTY  
JOHN BURROUGHS  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH FUND CHAIRMAN

**WILLIAM C. HOPPNER III**  
**Department Sgt-At-Arms**  
**Sgt-At-Arms@legionmail.org**

Greetings to all,

I hope everyone's holidays were filled with happiness and cheer. I want to wish each and every one of you health, happiness, and success in the New Year.

The training at Fall Conference went well. There was a lot of positive feedback from participants that attended the class and would like to see the training their respective areas. Those wishing to have the training in their area, please contact me.

Now that the new year is upon us, I will concentrate on having training sessions for Sgt-At-Arms for all posts, districts and areas that request training. Also, I will be conducting training sessions on the color guard competition that will take place at the Department Convention in

June. I will contact one of the National Assistant Chief Judges to help with the training and to answer any questions that may arise. When a date is set for training, notices will be sent out.

I am looking forward to the upcoming months as I continue to serve you. God bless you, your families, our veterans and God Bless America!

For God and Country,

William C. Hoppner III  
Department Sgt-At-Arms



**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA IS HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE **BASEBALL PROGRAM HAS BEEN REINSTATED!**

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR 18 VOLUNTEERS FOR "STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE" TO KEEP THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM RUNNING!

ERIC OWENS	RANDALL WHITE
CHUCK STEWART	MITCH REINHARDT
JOHN VINCENT	RONALD LADUKE
JAMES BROWN	JOHN BUZEK
DAVE TUCKER	CHUCK WEINBERG
JESSE FIGUEROA	EDDIE DIAZ
DARYL BOWIE	SHERRI HAFNER
TED DUNCAN	TIFFANY SPENCE
ARNOLD THOMPSON	BENNY COMBS

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU GOES TO:**

**ERIC OWENS**

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT AND BECOMING THE NEW BASEBALL PROGRAM CHAIRMAN!

TO CONTACT:  
BASEBALL@LEGIONMAIL.ORG

**American Legion Support of Law Enforcement  
Thomas J. Gora. Department Law and Order Chairman**

On behalf of the American Legion, Department of Florida, our condolences go to the families of four officers recently killed in the line of duty, two from the state of Florida. Tarpon Springs Police Officer Charles Kondek was killed in the line of duty early in the morning of December 21, 2014. Officer Kondek's death came less than twenty-four hours after the brutal, senseless assassinations of two Police Officers in New York City. Leon County Sheriff's Deputy Chris Smith was also recently killed in the line of duty. He was ambushed responding to a fire on



November 22, 2014. Much the same as the two NYPD officers he was murdered by ambush for just wearing the uniform, for just being “the police”. Each loss of a law enforcement officer is heartbreaking and losing four heroes in less than a month is a cry for peace and a signal not only to all Floridians, to all Legionnaires, but to all across this nation to pray for our men and women in uniform who protect our communities each day.

Like many comrades in the American Legion I had the honor of serving the community in a law enforcement career after my military service. Every year the American Legion recognizes and honors local law enforcement officers along with fire fighters and EMTs from across the state with awards for their community service and acts of heroism that they display in protecting the community they are sworn to protect and serve. Legion Family, this year at our Posts and in our daily lives we need to honor our local police and fire fighters with more enthusiasm and appreciation than ever before. They now need our support more than ever before.

National Law Enforcement Week is May 11-17, 2015, and I encourage all Posts to honor your local law enforcement during that week. For people who put their lives on the line for us every day, a simple certificate and thank you is not too much to ask for. I have personally attended many ceremonies at the National Law Enforcement Monument in Washington, D.C., on which the names of over 22,000 law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty are engraved; two of whom I worked with who lost their lives in the line of duty October 22, 1983. This year the names of Florida fallen heroes Charles Kondek, and Chris Smith will be added to that monument.

To “serve and protect” is a call, it is a commitment that not all can make; a career in law enforcement is much more just a job. Those who served in the Armed Forces understand making such a commitment. Not many choose a commitment to serve others in a capacity that may cost them their own life. So please remember to honor our local law enforcement officers during the week of May 11-17, 2015; and every day when you get the chance.

This is a reminder that the applications for the Department of Florida Law Enforcement and Fire Fighter/EMT are due to me by May 7, 2015. At the 2015 Department Convention, I intend to introduce a Resolution for the Department of Florida to initiate a Youth Law Enforcement Cadet Program in the Department of Florida. This program is in place in 17 other Departments across The American Legion. What a tremendous opportunity we have to send 20-30 high schools boys and girls to a police academy every year where they will learn the value and some of the science of police work. We hope some kids may come away from this program striving to seek a career as a law enforcement officer, but I am certain ALL who attend this program will come away with a new sense of respect for what our law enforcement officers do. This is one way how we in The American Legion, Department of Florida can contribute, we can help our youth learn that there is nothing wrong in RESPECTING the authority of law enforcement. Respect of public servants and what they do for us, is truly Americanism.



HAPPY NEW YEAR

## December Roster Changes

The American Legion Dept. of FL			
Post #	Last Name	First Name	Member #
397			
			Additional Information Provided
			4501 Colonial Blvd. Fort Myers, FL 33966 Post Email: <a href="mailto:adjutant@alpost38-swfl.org">adjutant@alpost38-swfl.org</a>   Post website: <a href="http://alpost38-swfl.org">alpost38-swfl.org</a>   Comdr. Email: <a href="mailto:commander@alpost38-swfl.org">commander@alpost38-swfl.org</a>   Adj. Email: <a href="mailto:adjutant@alpost38-swfl.org">adjutant@alpost38-swfl.org</a>
38			Email Changes Post mailing address/meeting info 1850 Luneta Street, Navarre, FL 32566   Meeting: 3rd Monday 7pm 3636 Burton Circle Navarre, FL 32566-9752   Home: 850.736.3867   Work: 850.936.5888   Email: <a href="mailto:dbence3636@gmail.com">dbence3636@gmail.com</a>
382	Bence	Diane	204729560
12 Dist. Vice Comdr.	Ayala	Felix	
Eastern Area National Security Commission	Figueroa	Jesse	
12 Dist. Vice Comdr.	Rhodes	Roger	
72	Tidwell	Brenda	204334364
197	Matthews	Fred	202615798
197	Richardson	Clarence	100875065
398	Davis	Phillip	204855449
403	Helms	Tommy	204930446
8	Darrigan	Sheila	201006646
309			New Post 8 Adj. Post Info Changes 116 7th Jrv St. Winter Haven FL 33880   Home: (863) 299-6588   Work: (863) 293-7029   Fax: (863) 293-0062   Email: <a href="mailto:louisedarrigan@yahoo.com">louisedarrigan@yahoo.com</a> Fax: (941) 722-6979   Meetings: 1st Mon 6 pm   Website: <a href="http://www.legion309.org">www.legion309.org</a>   Service Officer: none
309	Clements	Frank	100980336
344	Boys State Chairman	Eck	
Children & Youth Fund Chairman	Burroughs	John	
4th Dist. Vice Comdr.	Deschamps	Kenneth	
79			Phone Number Change Meeting Time Phone: (352) 453-6585 Post meeting time: 7pm 1615 SW 6th Pl. Cape Coral FL 33991   Email: <a href="mailto:franfrnt53@aol.com">franfrnt53@aol.com</a>   Home: (239) 313-1060   Work: (239) 540-8128   Fax: (239) 471-2692 Post meeting time: 3rd Wed 7:00pm Heisler-Johnson Post 119 David Weiner: (772) 334.1621 6306 S. Macdill Ave. Apt. 1710 Tampa FL 33611   Home: (813) 835-9155   Work: (813) 839-6740   Fax: (813) 443-0957   Email: <a href="mailto:adjamleg139@tampabay.rr.com">adjamleg139@tampabay.rr.com</a> Fax: (813) 443-0957   Meeting Time: 3rd Tue 6:30pm   Service Officer: Carl Couture at 813-839-6740 Both addresses to reflect 1770 E. Venice Ave, Venice, FL 34292   Comdr. Home: (941) 485-4748 novelpost159.org Mailing: PO Box 3152 Winter Haven FL 33885   Meeting time: 3rd Thurs 7:00 pm   Service Officer: Benjamin Jones at 863-299-3346 jpposs@aol.com 2116 Edwin St. NE Winter Haven FL 33881   Home: (863) 293-9383   Email: <a href="mailto:jpposs@aol.com">jpposs@aol.com</a> 2207 SE 224th Ter. Hawthorne FL 32640   Home: (352) 481-9119   Email: <a href="mailto:capitlar@gmail.com">capitlar@gmail.com</a> 1028 Brielle Ave. Oviedo FL 32765   Email: <a href="mailto:jamesm@exit109.com">jamesm@exit109.com</a>   Home: (407) 542-3285
90	Thompson	Charlie	101742814
119			New Post 90 Comdr. Meeting Time Post name Post Adj. Phone
126			Post Adj. Phone
139	Garcia	Patricia	201877287
139			New Post 139 Adj Post Info Changes Comdr. & Adj. Address   Comdr. Phone Change Both addresses to reflect 1770 E. Venice Ave, Venice, FL 34292   Comdr. Home: (941) 485-4748 novelpost159.org Mailing: PO Box 3152 Winter Haven FL 33885   Meeting time: 3rd Thurs 7:00 pm   Service Officer: Benjamin Jones at 863-299-3346 jpposs@aol.com 2116 Edwin St. NE Winter Haven FL 33881   Home: (863) 293-9383   Email: <a href="mailto:jpposs@aol.com">jpposs@aol.com</a> 2207 SE 224th Ter. Hawthorne FL 32640   Home: (352) 481-9119   Email: <a href="mailto:capitlar@gmail.com">capitlar@gmail.com</a> 1028 Brielle Ave. Oviedo FL 32765   Email: <a href="mailto:jamesm@exit109.com">jamesm@exit109.com</a>   Home: (407) 542-3285
159			Post website change
201			Post Info Changes
201	Perkins	James	100963463
230	Edwards	Robert	204518816
243	Murray	James	202922779
			New Post 243 Adj.