



# THE LEGION LINK

*Full Speed Ahead for Veterans*

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

## **"BRAVO-ZULU"!** Where has this year Gone?

You don't know how Proud I am being your Department Commander this year! First off I want to thank all the Post, District, Area and Department officers for their outstanding **accomplishments and dedication** and support to The American Legion.

It sure made me feel real good to see firsthand the entire American Legion Family throughout the state work together for our Community, Children & Youth, Veterans and their Families. I thank all the Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary members for their continued support to our Veterans!

We trained almost 1,000 Legion Family members in our Area Training sessions. You held the first ever **"STATEWIDE"** American Legion Family Blood Drive! We had our very own **Department American Legion College** in over 20 years!

We are currently 3rd in the Nation in Membership! Even though National had raised our goal by 3,560 cards; we are ahead of where we ended up last year with less than 2,800 cards from Nationals embossed 100% goal! But in my Book we are over 100% in Membership, every Post did a wonderful job; I am proud of all of you.

You won the **"BIG 12"** Competition! 3 Districts (6th, 7th & 13th) Won **National RACE -TO-THE-TOP** honors and others were so very close as well! Our Florida **American Legion Baseball** Team from Post 88, Jacksonville won the South-eastern Regional and advanced to the World Series.

Our Florida **Oratorical contestant** won the National Contest and walked away with over \$20,000 in scholarship Grants. You won National Commander Helm's **"Eagle Award"**. Our *Sons of the American Legion* attained its 20th consecutive **"ALL-TIME"** High in Membership. Your **American Legion Riders** raised \$36,600 for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship FUND during our In-State Legacy Run!

We have raised over \$40,000 for **Breast Cancer Awareness** so far this year. I want to thank all of you who participated. If you have any donations please present it at the Department Convention and for your canisters please cash the \$\$ out and write a check made out to The American Legion Dept of Florida with **"Breast Cancer"** in the memo section.



**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



I can honestly say that The American Legion Department of Florida Blew Up Facebook! Many Legionnaires from other States are following us on Facebook for ideas to bring to their State! In being transparent, you knew where I was at all times, whether it was in the woods with our Homeless Veterans, attending a function at an American Legion Post or having a few wings at my *favorite family restaurant "Hooters"*, you knew where I was everyday during my 55 weeks as your Department Commander.

As you can see, I am very Proud to have been your Department Commander! I want to thank all of you for making it a wonderful year; not only me but my lovely wife Toni. Everyone made us feel welcome at your Post and the hospitality was **SECOND TO NONE!**

As I turn over my **"Pinky Ring"** to my good friend Department 1st Vice Commander Jim Ramos; I urge you to give him your full support as you did to me and keep going **"FULL SPEED AHEAD"** For our Veterans with **"LEGION-PRIDE"**.

**"WELL DONE"!**

**"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, Please continue to work on Membership and help your Post, District and Department. Be a 100% on membership we can do it. How? By doing the following: Retain, Re-instate, Recruit, and Renew of our members who have NOT renew up to now. Please continue if you have not made 100% keep going until June 30, 2015 which is the end of the Legion year. Also, we need your Post CPR (Consolidated Post Report) and Department Addendum. Your Post has work all year round with all the programs so please lets do it (CPR) and turn it in to Department as soon as possible. If you are going to the Department Convention and your Post has not sent in the CPR report you cannot vote so get it in NOW. Please do your part and do the right thing and turn it in (your CPR report).

Do you like awards? If so this is easy to do "Post Excellence Award". I know you do the work at your Post so if your Post is 100% just do it the paperwork to receive the award and send it to me at Department HQ, with the following information:

1. **Membership:** Must be at least one member greater than the previous year. At least one Post officer attends District meetings.
  2. **Youth Activities:** Must sponsor and actively participate in at least one primary youth program: Boys State, American Legion Baseball, Oratorical, Boy Scout or Junior Shooting Sports. Just one program you do very well.
  3. **Community:** Must accomplish a community service project with members of the Legion Family activity working in the community outside the post home. A wide range of potential projects exists, such as a project centered on one of the Children & Youth's emphasis areas to fulfilling a strictly local needs. 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

hometown, or simply helping a local veteran with necessary update to his or her home. Again, a monetary donation may be part of the project but may not constitute the entire project.

Your Post does all the hard work all year round so Post **Recognition** should be a top priority because you all deserve it. Each Post has something they do excellence so why NOT? Thank you and your Post for all the work they DO.

*Jim Ramos  
1st Vice Commander*



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

May..what a month..the beginning of the DCC's and Spring Meetings in Indianapolis. Started out in the Pan Handle, Ft. Walton Beach, to be exact, for the 1st District DCC. We all know what a wonderful scenic and boring drive that is, but, at least, the weather cooperated. It was beautiful, wish I could have stayed there for the weekend.

Had to boogie home to catch a flight to Indy on Sunday for Americanism Spring meeting. Extremely informative.

The rest of the month will be DCC's on the weekends other than Memorial Day. I was invited to be the guest speaker for the Memorial Day Ceremony in the City of North Port. All went well and was congratulated by the four City Commissioners on a great speech. Always an honor when one can bring a shining light on the American Legion.

*For God and Country  
Joseph Magee*



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

It is hard to believe that our "Legion" year is coming to an end shortly. A lot has been accomplished, but there is still much to do. If you do not know what the status of your Post's Centennial Site updates are for the American Legion's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, please contact me or find me at convention as I will have a roster with me. I hope to see many Historians (or even those interested in the Historian functions and/ or Centennial – all can attend!) at the Convention's Historian Training Session on Thursday, June 25th from 1-2pm. Bring your questions, suggestions, and comments, Remember what Helen Keller said: "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

**SHELLI ROMEU**  
Department Historian

## 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. Mike "Goat" Kirchoff, Jennifer Day, "Big Al" Diaz, The Core 26 ALR IN-State Legacy Run Riders, All attendees at the 2015 Legion Family Homecoming. Tom Kaiser, Gene Bruce.





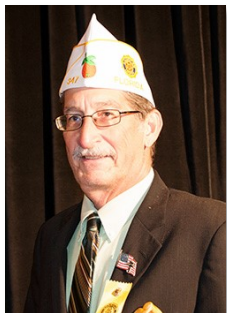
**JOHN DOLLINGER**  
 Department Blood Donor Chairman  
 BloodDonor@legionmail.org  
 (941) 661-8086 Blood Donor Committee



### Blood Donor Report - June 2015

This year we ran a Statewide American Legion that took in 465 units of blood. This isn't even part of the story, as I have traveled around the state, Legionnaires have been telling me about the increase in blood donations. One Post told me that this year they ran 4 blood drives and took in 66 units of blood, a 10% increase. Another took in 79 units which was a 21% increase over last year. I believe most of it can be attributed to communications and recognition that the Blood Donor is an important American Legion Program. This year was a beginning, and I would hope the future years will see the Statewide Blood Drive grow into a regular event supported by the Department of Florida. I would like to thank Commander Conti for his support, the District Blood Donor Chairman for their support, and the support of Erna Schwabe and her National Security team from the Florida American Legion Auxiliary, and the continued support of Detachment Commander Kirk Miller and our Sons of The American Legion. It was a true "FAMILY" effort. Finally, I would like to thank the local Post "Family" and their Blood Donor Chairmen whose "**boots on the ground**" efforts make this Blood Donor Program a success.

*John Dollinger – Blood Donor Chairman*



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

Hello Fellow Legionnaires;

Department convention is right around the corner. Fellow Sgt-at-Arms we need your help during our General Session both Friday and Saturday of the convention. The hours are Friday from 7:30 AM till approximately 1:00 PM and Saturday from 7:30 to 3:00 PM or the completion of Legion business. If you would like to participate please let me know by email or phone the days and times. I may be contacted by e-mail at [Sgt-At-Arms@legion.org](mailto:Sgt-At-Arms@legion.org), [gonepost1@aol.com](mailto:gonepost1@aol.com) or by telephone at 305-968-7979. There will be a meeting on Friday morning at 7:15 AM to go over duties and also to distribute Department Assistant Sgt-At-Arms Badges.

Each post, and district has received there paperwork for the "Eddie Humer Award". This award is for a post and district Sgt-at-Arms with the recommendation by the Post Commander for his/her contribution to the success of the post. The "Eddie Humer Award" will be presented at convention to the outstanding post and district Sgt-At-Arms. There also will be a runner up in both areas.

On Thursday June 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 there will be a Sgt-At-Arms class given from 1:00pm to 2:00pm in the Crystal CDE room. Also on Thursday there will be the color guard competition in the Crystal CDE room from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. This competition is open to all legionnaires. There will be three (3) overall awards given 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Information will be distributed in your post packages for department convention. I encourage all legion family members to attend and cheer on your competitor to victory.

I also want to thank Dorie Miller Memorial Post 331 color guard for volunteering to post and retrieve colors at department convention.

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

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





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

Summer is here and the school is out, children will out swimming, bike riding, playing baseball and softball. Let's ensure they do this safely, Get them involved with organized activities, Boys and Girl Scouts, Baseball and Softball Leagues, YMCA and other organizations are out there to assist. Let us have a safe summer.

School Medals, Jr ROTC and ROTC Certificates should be given out by now or within the next few weeks.

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

I will see everyone at the Convention.

### Important Dates in June

- June 6th, D-Day
- June 14 - Flag Day
- June 21 - Father's Day
- June 25 - June 27, Department of Florida Convention
- June 25 - Start of the Korean War

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

### Important Dates in July

- July 1 - Canada Day
- July 2 - I Forgot Day
- July 4
- July 14 - Bastille Day
- July 27 - End of the Korean War



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

Greetings my fellow legionnaires. Well it's that time of year again when we will be having our department convention this month. This year sure has gone by fast. I would like to thank everyone for the wonderful and rewarding year that i enjoyed as your department chaplain. I have met so many outstanding, caring, and thoughtful legionnaires, their families, an friends. Until I started traveling the state of Florida I didn't realize how big our state really is. Along with the great size of our state, we are truly blessed with our members of the legion, auxiliary, sons of the American legion, and legion rider's family. Each of you is a vital part of our total success. Seeing firsthand the hard work and dedication that many of you have exhibited is the reason for our total family and state's success that has been achieved. You have gone above and beyond in many arenas that we all can be proud of. From area training, membership, boys and girls state, oratorical to many other projects and programs throughout the year it has been a wonderful journey. As i close for now i would like you to remember a few things. As with god all things are possible. Mark 10:27 and be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or discouraged for the lord your god is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9. So with these sayings I wish you blessings and Godspeed in the upcoming year

Steven Newman  
Department Chaplain

**Legionnaires Insurance Trust**

**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.**



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

This month is when we all meet in Orlando for the Annual Department of Florida Convention and elect our Area and Department Officers for 2015 - 2016. If you are in attendance, please attend some of the training that is offered by the Department. Have a good time and enjoy being with our American Legion Family.

In the past, several request were made, that the Department of Florida continue to instruct the America Legion Extension Institute course, well, it was my honor to have been advised that it is going to be done. This course will be unlike the ones in the past, as it will be geared

around the on-line course that is offered by National. Mr. Tom Gora will be the main instructor and please support him in his effort. This course is extremely good.

Please don't forget that if your Post has not obtained your 100% goal, and you need assistance with this, please contact the Department and ask for help. There are several wonderful people who will come help you. Let's work hard next year to increase our membership!!!

It was so nice to have been the one who informed the Motor Vehicle Division in Lake Wales that the Department of Florida American Legion was in the process of getting a new license plate, they had to call Tallahassee to make sure it was true, and allowed me to pre-order our plates. With being married to a person who did not serve in the same branch that I did, it will be wonderful to have our plates. Let's support our Veterans and get the new license plates!

At this time, I would like to wish all of the new Officer's within your Post, District, Area's and Department the best for 2015-2016. Let's support these individuals and let's achieve our goals for membership.

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.

**JESSE FIGUEROA**  
**District Adjutant**  
**adjutant@fal12thdistrict.org**

12th District Report – Legion Link – June 2015

This year has already come and gone! Congratulations to the newly - elected Officers since adjournment of the 12th District Constitutional Conference on May 16th. They are Felix Ayala of Post 318 and Bruce Thurber of Post 117 as Vice Commanders and Wayne Smith - Post 163 as Finance Officer. The other newly - appointed Officers, even yours truly, will serve another year. I am very proud of the accomplishments that the 12th District has done this year. I also congratulate the incoming Post Officers of the 12th District as well. As the incoming officers of the 12th District are installed after the Convention we will continue to be the "Resource Team" and assist all Posts and Veterans with membership and all resources. Memorial Day Weekend is here. Safe travels if heading out of town to spend with family and dedicate our veterans who lost their lives serving our country from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. God bless America, our veterans and the American Legion Family. See you all at the Department Convention!

For God and Country,

*Jesse Figueroa*  
 12th District Adjutant & Asst. Dept. Blood Donor Chmn.

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

Fellow Legionnaires,

Team; Congratulations to the following for achieving the 100% Goal

3rd District (Need 95 renewals for 100%)

Post 59, Branford, 128.125%  
 Post 83, MacClenny, 115.789%  
 Post 322, Lake City, 109.524%  
 Post 234, Monticello, 104.348%  
 Post 107, Live Oak, 102.532%  
 Post 49, Monticello, 101.163%  
 Post 383, Old Town, 100.360%  
 Post 195, Madison, 100%

4th District (Need 158 renewals for 100%)

Post 237, Beverly Hills, 111.161%  
 Post 236, Williston, 109.402%  
 Post 232, Hawthorne, 106.667%  
 Post 210, Ocala, 104.762%  
 Post 16, Gainesville, 102.995%  
 Post 58, Dunnellon, 101.650%  
 Post 230, Hawthorne, 101.282%

5th District (Need 222 Renewals for 100%)

Post 401, Hilliard, 114.545%  
 Post 373, Orange Park, 108.286%  
 Post 102, Hastings, 105.882%  
 Post 233, Ponte Vedra Beach, 104.739%  
 Post 197, Jacksonville, 102.181%  
 Post 250, Middleburg, 102.181%  
 Post 54, Fernandina Beach, 101.718%  
 Post 129, Jacksonville Beach, 101.513%  
 Post 202, Keystone Heights, 100.719  
 Post 194, St. Augustine, 100.685%  
 Post 174, Fernandina Beach, 100%

17th District (67 renewals for 100%)

Post 255, Deltona, 112.727%  
 Post 270, Port Orange, 109.367%  
 Post 285, Edgewater, 104.762%  
 Post 120, Holly Hill, 102.611%  
 Post 45, Palatka, 101.105%  
 Post 204, Daytona Beach, 100%  
 Post 6, Deland, 100%  
 Post 380, Daytona Beach, 100%  
 Post 293, Interlachen, 100%

Commanders, for those 35 Posts (last month on 24) who reach the 100% goal, I expect Post Excellence Awards, you have already done the hard part. See your District Commanders and submit your applications.

Department Convention is coming up, this is a great time to have the up and coming members receive training.

Schools on Thursday include:

Service Officer School,  
 Legion Institute,  
 Food Handlers Calls  
 Historians Training  
 SGT @ Arms Training  
 Chaplain's Training

Please sign up for these classes, we need to have the best trained Legionnaires to take charge of our Posts. Please be one of them.

One last item, CPR's, CPR's, CPR's. Get the Year End Reports in. Department of Florida receives the Year End Reports, tallies them, and forward the information obtain from them to National American Legion Headquarters. National gathers all 54 Departments and they use this information when the National Commander goes to Congress. This is a BIG determination on how Congress, the President of the United States and the American People see the American Legion. And all the Legion is doing, is reporting what you do every day.

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

*Jerry Brandt*  
*Northern Area Commander*





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

## Rise-n-Shine with Membership!

As we wrap up the 2014-2015 Membership Year, Florida's Legionnaires worked collectively to claim a few national achievements and for those I salute you all for staying focused on meeting the membership goals at the Post, District and Area levels. It wasn't easy this year to reinstate, renew, and recruit but Florida was able to show the other 54 departments that it can still be done.

Most of the lingering awards that would have been passed along these past couple of months will be issued to those Posts as they pickup their new membership cards from the Department Membership Director Irene at Department Convention.

Bravo Zulu tickets have been steadily increasing throughout the year from meeting designated membership plan goals and pursuing new members. We have exceeded 88k and it's going to be an exciting Membership Blitz Drawing at the Department Convention. We wish you the best of luck!

**Which District Commander and Post Commander will sit in a lazy boy style recliner during the General Assembly meetings on Friday and Saturday? The highest membership percentage by May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 by a District Commander and a Post Commander will be awarded each a Lazy Boy style recliner at the Annual Convention.** It's going to be close and for those in pursuit, good luck.

A limited amount of BZ Pins are available on a first come, first serve basis. If you need pins, please seek out the Department Membership Chairman during the Convention.

Thank you all for doing your very best during the 2014-2015 Membership Challenge!

*Stephen Shuga*  
 Department Membership Chairman



District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rcvd	% of Goal
13	A. Burkett	9372	9622	102.67
6	T. Biddle	11734	11909	101.49
12	R. Saxby	8938	9061	101.38
7	I. Anderson	3848	3896	101.25
8	D. Deierlein	8266	7994	96.71
17	M. Wolohan	4102	4040	98.49
16	R. McNabb	12099	11823	97.72
5	T. Gora	8127	7918	97.43
4	C. Ferguson	3924	3771	96.10
9	J. Tewes	4111	3925	95.48
15	J. Romeu	5509	5299	96.19
2	W. Jackson	1416	1315	92.87
11	A. Bruce	4011	3759	93.72
3	H. Perry	1797	1724	95.94
1	L. Carpenter	6417	6014	93.72
14	G. Decker	3139	2917	92.93
Eastern	A. Diaz	20672	20970	101.44
South-western	J. Dollinger	17638	17616	99.88
Central	E. Butts	21456	21018	97.96
Northern	J. Brandt	17961	17453	97.23
Western	V. Joyce	7833	7329	93.57
Southern	W. Johnson	11261	10601	94.14





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

On June 26, time unknown, we will have our Inaugural Legislative training session. This will also be a good program for FALPA members to attend. Jeff Steele, Grass Roots coordinator from Washington Legislation office will conduct this important training to learn how the best way to help our veterans receive improved benefits. If you want more information about this meeting, call me at 786-423-2458.



God's blessings to all our veterans and their families this Memorial Day.  
*Stanley Gold*  
National Legislative Chairman

## **SIGN UP TODAY! for PROJECT: VetRelief Classes at Convention**

### **PROJECT: VETRELIEF ADVOCATE TRAINING**

During this class you will learn about the program and services of the organization, and learn best practices when facilitating casework.

Thursday, June 25th 9:00 – 10:00AM

OR

Friday, June 26th 3:30 – 4:30PM

### **FUNDRAISING CLASS**

Learn the Five Keys to Successful Fundraising. During this class, Legionnaires will be able to collaboratively plan a Fundraising Event for their Post or PROJECT: VetRelief.

Thursday, June 25th 10:15 – 11:15AM

OR

Friday, June 26th 4:45 – 5:45PM

**To sign up for classes contact [jcooper@floridalegion.org](mailto:jcooper@floridalegion.org)**



## Southwestern Area – June 2015

**8<sup>th</sup> District** - Well this is the last Legion Link for the year! The 8th District did not finish on top like we wanted to, but we still have time to get to 100% by the conference. Please work hard on Renewals so that those veterans keep active in the American Legion. I want to thank all the Post in the 8th District for supporting myself and the Southwestern Area, we are still the best Area in the State and I look for your support at Convention so that I may keep the Southwestern Area the Best Area next year! I want to Congratulate Andy Burkett and the 13th District for winning the Race to the Top this year. BZ to you all. I would also like to give a "HUGH" BZ to the Southwestern Area Commander John Dollinger for the Best Job ever as a Southwestern Area Commander. All past SW Area Commander always did a great job, but John has gone above and beyond that this year. All I had to do is call John at short notice and he would be there within hours. Thank you, John. He has raised the bar very high for me next year. I also ask all of you to support John as our Next 2nd Vice Commander for the State of Florida, he is truly the man for the Job! Well it has been a fun ride and I hope to see you all at convention. **Doug Deierlein – 8<sup>TH</sup> District Commander**

**13<sup>th</sup> District** - This is the last one for this year and all I can say is thank you, thank you, and thank you. District 13 is first in the state and national for membership, it's all because of what you, the Posts, have done. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done. Don't forget the convention is at the end of June, try to make it. Once more thank you and I hope we can do this next year. **Andy Burkett – 13<sup>th</sup> District Commander**

**Southwestern Area** – As we draw the year to a close, there are a lot of people to thank for their efforts; the **District Commanders** who put up with my constant push for membership, reports like this one and to support their Posts, which is where great things happen. Then you have those 34 **Post Commanders** in the Southwestern Area that received my regular mailings reminding them of upcoming events, membership, membership and more membership along with a chart that showed where they stood on membership that week. They were the filter to their membership. Then you have the **Post Officers** where the leadership begins, Thank you for all you have done to support your Post, District and Area. Now you get to the most important element in our American Legion organization, our individual **Post Member**. We are all Post Members, some of us may wear different colored covers, temporarily, or have different titles, temporarily, but we all belong to a Post somewhere. The individual Post Member is who motivates us to do the great things we do for veterans, for our communities, for our children and for each other. Please remember the 4 Pillars our organization is founded on, that focus keeps us strong. I want to thank everyone from the Department Officers, (who I bothered regularly), to the Headquarters Staff (who I also bothered very regularly), to the individual Post Member for all their efforts on behalf of The American Legion and the Southwestern Area. It has been a great year. Thank you all!

**John Dollinger Southwestern Area Commander**

### POW/MIA Report June 2015

Here are the current POW/MIA totals:

	Unaccounted for From Past Conflicts					
	WWII	Korean War	Vietnam War	Cold War	Iraq & Other Conflicts	Total
<b>Total MIA</b>	* 73,515	* 7,852	1,627	126	6	83,126

I am sorry there is no report on recently accounted for, because the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has not posted any since my last report. This has been a busy year for the POW/MIA program. We started the year with acronyms we understood "Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office" (DPMO) or "Joint Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Command" (JPAC), we ended the year with one, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). The consolidation is a result of a report done by the General Accountability Office (GAO) and released in August 2014 that demanded change and Congress was quick to require that change from the Department of Defense (DoD). The new Agency DPAA took life in January 2015 and has been organizing and is beginning to get back to the task of identification and research. I believe it will be January 2016 before any meaningful results are seen from this consolidation. Thank you for your support of the POW/MIA function this past year.

*John Dollinger, 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 105**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055**

### 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.