



# THE LEGION LINK

*Full Speed Ahead for Veterans*

www.floridalegion.org | 407.295.2631 | mail@floridalegion.org



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**JAY CONTI, SR.**

Department Commander  
commander@floridalegion.org  
(407) 247-5232

## "It Ain't Over Til' its Over"!

**As Yogi Berra would Say!** As of May 1st we still have 58 days to go, you elected me to do the job as your Department Commander and I will be **'FULL SPEED AHEAD'** each and Every day, I will NOT Give UP! I expect the same back from all of you as well, 100% in Membership by the Department Convention!

As I write this Commanders Corner we are getting ready for The Legion Family Homecoming, I would like to thank in advance everyone for attending and making the 2015 Family Homecoming a Complete Sellout. Everyone of you this year has made being the State Commander so Rewarding, I thank each and every one of you! Thank You!

Well, CPR Reports were due to Department on May 1, 2015. Even though the deadline has passed, you still need to get them in ASAP. Thank you in advance for your corporation. 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. **Let's show National we are ON-TIME and Number ONE!**

I would like to thank all the Posts who had made National Commander Mike Helm visit a big success. As I was driving him to the airport he stated that he has had the BEST Visit in Florida so far this year. Thanks to the entire Legion Family that made this happen!

I would like to Congratulate the following Districts for winning **'RACE-TO-THE-TOP':**

- Zone 3 - 7th District CDR Andy Anderson 2nd Place**
- Zone 5 - 13th District CDR Andy Burkett 1st Place**
- Zone 5 - 6th District CDR TC Biddle**

The **12th District** fell short just 21 cards short by the deadline or they would of also won **RACE-TO-THE-TOP! Everyone done a Great Job, Congrats to ALL!**

Let's finish the job with that final Push for Membership as Department is currently 95.65% of our Goal with just 4,922 Cards away from reaching 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**



**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



**Plaque!** If your Post needs any Help, please contact your **Membership Chairman "Little Stevie" Shuga.**

What an Awesome National Oratorical Contest we had last month! Our Contestant Geeta Minocha sponsored by Ocala Post 27 won the National Contest, also congratulations to 3rd Vice Commander Bob Brewster (Programs Chairman) and Dept Oratorical Chairman Ron Musslewhite. I was watching and cheering her on through Legion.TV! Congratulations Ms. Geeta and to the 4th District and Post 27 for having a great winner!

The Past month I attended an VAVS Awards Ceremony for the BayPines VA Hospital where they awarded our VAVS Volunteers' for achieving many hours of their own time. We need to keep doing that with our Volunteers' by keep telling them how much they mean to us and how much we appreciate them! Take the time out at your Post this year before the Department Convention and hold your own Post Awards Ceremony. I also urge each District Commander to do the same at your DCC's which are starting the first weekend of May.

I also attended All-Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg for a tour and present a donation from our Department. The 2nd Annual Bob Proctor Fundraiser and Relay for Life fundraiser in Lehigh Acres. One of the Best things that we had done this month was Escorting the Vietnam Wall (Over 1,200 bikes with 300 ALR members) to The All-Veteran Reunion in Melbourne. Your 1st Vice Commander Jim Ramos and I had the pleasure in helping to assemble the Wall and placing one of the panels in place for the wall to be viewed. Something that I know I will **NEVER FORGET!**

**"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 you're Posts, District and the Department be a 100% on membership we can do it. How by doing the following: Retain, Reinstate, Recruit, and Renew of our members who have NOT renew up to now. Please if you need assistance just let me know.

Also, we need to do the CPR (Consolidated Post Report) and Department Addendum; we do the work all year round so please let's do and turn it in to Department by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Now if you are reading this and have not done the CPR please do it now and turn it in.

One more thing the Post Excellence Award also do it and send it to me at Department HQ, with the following information:

**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 Scout or Junior Shooting Sports.

**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.

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
5. Start NOW! Be Creative, Be Different, and Be Flexible

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*

# 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.



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

Wow!! Has this month flown by. Busy, busy, busy. Started out with dinner at Post 323, Le High Acres, with the National Commander in attendance. It was an honor meeting him even if it was at the cost of getting my nails painted Pink. Then, there was the Eastern Area Ball ( Sock Hop) in Titusville, again Pink came into it. This time it was wearing a Pink Tutu. What a

sight. While in the area, I also visited Post 40 in Melbourne and Post 1, Titusville for breakfast.

Attended the 6th District picnic at Post 183 in Fern Park. Had a wonderful time. Last, but not least, finished off the month attending the Commander's Homecoming at Punta Gorda, Post 103. Again, had a good time, food was excellent, and served in timely manner.

As the Dept. Training Officer, while attending these various functions and talking to many different individuals all with different ideas, it reinforces how important it is to keep the lines of communication open. Remember we can all learn from each other.

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







**DENNIS R. BOLAND**  
**National Executive Committeeman**  
**NEC@Legionmail.org**  
**239-963-8383**

#### WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

In 2011, Congress passed into law the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, which included the Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) for employers who hire qualified veterans. This tax credit had been renewed through 2014, but veterans hired since January 1, 2015 are not eligible, and there is no guarantee that it will be renewed in the future.

We believe that this is an important program for encouraging employers to hire veterans, thereby increasing veteran employment opportunities, and working to decrease overall veteran unemployment.

Therefore, The American Legion supports making the tax credit permanent to encourage veteran employment, as well as improvements such as the simplification of the application process, and the inclusion of a reporting mechanism, in order to produce data showing the effectiveness of the credit. Simplification of the application process would, The American Legion believes, encourage more widespread usage of the program, resulting in more veterans being hired, and reducing veteran unemployment. A reporting mechanism resulting in data would help to better assess the effectiveness of the program, and would provide lawmakers and veterans organizations a better sense of whether the tax credit is valuable, and whether it should continue to be offered in the future.

Furthermore, we believe that Congress should continue to look for ways to encourage businesses and non-profit organizations to create on-the-job training opportunities for veterans. One way this can be done is by providing subsidies to businesses and organizations that provide these opportunities to veterans, thereby offsetting some of the cost of training.

*Dennis R. Boland*  
*National Executive Committeeman*

#### Department Commander Amusement Game Statute Update Letter

Dear Fellow Legion Family Members,

The House and Senate have begun moving two bills that update the Amusement Game Statute that is both out of date and made even more confusing by legislation created after the Allied Veterans arrests and Media. These bills include language to allow VSOs to operate these machines, which they cannot currently legally do.

The American Legion, Department of Florida is currently addressing concerns regarding this bill through our state lobbyist. To ensure this process goes smoothly and avoid conflicting information, **please refrain from writing letters of support or testifying on behalf of gaming companies.** These actions could interfere in the lobbying efforts of the Department and ultimately cause the bill to fail.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this regard. Please contact the Department Adjutant at 407-295-2631 if you should have any questions or concerns.

For God & Country,

Jay Conti Sr.  
 Department Commander



## Blood Donor Committee May 2015

Here are the results of the Statewide Blood Donor Drive

<u>Post</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Legion</u>	<u>Auxilia- ry</u>	<u>SAL</u>		<u>Post</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Legion</u>	<u>Auxilia- ry</u>	<u>SAL</u>
1	3	3				186	5	4	1	
4	10	10				193	3	1	2	
6	4	2	2			193	6	2	3	1
13	8	3	2	3		193	2	1	1	
19	3	3				219	7	3	2	2
34	2	1	1			235	9	9		
40	6	4	2			240	9	9		
54	26	11	10	5		250	8	5	2	1
55	4	2	2			252	6	4	1	1
69	5	3	2			255	3	1	1	1
75	9	6	2	1		259	4	2	1	1
82	1	1	0			273	11	10	1	
82	3	1	1	1		277	6	5	1	
88	10	4	3	3		283	20	11	5	4
90	21	11	6	4		303	9	5	2	2
98	7	5	2			312	4	2	1	1
103	7	4	2	1		316	10	6	3	1
110	12	5	4	3		318	35	21	9	5
113	8	8				323	13	5	8	
120	4	2	2			336	17	6	7	4
135	9	7	2			340	3	1	2	
136	3	2	1			344	1	1		
137	8	8	0	0		347	37	17	11	9
138	4	2	1	1		356	3	3		
148	3	2	1			359	1			1
155	14	7	5	2		371	5	3	2	
159	11	6	3	2		401	7	6		1
163	5	4		1		<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>62</b>
164	11	7	4							

I have issues with the report because some of the numbers don't match information reported by individual Posts. This report is late because some of the hospitals were very slow reporting numbers. If we do this again we will need to tighten the reporting methods. Over 1000 people came out to give blood but less than 1/2 were eligible. I would like to thank everyone for their efforts to assist our veterans. **John Dollinger Blood Donor Chairman**



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

Hello and greetings my fellow legionnaires. It surely has been a busy time these past few months. So sometimes it's a good idea once in a while to slow things down in our daily lives a bit if possible. Every once in a while we need to take a break from the hustle and bustle and just try to take an easy if we can. Taking a few minutes out of our busy schedule and just finding a few moments to chat with GOD can go a long way. He always has time for us no matter what the situation or time of day it is. Believe it or not GOD loves to hear from us and even though he knows how we are doing he wants us to tell it to Him personally. As I have emphasized previously utilizing prayer is having a conversation with GOD. Prayer is asking GOD for your wants, needs and forgiveness. In detail a prayer for forgiveness helps you release pain and suffering. It is a step in the process of forgiving. This kind of prayer can help you to bring you back to an improved relationship with yourself and with someone else. A prayer for forgiveness can help you release your and another's' burden of the heart. Forgiveness is not about making a right out of a wrong or waiting for the person who caused you pain and turmoil to show any remorse for their actions. It's about going in the right direction to alleviate and let go of the suffering that you are experiencing. It can also be in the other direction, helping you to heal from causing someone pain. You have to understand that forgiveness is for you, your own healing, health, and wellbeing. Forgiveness is a gradual process. Sometimes it needs to be done with a helpful, caring friend, or spiritual advisor. Whenever you pray for forgiveness it helps to release and re-connect you or the person you're praying for. It also helps you return to wholeness. A prayer for forgiveness begins with compassion. It is this love that helps you understand what's possible. Everyone can use a little forgiveness and if you pray on it your whole inner feel will be better. So keep this in mind the next time you pray and ask for forgiveness you will feel much better about yourself and the situation you might be in. With this I leave you with GOD's blessing and love. Take care and have a wonderful May.

ously utilizing prayer is having a conversation with GOD. Prayer is asking GOD for your wants, needs and forgiveness. In detail a prayer for forgiveness helps you release pain and suffering. It is a step in the process of forgiving. This kind of prayer can help you to bring you back to an improved relationship with yourself and with someone else. A prayer for forgiveness can help you release your and another's' burden of the heart. Forgiveness is not about making a right out of a wrong or waiting for the person who caused you pain and turmoil to show any remorse for their actions. It's about going in the right direction to alleviate and let go of the suffering that you are experiencing. It can also be in the other direction, helping you to heal from causing someone pain. You have to understand that forgiveness is for you, your own healing, health, and wellbeing. Forgiveness is a gradual process. Sometimes it needs to be done with a helpful, caring friend, or spiritual advisor. Whenever you pray for forgiveness it helps to release and re-connect you or the person you're praying for. It also helps you return to wholeness. A prayer for forgiveness begins with compassion. It is this love that helps you understand what's possible. Everyone can use a little forgiveness and if you pray on it your whole inner feel will be better. So keep this in mind the next time you pray and ask for forgiveness you will feel much better about yourself and the situation you might be in. With this I leave you with GOD's blessing and love. Take care and have a wonderful May.

*Steven Newman*  
 Department Chaplain



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

The 2015 ALR State Legacy Run was a complete success. Donations collected were over \$36,000 towards the Legacy Scholarship Fund and over \$1000 raised towards Breast Cancer Awareness as the Department Commander accompanied the Riders throughout the entire Legacy Run. After the Legacy Run was over, I got a chance to attend the National Commander's Reception Meet & Greet with fellow American Legion Family at Post 347 in Lady Lake to meet the National Commander during his visit to Florida. At the close of business on 31 March 2015, I was disappointed to hear that the 12<sup>th</sup> District did not reach Category 5 Race to the Top as we were 23 cards short of achieving 3<sup>rd</sup> Place as the 6<sup>th</sup> District finished 2<sup>nd</sup> Place and the 13<sup>th</sup> District won it all. I praised the posts of the 12<sup>th</sup> District for their tireless efforts throughout the competition. The 23 April 2015 membership report of the 12<sup>th</sup> District is now at 99.89% by collecting 10 cards before the 100% [Standard]/105% [BZ] Goal on 6 May 2015. Congratulations to Posts 171, 348, 366 and 406 for achieving 100% in membership. In closing, the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion at Wickham Park is going extremely well as I reunite with my brothers and sisters-in-arms from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America. Now is the time to focus on the Post elections until the 12<sup>th</sup> District Constitutional Conference that takes place on Saturday 16 May 2015 at Post 81 in Melbourne. Sign-in at 1PM as the Conference starts at 2PM for our District Officer elections, endorsement of the lead candidate for Eastern Area Commander, Department Officer candidate speeches and delegate selections to the National Convention. God bless America, our Veterans and The American Legion Family.

*Jesse Figueroa*  
 12th District Adjutant



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

The Oratorical Winner for the State of Florida, Geeta Minocha, when on to become the American Legion National Oratorical Winner. Thanks Post 27 for Sponsoring Geeta for this event.

School Medals, Jr ROTC and ROTC Certificates should be given out this month and early June. Thank you for following up with our Schools and the ROTC programs we have in our state.

Summer is here, you need to review for your summer programs, Little League Baseball, American Legion Baseball, other outdoor activities. Is your Post part of this? Time is now if you are going to be part of the summer activities.

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.

**Important Dates in May**

- 1<sup>st</sup> – May Day
- 5<sup>th</sup> - Cinco De Mayo
- 8<sup>th</sup> – V.E. Day
- 10<sup>th</sup> – Mother's Day
- ment of Florida Convention
- 16<sup>th</sup> – Armed Forces Day
- 24<sup>th</sup> - Pentecost
- 25<sup>th</sup> – Memorial Day

**Important Dates in June**

- June 6<sup>th</sup>, D-Day
- June 14 – Flag Day
- June 21 – Father's Day
- June 25 – June 27, Depart-

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

**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.

**PROJECT: VetRelief Classes at Convention**

We are excited to announce our class times during the Legion Department Convention, June 25-28.

**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)







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

Back in 1987 I was first appointed to serve on the National Legislative Council and attended all Washington legislative call ins since then. For the past twenty years I have been named Florida Vice Chairman and then many years also as Vice Chairman of National Legislative Commission. Each state has a person from each congressional area plus two senators. Normally only members that are on veteran's affairs committee, that council members, may be appointed to go to Washington.

The other members of the council are supposed to speak to their member of congress when there is no session in Washington. In the past few years, I as chairman, have requested to the Department that all council members need training—that is special training classes at Department Convention or the Fall meeting. The reply I received over the years was keep my report down to five minutes. Finally at this June convention, the director of our legislative program in Washington will hold a training session at that meeting for all council members.

They should make every attempt to be at this training session. For any reason they cannot make this, they should appoint someone to go in their place. Please call me if you cannot be there. As of this writing, all I know is that it will be held sometime Friday or Saturday at the convention hotel. All other members who would like to know more about legislation can also go to the meeting.

All benefits that veterans received are given by legislation in congress and also benefits can be taken away in the same manner by legislation in congress. It is very important that more members get involved with this. Our Department and National out weekly reports and if you wish to receive these reports let the department know. I do wish to thank Dennis Boland, NEC, for giving me a helping hand in getting this training session moving.

*Stanley Gold*  
*National Legislative Chairman*



**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](http://www.legion.org/4x4)





## 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**

**ROY HAVEKOST**  
**Social Media Chairman**  
**[socialmedia@legionmail.org](mailto:socialmedia@legionmail.org)**

Social Media awards will be presented at the annual convention in June. The cutoff for registering your Post and District *Facebook*™ pages or groups is May 15<sup>th</sup>. Simply email the link of 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 American Legion and your Post. Address all emails to [socialmedia@legionmail.org](mailto:socialmedia@legionmail.org)



Awards are tentatively scheduled to be issued at the convention on Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> during the General Session for Commission & Committee Reports and Awards.

*Roy Havekost*  
*Social Media Chairman*



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

During the month of May we commemorate our teachers on the 6<sup>th</sup> with National Teachers Day, in our home we celebrate our many family members who are currently teaching and the ones who have retired or gone before us. Let's thank a Teacher for our education we received.

VE Day WWII is on the 8<sup>th</sup>, this is Victory in Europe that is remembered by all who are allies.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> we celebrate Mother's Day. I lost my beautiful Mother, Orpha, on August 2, 1994 and miss her every day. "A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary." --- Dorothy Canfield Fisher

On the 16<sup>th</sup> we remember our armed forces for Armed Forces day. Let us remember all of those who are currently serving and those who have gone on before.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> we commemorate our fallen hero's and those who have gone to the Commander of us all ahead of us. My fallen hero is my Father, Norman, Sr., he served in the US Navy during WWII, Korea and separated shortly before I was born from Jacksonville NAS, Florida, later to go to Viet Nam as a Electrician with Pan American Airways. "A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself." --Joseph Campbell.

This month is also a time when we, as Legionnaires, are preparing for new leadership in the next year, we have our Constitutional Conferences, elections of our District officers, but to also to work on membership. This is crunch time. Pull your rosters and find out who has not paid their dues, call them, go visit with them, see if you or your Post could offer them help. Let's get those renewals!!

We cannot stress hard enough that during the Convention we have allot of great courses and training classes and it will benefit your Post for someone to attend. I look forward to attending some of those training classes and hopefully assist in instruction of one course.

During March I had the pleasure of going to Post 138 to assist the 15<sup>th</sup> District in a revitalization project. It was so good to see Sean Sparks from National. (He was our van driver when I went to the American Legion National College, 2010.) We enjoy working with Sean. Post 138 members were so nice to us. They provided us lunch each day, and the pizza on Thursday was the best pizza I have ever had. It's a neat Post and I wish them well. Thanks!

Please don't forget to get your membership into Department, make your reservations for the Convention, attend some of the courses, attend your Area Caucus', and please come cast your vote for the 2015-2016 Department Officer's on Saturday. I am proud to say that we will be there representing our Post, and because of allot of the members going North for the summer, I am glad to represent this Post.

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](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.

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.





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

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

Congrats to District 7 Category 3 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place RTT finish along with Districts 13 Category 5 – 1<sup>st</sup> Place and 6<sup>th</sup> Category 5 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place RTT finish. Your efforts have yielded yet another year with Florida being well represented at National. Thank you!

**Operation – No Legionnaire Membership Card Left Behind** is in full swing. Posts that still had lingering membership to be renewed received a personal email providing specific numbers to reach the ultimate goal of 100%. Our Department Commander requested that we all try to meet the target goal for each Post by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Bravo Zulu ticket chances have been steadily increasing. We have exceeded 75k and its going to be an exciting drawing at the Department Convention. We wish you the best of luck!

Awards for April: “Breaking Legs”, and May: “Godfather”, “Big Earner” will be presented along with other membership recognition items at the Department Convention. Special drawing will be held for all Posts over at/over the 110% to determine winner of the \$500 incentive on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Lazy Boy Incentive award to be determined at the end of May.** 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. These Legionnaires will be notified and expected to sit and enjoy their chairs during the General Assembly meetings on Friday – June 26<sup>th</sup> and Saturday – June 27<sup>th</sup>.

BZ Pins are nearly exhausted. If you need pins sent to you, please contact Department Membership Chairman, otherwise see him at the Convention either Thursday or Friday, so they can be passed along.

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

*Stephen Shuga*  
 Department Membership  
 Chairman



District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rcvd	% of Goal
13	A. Burkett	9372	9494	101.30
6	T. Biddle	11734	11772	100.32
12	R. Saxby	8938	8972	100.38
7	I. Anderson	3848	3848	99.79
8	D. Deierlein	8266	7884	95.38
17	M. Wolohan	4102	3926	95.71
16	R. McNabb	12099	11675	96.50
5	T. Gora	8127	7824	96.27
4	C. Ferguson	3924	3743	95.39
9	J. Tewes	4111	3862	93.94
15	J. Romeu	5509	5225	94.85
2	W. Jackson	1416	1302	91.95
11	A. Bruce	4011	4011	92.05
3	H. Perry	1797	1670	92.93
1	L. Carpenter	6417	5933	92.46
14	G. Decker	3139	2784	88.69
Eastern	A. Diaz	20672	20744	100.35
South-western	J. Dollinger	17638	17378	98.53
Central	E. Butts	21456	20740	96.66
Northern	J. Brandt	17961	17163	95.62
Western	V. Joyce	7833	7235	92.37
Southern	W. Johnson	11261	10338	91.80

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



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

**3rd District**

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, 101.899%

**4th District**

Post 237, Beverly Hills, 110.268%  
 Post 236, Williston, 108.547%  
 Post 232, Hawthorne, 106.667%  
 Post 210, Ocala, 104.762%  
 Post 58, Dunnellon, 100.990%  
 Post 16, Gainesville, 100.00

**5th District**

Post 401, Hilliard, 112.727%  
 Post 373, Orange Park, 108%  
 Post 102, Hastings, 105.882%  
 Post 233, Ponte Vedra Beach, 104.739%  
 Post 250, Middleburg, 101.527%  
 Post 54, Fernandina Beach, 100.763%  
 Post 194, St. Augustine, 100.685%  
 Post 174, Fernandina Beach, 100%

**17th District**

Post 255, Deltona, 112.727%  
 Post 285, Edgewater, 102.948%  
 Post 120, Holly Hill, 102.089%  
 Post 380, Daytona Beach, 100%  
 Post 293, Interlachen, 100%

Commanders, for those 24 Posts who reach the 100% goal, I expect 24 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. Anything from Service Officer School, Legion Institute Course, to Social Media Training, as well as officers training. Please have the new members attend.

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

### **SOUTHWESTERN AREA - APRIL 2015**

**8<sup>th</sup> District** – First off, I have to congratulate the 13<sup>th</sup> District for winning RACE TO THE TOP! We are still working hard in the Great 8<sup>th</sup> District to get to 100% membership for the year. I am asking each of the 8<sup>th</sup> District Posts to work "Full Steam Ahead" on retention. New members will come but keeping past members is very important. I am pleased to say that within the next couple of weeks we will be giving Post 407 their Temporary Charter. Post 407 is the newest Post in Florida and is located at the Avon Park Correctional Institute. Like I tell the Members of Post 407, you were Veterans first and then you became Inmates. I am very proud to them and look forward to working with



them in the future. Until next month I hope everyone has a safe and happy month.

**Doug Deierlein, 8<sup>th</sup> District Commander**

**13<sup>th</sup> District – No Report**

**Southwestern Area** – Congratulations to the 13<sup>th</sup> District for being 1<sup>st</sup> in Category 5 of The American Legion membership “Race to the Top” competition. Excellent job Andy Burkett and the 13<sup>th</sup> District Posts. I also want to recognize the 2<sup>nd</sup> place winner, Florida’s 6<sup>th</sup> District for all their efforts in the “Race to the Top” competition. It take everyone working together to make great things happen.

**Post Consolidated Reports** are due now. They can be done online or on the forms provided. **Have questions, call your District Commander immediately.**

**American Legion School Medals** As we roll up on the end of the school year, I encourage every Southwestern Area Post to be involved in recognizing student achievement and using School Medals to make an impressive presentation to students. **Post Excellence Award**, to qualify a post is required to achieve excellence in four areas: membership, youth activities, community service and support to currently serving troops or veterans. Many SW Area Posts meet the criteria. **Questions contact your District Commander.**

**100% Membership Pennant** – Post Commanders, please challenge your Post, Auxiliary Units and SAL Squadrons to achieve 100% membership. Both the Department and National now have a pennant. **Questions contact your District Commander.**

**District Constitutional Conference** is being held on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> District is being held at Venice Post 159, registration at 8:00 with meeting beginning at 9:00 am. The 13<sup>th</sup> District is being held at Punta Gorda Post 103 with registration at Noon and the meeting beginning at 1:00 pm. We understand this is Memorial Day weekend but this is one of the most important meetings of the year, you elect a new District Commander, and meet candidates vying to be Department Officers for 2015 – 2016. **Every District Post should plan to attend so we can have 100% representation at the meetings.**

**Department Convention** is June 25, 26 and 27 at the Renaissance SeaWorld Hotel in Orlando. Hotel reservations cutoff is June 1 but they will be gone before then.

**John Dollinger, Southwestern Area Commander**

**Department Commander Jay Conti, Sr. and Department 1st Vice Commander Jim Ramos helping with the putting up the Vietnam Wall at the All Veterans Reunion.**





**MIKE KIRCHOFF**  
In-State Legacy Ride Chairman

This is my last article as the In State Legacy Ride Chairman. We are only a couple of months away from Department Convention, which means we will have changes in the leadership at Department. As we close this year out I would like to thank Commander Jay Conti for selecting me to be the In State Legacy Ride Chairman. This was the third year of the ride, each year has been different and more enjoyable, We started the first year under the guidance of Commander Al (Gunner) Duley as a way to bring the Florida Legion Riders together for a great cause the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. We rode the entire State of Florida leaving Panama City and riding the west coast of Florida down to Key West then back up the eastern coast to Jacksonville and ending back in Panama City. 10 Riders made the entire ride and earned the Hard Core Goat Posse Patch. The second year with Commander Art Schwabe we rode a boot lace ride, crisscrossing the State starting in Jacksonville and riding 1,200 miles back to Jacksonville. Commander Schwabe accompanied us on most of the ride. Then this year we started in Lake City and rode north and west through the Panhandle, we had 26 riders that rode the entire ride and were presented with the Hard Core Goat Posse patch. Commander Conti and his lovely wife Toni were with us the entire ride. We also raised \$32,600.00 dollars. I can not say how much of an honor it is to be the Chairman of this event. I will be looking forward to next year when Commander Ramos takes the reins and hopefully lets me lead the ride again. I want to thank Department of Florida for the support by providing a support vehicle and all the work that they do making certificates and all the other support provided behind the scenes. Also a very special thanks goes out to Jennifer Day who is by far the one reason this ride is a great success. This ride could never happen without her dedication and support.

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*Mike (Goat) Kirchoff*  
*In State Legacy Ride Chairman*



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

Do you know of any "American Legion" namesakes in Florida? If so, please send these places, names, locations, origins and photos (if you have these) to me. You can help round out our Florida legacy by sharing these namesakes as each of these are a significant part of our Florida Legion history. Have you seen or visited any of these "namesakes" below?

American Legion Cemetery (in Tampa, next to Post 5, founded in 1922 by the USS Tampa Post 5 Auxiliary – it is the only privately owned American Legion Cemetery in the Country)

Legion Memorial Park (in Miami, next to Post 29, dedicated 1966)

American Legion Memorial Highway (I-75 throughout Florida, dedicated May 1969 to celebrate the American Legion's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary)

American Legion Memorial Auditorium (dedicated from Post 95 WWII veterans June 2005, in Frostproof)

American Legion Memorial Fountain (Waterfront Park, Daytona Beach)

American Legion Baseball Park (Brooksville)

American Legion Park (Sligh Ave, Tampa)

American Legion Symphonic Band (9<sup>th</sup> District, Broward County, founded 2004 by Arthur Tenny of Post 142)

If you have any further information on any of these, please share!

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 **before** the 6<sup>th</sup> of June! Please contact me if you have any questions.



*Shelli Romeu*  
*Department Historian*

## POW/MIA Committee Report - MAY 2015

The following have been accounted for March and April to date

Member Rank	First & Last Name	Service	Unit	Lost	Location	Accounted-For
Pfc.	Eugene L. Erickson	U.S. Army	Company B, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry	5/18/1951	North Korea	4/13/2015
Cpl.	Elmer P. Richard	U.S. Army	Battery D, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion, 31st Regimental	12/2/1950	North Korea	4/11/2015
Sgt.	John McLaughlin	U.S. Marine Corps	Company D, 32nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine	12/2/1950	North Korea	4/8/2015
Maj.	Dale W. Richardson	U.S. Army	2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division	5/2/1970	Vietnam	4/2/2015
Sgt.	Rodney L. Griffin	U.S. Army	2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division	5/2/1970	Vietnam	3/30/2015
Pfc.	Kenneth P. Darden	U.S. Army	Battery A, 15th Field Artillery, 2nd Infantry Division	2/13/1951	North Korea	3/23/2015
2nd Lt.	Harry B. McGuire	U.S. Army Air Forces	718th Squadron, 449th Bomber Group, 15th Air Force	1/30/1944	Italy	3/10/2015
Sgt.	Wallace J. Dawson	U.S. Army	Company L. 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry	2/14/1951	South Korea	3/7/2015
Chief Master Sgt.	Edwin E. Morgan	U.S. Air Force	6252nd Combat Support Group	3/13/1966	Laos	3/4/2015
2nd Lt.	Edward F. Barker	U.S. Army Air Forces	Headquarters Squadron, 8th Air Service Group	9/30/1944	Papua New Guinea	3/4/2015

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) was established on January 15, 2015. With this new agency, the DoD has transformed the way we account for missing personnel for conflicts dating from World War II through the First Gulf War. DPAA integrates the former offices responsible for this work: the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), and Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL). If you saw last month's report and look at this month's report it appears the consolidation has improved the activity level although it remains to be seen how the consolidation has affected the field activities.

**John Dollinger POW/MIA Chairman**