



*The*  
**LEGION LINK**  
*LEGION PRIDE: We Fight for Veterans*



**Web Site: [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org)**

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Florida Legionnaires, I have to say Thank you for your support and I hope you will continue with it for the rest of the 2016 year. As I go to each District all the Legionnaires are doing very well and I hope I'm doing the job as your Department Commander the best way I know how.

**New Chairmen for Baseball:**

We have good news the Baseball program is going with a new chairman Andy Burkett from Post 323 in Lehigh Acres, Thank you for your Service and support.

**In January 2016,** I hope you enjoy some of the pictures from my visit and National Vice Commander Jimmy Lane visit to the 6th and 12th District in January at Post 40 and Post 358.

**In March 2016,** we have the National Commander, Dale Barnett, visiting us from 25<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>. Please help with the Veteran Walk to let people know who we are. The American Legion, Department of Florida. Do an Open House and/or Membership Drive for your Post and let me know by Facebook or e-mail.

Please Help the American Legion Department of Florida make a Big Difference: My charity of choice for our year is the

Fisher House.

The Fisher House program provides a "home away from home" for families of patient receiving medical care at major military and/or VA medical center. The home provides free temporary lodging so military and veteran's families can be close to their loved ones during a medical crisis. Through the kindness and generosity of the American Legion Department of Florida we have made great strides towards helping our wounded, injured and ill service members, our veterans and their families. But we refuse to rest until all medical centers and hospitals with a recognized need have the resources only a Fisher House can provide. Join us in supporting the Fisher House by making a check out to The American Legion Department of Florida and in the memo to the Fisher House. Please if you can go check the Fisher House website and **Check out what happened in October 2013 the Government Shutdown** and why the Fisher House is so good to our Military, Veterans and their Families.

**Thank you for helping our charity of choice.**

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Please, thank your volunteers for all the hard work they do to help your/our Posts look good at least once a year.

Post Commanders, please take some time and do something (certificate of appreciation, a gift card, and /or a small party) just to say Thank you. If you need more suggestions, please let me know I will be more than happy to assist you in any way I can. Thank you.

**Let's work with "Legion PRIDE"**

- **PUBLIC RELATION:** Publicize Everything We Do At All Levels.
- **IMPLEMENT:** Start NOW! Be Creative, Be Different, Be Flexible.
- **DEVELOP:** Encourage new workers and Leaders, Maintain a Positive Attitude, and Reward Workers.
- **EDUCATE:** Our own members, the Public, do the American Legion Extension Course and Mini Lessons at the Post.

Please, give to The American Legion, Department of Florida and NOT to another state like Indianapolis, IN or Tulsa, Ok

Please read your mail check WHO are you sending your donation to. Does it look like Florida?

Please, if you get a letter from National Headquarters asking for your money, disregard it. Only give to the Department of Florida and it will stay in Florida to help our Veterans and their Families.

**Post Excellence Award:** The Post Excellence Award program honors Posts that have excellence in membership

participation, youth activities, community service, and support to veterans and U.S. troops.

**Criteria:**

**Membership.** Post membership must be at least one member more than the previous year. A Post Officer must attend district meeting.

**Youth activities.** The Post must sponsor and actively participate in at least one primary youth program: Boy Scouts of America or Junior Shooting Sports, for example.

**Community service.** The Post must organize a community service project that involves members of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion. A monetary donation may only be one part of a project.

**Service to troops or veterans.** The Post must organize a project supporting or veterans (for example, Family Support Network or Operation Comfort Warriors) that involves members of the Legion, Auxiliary, or SAL outside the post. A monetary donation may only be one part of the project.

**Certification.** District Commanders must certify the Post as having fulfilled the four specified criteria, and submit a list with Post's name, address and Commander's name to Department Headquarters, and if possible, accompanied with copies of press releases submitted to local media that raised awareness for the project and enhanced the Legion's public image. These will then be sent to National Headquarters.

**Go to:** [www.legion.org/commander/postexcellence](http://www.legion.org/commander/postexcellence)



**Joe Magee**

**Department 1st Vice Commander**  
**1stVice@Legionmail.org**

Hello Legionnaires! After the Fall Conference, activities slowed down due to the upcoming Thanksgiving Holiday. As usual, food consumption ratio went way up, so now back to the exercise machine. December brought Pearl Harbor Memorial Services, an invitation was extended to me by the AMVETS. It also brought a meeting with Dept. Adjutant in reference to the upcoming year. Of course, December also rings in Christmas and all the hoopla that goes with it.

On a sad note, I attended a Memorial Service in Avon Park, Post 69, for Past Post Commander Jerry Telling.

January got extremely busy. The early part of the month saw me attending the 5th District meeting at Post 250 in Middleburg with side trips to Post 173 and Post 316. Subsequent to the 5th District, there was the 17th District meeting at Post 6 in Deland. A monthly meeting at Dept. Headquarters, the Southwestern Area Ball (excellent food) and the Central Area Ball. Again, there was a Memorial Service, which I attended at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

February had me traveling the State of Florida, beginning with that monotonous drive to the Florida Keys, where I met with Dist. Commander Gary Decker and Post 28 Commander Dan Dedeo. I also met with Post 168 Commander Glennwood Lopez, who gave me quite a rundown of the history of their building. Of course, there were stops in Homestead, Key Largo and Marathon. Then, from the Keys, a quick over-nighter at home, and then off to Tallahassee for the 2nd District meeting at Post 13. After that I got to stay home for a day, then off to Dunedin for the Mardi Gras Parade, which was a fantastic time. Next up was Orlando Dept. Headquarters and Dept. Finance meeting coupled with a Project-Vet Relief meeting. Then back to South Florida and the Southern Area Ball. From there, I went back to the West Coast and up to Hudson Post 335 for the Women's Vet Luncheon, what a well put together affair. Another meeting at Dept. Headquarters and by the time this article is read, the Eastern Area Ball will be in the history books.

Before signing off, I am looking forward to serving you next year with your help. Also, I am still looking for anyone interested in working the Dept. of Florida Hospitality Room at the National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Please contact Jennifer Schneidau at 407-295-2631, ext. 232 or at [jschneidau@floridalegion.org](mailto:jschneidau@floridalegion.org). Be safe out there and have a wonderful St. Patrick's Day.

**Steve Shuga**

**Department 2nd Vice Commander**  
**2ndVice@Legionmail.org**

Now that the festive holidays have passed, several key activities and events will be rapidly approaching us in the coming months. Over these next three months – February, March, and April, we have a great opportunity to learn so much about our American Legion that I encourage each of you to get engaged and do your best to get smart.

Being a trained Legionnaire increases success for your Post:

- Having a comprehensive knowledge of our organization and the Four Pillars is vital.
- Training one another is a necessity to be knowledgeable of our organization.
- Above all maintaining a level of confidence is vital when expressing who we are, what we do, and why it is important for all wartime era veterans to become Legionnaires.

These key ingredients, when successfully applied, will increase our membership of veterans.

Those who are seeking to step up and lead our Legionnaires should always strive for improvement of their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Learning leadership principles and traits will promote confidence in your ability to lead Legionnaires. Training is key to becoming proficient when seeking a position of leadership.

Posts around the state have been receiving the Training Card. If you have not received yours, please contact the Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander at [2ndVice@legionmail.org](mailto:2ndVice@legionmail.org) and request them. The packets are 25 each and have instructions on how to use them. We must do our very best with the rapidly approaching opportunities to learn all we can to better ourselves and our American Legion.

For God and Country

#### **Patriotic Coloring and Halloween 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, Department of FL**

**ATTN: Allyson Capecea**

**P.O. Box 547859**

**Orlando, FL 32854-7859**

*or by email: [acapecea@floridalegion.org](mailto:acapecea@floridalegion.org)*

**Dianne Boland**  
**Department 3rd Vice Commander**  
**3rdVice@Legionmail.org**

I mentioned in the September Legion Link that I have the capability to keep you informed on a monthly basis. However, the Legion Link only comes out every three months, and I fail to tell you where you can find my updates on the website. This is the URL: <http://www.floridalegion.org/department/vice-commanders/3rd-vice-commander/>. Some of the info will be duplicated from the Legion Link because I always try to keep you informed about what's coming several months in advance. If you happened to see an error, please let me know as soon as possible so I can change it.

- National Washington Conference – February 21-24
- Area Oratorical Contest Deadline – February 21
- Boy Scouts Cracker Trail – February 26-28
- Eastern Area Ball – February 27
- Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship Deadline -March 1
- General Scholarship Deadline – March 1
- JROTC Cadet of the Year Scholarship Deadline –March 1
- Northern Area Ball – March 5
- Department Oratorical Contest – March 12
- Southern Area Ball – March 13
- Boy's State Delegate/Alternate Deadline – March 14
- Legion Birthday – March 15
- Medical School Scholarship Deadline – April 1
- Children & Youth Picnic April 2
- Legacy Ride—April 10-17
- Auxiliary President's Homecoming – April 9
- Teacher of the Year Deadline – April 15
- National Oratorical Finals – April 16-17
- Firefighter & Law Enforcement of the Year April 25
- CPR's May 2
- National Spring Meetings – April 29 – May 5

Need help? Give me a call. Is your post having a function that supports one of our programs? Ask me. I'd love to attend (if possible). Have you already had a big function? Write to me. I'd love to hear about it.

**Dennis Boland**  
**National Executive Committeeman**  
**NEC@Legionmail.org**

Final Report on the "Meet the Lead Candidate for National Commander", Charles Schmidt

As many of us go through life we have different commitments that take us to a variety of places. Those commitments at times can be costly, but it's not about the individual, but about preserving the integrity of The American Legion and its' commitment to our Veterans and the children

commitments at times can be costly, but it's not about the individual, but about preserving the integrity of The American Legion and its' commitment to our Veterans and the children of our Nation.

We as Legionnaires have made a commitment, as leaders of the Florida American Legion, to insure that these accomplishments can be obtained.

To accomplish these costly endeavors, we held a meet and greet for Charles Schmidt and solicited donations from the Officers and over 200 National appointees.

There is always good and bad news when we have functions like these. I was surprised when 9 of our District Commanders and 2 of our Area Commanders failed to make contributions and didn't show up for our meet and greet.

The good news is that we were able to give Charles Schmidt \$4,595.00 for his campaign travels. Of that, \$2,595.00 came from contributions at the meet and greet and \$2,000.00 from the Department of Florida.

It was great to have the SAL represented and we received a letter from George Segrest with a donation. George has been in a nursing home for the past 5 years. His long term memory is very good, but his short term is not at times. George was a District Commander and he still asks about the Legion to this day.

Again, our lead candidate for National Commander, Charles Schmidt has stepped up to the plate to carry the torch, and we as dedicated Legionnaires should have that same commitment to ensure our Veterans have a voice on the Hills of Washington, D.C.

Thank you for supporting The American Legion ideas and commitment to our Veterans.

**Steve Newman**  
**Department Chaplain**  
**Chaplain@Legionmail.org**

Hello and greetings again my fellow legionnaire Family. I am hoping and praying that all is well for everyone so far during this year. We have a lot to look forward to during this time. As you know, it is Lent season already. It is a good time to reflect, think, act and pray for all those good things that should and will come along in our daily lives. We live in a very dramatic and ever so moving period for both our country and our leaders. It is a time that requires much deep thought and reflection on who we are and what direction we want to head in. Always remember with God everything is possible and can be made in a positive way. By praying we build our relationship with God and He loves it. Take time to stop, look and listen, in relationship to Lent. We have an opportunity to stop and think about God, to look at our relationship with Him and to listen to God's voice in our own life.

**Arthur J Schwabe & Erna C Schwabe**  
**National Executive Committeeman Alternate**  
**Auxiliary National Executive Committeewoman**  
**NECA@Legionmail.org**

Florida families that you helped through difficult times.

YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE! THANK YOU!

Here is the list of Kids receiving COTA Donations.

**Oct through Nov 2015**

Richard C, Jacksonville, FL \$2,500  
 Desmond C., St. Petersburg, FL \$1,500  
 Logan G, Orange Park, FL \$1,500  
 Joey N, Kissimmee, FL \$1,500  
 Casey T, Northport, FL \$1,500  
 CJ T, Tampa, FL \$1,500  
 Anna Rose V, Gainesville, FL \$2,500  
 Total \$12,500

**Dec 2015 through Jan 2016**

Abel S, Center Hill FL \$1,000  
 AJessica M , Palm Beach Gardens, FL \$2,500  
 Addison B, St. Cloud, FL \$1,000  
 Kyan Bunker, FL \$1,000  
 Corrie Eavenson, Land O' Lakes, FL \$1,500  
 Oliver Keene , Jacksonville FL \$1,000  
 Isaiah Sanchez, Orlando \$1,000  
 Chloe Novak, Tallahassee FL \$1,000  
 Total \$10,000

Thank you,  
 Art & Erna Schwabe

**Larry Sheets**  
**Judge Advocate**  
**JudgeAdvocate@Legionmail.org**

It is advised that ALR Chapters *not* have their own Constitution and By-Laws, and operate in accordance with the Department SOP. The SOP has everything a Chapter will need to organize and operate their Chapter.

The majority of Post Constitutions and By-Laws that are submitted all have one statement that does not comply with the Department Constitution. Posts will put a section in their By-Laws that says "Meetings of the Post shall be conducted under and pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order."

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

If you refer to Robert's Rules of Order, your Post's Constitution and By-Laws will not be approved, and will be returned so you can make the needed change. **Robert's Rules of Order are referred to only as a last resort!!**

I received a call asking if a District Officer could be brought up on charges? The answer to that question is yes, as long as the person filing the charges against a District

Officer follows the procedures outlined in the Department By-Laws Article II, Section 5. Be advised that if charges are to be brought against a Legionnaire the person filing those charges must comply with the Department Constitution and ByLaws exactly as worded.



**John Bell**  
**16th District Commander**  
**16thDistrict@Legionmail.org**

First a Question? What is the largest group of people on earth dedicated to a mutual goal? Answer - "THE FAMILY", no other group has as its main objective, to help, support and encourage unity and success.

We, the members of the American Legion, are an enormous Family. We have the same goals, Justice, Freedom and Democracy, and serving our Veterans and their families through mutual helpfulness.

We are four groups that form one of the most cohesive Families in America, or for that matter the world. Our goals and ideals are shared by all our groups and their members as a Family.

The American Legion is the largest Veterans organization in the world. The American Legion Auxiliary is the largest women's patriotic civilian organization in the world, The Sons of the American Legion with over 350,00 members is a nationwide force of children and young men whose daily dedication to Veteran assistance and children and youth programs is a huge asset to our Family. The Legion Riders program is open to all Legion Family members, Legion, ALA and Sons. They ride and sponsor events for the same purposes all the Family groups support, and have experienced spectacular growth since their inception

As Post Commander I urge you to embrace these Family members. Your ALA President, Sons Commander, and the Riders Director need to be your best friends.

Family meetings have become an absolutely rewarding experience in the majority of our Posts. If your Post does not have one, get together with your Family and set up a meeting once a month, you may be surprised with what your Family can accomplish!

Family = Team  
 Together  
 Everyone  
 Accomplishes  
 More

**Tom Gora**  
**Department Sergeant-at-Arms**  
**Sgt-at-Arms@Legionmail.org**

“You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion’s greater possessions, our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship.” (From the Sgt.-at-Arms Oath)

As we enter the spring of 2016 Posts are busy planning for events and holidays such as The American Legion birthday, Area Balls, Armed Forces Day, and Memorial Day. By the time this issue of the “Legion Link” is published I will have enjoyed attending the Southwest, Central, Southern, Eastern, and Northern Area Balls. Before you know it District Constitutional Conference time will be upon us once again!

All of these holidays and American Legion events have some degree of “protocol” involved. Fortunately, the Department has some great resources on-line to assist you with your planning. You will find that the Sgt.-at-Arms Manual and the Officer’s Guide and Manual of Ceremonies are tremendous informational resources when planning these events. Remember when in the public for such events we represent not only our Post, District, or Department, we are representing The American Legion. We must always strive to protect the good name and reputation of The American Legion.

We are certainly witness to all the political campaigns this election year. With continuous issues concerning V.A. healthcare, politicians strive to make appearances with veterans. American Legion Posts are encouraged to participate in “Get the Vote Out” programs in our communities, but please keep in mind the following rules:

1. When hosting a voter registration drive, information and applications must be offered and available to all eligible voters.
2. Legionnaires may express partisan views, but they must do so when they are not wearing the Legion cap or other Legion attire, and without a direct connection to an American Legion Post.
3. American Legion Posts may coordinate forums or debates. However, Posts cannot endorse or oppose a candidate, or coordinate activities with a candidate without giving his/her opponent the same opportunity.

I have identified four short U.S. Army instructional videos about basic Honor Guard maneuvers, a great refresher course or a basic training tool for a Post starting a new Honor Guard. I can e-mail you those videos, just ask.

The 5<sup>th</sup> District will soon donate and dedicate an American Legion memorial monument to the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Jacksonville National Cemetery. For any Post, District or Area that would consider such a donation to a National Cemetery there is a detailed guide published by the Department of Veterans Affairs. There is a

process defined in the guide that requires certain documentation from the donating organization and from the monument vendor. The name of the guide is “Guidelines for Acceptance of Memorials for National Cemeteries” and you can find it on the Veterans Affairs web site, or contact me and I can send it to you. A National Cemetery cannot accept your donation without first going through this process.

**Shelli Romeu**  
**Department Historian**  
**Historian@Legionmail.org**

I have been updating some Post information on the Centennial Web Page, so please check this periodically and let me know if you have more to add! [www.centennial.legion.org](http://www.centennial.legion.org). As a reminder, the basic Post information needed is: Namesake, Post Picture, Webpage URL, Facebook URL, YouTube URL, 1<sup>st</sup> Commander Name, Notable members, any historical tidbits (like history of Post’s name or location, etc.). The Florida Centennial Committee will be meeting again at the June Convention, so if you would like to participate please let me know. All input is greatly appreciated and welcomed.

I have received numerous emails from various people who are finding the Centennial Webpage and are asking questions such as “does the Post rent the hall”, “where can I dispose of my unserviceable US Flag”, “I would like to transfer my membership to \*your\* Post from NJ”, etc. I receive these as I am listed as the POC contact on the Centennial page for your Post – if this had your own Post POC’s email address, you would be getting these emails instead. I of course respond to them with your Post’s contact information, but you could be using the Centennial Page as your own marketing tool for new members! Contact me to find out how.

I have heard from some new Historians that starting their Post History is a daunting task. While it may seem like a lot of work when initially looking at it, it really can be simplified and is quite enjoyable when building the foundation – and it really does not take much effort! I have templates for History Yearbooks already created in Word and can send these to you to help you get started – send me an email request and I’ll get these out to you!

If you are going to submit a Post or ALR History Narrative/Yearbook into the History Book contest this coming June, please note the following:

- All books must be at the Orlando HQ office **NLT 6th June 2016**. Do not bring them to the convention and expect them to be allowed into the contest. There is a lot of work that needs to be done upfront as far as organizing these, etc. to keep the contest fair, so no entries will be allowed

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after the 6 June 2016 cutoff.

Complete the "Certification Form" for your specific contest. This helps us for tracking/judging/and subsequent shipping. You can find these forms on the Department Webpage for download.

If you have any questions or concerns about the contest and/or anything else related to History or Centennial, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks!

**Mike "Goat" Kirchoff**  
**Western Area Commander**  
**WesternArea@Legionmail.org**

To start off I would like to congratulate the following Posts for achieving 100% Membership in District 1: Post 402 Panama City Beach and Post 378 Gulf Breeze. District 2: Post 84 Havana, Post 302 Alford, Post 114 Crawfordville, and Post 82 Landark Village. Outstanding job. In addition, the following Posts have achieved 90% District 1: Post 392 Panama City, Post 340 Pensacola, Post 221 Niceville, and Post 379 Pensacola Beach. District 2: Post 241 Sneads, Post 100 Marianna, Post 217 Quincy, Post 116 Post St Joe, and Post 51 Chattahoochee. Again outstanding. Now is the time for the remaining Posts in District 1 and 2 to step up membership. The Race to the Top is not over yet, let's show the State of Florida that Districts 1 and 2 are just that, the top 2 in the State.

It's been a busy couple of months since my last article. Christmas is the time of year when everyone seems to be the busiest. I spent this time dressed as Santa and attended the Annual Kids Christmas Party at Post 392. Great turn out this year with over 42 children attending. Plus, I spent some time at the beach so young Active Duty members can have pictures with Santa. I also visited Post 193 Pensacola, Post 33 Pensacola (by the way the Commander told me they never had a Department Officer in a white hat attend one of their meetings) Post 379 Pensacola Beach, Post 402 Panama City Beach, Post 356 Lynn Haven, Post 44 Bonify and tried to visit Post 272 in Blountstown only to find the Post closed.

January kicked off the New Year at Post 392. I attended Post 356 Lynn Haven Membership Meeting and Post 402 Panama City Beach. Post 392 conducted a Post Everlasting Ceremony on January 6th that was truly outstanding. I took a short break from Legion business to attend our Granddaughter's 10th Birthday in Ohio, then back down to Orlando for the Department of Florida's First Bike Days which consisted of training in both being a Road Captain and LEAD Training as to where the American Legion Riders fit into the Post Legion Program. I attended Post 296 in Destin's Membership Meeting. Post 193 Pensacola hosted a luncheon on January 26<sup>th</sup>, the guest speaker was

the Northwestern Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Director, great information was provided not only to the Legion members but all Veterans were invited to attend.

On January 28th I was invited to attend a presentation at Hurlburt Field of a custom built hunting bow to a young Air Force Captain that suffered a severe stroke. The American Legion through Operation Comfort Warrior bought this young man a custom bow with all the accessories to help in his rehab. It was a true honor to hand him the bow.

February and March are going to be busy months visiting more Posts. In April I will take part in the Florida State Legacy Ride, I hope to see a lot of Area and District Commanders as we travel other Areas of Florida.

**Jeff Durden**  
**Northern Area Commander**  
**NorthernArea@Legionmail.org**

Hello Northern Area. There is a lot coming up the next few months.

March 12<sup>th</sup> is the Department Oratorical Contest at the Department Headquarters in Orlando. The winner from the 5<sup>th</sup> District will be representing the Northern Area.

April is Children and Youth Month. Please plan a function at your post or in the community for the youth and their families. There will be a Children and Youth picnic on April the 2<sup>nd</sup> in Palm Bay, check the calendar for more information. The ALR Instate Legacy Run will be April 10<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup>, and the 24<sup>th</sup> will be the Department Commander's Homecoming in Gainesville.

May 13<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> is the ALR Rally in Punta Gorda.

June 4<sup>th</sup> will be the 4<sup>th</sup> District DCC and on the 5<sup>th</sup> will be the 5<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> DCC.

Let's keep going on our membership, District 3 and 4 are on top. Which one will be at 100% first?

Department Convention will be June 15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> and Boys State will be the 19<sup>th</sup> - the 25<sup>th</sup> of June.

**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.

**Eunice Butts**  
**Central Area Commander**  
**CentralArea@Legionmail.org**

Special thanks to the following Posts for having a 100% or better in membership: Post 95 (118.95), Post 71 (105.14), Post 396 (104.76), Post 23 (101.72), Post 201 (100.00), Post 248 (105.55), Post 26 (101.78) and Post 275 (100.00).

Thanks to the 16<sup>th</sup> District for being the top 5 consistently. For those Posts less than 100%, I would suggest you go to the 400 as a new list is available.

If you have a Post home, have a community family gathering or event for children which require their parents to be with them. Have a table set with pamphlets and information on the various American Legion Programs. Publicity will be your NUMBER 1 TOOL!

I have observed that Posts are losing memberships to other Posts due to lack of greeting others at the Post level or attitude problems. The Question: What can we do to get New Membership? When new members or current members present new ideas or want to participate in a specific program; let them. The old saying "this is how we have always done this" can be a problem. This is a new day and a new time. As long as the programs or Post activities are done, allow them to participate.

To the 7<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Districts, thank you for the many successful programs and community projects. I'm wishing all the Posts success in getting 100% by March 20, 2016.

Have a good year. Remember, as Legionnaires, we should all know that our positions being elected or appointed are there for the good of the American Legion, not for how we personally feel.

**Jim Day**

**Department Legion Riders Chairman**  
**LegionRiders@Legionmail.org**

Hello Legion Family,

It has been a very busy past few months since the December Legion Link. The 1<sup>st</sup> ALR Bike Days held in Orlando had a nice turnout as well as a visit from the National Vice Commander. ScootinAmerica (Adam Sandoval) came back into Florida and the ALR showed an overwhelming amount of support. We welcomed Chapter 82 Lanark Village to the family recently, and I have been to several Chapter/District/Area meetings and functions throughout the state.

As most of you know I am passionate about The American Legion Family and believe that as Legion Riders we need to support our Posts as much as possible. Sometimes we need to be reminded that we could not be Legion Riders if not for The Legion Family. It is very important to understand that the ALR is a subsidiary of The American Legion and is governed by the hosting Post. Keeping the balance between Legion Family functions and Legion Rider functions can be very challenging. I myself have struggled with finding time to support my Post recently with traveling and attending functions and events throughout the state. As I have travelled and visited Posts and Commanders, I am faced with a few Chapters that are conducting themselves separately from The American Legion and separating the Legion Riders from the Post. When we held classes at the Fall Conference and the ALR Bike Days we covered the emblem usage and trademark rules. The Emblem Usage guide was also sent out to every Chapter Director to further any questions that we the American Legion Riders are a "subsidiary" of the Post, and as a "subsidiary" we are governed by the Post Commander and or Post E-Board. I know for some Chapters this may be a hard pill to swallow, but the reality is simple. If there is no American Legion Post...there is no American Legion Riders.

Along those same lines of supporting our Legion Family, we need to be supporting our fellow Chapters/Districts/Areas. I will be asking all Area and District Chairman to get with the Southern Area Chairman Manny Ayala and the District 1 Chairman Steve Davidson, and get a schedule of events together. Both of these Chairman have done outstanding jobs of keeping communication strong and events organized with minimal overlapping. I would like to see these schedules and calendars getting emailed to the ALR Adjutant and posted on FB and the Dept. events calendar. Many times I hear Legion Rider Directors commenting that they would have attended an event in another area if they had only known about it. So, let's work together and get this event information centrally located and sent out to all the

**Continued on page 9**

**Florida American Legion Specialty License Plate**

Plates are now in all local Tax Collector's Offices, for \$35.00. Proceeds from the plate will go towards the programs of The American Legion, Department of Florida. Help support our programs and get your plate today!





Chapters.

Great news: Jennifer Cooper has recently added a mailing list for the ALR follow the link to sign up and receive the events and information:

<http://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/legion-riders/mailling-list/>

Final housekeeping notes:

- **The ALR SOP conversion seems to have some confusion:** Basically, all that needs to change is the format used. ALL the current policies in place for each individual Chapter Bylaw will remain the same. Please feel free to contact the ALR Adjutant with any questions and or help with the conversion. A template will also be coming out this month and posted online, please understand that each Chapter is unique and we can address individual issue as the arise.

- **Chain-of-Command:** There have been some issues lately that have required Chapters to contact Area Chairman or myself skipping over the District Chairman. Protocol would dictate this sequence: members – Chapter Directors (if ALR issue District Chairman, if Post issue Post Commander) – District Chairman (if ALR issue Area Chairman, if Post issue District Commander) – Area Chairman (if ALR issue Department Chairman, if Post issue Area Commander/Department Commander) – Department ALR Chairman – Department Commander. This is only a suggested protocol. If the need arises and one or more of these positions need to be “skipped”, then, so be it. The point is the problem/question needs to be resolved.

- **Titles:** The Department of Florida continues to keep The Legion Riders a Post level program. In some states the program is Department level and therefore controlled by Department. Florida uses the titles of: Director, Assistant Director, Secretary, Road Captain, Chaplain, Treasurer. If your Chapter officers are using any other title (i.e. President, Vice President) the title will need to be changed. Only the titles used in the ALR SOP will be recognized and permitted.

#### Upcoming Events:

- **Merry-go-Round supporting Children & Youth programs:** Similar to the fall Round Robin supporting Project Vet Relief but for programs supporting Children & Youth. The 1<sup>st</sup> C&Y picnic will be held @ Post 117 on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. The registration forms and flyers are posted online at [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org) under the Legion Riders. ALL of the money raised will stay in Florida to support our own programs. Organize rides and events from March 12-27, 2016. Registration is online.

I will be making another custom “parts” trophy that will be awarded to the winning District at Convention in Orlando. All are welcome to participate and join in on supporting the cause. Registration is only \$5. Even if you can't ride or drive, you can support by going online and registering. Gets your District 55 points per registration.

- **Legacy Ride:** April 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 2016 with the Travelling Wall escort on the 18<sup>th</sup>. Starting in Deland and ending in

Melbourne. Visiting 50+ Posts and riding 1200+ miles. Registration and information posted online. Even if you can only ride for a single day or a few hours, please join us in promoting The American Legion and getting the word out about the Legacy Scholarship. All are welcome to join (even cages).

- **ALR Rally in May will be hosted by Punta Gorda:**

Information will be posted online soon.

I want to thank everyone who came out and supported Adam Sandoval and ScootinAmerica. I had the privilege of attending most of the visits in Florida. From Jacksonville – ALR Bike Days – Fort Myers – Palm Bay – Ft Lauderdale area the Legion Riders did an outstanding job with escorts, hosting meals and providing lodging for Adam and Scooter. The t-shirt order form is up online if anyone wants to order a shirt. The profits will go to the Florida ALR Legacy fund and be sent to the National Convention.

**ALR Bike Days:** Thank you to Vice Chairman Mike Kirchoff for stepping up and teaching classes. The Osceola Sheriff had motor officers onsite with the SMART program and riding demonstrations. Great news from this event we will be having a Legion Riders training session with a Ladies ONLY class on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Information for hotels and class will be posted online. We also had a visit from the National Vice Commander and several PDC and our current Commander Jim Ramos.

**It's that time of year again where we need to be focused on getting those quarterly reports submitted. These reports are very important on determining the awards for Chapter of the Year. Once again we will have a Chapter of the Year for Small, Medium, Large and X-Large Chapter and an overall Chapter of the Year. Based off the quarterly reports we will have some other awards for outstanding Chapters. GET THOSE REPORTS SUBMITTED. Don't miss out on the opportunity to be recognized on the Legion floor at Convention. Link to report:** <http://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/legion-riders/resourcesforms/alr-quarterly-activity-report/>

Finally, THANK YOU all for your continued support and kind words. It takes a team to build a program into a great success. Without the help of everyone in the Legion Riders and Legion Family we could not have accomplished so much for our Veterans and Legion programs.



**Jerry Brandt**  
**Membership Chairman**  
**Membership@Legionmail.org**

Fellow Legionnaires,

At the time I am writing this, February 12, 2016, we have had 40 Posts who exceeded the 100% goal for the year. However, the hard part has just begun; the last 10% of the members needed for their 100%. February we had the Revitalization process for the State, if your Post did not participate in this Revitalization, please do so now. Go to MyLegion.org, under Legion, and search under, "Find Members in My Area". You will be surprised to see who shows up. A reminder, National added 19,000 DMS Members to Florida on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, they are now available for your Post, contact them, ask them to come down with proof of service and go from there.

The Commander's Walk is scheduled for March and the National Commander would like to let the Communities of our Nation know what is happening to our Brothers and Sisters in Our Nation's VA System. Go to Legion.org to find out more. Also, go and Google the VA and find out what the problems with our VA System are. Did you know 22 Veterans Commit Suicide a day? These are the numbers from 2012 records of those Veterans in the VA system. Experts believe the Suicide Rate is much higher! Please let the Community know about this tragic problem.

April is a great time for an Open House in your Community, April is Children & Youth month plan something for all the children in the community. Ask for some assistance from your Law Enforcement for safety tips, such as Fire-fighter, EMT and Paramedic on how to "Stop, Drop and Roll" for a fire. How to call 911 for help is often the most important action you can take to help someone. Have a Blood Drive and save a life.

May features Armed Forces Day, Mother's Day and Memorial Day, this is a wonderful time to do a function at your Post with your Post Family, have your members bring in guests, and share the time with friends. Have a Service Ball or a Mother's Day Ball. Do not forget, "Consolidated Post Reports (CPR)". This is the time of year to brag about your Post, make sure to let everyone know how great a Post you have.

As for those Posts who have exceeded this year's goal; please have your "Post Excellence" request sent into your District Commander. You did the hard part already, take home the award! Also, work on the 100% Family Banner, bring the whole Family in, with this award from National.

As Always,  
 Yours in Service

# Membership Report

## As of February 25, 2016

District/ Area	Commander	Goal	Rcvd	% of Goal
3	H. Perry	1,799	1,692	94.05
2	W. Jackson	1,337	1,248	93.34
16	J. Bell	12,007	11,156	92.91
4	K. Deschamps	3,837	3,564	92.89
6	D. Bass	12,137	11,183	92.14
12	R. Fashano	9,203	8,439	91.70
13	M. Adcock	9,774	8,895	91.01
1	C. Johann	6,149	5,581	90.76
17	B. Howe	4,076	3,666	89.94
8	D. Walsh	8,149	7,325	89.89
5	L. Dukes	8,074	7,184	88.98
7	S. Anthony	3,973	3,486	87.74
11	A. Bruce	3,685	3,199	86.81
15	G. Hamblin	5,378	4,667	86.78
9	J. Tewes	3,997	3,445	86.19
14	G. Decker	2,963	2,531	85.42
Eastern	T. Biddle	21,340	19,622	91.95
Western	M. Kirchoff	7,486	6,829	91.22
Northern	J. Durden	17,786	16,106	90.55
South-western	D. Deierlein	17,923	16,220	90.50
Central	E. Butts	21,358	19,309	90.41
Southern	J. Motes	10,645	9,175	86.19

**Paul Martel**

**Department Legislative Chairman**

**Legislative@Legionmail.org**

Our State Legislators are in session and they are doing a great amount of work for you, the veteran. If you are on my mailing list you would have received all the bills that they are working on. As the bills are passed and sign by the Governor, we will pass the information out to you.

This month the Legislative team will be in Washington D.C. to meet with our Representatives to share our thoughts on what is the best way to help our veterans. As many of you know the Department of Florida is the only state to have a luncheon at the Rayburn building in the Gold room. All of our Representatives have been notified of the time and where we will be holding this event. In the past the attendance has been well worth the effort; the Committee not only has a chance to hear what each Representative has to say, we ask them questions and bring them back to the reason we are there, VETERANS ISSUES. If someone could not make the luncheon we set up teams to go to that person's office to make sure he or she knows where we stand on issues for our Veterans. With the next report in the Link I will give you a breakdown of what happens with this trip. On a personnel note may I say that we are fortunate to have Stanley Gold as the National Legislative Chairman. He has been going to Washington for years and knows just about everyone there, and has worn many caps from the United States Post Office to the Legion. I salute you.

For the people who are on my list, I do hope you are reading what is passed on to you but more importantly that you are sharing your list and bringing the information to your own Post. I have been asked why some of the information is repeated, not only from me, but other people; my answer is simple, you must be a very important person and we want to make sure YOU have that information. My next statement is this, the men and women who devised the computer were very smart, because they put the DELETE button on the keyboard.

**Loretta Young**

**JROTC/Shooting Chairman**

**JROTC@Legionmail.org**

Jr. Shooting Sports Target deadline has passed and all targets have been fired and returned. There is still some confusion about the online application and Posts making payments with reimbursement of the cost. I have requested that the District Chairmen advise me on what schools have participated in the Postal Match, however I've had little response at the time of writing this.

National has asked the State Chairmen to reconcile all the teams that have participated in the past. Through the years Florida has had 80 teams sending in targets. Posts, please advise your District Chairmen or myself what teams you are sponsoring.

The next deadline is the Cadet of the Year application, due March 1st. The Department has sent out the applications to all the schools. One set went out at the beginning of the semester and the second mailing at the beginning of January. The applications went directly to the Guidance Counselor and should be forwarded to the JROTC Instructors. Please follow up with your schools to make sure they have been received. It is the responsibility of the instructor to choose the applicants and return the applications directly to the Program Chair at Department. Thanks to all the posts on what you do for our youth and our Legion programs.

**Todd Emmert**

**Scholarships Chairman**

**Scholarships@legionmail.org**

The Scholarships Committee will become active over the next few months with the March 1<sup>st</sup> applications deadline. Over a dozen General Scholarship applications have been received so far. We expect several more applications for Eagle Scout of the Year, General Scholarship, JROTC Cadet of the Year and Teacher of the Year by the end of February.

I have contacted Florida's six medical school's financial aid offices to remind them of our two scholarships for third year medical students. Last year we had no applicants. I have made Post visits to Posts 90, 103, 110, 123, 254, 323 and 274 in conjunction with Legion Rider's events and have introduced myself with the leadership teams at each Post. I also attended the District 13 Fall Conference meeting for the American Legion, Legion Riders and Sons of the American Legion. Lastly, I attend the Department Fall Conference and completed the Post Services Officer training.

**Andy Burket**

**Baseball Chairman**

**Baseball@Legionmail.org**

**786-351-5485**

Hello everyone this is my first article in the Legion Link. This is to let you know who I am: I have been appointed as the new Chairperson for America Legion Baseball Program and I am getting my feet wet very quickly. I will know more about my job next time and will be able to give you a proper update.

**Stanley Gold**  
**National Legislative Vice Chairman**  
*stanleymgold@gmail.com*

On February 22-24, a delegation from Florida will attend the Washington Legislative conference including the Women’s Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion. Our Department will hold our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Luncheon for all Florida members of Congress, which will be held in the Gold Room in the Raybourn House Office Building on February 24<sup>th</sup> at noon. All members of the House informed us that they will be there.

The same morning our National Commander Dale Barnett will speak to the Joint Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committee. We will also be at that meeting.

Whether or not you will be attending the Washington Conference, you can help push out our key issues to members of Congress, leaders in your community and your local media. Among The American Legion’s top issues and priorities for the second session of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress:

**Caring for mental health issues:** Congress should provide help and proper funding for veterans struggling with mental health issues, post-traumatic stress disorder and brain injuries. Alternative treatment must be provided as options for veterans and service members in need of treatment for brain injuries and mental stress

**Provide transition assistance:** Service members transitioning to the civilian world face many challenges. Congress should ensure that sequestration cuts and budget shortfalls do not impact service men and women.

**Expand employment opportunities:** Congress should implement a proposed pilot program that would subsidize businesses and non-profit organizations that create on-the-job training opportunities for veterans.

**Protect our Nation:** Fully fund a superior national defense to battle enemies including, but not limited to the Islamic State, North Korea and others

**Improve VA experiences:** Veterans must have faith that the health care system designed for them will be there to meet their needs. There has been progress but there is need for continuous improvement and reform, such as strengthening the oversight program.

**End veteran homelessness:** While improvements have been made to eliminate veteran homelessness, too many are still on the streets. It is essential to continue the funding that Congress pledged to eradicate homelessness.

**Protect the American Flag:** The American Legion remains committed to protecting Old Glory, and continues to support legislation that safeguards our nation’s flag from physical desecration.

I encourage you to communicate our priorities to your representatives and Senators, write a letter to your local newspaper and share these priorities on your social media feeds. Let’s ensure the voices of 2.2 million members usher in the necessary changes that benefit veterans of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

# PROJECT: VETRELIEF

A PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

**Calling all Legion Family members...**

*Did you know that in 2015 PROJECT: VetRelief was only able to help 118 families who applied for Emergency Assistance? Due to lack of funding and resources, we were only able to assist 19% of our cases last year.*

It is only with your help that we can provide additional support to more and more of our **1.5 million service members** residing right here in our own state.

Every dollar makes a difference. Together, we can make a HUGE impact on the lives of our service members and their families!

All contributing Family Members will be acknowledged during State Convention.

**JOIN US AS WE FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT!**






**MOST GENEROUS BRANCH OF SERVICE CAMPAIGN**

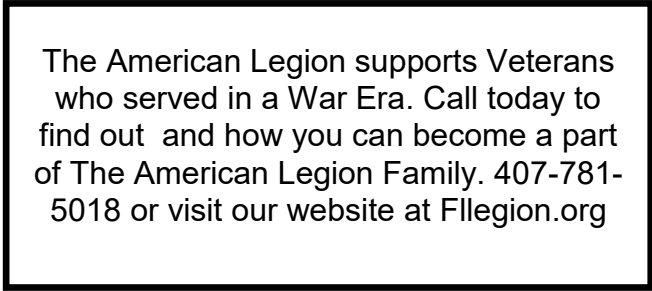
Do you think your branch of service can be considered the "Most Generous"? In April, we will launch an online fundraising campaign to find out! Be on the look out for more information on this campaign, and how you can join in on the fun! The winner will be announced at the 2016 Department Convention.

*Who will it be? Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, or Coast Guard?*

For more information visit our website: [www.ProjectVetRelief.org](http://www.ProjectVetRelief.org)

**Diane Schmidt**  
**Public Relations Chairman**  
**PublicRelations@Legionmail.org**

What does your business card say about you? Is it busy with too much information? Notice those large billboards on I-4 and try to recall what you remember from the split second as you passed it.



**Which of the above two billboards would you select?**

Your business card does the same thing. Do you take the time to understand your audience and what you hope to achieve by handing it out? What do you want the recipient to know: all of your affiliations and your phone number or how to get in touch with you immediately?



**Roy Havekost**  
**Social Media Chairman**  
**SocialMedia@Legionmail.org**

I am interested in those Posts and Districts that have a *Facebook*™ presence and how you are utilizing your site. Please send me a screen shot of your page or group, along with a short description of its use, and include your site URL (ie [www.facebook.com/group/ALxxx](http://www.facebook.com/group/ALxxx)). I will be using the emails to judge sites for awards being presented at the 2016 Department Convention. Send your screen shots to [SocialMedia@legionmail.org](mailto:SocialMedia@legionmail.org). Entries are due no later than May 2nd, 2016. This is your last chance to enter! Winners will be announced in the June Legion Link before the Convention.

If your Post or District isn't using your page or group to its fullest capacity, then you should send a representative to this year's Convention in June and attend the Social Media Training class being offered. You will learn ways to promote your site so that it better serves you as an advertising medium.

## 98th Annual Department Convention

The American Legion, Department of Florida will be hosting its annual statewide convention June 16th – 19th 2016 at The Renaissance SeaWorld, Orlando FL.

Approximately 3,000 American Legion members will be in attendance to include spouses and family members. Each year the state convention offers a wide variety of leadership training available to all members for the development and betterment of their local Post. The Department convention is not only a time where all posts gather to exchange ideas and reunite as a family; it is also a time where our members gather to elect the leadership for the new membership year and celebrate in the successes of the past membership year as it comes to a close. Please review this year's convention agenda to see all the exciting events planned and unique learning opportunities offered. A tentative agenda will be on Department's website by the end of March.

**Troy Horsley**  
**School Medals Chairman**  
**SchoolMedals@Legionmail.org**

My fellow Legionnaires

We need your help with our youth. There are a lot of good kids out there that are exhibiting traits that are good for our country. They are the kids in our schools that are naturally showing Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, and Service. The Legion has a program to recognize their efforts and the American Legion School Award program is the answer. Hopefully by now Post Commanders have assigned their committees and you are out soliciting your local schools. If not, now is the time!

Students are graduating from elementary, middle and high schools in May and the teachers and staff would like to reward their students for their great achievements. Please, get out and talk to your local school principals or guidance counselors to let them know the Legion has this program and would like to recognize their students. Talk to them about the selection process of choosing a boy and girl awardee who they determine is the best representative of the values of Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service. Find out when the end of the year award presentation for the school is going to be held so someone from your Post can be there to present the awards. If you need assistance with examples of talking points for the councilors, awards that need to be presented or the awards presentations, don't hesitate to contact me via email. I will be glad to be of assistance.

Don't forget to keep track of your numbers. It is very important for the end of the year Consolidated Post Report. The numbers are important as each Department is nominated for a beautiful plaque, known as "The Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy". It is awarded annually to the Department showing the greatest Americanism activity in the use of the American Legion School Award Medals. The winning Department will be determined by: (a) the number of "American Legion School Awards Medals" recorded in the Consolidated Post Report form; (b) the number of awards per Department is then divided by the number of Post in the Department; and (c) the Department with the highest percentage will be declared the winner of the Ralph T. O'Neil Education Trophy.

Let's win this Trophy this year for all the young future leaders of our country who share our values of true Americanism.

**Deborah Wheeler**  
**Women Veterans Chairman**  
**WomenVeterans@Legionmail.org**

It brings me great pleasure to write this Legion Link article as the Department of Florida Women Veteran Chair. The history of women in the military dates back to over 3000

years ago serving their respective countries. In US history women were serving in the Revolutionary War beside men and also took their husband's place after death or injury. In World War I women enlisted disguised as men. In 1948 Congress allowed women to serve in limited roles in the US military and put a ceiling cap of 2%. Over 300,000 women are World War II veterans. In the Korean War the percentage rose to 2%. The cap was removed in 1967 and the number rose to 14% in 1997.

Many women who served after 1948 were labeled by nonveterans as floozies or other cruel labels. Some were shunned by their families. Even in the late 50s and early 60s if she became pregnant she would immediately be discharged. Times are changing. Current levels of female are 13%, the branches with the least numbers of women in their ranks are the Marines while the Air Force has the most.

Military roles of women and attitudes has changed dramatically over the years as we all know. The number of US military veterans are over 2.2 million and continues to rise. The VA has adapted to provide health care with the increasing numbers of women and continue to provide gender specific care.

With this information in mind the American Legion has to adapt to our sisters. Even after gaining official veteran status in 1948 women were still not permitted at Legion meetings or in the Posts. Most found the Auxiliary more comfortable. Now our Legion welcomes the female veterans with open arms and encourage participation, however there are isolated incidents in which the good old boys club prevails and women are shunned. This practice has to stop now. We cannot run our members off due to personal biases or gender. Female veterans are not feminists, we proudly served alongside our brothers, we are just as patriotic, loyal and proud of our service just as our brothers are.

**Donna Artola**  
**Blood Donor Chairman**  
**BloodDonor@Legionmail.org**

So far this year has been good. This month I attended one Blood Drive and went to a few Posts to talk to them about the Blood Program. I have also addressed the SAL of one Post, they knew nothing about the program. The Post that I attended had 18 donors.

Please let me know if your Post needs any help with this program. This is a very fulfilling program. By donating one pint of blood it saves 3 lives. I look forward to helping each Post. Please email me your stats for the blood program, and when you do your year-end CPR report email me your pints donated.

**Rick Johnson**  
**Children and Youth Chairman**  
**C&Y@Legionmail.org**

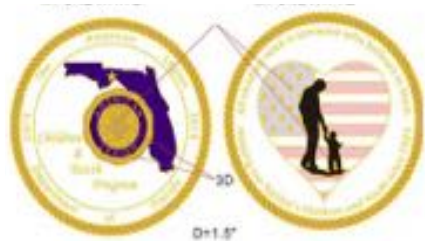
Well, it is getting closer to the end of our year, and I will tell you, being your Children and Youth Chairman has been fun and eye opening. In September we had our Golf Tournament which was a great event, thank you to the family of 323. March 19<sup>th</sup> in Seminole, Post 252 is having a special event honoring the community and will have a booth there to answer questions on the C&Y Programs. April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016 will be the statewide Children and Youth picnic being held at Post 117 and will have Doug Lippert, National Director from COTA and the National Beads of Courage representatives here. We need as many sponsors that we can get for this fun event which hopefully will become an annual event.

April 15<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for applications for Teacher of the Year, so please get those applications in. Let's pay tribute to those very special people out there. We still have C&Y coins for sale contact me or Department for them. All monies raised from coin sales and the picnic, will be donated back to the Legion, SAL and Auxiliary Children and Youth programs at the Convention. All of this could not happen if the Family is not involved. I promote family values all the time and I hope as we keep moving forward, we continue to work as a tight knit group and continue to remind everyone why we are here. Doing events together as a family only gets awareness out there about our programs. The more events that we have the more the community will know about us and begin to stand behind us in our goals.

It has also been great to work with Michelle and Bill my counter parts for the C&Y programs. Again, thank you everyone who has supported us this year and if there is anything that I can do, please call me.

Let's not remain a secret in our communities. Let's get visible. Let's remember what the Children and Youth Pillar stands for. If your Post or District has a function going on, please let us know so we can get the word out and get participation within the State.

Let's continue to give our kids a "Square Deal" and continue working the programs.



**Children & Youth Challenge Coin Order Form**

Price: \$10.00 each

*All proceeds go to funding the Annual Children & Youth Programs*

Post #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Coins: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00

Total Dollar Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make checks or money orders out to American Legion, Department of Florida*

*Mail to: P.O. Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854*

*Attn: Programs Director*



The American Legion, Department of Florida  
would like you to join us for the

# Annual Children & Youth Picnic

Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

12:00 PM *until* 6:00 PM

Live Entertainment BY D.J. Doc Holiday!

### Activities

Carnival Games  
Safety Finger Printing  
Bounce House  
Vendors  
Chinese Auction  
50/50 Raffle  
Dunk Tank

### Food

Cotton Candy  
Candy Apples  
BBQ Chicken  
Hot Dogs  
Hamburgers



### Poker Run

Registration starts at 8 AM  
Kick stands up at 9 AM  
\$10 per Rider  
\$5 per Passenger  
  
Cars are Welcome!!  
\$10 per Car  
\$5 per Passenger

Fun Carnival Atmosphere for All Ages!!

Picnic Hosted BY Post 117

189 Veterans Drive, Palm Bay, FL 32909

#### For More Information Contact:

Rick Johnson – rickjtank@hotmail.com; (954) 242-4496  
Jim Fournier – postcommander@a117.com; (561) 201-6189  
Or visit [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org)



**Admission**  
\$10 per Person  
(Children  
under 12 years  
old are free!)



**Sponsorship Levels:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Bronze \$25 – Name on Sponsorship Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Silver \$50 – Name on Sponsorship Board and Two Tickets to Annual Children & Youth Picnic

\_\_\_\_\_ Gold \$100 - Name on Sponsorship Board, Two Tickets to Annual Children & Youth Picnic, and Children & Youth Shirt with Name on it (Cut-off Date for Gold Sponsorship March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016)

Size Shirt (please circle): Small, Medium, Large, X-Large, 2XL, 3XL Make Checks out to Post 117, in the memo put C&Y

Picnic

Mail Checks to Post 117 – 189 Veterans Dr. Palm Bay, FL 32909

**We are in need of Basket Donations for our Chinese Auction. Any gifts will be appreciated**

**Poker Run Registration:**

Post

Numb

er: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Riders: \_\_\_\_\_

**Hotel Information:**

**Holiday Inn Express – 1206 Malabar Rd. S.E., Palm Bay, FL**


(321) 220-2003

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Constitutional Conferences		
District	Date	Location
1st	April 30th	Post 235
2nd	May 7th	Post 100
3rd	June 4th	Post 291
4th	June 4th	Post 284
5th	June 5th	Post 137
6th	May 7th	Post 80
7th	May 15th	Post 8
8th	May 21st	TBD
9th	May 22nd	Post 142
11th	June 5th	Post 64
12th	May 7th	Post 81
13th	May 21st	Post 103
14th	May 21st	Post 31
15th	May 7th	Post 111
16th	May 14th	Post 335
17th	June 5th	Post 6

Upcoming Events and Deadlines	
Event	Date
Northern Area Ball	March 5th
State Oratorical Contest	March 12th
Legion Birthday	March 15th
National Commander's Visit	March 24th-31st
Children & Youth Picnic	April 2nd
Florida In State Legacy Ride	April 10th-17th
Commander's Homecoming	April 24th
Teacher of the Year	April 25
Firefighter of the Year	April 25
Law Enforcement of the Year	April 25
Nat'l CPR's & Dept. Addendums	May 2nd
End of Year Award Submissions	May 2nd
ALR State Rally	May 13th-16th
Armed Forces Day	May 21st
Memorial Day	May 30th
History Books/Narratives	June 6th
Department Convention	June 16th-19th
Boys State	June 19th-25th
Youth Law Cadet	July 11th-15th

## TAPS



David L. Corning, Past 17th District Commander

Chris Christians, Past Northern Area Commander

William "Bill" Bingle, Past 1st District Commander



October 14, 2015

Michael McDaniel Department  
 Adjutant  
 P.O. Box 547859  
 Orlando, Florida 32854-7859

At the Executive Board meeting on October 14, 2015, Joseph R. Magee received the endorsement as a candidate for the high office of Department Commander for the Department of Florida.

Joe's eligibility in the American Legion derives from four+ years served honorably in the United States Navy from Sept. 1964 - Oct. 1968.

Joe has been a member of the Department of Florida since 1974 serving in many capacities, including all Post Offices, plus Judge Advocate. District level, Joe is a three term 8th District Commander. Joe also served as Asst. Sgt-At- Arms, Judge Advocate, Historian and two terms as District Executive Committeeman, and as District Oratorical Chairman.

Joe is a Past Department Vice Commander, Southwestern Area. He, also, served as Area Oratorical Chairman. In the past, he has been an appointee to the National Economic Committee, and currently serves on the National Americanism Committee.

Joe has served as Department of Florida 2nd Vice Commander and, currently, serves as Department of Florida 1st Vice Commander.

Joe has attended the Florida American Legion College in 1995, the Service Officer School, Sgt-At-Arms Training. In 2014-2015, he served as a member of the Area Training Team, served as a staff member of the Florida American Legion College and attended the National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis, Ind.

Based on his experience and determination, there is no doubt Joe is amply qualified to fill the duties of the position of Department Commander.

For God and Country,

Angelo Felcita  
 1st Vice Commander

William Conti  
 Adjutant



## The American Legion Old Glory Post 183

2706 Wells Avenue  
Fern Park, FL 32730  
(407) 831-8004

September 25, 2015

To: Michael McDaniel, Adjutant Department of Florida  
From: Jerry Fairman, Commander

Subject: ENDORSEMENT OF STEPHEN SHUGA

At the monthly meeting of the general assembly of American Legion Post 183, Fern Park, Florida on September 20, 2015, a unanimous vote to endorse the name of Stephen Shuga, ID# 2028938 for Department 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander, year 2016-2017 for the State of Florida was taken and passed.

Stephen has been an active and loyal American Legionnaire over the past 12 years, has served in the United States Marine Corps for twenty years, and was honorably discharged/retired in 1995 as an E-7 Gunnery Sergeant. Stephen is actively engaged in and has served faithfully throughout Florida at the Post, District, Area and Department levels since joining The American Legion. He has completed essential educational requirement to better understand the organization, having completed American Legion Institute in 2006 and the National Legion College in 2008.

Stephen is very diversified and knowledgeable of our programs, operations and membership. He is currently Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander.

Past association in leadership positions through other veteran service organizations have enriched Stephen's abilities to encourage an understanding of mutual helpfulness for a common cause. He has maintained an active participation in programs that aid and support the communities. His steadfast devotion to these various activities exemplifies his total dedication as an American Legionnaire and his profound support for our community, state and nation.

It is with great pleasure that American Legion Post 183, Fern Park, FL endorses American Legionnaire Stephan Shuga to become the next Department 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander, State of Florida for 2016-2017.

Jerry Fairman  
Post 183 Commander

Melanie Golden  
Post 183 Adjutant



**American Legion**  
 Charles F. Thomas IV Post 117 189  
 Veterans Drive  
 Palm Bay, Florida 32909



10 September 2015

Department of Florida:

At the General Membership Meeting of the American Legion, Charles F. Thomas IV Post 117, on 19 August 2015, the General Membership unanimously endorsed Legionnaire Dianne Boland, formerly Dianne Thibodeau, for the election to the high office of Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander, Department of Florida for the year 2016 — 2017.

Dianne Boland has been an active member of the American Legion for 20 years. She joined the organization in 1995 and is a "Paid Up For Life" member of the American Legion. Dianne Boland is a Vietnam era Veteran who was on active duty in the United States Air Force from 1965 to 1968. When her husband was discharged she got out of the service and later joined the United States Air Force Reserves and completed another 21 years and retired as a Chief Master Sergeant.

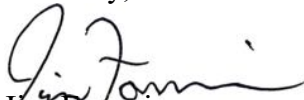
Dianne has served numerous positions at the Post level to include four terms as Post Commander, one term as Post 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander, four terms as Post Finance Officer and Adjutant, and one term as Post Historian. In 1998 Diane was awarded the "Legionnaire of the Year Award" at her Post. She is a strong supporter of Boys State and attended Boys State on four occasions.

At the District level, Dianne has held the office of District Vice Commander and District Commander. She also was the Chairman for District 12 Children and Youth Commission. At the Department she served as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander for the years 2015 — 2016 and Chairman for the Children and Youth for three terms. She also served as Chairman for Membership, Americanism, and Special Olympics.

At the National level, Dianne was appointed as a general member of National Membership and Post Activities Committee for five terms and served several terms as Vice Chairman on Foreign Relations Council.

Dianne's dedication and desire to serve the American Legion is unquestionable. She has served the members in numerous capacities and will do an excellent job if she is elected to the high office of Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander. It is with great pleasure and honor that American Legion Post 117 endorse Dianne Boland as a candidate for Department 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander for the years 2016-2017.

Sincerely,

  
 Jim Fournier  
 Commander, Post 117

  
 Duane Podhota  
 Adjutant, Post 117

William C Morris Post #36  
Ft. Lauderdale FL 33324

Michael McDaniel  
Department Adjutant  
PO Box 5478589  
Orlando FL 32854-7859

October 1<sup>st</sup> 2015

At a regularly scheduled meeting on September 28th 2015 the membership of Post 36 proudly and unanimously endorsed the candidacy of William Rick Johnson for the high office of Department 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander Department of Florida,

Rick is a Ten year member of the American Legion and an outstanding member of Post #36.

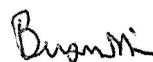
He held the Southern Area Commander from 2013-2015 and served the Department of Florida well. At the District level, Rick has served as Asst-Sgt-At-Arms, Sgt-At-Arms, Vice Commander and Commander. He currently holds the C&Y Chairman from 2015 and is our post adjutant to present. At the National level he holds the Vice Chairmanship for Homeland Security Council 2013-to present. He is a graduate from the Legion Institute. He is also a dual member and holds the position as Sgt-at-arms for the SAL 9<sup>th</sup> District. He conducts himself very professional in every event he attends and continues to mentor younger members within the Legion and we are proud to have him a member of our Post.

The members of Post #36 have supported him in all ventures at all levels. Post #36 strongly endorses him for his next venture as 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander for Department of Florida for the year 2016-2017. .

For God and Country



Larry Sapp  
Commander



Pete Bugnacki  
Adjutant



AMERICAN LEGION POST 69  
1301 W. BELL ST  
AVON PARK  
FLORIDA 33825

Michael McDaniel  
Adjutant  
Department of Florida  
P.O. Box 547859  
Orlando, Florida 32854

October 12, 2015

Dear Adjutant,

Subject: Department Sergeant at Arms 2016-2017 Endorsement

We the General Membership of Highlands County American Legion Post 69 confidently recommend and endorse Doug Deierlein for the position of Department Sergeant at Arms. Doug has proven to be a leader who works for his comrades and has proven that he has been a leader for the American Legion.

Doug Deierlein excels in the areas of the American Legions Four Pillars and Ethics. During our years of working with Doug at Post 69 and the Eighth District we have found him totally trustworthy and knowledgeable in all Legion matters.

Doug's experience in the past five years includes First Vice Post Commander, Post Commander, District First Vice Commander, Department Membership Chairman, 8<sup>th</sup> District Commander and is currently serving as Post 69 Commander as well as Southwestern Area Commander, Doug's well known commitment to accountability in the legion will promote an atmosphere of openness in the position of Department Sergeant at Arms.

If you want to see a hard working honest person at the Department level, join me in supporting Doug Deierlein for Department Sergeant at Arms

  
Robert (Bob) Plafchan

Post 69 Adjutant

  
Robert ( Bob ) Burke

Post 69 Finance Officer



Theodore H. Hernandez  
 American Legion Post 54 626 South Third Street  
 Fernandina Beach, FL. 32034

Mr. Michael McDaniel, Adjutant  
 The American Legion/Department of Florida  
 P.O. Box 547859  
 Orlando, Florida 32854

November 2, 2015

At the regularly scheduled meeting of November 2, 2015, the membership of Post 54 endorsed post member Thomas J. Gora as a candidate for office of Sergeant at Arms, Department of Florida 2016-17.

Thomas Gora earned his eligibility to be a member of The American Legion as a Vietnam era veteran, serving in the U.S. Air Force 1971-1976 with distinction assigned to the 35<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, Misawa Air Base, Japan, and in a cadet support role at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs. After service he then completed his college education and began a 30 year career with the United States Department of Justice, retiring in 2004. He continues to provide services as a professional consultant to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Gora, a 12 year member of The American Legion, has held several officer positions at Post 54 including Post Commander 2009-2011. Mr. Gora served as 5<sup>th</sup> District Vice-Commander 2012-13 and as 5<sup>th</sup> District Commander 2013-2015. He has served two terms as the Department Law and Order Chairman, and has served on the National Security Council 2013-2016. He has completed The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) and currently serves the Department as an ALEI instructor, and he is a 2014 Graduate of the National American Legion College (NALC). He also served on the faculty of the 2015 Department of Florida Legion College.

Mr. Gora, currently serves as Department of Florida Sgt. at Arms 2015-16 and has initiated a training program for Sgt. at Arms which he has thus far provided to two Districts. He attended the National Convention in 2015 participating in parade preparation, he also served as a National Assistant Sergeant at Arms on the convention floor, and he is a member of the National Sergeants at Arms Association. Mr. Gora is seeking a second term as Department Sgt. at Arms to provide stability and continuity to the position and to complete training of all Districts. The membership of American Legion Post 54 proudly endorses Thomas J. Gora as a candidate for the high office

of Sergeant-at-Arms, Department of Florida for the year 2016-2017.

For God and Country,

William Martin, Commander

G. Pat Beamer, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander





Lehigh Acres American Legion Post 323 1124 Ashler  
Ave  
Lehigh Acres, FL 33936

July 20, 2015

Michael McDaniel, Department Adjutant  
The American Legion  
Department of Florida  
P.O. Box 547859  
Orlando, FL 32854-7859

Dear Michael:

On July 20, 2015 at a regular convened meeting of Lehigh Acres American Legion Post 323, a motion was made and unanimously voted on to submit the nomination of Dennis R. Boland for the high office of National Executive Committeeman for the 2016/2018 years.

John Bennet, Post Adjutant

Jackie Frady, Post Commander



# American Legion Post #120

461 Walker Street  
Holly Hill, Florida 32117-2605  
(386) 258-5275

September 17, 2015

Mike McDaniel  
1912A Lee Road  
Orlando, Florida

At a Regularly scheduled meeting of Post 120, 461 Walker Street, Holly Hill, Florida the Post unanimously endorsed Art Schwabe for the High Office of National Executive Committeeman Alternate for the Great State of Florida for the years 2016-2018.

Art has shown his ability to lead and do the job representing Florida and should continue to serve as NECA.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Brewer'.

Esther Brewer, Post Commander

Tom Rice, Post Adjutant

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Thomas Rice'.



# Hugh Gilbert Strickland Post 138

Department of Florida  
 5535 West Prescott Street  
 Port Tampa City, FL 33616  
 (813) 839-1889      www.post138florida.com

Michael McDaniel

November 18, 2015

Department Adjutant P.O.  
 Box 547859  
 Orlando, Florida 32854

At the regularly scheduled meeting held on Wednesday November 18, 2015, the membership of Hugh Gilbert Strickland American Legion Post 138, Port Tampa City, Florida unanimously voted to endorse Shelli Romeu as a candidate for election to the high office of Department of Florida Historian, for the subsequent term 2016-2017.

Shelli earned her eligibility to become a Legionnaire by serving her country faithfully with honor and dignity in the United States Army from 1986-1990. She has been a member of the American Legion and a valuable member of Post 138 for 6 years, and is a "Paid up for Life Member". Shelli has held the Post level offices of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander, Executive Board member, Historian, and assistant Chaplain. She is currently serving as our Post's 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander and also continues to serve as Chairperson for our Americanism, Oratorical, and Children & Youth Programs.

At the District level, Shelli is in her fourth year serving as Adjutant. Shelli is also currently serving as the Department of Florida Historian, fulfilling her duties admirably. She is a graduate of the National Legion College 2013 class. Shelli is an active member of both the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) and Florida American Legion Press Association (FALPA). She has been very involved with Florida's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and this is reflected on the National Centennial webpage.

Shelli is also involved with other Veterans's Organizations such as AMVETS (life member), Twenty and Four (Honor Society for Women Legionnaires), and the Forty and Eight (serving in both Grande and Locale Officer positions).

In all her leadership positions, Shelli has served with distinction - executing her duties with integrity and enthusiasm. She is a dedicated and loyal legionnaire who will fulfill the duties of any position above and beyond that which is expected. For this reason, Hugh Gilbert Strickland American Legion Post 138, Port Tampa City, Florida proudly endorses Shelli Romeu for re-election to the high office of Department of Florida Historian for 2016-2017.

For God and Country,

  
 Daniel Carter  
 Commander

  
 Gene Fullen  
 Adjutant



Cassin Young Memorial  
American Legion Post 267

To: Mike McDaniel, Department Adjutant

April 12, 2015

Department of Florida

Subject: Endorsement of Reverend Willie W, Branch Jr. for the High Office of Department Chaplain for Department of Florida year 2016-2017.

During American Legion Cassin Young Memorial Post 267 August 27,2015, scheduled General Membership Meeting. The General Membership voted unanimously to Endorse Reverend Willie W. Branch Jr. for election to the High Office of Department Chaplain, Department of Florida year 2016-2017.

Rev Branch served as Post 267 and District 17 Chaplain. He is currently Post 267 Commander. Further he was Ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, October, 1995, after five years of study to become a minister. He has pastored multiple churches in Texas and in Florida. In 2009, he was stationed in Ormond Beach, Florida to pastor Historic New Bethel A.M.E. Church where he joined the Cassin Young Memorial Post 267. He gives the benediction each year at the annual Memorial celebration in Ormond Beach, where he also has served as Police Chaplain and Chaplain of the Volusia County Sheriff's Office until January, 2015, when he resigned focusing his energy into his duties as

Commander and District Chaplain. In addition to duties at the post he serves as Chairman of the Ormond Beach Housing Authority Board. Served in the US Navy from 1971 until 1983. A dedicated man of the Cloth who serves the people of all races and religions, practicing "being a servant and not being served."

His numerous volunteer work in the community includes;

Minister African Methodist Episcopal Church, (1990 — Present), (Retired Pastor 2012)

Chaplain (Almoner) Forty and Eight Post 294, Volusia County (2012 — Present)

Chaplain District 17 American Legion Department of Florida (2014 - Present)

Chaplain Florida Hospital Ormond Beach (2009 — Present)

Chaplain (Gospel Music Workshop of America, Daytona Chapter 2012 — Present)

Executive Board Ormond Beach Senior Games (Technical Director) (2013 — Present)

Chairman, Ormond Beach Housing Authority Board (2013 — Present)

Member of HAMA, Halifax Area Ministerial Alliance (2010 — Present)

Member of Florida Crisis Response Team (2011 — Present)

Volusia County Crisis Response Team (2012 — Present)

Member of Ormond Beach Memorial Day Planning Committee (2011 — Present)

For the many reasons listed above it is a great honor to endorse Reverend Willie W. Branch Jr. for this high office.

**Tracy Ward**

Post Adjutant

**Larry Murphy**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander



THOMAS P JOHNSTON AMERICAN LEGION POST 222  
4250 NE 5<sup>TH</sup>, FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33334  
PHONE 965-565-6501

To Department Adjutant Mike McDaniel  
Department of Florida American Legion

24th, OCTOBER 2015

Subject: Endorsement for Steven R. Newman for the High Office of Department of Florida Chaplain 2016-2017

The American Legion Post 222, during a regularly scheduled general meeting on 13 October 2015 endorses Steven R. Newman for the high and prestigious office of Department of Florida Chaplain, 2015-2016.

Steven has been a member of the American Legion in good standing for twelve (12) years. He currently holds and has held numerous Chaplain positions at various levels over the past years which include Department of Florida Chaplain 2015-2016, Southern Area Chaplain, 9th District Chaplain, Post 222 Chaplain, Post 222 SAL Chaplain, and 40/8 Chaplain. Additionally, he is the Post's Honor/Color Guard Chaplain. He is a mainstay to this organization and has been since he became a First Vice Commander over 12 years ago. Steven Newman serves in the Chaplain position with high ethical, spiritual, and moral standards and takes these responsibilities with strong courage and conviction.

As Chaplain in the various levels of the American Legion, which now includes the prestigious Department of Florida Chaplain for 2015-2016, he maintains and provides excellent leadership skills displaying at all times the care and concern required of his position. Since assuming duties as Department of Florida Chaplain he has implemented an outstanding Chaplain's training program for all Post Chaplains and those desiring to be Chaplains at the District and Post level. Steven has also been selected once again as the National Chaplain Training Coordinator. He has also updated his previously published Department level Chaplain Course Manual to aid Chaplains at various levels. Still accompanying the Chaplain Manual is a published Department Chaplain prayer manual. Steven is a truly devoted and dedicated Department Chaplain who is an inspiration to all he comes in contact with.

He is nothing less than a fine and exemplary Chaplain at all levels. Steven Newman is well disciplined in the principles that govern the American Legion and is a highly qualified legionnaire for the high office of Department Chaplain. His experience, coupled with his applied knowledge, outstanding teaching and leadership skills are truly strong elements for his candidacy.

It is with great pleasure that American Legion Post 222, Fort Lauderdale endorse the name of Steven Newman to be the next Department Chaplain for our great state of Florida for 2016-2017.

"For GOD and Country"

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Reynolds  
Mark Reynolds, Post 222 Commander

Ed Miller  
Post 222 Adjutant