



The LEGION LINK

"Lil Leprechaun Fighting For Vets"



Department
of Florida

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Joe Magee
Department Commander
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I hope everyone had a fun filled Labor Day weekend. Prior to leaving for the National Convention, I was treated to the thrill of my life. I was invited to participate on a gator hunt sponsored by Post 81, wow, what a time. The following weekend it was off to the National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. The ride up in the Leprechaun Limo was a hoot, we had mountains disappear, some goofy photos taken and on the way back we even had a passenger talking to the dashboard, no other comments on that situation. The Limo did enjoy a prime parking spot at the hotel and was seen by the Nation.

The Limo participated in the parade and was a big hit there. Also, we met the Riders coming in off the Legacy Run. The only down side to the Convention was we had to walk down 22 flights of stairs due to an emergency on Thursday, our first day there. It took a while to recover from that ordeal.

On the way home we, of course, had to make a couple of courtesy stops; Lake City Post 57 and Gainesville Post 16. I would like to thank all there for their hospitality. Next stop was Post 266 Fruitville, Sarasota, then home. The following week we were off to Orlando and back to business. From there we were invited to the 5th District and the Legion Family Memorial Dedication Ceremony at the national cemetery in Jacksonville, it was a moving dedication and so well attended. Kudos to those on the committee that worked for so long to make a dream become a reality. I also attended the 5th District meeting

while there, as always an impressive function, done only the way the 5th knows how to do it. While in Jacksonville I visited numerous Posts such as Post 9, Post 283, Post 316 and Post 137. Also, while there I attended a 9/11 ceremony at Post 283, nice job, another moving experience. I would also, like to thank all I was in contact with for their courtesies.

After returning from Jacksonville there was another meeting in Orlando. The next day golf was played in the Vet-Relief golf tournament (don't know if I should say "played", banging the ball around is more like it), however, it was a great day. We brought in \$40k plus, hard to follow that one and what can one say other than "thank you" to all who were a part of day. That golf outing was in Orlando, then we left there and drove to Lehigh Acres for the Children and Youth Golf outing, we had a great time except for a cranky old ranger who apparently did not think we were moving fast enough, can you imagine us moving fast at our age, maybe he is on geratol! That golf outing was also a success, took in in excess of 7k, kudos to all involved for their hard work; and what about the leprechaun team? Were they impressive or not?! Maybe we can turn that fever into working membership. Remember work hard and play hard and we will achieve our goals. Remember COTA, my charity. Please be as generous as possible. I think I have rambled on enough but wanted to keep you, the members, posted on my activities. Believe it or not, there are Legionnaires out there reportedly believe the commander "does nothing but ride around and talk to people". Someday, hopefully, they will learn what the Legion is all about. I hope I am not leaving anything out so I will say bye for now, keep smiling. Keep working and keep playing and it will all come together.

Dept.
of
Florida

Legion College
POSTPONED





OCTOBER 2016	
3	Child Health Day
3	Rosh Hashanah
5	Dept Membership Goal 60%
6-9	Dept Legion College (Postponed)
7	Renewal Notice Mailing
10-13	National Fall Meetings 🍀
10	Columbus Day
12	Yom Kippur
13	Navy Birthday
15	Legion Link Articles Due
17	Boss's Day
19	Renewal Cut-off
31	Halloween

🍀 - Commander Joe Magee's Attendance
Events are subject to change.



Steve Shuga
1st Vice Commander

It is great to see so many people renewing their membership and getting others to follow suit. Our strength comes from our membership and our membership is what

supports programs and activities.

The District Shuffleboard affect has begun: Please follow the weekly membership reports on the Department website. Per our Department Membership plan, October is the 60% mark that hopefully every Post will hit. Over the next few months, membership renewals will begin to slow way down and this is the time to engage with an aggressive membership renewal push.

Aim to submit renewals, transfers, and new membership weekly. This effort will support a healthy Post membership as well as making it easier on you.



Dianne Boland
2nd Vice Commander

Greetings: I have written about The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI) being the tool that would be best for your new members who are interested in learning all about the American

Legion; from their history to the four pillars of service. To register and take the course, visit www.legion.org/alei.

(2nd Vice Commander Continued)

I have also written about The Department of Florida's Legion College being another way to receive training. This year, it will take place in Orlando from October 6, 2016 thru October 9, 2016. A \$200.00 registration fee is required for rooms, coffee, donuts, and lunches and must accompany the application. They must be at department **NLT September 1, 2016**. You can find the application form at www.floridalegion.org/forms.

The Sons of the American Legion College is also an excellent Leadership Course. You have to go to their website for more information.

What I want to bring up now is the various manuals where you can find a lot of information. All can be found on the Florida Legion website or National's website.

1. Florida American Legion Area Training Guide
2. District/County Commander's Guide
3. Officers Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
4. Florida American Legion Post Administrative Manual
5. Post Operations Manual and Post Building Guide
6. Post Adjutants Manual
7. Post Development & Revitalization Procedures and Resources
8. Florida American Legion Leadership, Protocol and Parliamentary Procedure Guidebook
9. Membership Information and Awards Manual

The Florida Department Website www.floridalegion.org and National's Website www.legion.org have a wealth of knowledge about the American Legion, our programs, our history, our people and a whole lot more. When you have the time, you should browse to see what's available.

As always, if you have any comments, questions, concerns, or suggestions I would like to hear from you.



Rick Johnson
3rd Vice Commander

I hope this finds you well. We are almost four months into our new leadership, and I have contacted all of our Department chairman and have only received six responses back.

We are trying to get the web site updated with the most accurate and up to date information in order to serve our Posts and members the best we can.

(3rd Vice Commander Continued)

We have one year to get everything accomplished and we need your help. Please, let us know who your chairman are, and PLEASE let us know what you are doing out there.

I want to thank the 12th District on what you did for 9/11. It was an awesome weekend. Your city is behind you 100% and the Mayor giving you that proclamation was awesome. Thank you Riders for the escorts to all the stops to feed the city of Palm Bay. Your dedication to your community is commendable. Thank you to the honor guard at Post 117 for the ceremony at Space Coast Harley. It was a great ceremony.

This is what we are supposed to do within our communities to let them know what the American Legion is about. We have a lot of events going on, but we don't know till after the fact if you don't share with us. Let's get the word out and have a great year under our new Commander Joe Magee and have fun.

We have a visit coming in November with our National Commander in the Western Area. The schedule will come out soon so if you are around, please stop by and say hello to our new National Commander. Let's continue doing what we do best and take care of our own. God bless us all and God bless the USA. So, let's have a great and fun year and let's work together as a family to attain our goals as one.



Dennis Boland
NEC

The American Legion opposes policy of prohibiting the placement of American Flags on individual Veterans graves in National Cemeteries

The American Legion has an ongoing position to oppose attempts that would prohibit the placement of flags on individual graves. This was made clear in 1978 at the National Convention in New Orleans when delegates passed Resolution 498 titled "Oppose Any Plan to Stop the Decoration of Individual Graves in any National Cemetery" and by Resolution 214, National Convention 1997 at the National Convention in Orlando entitled "Oppose Policy of Prohibiting the Placement of American Flags on individual Graves in National Cemeteries."

President Abraham Lincoln, in 1862, signed legislation creating the national cemeteries and through the years it has been traditional and



(NEC Continued)

customary to decorate the individual graves with the U.S. Flag. The flag represents the country for which they served and by displaying the National Symbol, the Country expresses a degree of appreciation to that veteran; that it remembers his or her service

The America Legion believes it is wrong that some national cemeteries have adopted policies prohibiting the placement of the flags while, at the same time, allowing floral and other items to be placed on the gravesites.

National Cemeteries are symbolically "American Cathedrals" where the living respect the memories and service of the veterans and family members interred therein. There is no more fitting remembrance of veterans and their service to this country than the U. S. Flag.



Art Schwabe
NEC Alternate

Happy cool weather I hope!!!!

Well, the National Convention is over and a new commander has been elected, Charlie Schmidt

from Oregon. He plans on doing the awareness walk like PNC Barnett. So, get your walking shoes on, and join the walks or, better yet start one in your Post. Let's make the Legion known in your community for what you do and who we represent.

Legislation

Military Pay Increases 1.6 Percent for 2017

President Obama approved plans to cap the military's 2017 pay raise at 1.6 percent. In a brief letter to Congress last week, he said the cap was needed to maintain a "sustainable fiscal course."

House Republicans are hoping to override the President's rate with this year's defense policy and spending bills, but that effort is uncertain at best. The House versions of those bills provide troops a 2.1 percent pay raise, using a portion of the Overseas Contingency Operations fund to pay for the higher raise. But the Senate versions of those bills support President Obama's 1.6 percent raise.

Update on Flag Amendment Bill

On January 7, 2015, **House Joint Resolution (H.J. Res.) 9** was introduced by Rep. Steve Womack (AR). This legislation is a proposed constitutional amendment to protect the American

(NEC Alternate Continued)

flag from physical desecration. Its text states simply: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." In addition to Rep. Womack and the five original co-sponsors of the House joint resolution there are now a total of **42** cosponsors, with the addition of Reps. Lamar Smith (TX) and Leonard Lance (NJ) on September 6.

On July 30, 2015, Sen. David Vitter (LA) introduced Senate Joint Resolution (S.J. Res.) 21. The Senate measure has **9** cosponsors.

Additional cosponsors continue to be sought for both measures. [A listing of all cosponsors for both flag amendment bills is attached to the end of this report.]

Please contact or Senator and House Representative and see if they wish to be a cosponsor. All it takes is one phone call. Let me know if you do call and what they say. Thank you for the time and effort in this matter.

COTA

Here is the list of monies you have donated to the kids in Florida for the transplants so needed around are great state:

PATIENT	CITY	AMOUNT
Janae Gayle	Ocala	\$1,000
Ian Cosme-Freytes	Orlando	\$2,500
Danna Emberton	Wonderlake	\$ 500
Angela Page	Ocala	\$1,000
Abel Schiffhauer	Center Hill	\$ 500
Sophie Brown-Blake	Tallahassee	\$1,000
Casey Taylor	Northpor	\$1,000
Chloe Novak	Tallahassee	\$1,000
Zach Szilagyi	Ponte Verde	\$1,500
AnnaRose Van Sciver	Gainesville	\$1,500
Jovani Sanchez	Altamonte Springs	\$2,000
Isaiah Sanchez	Orlando	\$1,000
CJ Thompson	Tampa	\$1,000
Casey Luque	Naples	\$1,000
James Dolan	St. Petersburg	\$ 500

Thank you for the support now and in the future.

COTA
\$17,000
RAISED AND COUNTING



Tom Gora
Sgt-at-Arms

"You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greater possessions, our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship."

Unfortunately, due to illness I could not attend the National Convention in Cincinnati, so I can't share any experiences with you about the parade and other activities. I thank all for the get well wishes, the e-mails and phone calls. The new chapter (#14) in the Sgt.-at-Arms Procedural Manual is now posted on the Department of Florida web site along with four Color Guard instructional videos. You can find these items under "Officer Reports." I hope that this new chapter and the videos will assist Posts and Districts that have color guard questions.

In the August 2016 Legion Link, we talked about the membership composition of the two basic Color Guard Units we typically use in The American Legion, the Military Class and Military Class -Open. This month let's review some of the equipment requirements for Color Guard Units.

The style and color of uniform will be optional with each unit, provided they are within the dignity and propriety required when carrying the National Colors. Headgear is required to be worn by all members of the unit. If the Color Guard does not wear Color Guard headgear specific to the Color Guard such as helmets or berets, members shall wear the official uniform hat of the member's organization within The American Legion Family. Required authorized equipment will consist of National Colors*, American Legion Organizational Banner, and at least two weapons. *DEFINITION - The Institute of Heraldry, Washington, D.C., has specified in Title 4 of the U.S. Flag Code, the 50-Star American Flag is the Flag of our Country (U.S. Colors); therefore, all others shall be treated as banners. Minimum size of U.S. Colors is 3 feet by 5 feet. No flag shall be larger in size than the U.S. Colors.

Additional authorized equipment, such as flags, sidearm, sabers and swords may be carried and can be simulated. "Replica rifles" may be used, as long as they have the same weight as the real rifle, plus the bolt mechanism. **"Simulated rifles" (rifles of lesser weight with or without simulated bolt mechanism) should not be used.** Rifles are defined as weapons that are hand operated and designed to be fired primarily from the shoulder. The surface of the rifle must



(Sgt-at-Arms Continued)

have bore and grooves to impart rotary motion to the projectile, which conform to the original design of military rifles, past or present. Sights, slings, barrels, trigger and trigger housing are optional. Bolts or simulated bolts are required. Side arms are defined as weapons, which are hand held and fired by means of a primer, percussion cap, or cartridge enclosed igniter. Sabers (swords) are defined as weapons which are designed to be hand held for cutting, thrusting or slashing an enemy, with either a curved (saber) blade or straight (sword) blade which may be constructed of any material and must have hand guard.

CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION POSTS:

Exceptions to the weapons rules can be made as necessary for security reasons at American Legion Posts located in correctional institutions. The use of any real, replica or simulated sabers, sidearm, swords, or rifles is left to the discretion and approval of the Chief of Security, the Superintendent, or the Warden of the correctional facility.



Steve Newman
Chaplain

Hello and a blessed greeting to all my fellow legionnaires .

Another month has come and gone. You wonder where the time goes by so quickly. September has been a busy month for myself. I spent a lot of time visiting sick veterans in the hospital. I participated in two 9/11 Memorials. The Memorials were reminders of that very tragic day in our history back on September 11, 2001. It's a day that we must never forget. A day that has changed many of our lives forever. I also participated in the annual POW/MIA Memorial Day.

Soon it will be time once again for our Fall Conference. I plan on giving another chaplain training class. I hope I will get as many attendees as I had in the Department Convention class. The training will be similar as I want to discuss the conducting of the Post Everlasting and Four Chaplains ceremony. There will also be a question and answer period. Chaplains from the Legion Family: The Legion, Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion and Legion Riders are invited to attend. In fact, anybody who wants to attend is invited.

I really appreciate the support that I received and

(Chaplain Continued)

still receive from the entire Legion Family. I believe everything has been made possible for me through the power of God. You should always believe with God all things are possible. Mark 10:27. Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles. Isaiah 40:31. We are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2. Remember the Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song. Psalm 28:7. I wanted to give each of you a little food for thought and for your soul. As I always say with God everything is possible. He is our strength and our shield. With that God bless.



Larry Sheets
Judge Advocate



There seems to be a misunderstanding regarding the term, "A Post shall be the judge of its own membership."

If an eligible veteran applies for membership in a particular Post, the membership of that Post votes on whether or not to accept the application for membership. The right of each Post to determine its own membership is without restriction.

In a 1937 ruling, the then National Judge Advocate stated: Regarding Article IV, section 1 of the National By-Laws, "In other words, a member may be eligible to join The American Legion, but this does not mean that he must be accepted for membership in a particular post. Eligibility is not synonymous with acceptability. If a member is eligible to join The American Legion, it is still the prerogative of the post to determine whether they will accept such member in their post."

The Post has the prerogative to accept, or not, whomever is eligible, provided that the Post does not refuse membership to an eligible veteran based on criterion prohibited by law, such as ethnicity, gender, age. etc.

Once an eligible veteran is accepted into a Post, the only way that person can lose his/her membership is by trial in accordance with Article X, section 14 of the Department Constitution.

(Judge Advocate Continued)

Should a member request to transfer his/her membership to another Post, it is the prerogative of the Post the member wishes to transfer their membership to, to decide whether or not to accept the transfer. Should that Post decide not to accept the transfer, the member requesting transfer still maintains his/her membership in The American Legion.

We are honored to have The American Legion national Judge Advocate, Phil Onderdonk with us at the upcoming Fall Conference.

I would ask that all Post, District, and Area Judge Advocates please plan to attend the session from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. on Friday November 18th, and try to be in attendance.

Mr. Onderdonk has been the National Judge Advocate for a number of years now, and is very up to date on the National Constitution and By-Laws. Again, please plan to attend this session. It would be nice to have a good turnout of Legionnaires in attendance.



Jerry Brandt
Membership

We are slightly behind from last year, so we need to start working a little harder. The next National Notice will be going out on October 7th, however, do not

wait for the notices to bring the members in to renew. Have events to bring them in, Halloween is coming up, have something for families to enjoy. Veteran's Day is November 11th, and would also be a great time to have an event at your Post. Now is the time to advertise events and bring them in.

Also, assisting us is the S.A.L., The S.A.L. National Commander, Jeff Frain, has requested each S.A.L. Member to sign up three (3) new Legion Members. Involved the S.A.L. and Auxiliary in your Post with your membership drives, make this a family event for new members.

Please review the National Membership Awards Manuel for has new Awards, You can find all awards from the 2017 National Membership Awards Points Manual under: <http://www.legion.org/publications> and scroll down to Membership.

And under <http://www.legion.org/membership>, there are videos and other ways to assist you in



(Membership Continued)

“Carrying The Legacy Forward.”

We have reach the 55% goal date, congratulations to the following:

DISTRICT 1

402	66	121	379	44	75
235	33	340	356	240	

DISTRICT 2

272	302	241	42	100	
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DISTRICT 4

166	230	58	236	149	237
284					

DISTRICT 5

102	202	372	129	54	250
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DISTRICT 6

76	101	21	330	53	347
219	52	18	41	409	109

DISTRICT 7

15	23				
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DISTRICT 8

11	320	317	69	266	
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DISTRICT 9

233	308	222	209	170	310
385	365	142	220	304	

DISTRICT 11

277	371	141	64	268	390
12					

DISTRICT 12

355	200	189	332	181	1
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DISTRICT 13

405	397	404	351		
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DISTRICT 14

145	32	144	31	28	133
43	165				

DISTRICT 15

5	111	139	334	26	246
186					

DISTRICT 16

125					
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DISTRICT 17

204	187	127	259	293	267
120					

CONGRATS THESE POST ARE AT 100%

102 Hastings	76 Tavares	405 Punta Gorda	145 Islamorada
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MEMBERSHIP GOAL
60%
 October 5, 2016



Sid Damsgard
Central Area Commander

All quiet on the central front after the havoc Tropical Storm Hermine caused leaving us very wet. Many areas in Pasco still

have not entirely recovered. I was lucky to miss most of it while on the National Legacy Run and National Convention. We watched with high anxiety while the storm dumped so much rain on the entire Central Area. I'm happy to report that as of this writing no Posts were washed away and things have returned to normal.

Central Area Stand Down will have already occurred with several Posts from the 7th, 15th and 16th Districts contributing volunteers and goods helping our homeless brothers and sisters. This annual event serves veterans from Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough and Hernando counties and is one of the main focuses of Post 79, Paradise Post in New Port Richey. Anyone interested in helping with next year contact them beginning in August. The Stand Down is usually the last weekend in September.

We have received only one notification of events in the Central Area this month. There will be a picnic benefiting Boys/Girls State hosted by American Legion Post 138 on October 15th. The Post is located at 5535 Prescott Tampa Florida 33616. The picnic starts at 11:00 am until 4:00 pm. Come out and support this worthy cause.

District Commanders please send your schedule of District meetings to Department so they may be put on the calendar. Starting soon there will be visits from candidates for Department Officers and they would like to know when and where you are going to meet. If there are conflicts with the scheduled DCC let us know.

John W. Rose
Northern Area Commander

The 2016-2017 year is well underway. District meetings are taking place and Posts are working on membership and starting programs. Thank you to all our Posts for working so hard on

(Northern Area Commander Continued)

membership. Some of us have gotten off to a great start by making the target goals while others need to dig in and make more happen. Membership needs to be a Legion Family effort at each Post and every member needs to be an active part of this effort.

Our American Legion has a long history, nearly 100 years, of working to insure our veterans who have served and are still serving get the support they need, while also providing for the community, state and nation. We are beginning our program year with Chairman at all levels receiving the packets with information about our various programs. Again, as with membership the success of these programs begins at the Post level. It is here that the “blue caps” provide their time to do the programs that help us help others and let our communities know what our great American Legion does. As we start programs it is a good time to record what we are doing so that we have the data for the end of the year reports. If you have an event, please put the information on the Department calendar so everyone will know and possibly support your endeavor. Please, also use our social media such as Facebook to post events and programs that you are doing.

Let us not forget to exercise our right to vote. I personally like the expression “vote in honor of a veteran”. Thank you for the honor of being your Commander this year, and remember together we can accomplish great things.



Andy Burkett
Southwestern Area Commander / Americanism Chairman

As your Southwestern Commander I would like to thank all the Posts that I have visited

for your hospitality. I intend to continue my visits to all the Posts in the Southwestern Area. If there is an event that you would like me to attend that is special to you or your Post please let me know by e-mail at donna.burkett35@gmail.com or by phone at 786-351-5485. I am looking forward to this month's visits and please, remember membership should always be on our minds.

As your Department Chairman for Baseball our work has just started. I am going to National Headquarters for a meeting to discuss Legion baseball for the 2016-2017 year. When I return I will schedule a meeting for all District and Area Chairman to discuss our plans for the new year. I am looking forward to working with everyone this year.





(Southwestern Area Commander / Americanism Continued)
 Americanism, is the hottest thing on the block for the next couple months, with a lot is going on in the Department for Americanism, details to be shared soon. If you are doing an event for Americanism and you would like me to attend, please feel free to contact me with details. I am attending the golf tournament in Lehigh Acres for Children and Youth next weekend.



Fred Matthews
 5th District Commander

September 2016 has been a benchmark in time for Florida's 5th District. Saturday, September 10th, Department

Sgt-at-Arms, Tom Gora accompanied by his committee of Legionnaires, SAL and the District Auxiliary President Robin Walker, led the dedication of the first American Legion Monument in Northeast Florida. The Legion Family monument was fully documented in the Florida Times-Union as a remembrance marker for military veterans, living and deceased, their families and the communities that support them.

The monument was 3 years in the making through fundraisers, donations and single-minded determination to detail. Department Commander Joe Magee and Department President Kelli Becraft presented remarks and laid the first wreath at the monument.

The emphasis in the 5th District this year is "training." September 17th, at Post 283, officers and members from 18 Posts in the District came together to learn more about how the Legion should operate, and with that knowledge, how they can better serve their membership and the communities they reside in. Also present were Department Vice Commander Dianne Boland, Past Department Commander Jim Ramos and Department Membership Chairman Jerry Brandt.



Bruce Thurber
 12th District Commander

September was a very busy month in the 12th District. We had our first District meeting, several 9-11 ceremony's and POW/MIA day ceremony. 3rd

Vice Commander Rick Johnson visited with us and assisted in delivering meals to over 300 first responders.

However, the most exciting visit we had was from

(12th District Commander Continued)
 6th District Sons of The American Legion Commander Tim Chancellor, I was able to deliver a challenge to the 6th District Family for a Soft Ball Tournament. This will be an American Legion Family event with players from each of the organizations. I have raised over \$2000 for Give Kids the World so far. We have also set aside \$1100 towards Boys and Girls State transportation and our picnic proceeds have not been added as of yet. Have you bought your Mustang Tickets yet? If not contact us. Remember \$20 can get you a sweet ride.

As we come upon All Hallows Eve we prepare for the Holiday Season and welcome our Snow Birds back. Early Birds are over but membership is still a priority. The National Constitution Article X section 4 tells us that all dues are payable by October 20th of each year for the succeeding calendar year. Many of us including myself for many years believed that December 31st was the cutoff date. This is something we need to put out to our members so they have the correct information.

I look forward to visiting many of you during the holidays and seeing all the great things you are doing. Fall Conference is quickly approaching and this is the time to learn. If you can attend, there are many extremely informative sessions and classes. Many of your Posts in the 12th are close enough that you can come by for the day and participate in the learning experiences offered.

National Commander Schmidt has a Membership Incentive Award the 12th district should easily be able to achieve. All it takes, is to sign up one (1) new member and you have earned the award. I am asking each Commander, Vice Commander, Adjutant and membership chairman of the 12th District to monitor and submit the paperwork for everyone who brings us a new member. Thank you all for your continued service to our great nation.

14th District
 2016-2017 Event Schedule

September 17– 14th District General Meeting
 Registration at 9:00 am, Meeting Starts at 10:00 am at Post 31-South Miami

October 14 – Post 133 at 4:00 PM, Will Host Grand Breaking Ceremony of Veterans Park and Gold Star Family Memorial Monument. Opening. Free Dinner following the Ceremony at Post 133. For Information contact Paul Amato @ currahee101@icloud.com

November 6 – Veterans Day Parade, Town of Miami Lakes. Post 144 will participate

(14th District Continued)
November 11 – Veterans Day Ceremony, City of Hialeah. Post 144 will participate

January 7 - 14th District General Meeting
 Registration at 9:00 am, Meeting Starts at 10:00 am – at Post 31-South Miami

March 18 - 14th District General Meeting
 Registration at 9:00 am, Meeting Starts at 10:00 am – at Post 31-South Miami

May 28 – Flag Placement Ceremony at Vista Memorial Gardens; Post 144-Miami Lakes, Boy Scouts Pack 484 and Boy Scouts Troop 584.

May 29 – Memorial Day Observed. Post 144 will participate at City of Hialeah Ceremony. Also, Post 346 will participate at local venue – TBD

June 10 – 14th District Constitutional Conference, Registration at 9:00 am, Meeting Starts at 10:00 am – at Post 31-South Miami

June 28, July 2 - Department Convention – Marriott Orlando World Center (NEW LOCATION)

***In addition, the District Commander will be conducting Post Visitations every other week throughout the year beginning in September. These visitations will be used to ensure that our Posts are operating properly, to reinforce the need for increased membership, participation in Legion Programs, and to provide support and leadership training to Post Commanders and Post Officers.*

NOTE: Schedule subject to change. Additional dates may be added. Last update 9/14/16.



Donna Artola
 Blood Chair

My fellow Legionnaires, this month we had an event in Lehigh Acres: The Golf Tournament for Children and

Youth. A blood mobile was there from Lehigh Acres Health Systems. The good thing about using Lehigh Acres Health Systems, is that all blood collected stays in the community. They received 4 pints that weekend from the Legion Family. That is a total of 12 lives saved.





(Blood Donor Continued)

This past month I have visited the following Posts in the 14th district: 154, 28, 168 and 333. In the 11th district I had visited 141, 277, 399, 47, 269, 20 and 12.

Remember when you have an event get a hold of the local blood mobile ahead of time and save a few more lives than just the people you are helping with your event.

If you need of help getting your blood chair in place please, contact me. Also, when you have your blood drives please contact me with the number of pints that were donated.

Pictured is Detachment Southern Area Vice-Commander Buck Wallace.



George Wehrli
Boys State Chair

BOYS STATE 2017
JUNE 18 – 24

After October 1st, Posts may mail your registration fees of \$450.00 per delegate provided you have the Post Chairman information on file at Department. Look in your Chairman's Manual on page 6 for important dates to remember.

All regular quota and over-quota monies must be received by Department by December 23, 2016. The number of Boys Staters a Post can send is according to your Post Membership Goal for 2017

(Boys State Chair Continued)

and is explained on page 9. You will note on page 8 that the actual cost for a Boys Stater in 2016 was \$450.21.

We appreciate your hard work at the Posts selecting the best boys and providing the funding for their most enjoyable experience at Florida American Legion Boys State. It is the Post Chairman's responsibility to assist your Boys State delegates and alternates with their on-line registration and it is a good idea to have a computer available, and to witness that their registration went through to Department. By having on line registration we have less spelling mistakes of names, addresses, email addresses, etc. Medical waivers must be mailed by the Post Chairman and returned to Department Headquarters by March 16, 2017.

District Chairman will work with you at Post level to ensure getting your Boys Staters to Tallahassee on a District Bus, or your Post may provide other transportation to arrive by 9:30 AM on Sunday June 18, 2017. Your District Chairman will set up the date and location of the Boys State District Orientation. Delegates, alternates, and parents should attend this meeting.

If your Boys Stater is not able to attend the Orientation in your District, please check with another District about available dates. When you need to replace a delegate, please contact Elizabeth Douglas at Department and provide the name of the registered alternate and who they are replacing. Meeting deadlines is very important to keeping the program moving forward. I am looking forward to working with everyone. Please call me with your questions at 386 397-9366 or text this cell number.



Sid Damsgard
Children & Youth Chair

It is so good seeing our winter members have started coming back. We are looking forward to the many events scheduled for

this fall. Be sure to check the calendar for entertainment and upcoming meals.

Those of you who have been to Post 275 lately, have probably noticed that we are making progress on the deck. I am hoping that it will be completed in the next week or so and ready for final inspection by the city. Of course, it is always a guess how the city will react to the small changes we had to make in order for us to install the gates.

(Children & Youth Chair Continued)

Our next step in the process is to contract an electrician to add wiring for the TVs and lighting. I only hope that this will not take as long to get city's approval as the rest of the deck.

We have also begun improvements to the TVs around the bar area. There will be two new sets installed directly over the bar with one of our existing sets mounted on the end. Once they are installed, we will indicate which set will be playing certain games during the remainder of the football season. Once we have installed power to the deck there will at least one set out there as well.

If you have not sent in your membership dues for this year, please do so as soon as possible. Our Post was recognized during the Department Commander's visit for having 8 years at 100%, so let's make it 9. Your membership supports our programs and allows us to keep our charter.



Bill Walsh
Oratorical Chair

Happy October to all. School is back in session and it is time to start working on the Oratorical Program. There are 2344 high schools in Florida

(1563 Public High Schools and 781 Private High Schools) plus a large amount of home schooled youths to work with. We have 297 posts, 6 Area Chairmen and 16 District Chairmen to get the word out about the Oratorical Program. No one should have a problem finding a student to participate in the program. Chairmen at all levels should have a place picked out to hold their Contests and also be very familiar with the information provided on the Department web site about the Oratorical Program. For detailed information about the Oratorical Program proceed to the Department web site at floridalegion.org and do the following:

1. Select Programs and Services.
2. Select Oratorical Competition.
3. Selected Resources on left side of screen.
4. Select How to Conduct an Oratorical Contest.

Here you will find ten (10) modules that instruct you on how to conduct a contest. This site is full of valuable information. Visit it often.

Area Chairmen get with your District Chairmen and try to arrange contest dates so that you will be able to attend the District Contests.





(Oratorical Chair Continued)

District Chairmen get with your Post Chairmen and try to arrange their contests so that you will be able to attend the Post contests.

As your Department Chairman I am at your disposal 24/7. I am available to conduct seminars in your Areas or Districts per your request. I can be reached at 352-454-8318 or at oratorical@legionmail.org. Thanks for all you do for Veterans

David Miller
Pow/Mia Chair

September was National Pow-Mia month and the third Friday was National Pow-Mia day so hopefully your Post homes or towns had something special to honor our Pows and Mias from all wars and conflicts.

I attended quite few special Pow-Mia events including the Special Chair Dedication program at the Bay Pines VA Medical center on Tuesday, September 13, 2016. It was quite an eye opener having a real Vietnam prisoner of war who spent almost 7 years in captivity give his presentation about his daily schedule and his every day beatings, starvation and diseases that almost kept him from coming home. It makes you realize no one can understand what a POW has went through except another POW.

I attended and helped with several Pow-Mia ceremonies and Flag Dedication Ceremonies throughout the entire weekend starting on September 16th, which is actually National Pow-Mia Recognition Day. Too many people forget about the true meaning of this day.

Once AGAIN I am still awaiting some responses from our AREA COMMANDERS as to what date are available to hold our Area Pow-Mia Black and White formal dinner events this year with the formal table ceremonies at each event. Please check with the Posts in your area to see who would like to host these special events. I would like to do one in each area this year as I have done in the past.

The Pow-Mia issues are still very much important issues with our Congressional delegates so please stay in touch with them to make sure we have a full accounting from every WAR or CONFLICT to get all of them back home to their families.

Once again, I am available for any events or meetings you would like me to come speak and explain our protocol for our Pow-Mia events

(Pow/Mia Chair Continued)

and ceremonies or to give you an update on the current number of Pows and Mias from all wars and conflicts.

Please keeps the word spreading throughout our Department of Florida.

LET'S NOT FORGET!! BRING THEM HOME!!



Diane Schmidt
Public Relations Chair

Public Relations is like a mirror. What you see is what you are. Or is it? Ask 10 people what they think of a person and you will get 10 different answers.

Recently a dear friend of 25 years asked me my pick for the Presidency. I knew better than to answer; however, I thought I would give it a try. When I answered, she pontificated for 10 minutes on why I was wrong. Surely, since I was intelligent and well read, she felt that there was enough on the internet to change my mind. I replied that I don't believe everything I read. The fact that I had a personal friend who knew my candidate of choice for many years and had shared personal insight. I said to her, "Things are not always what they seem." I then decided to personalize my thoughts to give her insight on what I meant. I asked her "What if someone became very critical of you, saying that you "are an unreasonable landlord, very heavy and gay" my reply would be, "to me you are very business- like, love good food and are a free spirit". Who is right? Technically both, it is how we perceive you. We both came from different backgrounds, education, and community influence.

It is the same with Public Relations. We might think that our Post is just the greatest thing since chocolate covered strawberries. We might be busier than a one-armed paper hanger to get our Post ready for an event. But, when those newcomers don't return or members don't renew, why? Maybe it is their perception. Maybe what they see is different than what you see. Sometimes we need to evaluate what we are doing to see if it accomplishes our purpose. How do we really come across? Is your Post stuck on "this is what we always do" or is it open to new creative ways of attracting young Veterans with families and limited funds for hanging out. These young Veterans need socialization on their terms. They like chai tea, veggies, Lego games for their kids, large screen TVs to watch

(Public Relations Chair Continued)

documentaries. They are not into heavy drinking, hot dogs & hamburgers. They are careful about their spending, how they spend their time with their little ones and especially what they eat. They see things differently. They react differently. Post may have been ideal yesterday but today is a new day. I challenge each of you to think outside the box and evaluate what your Post does to welcome our new Veterans. Your Public Relations and how it works for you depends on what you expect as an outcome. Let me hear from you and what you doing to change your image.



Troy Horsley
School Medals Chair

Commanders and Legionnaire comrades of the state of Florida, my name is Troy Horsley and I am currently serving as Department of Florida Chairman

for School Medals. Hopefully by now all of the District and Post Chairman have been identified. I am looking forward to hearing from the District chairs on the great works of each Post in promoting the future leaders of our country. With all of the distractions in today's society, there are just too many that are negative. From people desecrating our flag by trampling on it and to people not recognizing what standing for our national anthem and what it represents, it is up to us as Legionnaires to go out and recognize our youth who are about supporting our core values and have the courage to stand up and say no.

How we approach that is quite simple. Go out to our schools and talk to the principals or guidance counselors and tell them about the School Medal program. Let them know we want to recognize a girl and boy student who best demonstrates all the desired qualities of Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service from their school. School Medals and certificates are provided free to participating schools. All the school's responsibility is to select the boy and girl to be awarded the School Medal. School medals are normally presented by a Legionnaire at the school's end of year awards program in recognition of their great achievements.

If you need assistance or have never done this at your Post, don't hesitate to contact me and I will gladly help. There are resources available on the Department website or I can send you a starter package. Hope to hear from you soon.





Roy Havekost
Social Media Chair

Facebook is alive and well in the 5th District. In addition to being the Social Media Chairman for Department, I also hold that title in the 5th District. At the monthly meeting held on Sunday, September 11th, thirteen (13) Posts were awarded Certificates of Recognition for their active participation on Facebook in an effort to continue awareness of the programs, goals and objectives of The American Legion through the use of social media. I would suggest that the other District Social Media Chairmen get onboard with a similar plan within your own respective Districts by recognizing those Posts, in your District that are continually active on Facebook. Publicize the presentations on your District page/group to encourage any non-active Posts to participate. Remember, Facebook is free advertising and, when used correctly, can be one of the best membership recruitment tools that we have today. Keep your community informed of the events and fundraisers that you run at your Post that help to support the American Legion programs...by using Facebook.

At this point in time, I have not received feedback on what you would like to see in a training class for Social Media. Please send your suggestions to me at socialmedia@legionmail.org. There isn't much time left before the Fall Conference to put together a training class, so please send your suggestions or ideas, thank you.



Larry Roberts
VA Entitlements Chair

Veterans are always asking me, do I qualify for VA Benefits All Information is from the VA Health Care Benefits Overview 2015 Edition, Vol.1 Basic Eligibility for VA Health Care.

If you served in active military, naval or air service and are separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA health care benefits. Current and former members of the Reserves or National Guard who were called to active duty (other than for training only) by federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty may be eligible for VA health care as well.

Minimum Duty Requirements

(VA Entitlements Chair Continued)

Most Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty to be eligible. This minimum duty requirement may not apply to Veterans who were discharged for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, discharged for a hardship. Or received an "early out." Since there are a number of other exceptions to the minimum duty requirements, VA encourages all Veterans to apply to determine their enrollment eligibility.

Post 323
Just a Note

To my American Legion Family of Post 323 in beautiful, downtown Lehigh Acres,

I wish to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for renewing my faith in humanity.

I would especially like to extend not only a great big thank you, but my deepest appreciation and a shout-out to our present Commander, Michael Mason, for his support and proving to me that together we absolutely did something I would have never been able to do by myself. I have been a member of Post 323 since 2013 which, is why I started my first sentence with "My American Legion Family". I was a homeless Vietnam Vet since early 2000 and it took its toll on me. I had lost all hope of finding a place and the help I needed to get back on the track of life until I became a member of Post 323 where my faith in humanity returned as well as a new family. I now have a mailbox that I can call mine and with pride, thanks to all of Post 323 and to say this is not only a thank you letter but a letter that shows a ray of hope to all of my brothers and sisters in arms to never give up and always keep the faith. There is humanity after all.

May God bless America and may God bless The American Legion Post 323 Family. Thank you all.

Department of Florida
Fall Conference
Nov 18-20
Hilton Orlando
at Walt Disney World Resort

American Legion dedicates monument to Northeast Florida veterans, active duty military and their families



Will.Dickey@jacksonville.com Kelli Becraft (from left), Walter Rasco and Joe Magee lay a wreath during the dedication of the American Legion Family Monument at the Jacksonville National Cemetery.



Will.Dickey@jacksonville.com Members of the Beaches Honor Guard fire a gun salute during the dedication of the American Legion Family Monument Saturday.



Will.Dickey@jacksonville.com Members of the Color Guard from American Legion Post 137 march at the beginning of Saturday's ceremony to dedicate the American Legion Family Monument at the Jacksonville National Cemetery.



"If they are remembered, they are not gone truly, they simply change duty assignments and are amongst the best."

Cauleen Dolan
Past 9th District Commander

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Past 9th District Commander, Cauleen Dolan, of Jacksonville, FL at the age of 67. A memorial service was held on Saturday, September 24, 2016 at 4:00pm at Post 142, 171 American Legion Way, Pompano Beach, FL 33060.

Cauleen was a Vietnam US NAVY Veteran and a member of Sterling McClellan Unit 142, with 32 continuous years of membership. Please keep her family and friends in your thoughts and prayers in this time of grief. Condolences may be sent to Post 142.

James "Jimmie" Adams
Past 9th District Commander

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Past 9th District Commander, James "Jimmie" Adams.

French "Frenchie" Shannon Jr.
Past 9th District Commander

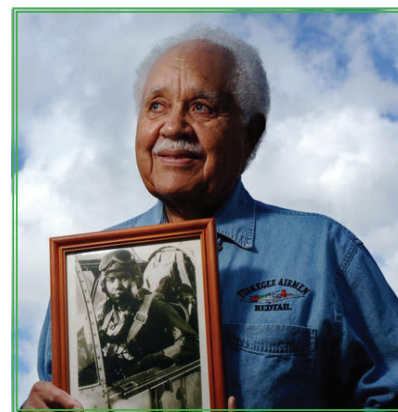
It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Past 9th District Commander, French "Frenchie" Shannon, Jr. , at the Alexander "Sandy" Ninger Veterans Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines at the age of 88.

Frenchie was a WWII US ARMY Veteran and was a charter member of Post 365, with 26 continuous years of membership. Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers in this time of grief.

A memorial service and celebration of life for French will be held on October 7, 2016 at 3:30pm at VFW Post 8195, 4414 Pembroke Rd. West Park, FL.

This will be an all Veteran Service coordinated by the American Legion and the VFW. There will be a buffet following the service.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to American Legion Post 365 in his honor by check or online website: www.sunrisepost365.org.



Leo R Gray
Charter Member of Post 365

It is with deep regret that we report the passing of Leo R. Gray, (Lt. Col. Ret.), a Charter Member of Post 365. He was one of the last surviving original Tuskegee Airmen and a Red Tail Pilot in the State of Florida. He was well known throughout the state and country and traveled abroad telling the story of the "famed" Tuskegee Airmen of WWII.

Leo will be greatly missed and fondly remembered. Condolences may be sent to, Diane Gray, at 1802 Eleutheria Pt., Apt. B1, Coconut Creek, FL 33066.





Portraits of Tuskegee Airmen: Leo Gray

By Redtail.org ~ The CAF Red Tail Squadron has many special relationships with original Tuskegee Airmen, and we absolutely treasure them. These American heroes are unique, continuing to inspire us as much today as when they fought fascism abroad and racism back home in the era of WWII. We are honored to stand beside these great role models at many of our outreach events around the country. Leo Gray, an original Tuskegee Airmen and pilot, continues to share his experience with our audiences, inspiring the next generation to RISE ABOVE.



Gray, born in Boston, volunteered for service in 1943. He went to flight school at Tuskegee Army Airfield where he qualified for single-engine fighters. He was then assigned to Ramitelli, Italy where he flew 15 combat missions in the P-51 Mustang, logging 750 flight hours. He served 3 years and seven months active duty, and remained in the United States Air Force Reserves until 1984. He retired after 41 years of service with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

“The Tuskegee Airmen are a classic example of overcoming adversity, and

people in our country should know about it,” said Gray. “It is worthwhile for everyone.”

During his military career, Gray was awarded the Air Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, a Presidential Unit Citation and the Mediterranean Theatre of Operation Ribbon with three Battle Stars. The Tuskegee Airmen collectively were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by Congress in 2007 to recognize their “unique military record that inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces.”

After the war, Gray earned a Bachelor of Science at the University of Massachusetts and a Masters degree at the University of Nebraska, both in agricultural economics. For 30 years, Gray coordinated research for the USDA. He credits his military service as the catalyst that helped his civilian career by giving him the skill and perseverance to be successful.

Gray has played a leading role in the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. organization, serving as president of the Miami and East Coast chapters. He also helped to form a new chapter in Walterboro, South Carolina, the location of advanced combat training for Tuskegee-trained pilots before being shipped overseas to combat from 1943 to 1945.

He is also a dedicated member of the Boys & Girls Club of America – of which he was a member himself in his youth – and is a co-founder of the organization’s Ionosphere Club in Broward County, Florida. This unique group gives members the opportunity to learn about all aspects of flying, including science and mechanics.

“There are many young people, especially in urban areas, who have not

been exposed to aviation,” remarks Gray. “They need to understand what’s available for them. Aviation is a field with many openings. Pilots and support personnel are in demand because of many retirements. People need to understand the impact that aviation has on different areas of the country.”



Gray has been gracious enough to help make our outreach visits even more impactful and inspiring by appearing at several of our events. For example, earlier this year, Gray joined us in Florida to speak directly to school groups about the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, and how students can utilize the Squadron’s Six Principles in their own lives –

Aim High, Believe In Yourself, Use Your Brain, Be Ready To Go, Never Quit, Expect to Win.

“The CAF Red Tail Squadron is one of the few organizations that has a hands-on approach to opening peoples’ eyes to aviation and the history of the Tuskegee Airmen,” he says. “The RISE ABOVE Traveling Exhibit gives young people the opportunity to find out things that might never have been exposed to.”

Thanks to the ongoing hard work and perseverance of Tuskegee Airmen, including Lt Col (Ret) Gray, younger generations are learning not only about an important piece of American history, but about what grit, determination and strength of character really means.

The CAF Red Tail Squadron is a volunteer-driven organization dedicated to educating audiences across the country about the history and legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen, America’s first black military pilots and their support personnel. Learn more at www.redtail.org.





PROJECT: **VET**RELIEF

A PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA



The results are in...

There were **128 golfers** that gathered at Orange County National Golf Course on Friday, September 16th to support PROJECT: VetRelief in the 3rd Annual RL James Charity Golf Tournament.

RL James General Contractor hosted partners, vendors, and friends to a fun filled day of golf raised a record setting **\$40,400!**

We would especially like to thank the following Legionnaires who participated: Commander, Joe Magee; Adjutant, Michael McDaniel; Judge Advocate, Larry Sheets; Finance Committee Member and PROJECT: VetRelief Board President, John Dollinger; Finance Committee Member, Albert Porter; and VA Entitlement Chairman, Larry Roberts.



Florida Legion Riders: **ROUND ROBIN RIDE**

Don't forget to mark your calendars for your District's Round Robin Ride. Every District is in competition between one another trying to earn the most points. Rides will be going on between **October 1 - 31st**, so be sure to contact your Legion Rider District Chairman for information on your District's ride.

The District with the highest point total, will receive this year's Round Robin trophy at our upcoming Fall Conference and will have a year's worth of bragging rights!

"The funding really helped me get on the right track. It was the greatest experience, from the time I made the phone call. Thank you!"

- Widow of WWII Veteran

Fall Conference is Coming Up!

Want to be a part of the PROJECT: VetRelief Team? Seize the opportunity at The American Legion, Department of Florida Annual Fall Conference, November 18-20th. Join us for a class, or let us send you home with marketing materials for your Post or upcoming events. We look forward to meeting you!

Below are the list of class times. Be sure to register online to save your spot, as class space is limited.

PROJECT: VetRelief Advocate Training (Salon 8)

Friday, November 18th 8:30 - 9:30 AM

Saturday, November 19th 2:00 - 3:00 PM

**Class times and location are subject to change.*

CASE REPORTING:

July 2016 - August 2016

★ **TFA** - 8 families
\$9,715.17

★ **PVR** - 22 families
\$13,692.93

★ **Benefits Cases** - 34

For more information visit our website: www.ProjectVetRelief.org





Veterans Park Memorial Ceremony

The Village of Palmetto Bay and the American Legion Marlin Moore Post #133 cordially invite you and all Gold Star Mothers and Families of South Florida to be our guests at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for our Veterans Park and the first Gold Star Family Memorial Monument in South Florida.

Saturday, October 15, 2016 - 4pm
16165 S. Dixie Highway (rear)

The gathering of patriots will take place at the American Legion Post,
16401 SW 90 Avenue.

Followed by a parade to the park just down the road.



Hershel Woodrow ("Woody") Williams, last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from Iwo Jima, will be our honored speaker. Mr. Williams not only cleared the way for his fellow Marines to raise Old Glory over Mount Suribachi in February 1945, but he has dedicated his life to ensure the families of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms are honored and their patriot loved ones are never forgotten.

Please join us for this very special occasion