



The LEGION LINK

"Lil Leprechaun Fighting For Vets"



Web Site: www.floridalegion.org

E-mail: mail@floridalegion.org

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Joe Magee
Department Commander
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Wow, what an exciting month!

Firstly, I would like to recognize two of our own distinguished Legionnaires. PDC Larry White of Post 155, in Crystal River, was awarded Veterans Volunteer of the Year Award by Gainesville Hospital. Congratulations, Larry, and thank you for your tireless service. David Miller of Post 273, in Madeira Beach, was awarded the National VAVS Volunteer of the Year, through his service to veterans at Bay Pines VA Hospital in Clearwater. David is the first Legionnaire, in The American Legion History, to receive this most coveted National Award. Larry and David exemplify the dedicated members of the Department of Florida, of which there are many unsung heroes.

We had the pleasure of sharing in Mike's and Kathy's special day as they exchanged vows in Ocala. Congratulations and what a grand time.

We stopped in for a visit with some of our 4th District posts, escorted by our Legion Riders. Many thanks to Post Commanders and Members of Post 16, Post 236, Post 237 and Post 155 for their hospitality.

Then we were off to Palm Bay, Post 117 for the Children & Youth picnic, which was a fantastic success. It's my understanding an estimate of \$17k was raised, WOW! Thank you everyone who had a hand in making this a successful event.

Following the Children & Youth picnic, we participated in a site study for the VA Gulf Coast Health Care System, including a hospital in Biloxi, MS and a Clinic in Mobile, AL. While there we stopped at the Crestview post for a quick, "Hello". The site study was very informative and interesting, interacting with the Districts and Managers. The site study included a GA Dept Commander, two National Reps from Washington D.C., two NECs from GA and MS. A Town Hall meeting was also held with

discussions on the VA Stall.

Leaving Mobile, we visited our Dept. Headquarters for a Boys State organizational meeting, before heading to Clearwater for President Kelli's Homecoming. We had a fantastic time, delicious food, and great music. Very impressed with the group in attendance.

We also attended a Stand Down at Bay Pines VA Hospital. David Miller and his staff are commended for their tireless efforts. More than 300 phone cards were given out to veterans in need. Post 252 Seminole and Post 273 Madeira Beach were well represented by Legionnaires, Auxiliary, Sons and Riders, thank you all for your support.

After the Stand Down we stopped by Madeira Beach post 273, thank you to Commander Jim and staff for their hospitality. We were then back to Dept Headquarters for another meeting, then off to Melbourne. We attended Post 191's Law Officer of the Year ceremony, which was well orchestrated. Congratulations to Joe O'Neil, staff, and all post members involved who made The American Legion shine. We left there for Fern Park for the District 6 picnic, also very well attended and strong fundraising effort, thank you to all involved.

Our many travels concluded with my Homecoming at the "Largest Post in the World", our very own Post 347 in Lady Lake. Their attention to detail exemplified their status. Thank you to the Ladies for the décor in the hall, the Legionnaires who helped, Post Officers, members in attendance, Post Commander Tim, Bill Walsh, and our Department staff. I am so grateful, I can not put into words my gratitude. My Homecoming provided many memories for many years to come.

Finally, I would like to mention my chosen charity COTA. During my Homecoming, Squadron 275 of Dunedin presented a check from their Golf Tournament in the amount of \$8,200. The Legion, Auxiliary, Detachment, and Riders worked tirelessly to make this Golf Tournament a gleaming success for COTA. Treasure Island Post overwhelmed me with additional check for more than \$10K. Thank you, thank you and a thousand more to you all.

For all out there, please keep your Membership coming, we need it to really have a great year.





MAY 2017

1	CPR & Addendum CPR Due
1	Children & Youth Fund Request Due
1	May Day
1	Loyalty Day
1	Silver Star Service Banner Day
1	Public Service Recognition Wk
3	Dept Membership Goal 100%+1
4	National Day of Prayer
4-7	Veteran's Reunion in Brevard
6	6th District DCC 🍀
6	12th District DCC 🍀
8-11	National Spring Meetings 🍀
8	VE Day
12	Military Spouse Appreciation Day
13	3rd District DCC 🍀
13	Armed Forces Day
14	5th District DCC 🍀
14	Mother's Day
15	Baseball Ins Purchase Deadline
15	Legion Link Articles Due
20	8th District DCC 🍀
20	13th District DCC 🍀
20	Armed Forces Day
21	7th District DCC 🍀
21	17th District DCC 🍀
22	National Maritime Day
27	1st District DCC 🍀
27	2nd District DCC 🍀
29	Memorial Day (HQ Closed)
31	Dept Membership Goal 105%

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

ATTENTION

Don't Lose Your Charter!

DEADLINE MAY 1, 2017

COMPLETE NATIONAL CPR
mylegion.org

COMPLETE ADDENDUM CPR
floridalegion.org



Steve Shuga
1st Vice Commander

May is membership crunch time. Florida's membership

deadline for 2017 is June 30th. Please check your American Legion membership card and verify that it is current (2017). If not, see your Post Adjutant or Membership Chairman ASAP.

We continue to lead our American Legion in a variety of unique ways. As we prepare to bridge the gap into the future we must motivate our current membership to remain and to encourage qualified US Veterans to join The American Legion, a Veteran Organization Worth Fighting for.

I thank you for your hospitality, professional courtesy, support, friendship, and permitting me the opportunity to serve you as your Department 1st Vice Commander this past term.

I hope to see a large contingent of Florida American Legionnaires proudly representing your Post, District, and Area at our June Department Convention.



Dianne Boland
2nd Vice Commander

Greetings,

Now that the year is coming to a close, you should be focused

on the reports required at the end of the year. If you have been following your "Post Administrative Manual", you would be on top of the due dates. This is where important information comes from throughout the year. [The Following page is the "Paperwork Timeline" from this manual.](#)

The other paperwork you need to be aware of is the National Consolidated Post Report (CPR) and the Department Addendum. They are both due by May 1, 2017. The Department website has a notice on their home page announcing this and informing Posts they must participate in at least one recognized program of the American Legion and complete this paperwork or they may lose their Charter.



Dennis Boland
NEC

SUPPORT FOR VETERANS CAREGIVERS!

Some 5.5 million caregivers go unnoticed while they care for American's military wounded. Caregivers suffer higher rates of depression and health problems than others. The American Legion is committed to supporting these hidden heroes.

U.S. Code 101 unfairly categorizes service-members and veterans by dates of service and/or theaters of operations. As a result, veterans receive different levels of VA benefits based solely on when and where they served, rather than their honorable service alone.

The American Legion urges VA to provide the same level of benefits to all eligible enrolled veterans. VA caregiver benefits should not be limited to post-9/11 veterans but expanded to assist all who are eligible. VA has enrolled veterans including those who require caregiver's assistance in day-to-day health-care needs, regardless of when they served.

The American Legion urges Congress to create and pass legislation to remove the "September 11, 2001" date from Public Law 111-163 and revise it to include all veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

Review current legislation and public laws to ensure that benefits are provided equitably and consistently for all veterans from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and those from previous war eras.

Direct VA to provide the same level of benefits for any veterans, regardless of the dates or theater of operations during their military service.

Fully fund the caregiver program.

PAPERWORK TIMELINE

Found in Post Administrative Manual

JULY

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet

AUGUST

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- Halloween Coloring Book Order Form – *Due to Dept October 18th*

SEPTEMBER

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- Post Program Chairman List – *Due to Dept September 1st*
- 55% Membership Goal – *September 7th*

OCTOBER

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- Boys State Registration Fees accepted *October 1st – December 23rd*
- 60% Membership Goal – *October 5th*
- Halloween Coloring Book Forms Deadline – *October 18th*

NOVEMBER

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- Membership Verification Reminder
- 70% Membership Goal – *November 2nd*
- Dept. Fall Conference – *November 18-20, 2016*
 - For more information go to:
 - <http://www.floridalegion.org/news-events/fall-conference/>
- American Education Week – *November 13th – 19th*
- National Family Week – *November 20th – 26th*

DECEMBER

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- 80% Membership Goal – *December 7th*
- Homeless Veterans Outreach Award – *Due to Dept December 14th*
- Boys State Registration Fee Deadline – *December 23rd*

JANUARY

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- 85% Membership Goal – *January 4th*

FEBRUARY

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- 90% Membership Goal – *February 1st*

MARCH

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- JROTC Cadet of the Year Scholarship – *Due to Dept March 1st*
- General Scholarship – *Due to Dept March 1st*
- Eagle Scout of the Year – *Due to Dept March 1st*
- 95% Membership Goal – *March 1st*
- State Oratorical Contest – *March 11th*
- Post Elections reminder – *no elections prior to March 31st nor later than June 19th*

APRIL

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- Medical School Scholarship – *Due to Dept April 1st*
- Nursing School Scholarship – *Due to Dept April 1st*
- 100% Membership Goal – *April 5th*
- Teacher of the Year – *Due to Dept April 15th*
- Law Enforcement Officer of the Year – *Due to Dept April 25th*
- Firefighter of the Year – *Due to Dept April 25th*

MAY

- End-of-Year Report Tally Sheet
- National CPR & Department CPR – *Due to Dept May 1st*
- End of Year Award Nominations – *Due to Dept May 1st*
- 100%+1 Membership Goal – *May 3rd*
- 105% Membership Goal – *May 31st*
- End of Year Deadline Dates Reminder
- Historian Books/ Narratives – *Due to Dept June 5th, 2017*
- Department Convention – *June 29th – July 2nd, 2017*





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".

I would like to address a couple of items that have been recently called to my attention. I have received questions about when the POW/MIA flag is placed on the empty chair during meetings, and there is a question regarding the wearing of the District cover.

Please remember that the POW/MIA portion of our meetings is required by Resolution 288 adopted at the 67th Annual National Convention. This resolution calls for designating a POW/MIA empty chair at all official meetings of The American Legion. Now to the specific question about this.

Q: *During the opening ceremony of a meeting when is the POW/MIA flag placed on the empty chair, before or after the prayer? Same question is posed for retiring the POW/MIA flag at the closure of a meeting.*

A: Remember the first four words of our Preamble, **"For God and Country."** This is always an easy way to remember which comes first during opening and closing ceremony. For God (we say prayer first) and Country (POW/MIA placement and Pledge of Allegiance always follows prayer). At the conclusion of the meeting, prayer comes before the POW/MIA flag is retired. Just remember the words of our Preamble, **"For God and Country."**

Q: *Who can wear a District (white over blue) or Department (white) cover?*

A: The Department of Florida Constitution and By Laws, defines who is allowed to wear a District cover, (Article IX, Item #12), or a Department cover (Article VI., Item #9). Past District or Past Department Officers are not allowed to wear those covers forever; you wear those covers ONLY when you serve in the appropriate District or Department office. When you go back to the blue cover, you are allowed to recognize your past District or Department offices with embroidered letters on the right side of the blue cover. Legion emblem sales will help you with the embroidery when you order a new cap and the last time I checked it was \$1.25 per embroidered letter.

(Sgt-at-Arms- Continued)

Thank you to all Legionnaires for all you do, and a special thank you to those Sgt-at-Arms out there who make our posts shine during meetings and ceremonies; I appreciate everything each and every one of you do. See you all at convention!



Steve Newman
Chaplain

Hello and Greetings my fellow Legion Family.

Hopefully everything is going in a good direction for everyone. I hope everybody had a wonderful and blessing filled Easter this past month.

Well, it's getting ever so close to my last two months as your Department Chaplain. I can't express myself enough to give all of you my sincere thanks and gratitude for a wonderful run during the past four (4) years as your Department Chaplain. I know deep down however that your next Department Chaplain will do a wonderful and gracious job. I also know that you will give the individual who is elected your utmost support and confidence as you did with me. We have a wonderful American Legion family that's very difficult to beat in any category. That attests to the great leadership the Department of Florida has and the great leadership throughout our great state.

As I traveled throughout the state of Florida I met many wonderful and super American Legion Family members. You will always be a part of my memories and dreams. Of course, only with God's guidance and direction could any of this have been possible. He's the one who is my major mainstay in life. Everything evolves around Him. I could not have done the things that I did without Him being a major part of my life. With Him everything is done in a positive and forward direction. With God, everything can be made that much easier, all you have to do is believe, and ask Him for His guidance and assurance. You would be surprised with the things He can help you with. Through the good times and not so good times, He gives you loving support and confidence to make it. He is our strength and love. So once again I say to everyone...

"Believe, and let God come into your lives for a better today and tomorrow."



Larry Sheets
Judge Advocate

About 90% of the Post Constitutions and By-Laws I receive for approval are returned for corrections. It seems like all of them are making the same mistakes. It is obvious that Posts are not consulting the Department Constitution and By-Laws because if they were, they would not keep making these mistakes. **Please find below the commonly made mistakes:**

Each Post must remember that the Post Membership has the final say on items brought before the Post. *Just about all By-Laws submitted are worded to make the person reading them think that the Post Executive Board has to approve all things to be done by the Post. Whatever the Executive Committee or Board approves must also be approved by the membership.*

Just about every Post puts in their By-Laws that All proceedings of the Post shall be in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order Revised. Had they read the Department Constitution, Article X, section 18, they would find the following: "Each Post Shall Use and follow The American Legion Post Officers Guide in conducting its meetings, initiation of members and other ceremonies prescribed therein."

When a Post appoints a committee to revise and update the Post Constitution and By-Laws, the chairman of that committee needs to be the Post Judge Advocate. *All members of that committee should read the Department Constitution and By-Laws, so that the same mistakes aren't made each time.*

Should you have any questions, you can email me at rivotkckr@comcast.net, or call me at 305-467-7713. I will assist you when possible.

SHOW YOUR PRIDE
ADVERTISE IN OUR CONVENTION BOOK
DEADLINE May 15, 2017 (See flyer insert)





Jerry Brandt
Membership Chair
Commanders,

I would like to congratulate to the 46 Posts who made their 100% goal for April 5th.

1st District:

- Post 402, Panama City Bch
- Post 378, Gulf Breeze
- Post 382, Navarre
- Post 240, Pensacola

2nd District

- Post 116, Port St Joe
- Post 172, Hosford
- Post 82, Lanark Village

4th District

- Post 210, Ocala
- Post 237, Beverly Hills
- Post 166, Homosassa
- Post 236, Williston

5th District

- Post 372, Jacksonville
- Post 202, Keystone Heights
- Post 250, Middleburg
- Post 102, Hastings
- Post 197, Jacksonville

6th District

- Post 409, Avalon Park
- Post 76 Tavares
- Post 330, Leesburg
- Post 357, Clermont
- Post 347, Lady Lake

7th District

- Post 15, Dade City
- Post 71, Lake Wales

8th District

- Post 69, Avon Park
- Post 254, North Port

9th District

- Post 142, Pompano Beach
- Post 310, Hallandale
- Post 170, Coconut Creek

12th District

- 177, Cocoa
- Post 394, Palm Bay

(Membership Chair- Continued)
Post 200, Satelite Beach

13th District

- Post 405, Punta Gorda
- 397, Fort Myers
- Post 404, Marco Island

14th District

- Post 144, Miami Lakes
- Post 29, Miami
- Post 374, Key Biscayne
- Post 145, Islamorada
- Post 32, Hialeah
- Post 28, Key West

15th District

- Post 108, Lutz
- Post 389, Ruskin

16th District

- Post 275, Dunedin

17th District

- Post 187, Deland
- Post 45, Palatka
- Post 380, Daytona Beach

Even if the 100% goal has past, please keep working on Membership, you all know how important our membership is.

Currently the Department of Florida ranks 23rd in the American Legion, up from 27th only two weeks ago, so membership is still coming in and we are climbing in the stats. However, we need to have another 4,550 renewals to reach 95%. Yes, that number seems high, but we are the State of Florida, 2nd Largest Department in the American Legion and we have done it before. Please reach out to your Posts and ask them to send in any renewals they are holding on to.

Looking at the above numbers, please be aware that 37 Posts in the Department needs only 5 renewals or less for 100%. Again, reach out to those Posts to see if they need assistance for that 100% goal.

The good news is the LAST Renewal Notice mailing will be on the April 27th, let's not wait for the Notice to go out, let's get then in.

*****NEWS FLASH*****

Please review the changes to the 2018 membership cards at my.legion.org. The size has been increased and 2 new items have been added. 1. Gender, 2. Date of Birth.

(Membership Chair- Continued)

To answer your question, No, the application form is not changing, and the size of the membership card remains the same.

Again, let me know if there is anything I can do to assist you in Membership



Sid Damsgard
Central Area Commander

Activities in the Central area have been slow this month. A couple of things to note: The

16th District Auxiliary held a picnic to benefit transportation for Boys and Girls State. Thanks to Nick for smoking all the meat and the Auxiliary for everything else. The gift baskets raised enough to secure bus transportation to Tallahassee.

It is with deep sadness I must report the loss of a great Legionnaire. This month John Heisler from Post 119 Largo passed. John was a life member coming from a family with a long history of Legionnaires. John's great uncle was one of the founders of the Post which bears their family name. John held many positions in the Post and was mentor to all those who came to him for advice. We in the 16th District will greatly miss him



John W Rose
Northern Area Commander

This year is rapidly coming to a close. Post CPRs were due by May 1st. If you haven't sent in your CPRs, you need to take the time to get them in. If you still need help, reach out to your District Commander.

Hopefully by the time you get this our membership will have improved. Last month we had many Posts within a few members of the 100% goal. Membership isn't easy and requires all of us working together to continue our legacy.

Thanks to each and every member who has volunteered their time to their Post and its programs.





(Northern Area Commander- Continued)

As we near the end of another American Legion year we might want to make an effort to let our communities know who we are and what a vital part of the community each Post is by writing an article for our local newspaper. Remember to attend local ceremonies remembering our departed comrades this Memorial Day.

Again, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support.



Andrew Nagy
Centennial Chair

There are 299 Posts in the Department of Florida. Department is looking for 100% participation in submitting your Post History to the Centennial web site. Every Post has received the Centennial/History form, it is up to the Post Commander or the Post Adjutant to fill it out and send it in. It may also be completed online at www.floridalegion.org/posthistory/.

Every Post has a Post name, either the city it is in or is named after a person. Every Post has a charter, most have it on their wall. The charter has the date the Post was chartered. Most Posts have either photos or a plaque with the past Post Commanders listed. All this information is requested on the form.

Please take the time to fill it out and send it in. I can be reached 24/7. I read all my emails and respond to them. I also return phone calls. Contact me if you have any questions



Sid Damsgard
Children & Youth Chair

Many thanks to Post 117 Palm Bay for hosting this year's Children and Youth picnic. Special thanks to Gene, Bruce, Jim, Dawn, and the whole crew. You really know how to throw a party!

We managed to raise about \$4500 for COTA, Beads of Courage, and Special Olympics. With more funds coming in we should be able to present the family groups with a sizable check at Convention.

(Children & Youth Chair- Continued)

To all sponsors who sent us checks, thank you. If not for your support, we would not be able to have such a fun event. I was waterlogged for days from my turn in the dunk tank, I think there was some serious cheating going on but in the end, it was worth it.

There is still plenty of time to hold events to benefit Children and Youth before Convention. If we can help in any way please let us know.

With the picnic over, I have the time to attend any event if you contact me on the Legion address for Children and Youth. Feel free email the details of your event to me.



Tom Gora
Legion College Chair

Get in on the training and experience, don't be left behind! The more knowledge members have about The American Legion helps make this a better organization and should also help you as you prepare to advance to District or Department office if that is something you would like to do.

Completing The American Legion Extension Institute (ALEI), and attending The Florida American Legion College are both great opportunities to learn about the organization and operations.

The ALEI class will be offered at the Annual Department Convention in June, and the next Florida American Legion College Class is scheduled for September 7-9, 2017.

These are two great educational opportunities and I hope you take advantage of them!

2017 DEPT. CONVENTION CLASSES

REGISTER ONLINE

floridalegion.org/register

Pre-registration is required for Service Officer School, Legion Institute, and Foodhandlers classes.



Loretta Young
JROTC/Shooting Sports Chair

The Department of Florida Cadet of the Year ended on March 1st. The number of

applications was the smallest in the last several years. We will have to do a better job next year to increase the submissions to this is a scholarship.

The top cadet of the year is awarded \$2,500.

Some of the instructors that I spoke to this year did not know of our Legion Cadet of the Year Program, which may partially be because there are many Posts who do not have a Chairman for the ROTC/JROTC Program. Our Districts must stress how important it is to have a Post Chairman in place to promote our Youth Programs. The instructors are very involved throughout the year and on a very tight schedule with various deadlines. Staying on top with a Chairman in place is the key to your success.

I had the honor of serving on the panel for the Broward County Mini Board for the Cadet of the Year and be involved in the interviewing of some very amazing Cadets. Each panel has four members that interview the Cadet selections made by the Senior Instructors for the Unit. The Cadets are quizzed on the Constitution, cadet knowledge, styles of leadership and current events. From these selections, there is another panel that selects the top finalist that will be the Cadet of the Year and the runner up who will lead in the Pass in Review for Broward County for the Superintendent of Schools. Finalist also receive scholarship awards that are given to the top contenders.

I have made several Post visitations to meet the members and promote our Year End Award Presentations to the High Schools and Universities. This is the time of year when all the schools are having their Award Ceremonies and Military Balls. I encourage all Posts to support the schools in your area and make that personal appearance to present the medals to the students.

I had the opportunity to attend the Broward County JROTC Drill Meet held at Boyd Anderson H.S. It was great to see that several Posts were represented as well as the 9th District Chairman, Rick Molina. The Legion assisted with the Trophy Awards at the completion of the event. Most of the Broward JROTC Units were present and the winners were very excited when coming forward to receive the trophies. Boyd Anderson





(JROTC/Shooting Sports Chair- Continued)

did an outstanding job of coordination and setting up the events. Kudos to all the staff and the cadets.

I want to thank all the Posts who are involved in our Legion Youth Programs. They are our future and deserve our support.

Bill McIntyre
Law & Order Chair

This has been a busy and fast year. I sincerely want to thank every Post that participated in the Law & Order program this year. I hope you have sent in your reports to Department for Police and Firefighter of the year. They were due by April 25th. These brave men and women deserve to be recognized for what they do each and every day to keep us safe. They certainly deserve all the praise we give them.

Remember, if we all work together and do our part the Department and the Commander will be happy with the results and Florida will once again be a winner.

I have been going to events and meetings to encourage you to participate in this great program and am looking forward to the results at Convention.

Keep up the "Can Do Spirit" and "Dare to Excel" Thank You for all your hard work.



Eunice Butts
Post Development Chair

I want to give a special thanks to Department Commander Joe Magee for selecting me to be on his team as Revitalization/ Post Development Chairman for the 2016-2017 year. It has been very rewarding to help many Posts and to do Area and District Revitalizations.

- February 2-4 the Western Area Revitalization was held in Pensacola and Tallahassee
- February 10-11 the 5th District Revitalization was held in Jacksonville
- February 24-25 the 9th District Revitalization

(Post Development Chair- Continued)

was held in Ft. Lauderdale

- March 2-4 the Central Area Revitalization was held in St. Petersburg, Tampa, and Winter Haven
- March 25th the 12th District Revitalization was held in Melbourne

Special thanks to Western Area Commander Jimmy Martin, 5th District Vice Commander Troy Horsley, 5th District Commander Fred Matthews, 9th District Commander Don Schwiesow, 12th District Commander Bruce Thurber and all the Posts and Post Commander that assisted us and showed such wonderful hospitality. Also, many thanks to 7th District Commander Tony Anthony, 16th District Commander John Sloat and 15th District Commander Jay Allen.

To the Posts that gave me the opportunity to assist or train officers according to their individual By-Laws, thank you. I will always have an open-door policy for suggestions, answers or just helping you.

For those of you in the state of Florida who had confidence in me and called to get suggestions or answers to your questions, I also thank you. I would like to encourage all Posts to send a representative to the Revitalization and Post Development class at the Department Convention in June. If possible, all District Commanders should also attend. This will help you better serve our District or Post Revitalizations.

[Revitalizations are now closed to the 2016-2017 year but Post Development is open until the June Convention](#)

In closing, I say to the Department of Florida, Areas, Districts, Posts, and all Legionnaires, thank you for giving me such a fruitful year in giving service to you. I'm wishing you a very successful 2017-2018 year.

David Miller
POW / MIA Chair

CALLING ALL FLORIDA LEGIONNAIRES

Time is flying as we are getting close to the end of the current Commander's regime. How many of your Posts or Districts have really done any events for the Pow-Mia program or issues? We ALL need

(POW / MIA Chair- Continued)

to get involved and realize how important this program is!!

On April 8th, 2017, I had the honor of working the 2017 VA Stand-Down at Bay Pines VAMC. This was an amazing event and shows how veterans come together to help our homeless and less fortunate veterans who served. I spoke with several former POWs that attended to support this event and they assured me that all veterans need to continue working to get a full accounting of all our missing service men and women from all wars and conflicts. This is important to the families of all the MIAs. Keep up the phone calls and letters to everyone in Washington DC as well as your state politicians!

As our Country continues to try to get all former service men and women back to our Country no matter where they were deployed to we must also try to push the issues in all our service organizations. Contact your Congressional delegate and Senator to keep investigations going to bring them all home from ALL wars and conflicts.

Hopefully all your Post homes have a Pow-Mia table set up. If not, and you need help setting one up contact me by email or phone and I will help you. As always, if anyone needs help dedicating a Pow-Mia Flag or Table with the formal ceremony, please contact me. You can reach me 24/7 by email or phone. My home number is in the Department roster. (727-393-0548) home (727-331-1652) cell.

My emails are listed as well. Our Pow-Mia program is going strong in the Department of Florida, so remember you could be captive or missing somewhere and your family would be devastated. Help bring these HEROES home to the Country they fought for, our nation, United States of America.

**REMEMBER POW-MIAS NEVER HAVE A NICE DAY
BRING THEM HOME
GOD BLESS OUR MISSING HEROES AND GOD BLESS
OUR GREAT NATION**

TICKETS ARE SELLING OUT FAST

**2017 DEPT CONVENTION
COMMANDER'S
BANQUET**
floridalegion.org/tickets



Roy Havekost
Social Media Chair

Greetings Legionnaires;

This is the last chance for your Post or District to be nominated for a Social Media Award. Awards will be presented at the annual Department of Florida Convention in June. I have asked that the District Social Media Chairmen review the Post's Facebook pages and groups in their respective Districts and after reviewing the pages nominate your District and/or Post(s) in your District, for an award consideration based on content used on the site that help to promote Legion programs. This will be the last request made in the Legion Link newsletter for 2017, as the cutoff date will be May 15th, 2017.

The use of Facebook by the American Legion helps to bring our goals and objectives to the community we serve. Facebook is the go to place for information and is used today by people of all ages. The service provided by Facebook is free, and it literally reaches thousands of people within your community and beyond. Showing your community what your Post is about will also spark membership interest, not only for the Legion but also your Auxiliary, SAL and Riders Chapters.

If you are the administrator for your Post page or group, and your District does not have a Social Media Chairman, by all means, submit your Posts' page or group for consideration. Email the Facebook URL with group name and Post # to me at SocialMedia@Legionmail.org. Again, the deadline is May 15th American Legion program/project videos shared on your site will increase your chances to receive an award.

Check the Convention itinerary for the next upcoming Social Media training session.



Larry Roberts
VA Entitlements Chair

All Information from:
MilitaryBenefits.info

10 Veterans Benefits You May Not Know About

Many veterans know about the basic health care and education benefits available to them through the Department of Veterans Affairs: Tricare and the GI Bill. While these benefits alone are substantial, numerous other programs help provide more benefits to veterans and their families. Even within the health care and education programs are little-known benefits to improve the lives of veterans and help ease the financial burden of medical care or other expenses. Here are 10 veterans benefits you may not have heard about that all veterans should see if they qualify for.

1. Long-term Care

Long-term care is expensive, but often necessary to provide care for aging relatives. Through the Aid and Attendance program, many veterans are eligible to receive money to cover the cost of nursing homes, assisted living programs and other long-term care options. With the ability for couples to receive up to \$25,020 a year, the Aid & Attendance benefit will help take care of a significant portion of long-term care costs. Surviving spouses of veterans are also eligible to receive up to \$13,560 a year to cover their long-term care costs.

2. Caregiver Support

Should you choose to take care of an ailing Veteran at home, the Department of Veterans Affairs offers a caregiver support program. While this program does not offer any monetary support to caregivers, they are provided with a free support line and a caregiver support coordinator to help navigate military benefits and the stress of care giving.

3. Death Benefits

When a veteran dies, families have a few unique benefits available to them. A U.S. flag may be requested to drape over the casket and families may request a Presidential Memorial Certificate to honor the deceased loved ones service. The Department of Veterans Affairs also provides free

(VA Entitlements Chair- Continued)

headstones or grave markers.

4. Certification Programs

In addition to receiving credits to use toward a college degree, the GI Bill offers up to \$2,000 to help cover the cost of certification courses or other vocational training programs. This benefit will work well for veterans who wish to change careers or pursue a career path that does not require a college degree.

5. Transferring GI Bill Credits

Unused credits through the GI Bill may be transferred to spouses and dependents of veterans. There are service limits required to transfer the benefits.

6. Free Tax Preparation

Veterans and their family have access to free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance offices on military bases. The individuals who work in the offices have expertise working with the complicated nature of military-related tax issues.

7. Life Insurance

Many veterans have trouble obtaining traditional life insurance, particularly if they sustained an injury during their time of service. Through the Servicemembers' and Veterans' Group Life Insurance program, veterans may receive up to \$400,000 in life insurance. This program also offers competitive premium rates.

8. Mortgage Help

Veterans having trouble making their mortgage payments are eligible for repayment assistance through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Options for help include special repayment plans, loan forbearance and loan modification programs. Additional benefits are available for veterans with VA loans and for homeless veterans.

9. VA Foreclosures

The VA maintains a list of homes serviced by VA loans that have gone into foreclosures. Veterans have the ability to search the list of VA acquired properties and purchase homes at a discount. You do not have to be a veteran to search the properties, but all properties qualify for VA financing.

10. American Corporate Partners

American Corporate Partners connects veterans



(VA Entitlements Chair- Continued)

with top companies to help them obtain a job after their time of service. Along with being connected to job opportunities, veterans have the opportunity to receive one-on-one mentoring and other career development services.



Alan Cohen
VA&R Chair

Greetings my fellow Legionnaires.

For the most part, over the past several months I've spoken about one or another of our wonderful VAVS volunteers. It's been relatively easy to identify them since we're blessed to have so many such individuals.

This time around I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge our volunteers as a group. I've been fortunate enough to have visited several of the VA hospitals and Outpatient clinics in the state and am happy to tell you that we have much to be proud of. The spirit of teamwork, camaraderie and friendship is no small part of the spirit that these volunteers share, regardless of location. Their contributions and dedication to helping our fellow veterans are simply too numerous to mention here and we're grateful for them all.

Of particular note, this past month was a Veteran's Stand-Down conducted at the Bay Pines VA hospital. Our reps were instrumental in helping bring together vendors of every type to provide much needed services to approx. 400 homeless Vets. Available was everything from meals and basic comfort items to free telephone calling cards, legal services and much more, all of which had a positive effect on the lives of these worthy individuals.

Also, I'm proud to announce that as is often the case, the Dep't of Florida went the extra mile and made a generous donation of 2 motorized scooters to the soon to be completed Wounded Warrior Ranch which will be located in the Tampa area.

In closing this month, I'm reaching out for some of your input regarding finding a full-time VAVS rep at the James A. Haley VA hospital in Tampa. Should you or anyone you're associated with have that spirit of volunteerism, please let me know.



Bob Brewster
Youth Law Cadet Chair

THE DEADLINE TO SUBMIT CADET APPLICATIONS HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO

JUNE 1ST, 2017!! PLEASE GET YOUR APPLICATIONS IN TO DEPARTMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

This is a great program, but I am afraid that if we don't get some more support from all of you, it will die on the vine. We are getting good support from the Fifth District, but we can't do it alone. Next year, if I am still chairman, I will make it a point to somehow get around to as many of your District meetings as possible. I believe that this might increase interest in this program. Also, I will do a mailing to the individual Posts myself, for I believe from past experience and surveys that I conducted, very few of you read the Legion Links. Again, from my own experience, get to your local police and find out if they have an Explorer program. This is a gold mine of cadets who will be most interested in enrolling in this program.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 904-272-1619 (home), 904-635-4492 (cell), or email: brewsterrobert@bellsouth.net.

Dan Biron
Envoy Mortgage

Envoy Mortgage A Committed Residential Mortgage Lender to the American Legion

Envoy Mortgage with offices in Tampa, Naples, Orlando, Lake Mary (N. Orlando), and coming soon, St. Petersburg is a committed partner to the American Legion.

In addition to sponsoring the Project Vet Relief last summer at the Orange County National Golf Course, and being a sponsor at the Legion Department Convention, they are have been by our side to assist all Vets and their families in homebuyer education and gaining financing access to buy a new home or refinance an existing one.

Each time they work with the American Legion with a closed loan they donate back to the organization. In addition they have rolled out a VA loan training program to all and as many realtors

(Envoy Mortgage- Continued)

in your area who would like the training. They would love to have a VA Expert Loan officer and these VA educated realtors come to your local Post to conduct free home buying seminars.

If you have interest in this please contact Dan Biron at 407-687-3471 or dbiron@envoymortgage.com for more information.

If you have any questions on financing Dan will assist in getting you to the local Envoy office to ensure all your needs are taken care of.

Envoy Mortgage - committed to the American Legion Vets and their families.

WE'VE MADE SOME EXCITING CHANGES TO EMBLEM SALES
BE SURE TO VISIT US AT CONVENTION

NEW DEPT CONVENTION T-SHIRTS

Available in Men's or Women's styles. Front features eagle with Legion emblem. Back features Convention artwork, sponsor logos, and a roster of your 2016-2017 Department Officers.

ORDER ONLINE BY MAY 1ST AND SAVE \$5

ORDER ONLINE
Your Convention T-Shirt today!
floridalegion.org/tshirt

Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

June 9-10, 2017



Women Veterans' Conference

Orlando VA Medical Center at Lake Nona
Auditorium—4F, Room #301 A
13800 Veterans Way, Orlando, FL 32828



Register Online

<https://ourwomenveteransconference.eventbrite.com>



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.



THE AMERICAN LEGION

For God and Country

Greetings Legionnaires,

The American Legion Department of Florida will be hosting its 99th Annual Statewide Convention June 29th - July 2nd 2017 at the Orlando World Center Marriott, 8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821.

We wanted to give each Post the unique opportunity to be recognized by advertising in our Convention Program. This is your chance to send well wishes for a successful convention; announce outstanding membership goals; inform of special projects; thank your officers for a great year; announce new officers or pay tribute to a special member of your post!

There are three different advertisement layouts to choose from: full page, half page or quarter page. You may complete the attached form or purchase online at floridalegion.org/book.

The following rates are exclusive to our Legionnaires:

<u>Full Page Advertisement (7.5" x 10")</u>	\$350 Legion Member Discount: \$175
<u>Half Page Advertisement (7.5" x 5")</u>	\$200 Legion Member Discount: \$100
<u>Quarter Page Advertisement (3.75" x 5")</u>	\$100 Legion Member Discount: \$50
<u>Design Fee (Any Size)</u>	Only offered to Legion Members: \$25

ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE: MAY 15, 2017

The American Legion appreciates your support of our veterans that have served and continue to serve our great country. We extend our ever-lasting gratitude to our men and women in uniform. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Schneidau, Event Coordinator at 407-295-2631 ext. 232 or via email at jschneidau@floridalegion.org.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Schneidau
Event Coordinator



THE AMERICAN LEGION - DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA 99th Annual Department Convention Book Advertising

Name/Post/Business: _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone No: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

<p>FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT \$175</p> <p>7.5" X 10"</p>
--

<p>HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENT \$100</p> <p>7.5" X 5"</p>
<p>HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENT \$100</p> <p>7.5" X 5"</p>

<p>QUARTER PAGE \$50</p> <p>3.75" X 5"</p>	<p>QUARTER PAGE \$50</p> <p>3.75" X 5"</p>
<p>QUARTER PAGE \$50</p> <p>3.75" X 5"</p>	<p>QUARTER PAGE \$50</p> <p>3.75" X 5"</p>

LEGION MEMBER PRICING ONLY

- Full Page Ad \$175
 Half Page Ad \$100
 ¼ Page Ad \$50
 Design Fee \$25
 Send Proof \$0

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Advertisements must be submitted no later than May 15, 2017 to be included in the program. Please submit your advertisement artwork via email in one of the following image file types: .ai, .eps, .psd, .pdf, .tif, .jpeg, .jpg, .png. All artwork must be digital; no scanned or printed artwork will be accepted. All advertisements will be in grayscale, no color.

Designing not your day job? No worries, we can help. We are now offering our design services for an additional fee of \$25. You must provide the content of the ad, any images, logos, etc and we'll take care of the rest. We'll even send you a proof upon request.

All imagery must be original or legally licensed. The American Legion, Department of Florida reserves the right to redesign any advertisement due to required formatting or licensing issues.

Please email artwork to: jschneidau@floridalegion.org

Send Payment to:

American Legion, Department of Florida
 ATTN: Jennifer Schneidau
 1912 A Lee Road
 Orlando, FL 32810

Checks payable to: American Legion, Dept of Florida

YOU CAN COMPLETE AND PAY ONLINE
floridalegion.org/book

We also accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover.

Visa MasterCard American Express Discover Please charge my card in the amount of \$ _____

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date: _____ CVV Code: _____

Cardholder Name: _____

I authorize The American Legion, Department of Florida to charge the amount listed above to the credit card provided herein. I agree to pay for this purchase in accordance with the issuing bank cardholder agreement.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

JUN 30

CANARY 3-4

-JOIN US- 2017 COMMANDER & PRESIDENT

BANQUET

menu

- Fresh Greens Salad
- Irish Potato Salad
- Guinness Buttermilk Fried Chicken
- Braised Short Rib Sheppard's Pie
- Butter Braised Cabbage
- Honey Glazed Carrots
- Assorted Rolls & Bread
- Various Desserts

*Menu is subject to change.

COCKTAILS: 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
BANQUET: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM



PURCHASE ONLINE
www.floridalegion.org

Join us, June 30, 2017, Department Convention at the World Marriott Center.

Yes, I would like to attend the Commander's & President's Banquet!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

of Tickets _____ X \$40 each = Total Due \$ _____

Payment Type: Check Money Order Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Yes, I authorize my card to be charged for the total amount above.

Credit Card #: _____

Expiration: _____ CVV: _____ Signature: _____

Tickets will be available for pickup during Convention located in the Headquarters Office.

Please mail to: The American Legion, Department of Florida, Attention: Event Coordinator, P.O. Box 547859; Orlando, FL 32854



2017

**The American Legion
Department of Florida
100% Target Report**

16	John Sloat	96.20%
14	Gary Decker	95.23%
15	Luther Allen	94.87%
6	Daryl Bass	94.74%
5	Fred Matthews	94.72%
12	Bruce Thurber	94.61%
1	Raymond Olsen	94.37%
7	Stephen Anthony	92.14%
8	Dennis Walsh	92.03%
17	Paul Alexander	91.68%
13	Chuck Weinberg	91.53%
2	James Brennan	91.11%
3	Frederick Hutto	90.33%
11	Robert Miller	89.27%
9	Donald Schwiesow	89.25%
4	Victoria VanBuren	88.83%
Central	Sidney Damsgard	95.14%
Eastern	Felix Ayala	94.68%
Western	Jimmy Martin	93.77%
Northern	John Rose	92.30%
Southwestern	Andrew Burkett	91.76%
Southern	Joseph Motes	91.00%

as of 04/20/2017



Call Now: 1-800-235-6943
Monday - Friday 8AM - 7PM (EST)

**DEPARTMENT TRUSTED.
LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.**

We provide a wide range of benefits designed to protect you, your family and your health.



From Your American Legion Department

We are committed to serving the unique insurance needs of LIT members and their families.



Emergency and Accident

A crisis can strike at any moment. Learn how we can help you prepare for the unexpected and get assistance when you need it most.



Insurance Coverage

From health to auto, we offer valuable insurance products designed to fit the specific needs of Legionnaires.



No Cost Protection

Your valued status as a Legionnaire makes you eligible for LegionCare, up to \$5,000.00 in NO COST to you benefits.

Cancer Care Insurance Plan

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust products and services are there when you them most. Listen to how others have benefited from services like our Cancer Care Insurance Plan.

- Cash benefits sent to Legionnaire members diagnosed with cancer
- We send you money - even if you don't have cancer

www.thelit.com



PROJECT: VETRELIEF



PVR CHALLENGE - DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE!

Don't delay, get your donations in today! This is the **last month** for Posts and Squadrons to send in their donations to be eligible for awards during the Department Convention in June. Donations must be sent to Department Headquarters and *post marked* on or before May 31, 2017 to qualify. Year end meetings are around the corner. That's a great time for you to vote and approve donations.


As you can see from our case support numbers below, the demand and need for our financial assistance program is there and only growing! More and more military families are learning of the wonderful opportunity we are able to provide them during their difficult times. And, since last year, we're trending to double the number of families we're able to help within a year - something we are **very** proud of!

However, it's going to take the support from the Legion Family to continue our mission of providing the necessary assistance to our service members and their families. If your Post or Squadron has not gotten involved or sent in a donation to meet your PVR Challenge goal, **do so today!**

It is our duty, as a veteran service organization, to be there for our veteran community, and this is one way you can do that! By donating to PROJECT: VetRelief, your impact gives us the ability to reach more families that need to keep their lights on, or stay out of the streets.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to help your fellow veterans with the assistance they need!



	Year 2 <small>(July 2015-June 2016)</small>	Year 3 <small>(July 2016-Mar 2017)</small>
 Number of Families	57	85
Amount Given	\$37,812.34	\$72,206.19

JUST A FEW WEEKS UNTIL CONVENTION

Want to be a part of the PROJECT: VetRelief Team? Seize the opportunity at The American Legion, Department of Florida Annual Convention, June 29th-July 2nd at Marriott's Orlando World Center. We would love to have you join us for a class!

Class details have been finalized and are below. Class space is limited, so be sure to register ahead of time. Anyone who signed up using the online VetRelief Advocate form will be sent the official class registration link.

Thursday, June 29th: 1:00 – 2:00 PM

Friday, June 30th: 4:30 – 5:30 PM
(Class times are subject to change)

Registration Link:

<http://www.projectvetrelief.org/classregistration/>

Calling all trained Advocates - volunteers are needed to answer questions, spark the interest of the Legion Family, and pass out marketing materials at our booth in the vendor area. Let Jennifer Cooper know if this is something you'd like to do, as we'd love to have your help!

We look forward to seeing you there!

In case you missed it...

The West Volusia Regional Chamber of Commerce held their 6th Annual Charity Ride on Sunday, April 9th. The event had several pit stop locations where riders and drivers could enjoy food, music, prizes, and a silent auction.

Several Legion Rider Chapters participated in the event and had a wonderful afternoon of fun and networking. Below, Post 6 Commander Jim Deal, our case worker Michael Beaven, and Post 255 Commander Loren King attended the check presentation at the Chamber receiving the proceeds from the day-long event, \$4,000!

Thank you to everyone who attended!



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

PROJECT: VETRELIEF



Each month a leader board will be posted of all donations that has been turned in.

- ★ Donations can be sent to: PROJECT: VetRelief, 1912A Lee Road, Orlando, FL 32810
- ★ Donations must be turned in by May 31, 2017 to count towards recognition awards

By now, your Post should have received your Challenge packet from your Area or District Commander. If you have not received it, please contact them or Jennifer Cooper at the Department Headquarters.

Thank you to the following Posts and Squadrons for participating during our Challenge!

CHALLENGE CENTRAL

CHALLENGE CENTRAL

	POST	DIST	AREA	LOCATION	GOAL	AMT DONATED	% OF GOAL
SAL	15	148	CENTRAL	Riverview	142	\$1,000	704%
	29	14	SOUTHERN	Miami	456	\$3,000	658%
	309	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Palmetto	340	\$2,000	588%
	308	9	SOUTHERN	Hollywood	22	\$100	455%
	67	14	SOUTHERN	North Miami	179	\$800	447%
	158	16	CENTRAL	Treasure Island	292	\$1,000	342%
	125	16	CENTRAL	Gulfport	456	\$1,500	329%
	221	1	WESTERN	Niceville	333	\$1,000	300%
	382	1	WESTERN	Navarre	406	\$1,000	246%
SAL	117	12	EASTERN	Palm Bay	196	\$476	243%
	199	11	SOUTHERN	West Palm Beach	86	\$200	233%
	131	3	NORTHERN	Greenville	22	\$50	227%
	284	4	NORTHERN	Bellevue	440	\$1,000	227%
	310	9	SOUTHERN	Hallandale	58	\$118	203%
	170	9	SOUTHERN	Coconut Creek	54	\$108	200%
	59	3	NORTHERN	Branford	41	\$70	171%
	57	3	NORTHERN	Lake City	728	\$1,121	154%
	47	11	SOUTHERN	Lake Worth	228	\$300	132%
	340	1	WESTERN	Pensacola	799	\$1,000	125%
	224	3	NORTHERN	Cherry Lake	102	\$123	121%
	283	5	NORTHERN	Arlington	838	\$1,000	119%
	92	9	SOUTHERN	Hollywood	254	\$300	118%
	7	16	CENTRAL	Clearwater	865	\$1,000	116%
SAL	321	9	SOUTHERN	Cooper City	131	\$150	115%
	133	14	SOUTHERN	Palmetto Bay	273	\$300	110%
SAL	54	5	NORTHERN	Fernandina Beach	92	\$100	109%
SAL	113	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Rotonda West	209	\$225	108%
SAL	375	1	WESTERN	Southport	134	\$140	104%
SAL	81	12	EASTERN	Melbourne	119	\$120	101%
	142	9	SOUTHERN	Pompano Beach	516	\$516	100%
	385	9	SOUTHERN	Pembroke Pines	233	\$233	100%
	278	15	CENTRAL	Brandon	103	\$103	100%
SAL	24	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Bradenton	141	141	100%
SAL	80	6	EASTERN	St. Cloud	101	\$101	100%
SAL	79	16	CENTRAL	New Port Richey	284	\$283	100%
	243	6	EASTERN	Oviedo	155	\$150	97%
	69	8	SOUTHWESTERN	Avon Park	712	\$250	35%

*The Chart reflects donations turned in between July 1, 2016 and April 24, 2017

For more information and Challenge materials:
Jennifer Cooper at jcooper@floridalegion.org