



THE LEGION LINK

COMMUNICATION ★ DEDICATION ★ EDUCATION



AUGUST 2018

COMMANDER DIANNE BOLAND

VOL. 27 ISSUE I

From Your Department Commander Dianne Boland

commander@floridalegion.org



It is with heart-felt gratitude that I thank The American Legion Family for your confidence and support in allowing me to be your Department Commander.

Thanks to all the outgoing officers and chairman for your dedication and hard work last year and a big congratulation to all the incoming officers and chairman. I look forward to working with you towards a successful and exciting year.

This year will be The American Legion's 100th Anniversary Year. It is so special that National is celebrating it for 14 months. The true date is March 15, 2019. Now is the time for your post to start planning for this celebration. Remember to not only communicate with your community but invite your local community leaders; have fun while celebrating our past – our heritage. The Department is having a two day 100th Year Birthday Celebration on January 18-19, 2019 in Crystal River. It is sponsored by Post 155. More information will be forth coming.

The Youth Law Cadet Program just had some outstanding cadets graduate. I'm sorry I couldn't be there to watch it happen. My thanks go out to Bob Brewster, his daughter and Tom Gora for another successful year.

In case you haven't heard of this program, there's information about it on our web site at <https://floridalegion.org/programs>.

My slogan this year is Communication, Dedication and Education. This is a recipe for success. We need to improve our communication skills within our posts; also, from post level up as well as department level down. We need to improve within our legion family as well as our community. Remember listening is as important as speaking. You are all dedicated or you wouldn't be here but we need to rededicate ourselves in support of our four pillars. Education is needed to be able to "sell" the American Legion. In order to explain what we are to someone you must first know it yourself. National has an excellent computer course that takes roughly 2 – 3 hours. It is called "Basic Training" and can be found at <https://legion.org/alei>. It is free to the American Legion Family. It covers our history as well as the Four Pillars. I highly recommend everyone taking the course.

I look forward to an exciting year. We will be celebrating our history, our heritage as well as building up our membership. We can't allow our membership to slide any lower. Our dues help support our programs. Retention within the posts is very important. Not all members can visit their post. Do you keep them informed? Do you give them a reason to stay? Be sure to thank your volunteers, your chairman and your officers for their time supporting our four pillars.

In This Edition....

- » Page 1 - Commander
- » Page 2 - 2nd Vice, 3rd Vice
- » Page 3 - NEC, Judge Advocate, Historian
- » Page 4 - PCI
- » Page 5 - Central Area, Northern Area, Southwestern Area
- » Page 6 - Western Area, 12th District
- » Page 7 - Membership, Children & Youth
- » Page 8 - Disaster Preparedness, JROTC/Shooting Sports, Post Development
- » Page 9 - POW/MIA, Public Relations, Resolutions, Security Commission
- » Page 10 - Social Media, VA Entitlements, VA&R
- » Page 11 - Youth Law Cadet
- » Page 12 - PROJECT: VetRelief
- » Page 13 - Convention Awards
- » Page 15 - Membership Report
- » Page 16 - Family Cruise

Preparing for the New Year

Jerry Brandt, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org

Comrades, I would like to thank everyone who attended the Department Convention, however now, we need to start preparing and work towards a great year. As you may know, as 2nd Vice Commander, I will be providing assistance and oversight to the Central and Southwestern Area, which includes the 7th, 8th, 13th 15th and 16th District. As always, your First point of contact will be your local Posts Commanders, then District. Please allow them to help you resolve them. We have a chain of command and open communication within this command chain, let us use it to assist you.

As you know training/education is a vital part of what we do. Training is given at Fall and Summer Conventions, so that we have the best educated leaders in the Nation. The Area Commanders are preparing for training for the Districts, more information will be forth coming on the dates, location and times.

Post Commanders, please, get your officers together and attend these classes when available.

Commanders, now is the time for your Posts to also look forward for the Legion College, this will be after the 1st of the year, but now is the time to start looking at the possible candidates for this school.

Zone 2 will have a Traveling Trophy this year for the leading District. So whoever is ahead in Membership percentage at the end of the first quarter, will receive the Traveling Trophy at Fall Conference. After the 1st of the year, this will be passed to the winner of the 2nd quarter, same with the April 1st cut off. At the Summer Convention, the winner, and the keeper of the Traveling Trophy will be announced.

I will be seeing everyone at the various District Meetings. And Thank You for Your Continuous Service to our Country, and to the American Legion.

AUGUST 2018	
1	Air Force Day
1-4	National Veterans Wheelchair Games
2	Operation Desert Shield
3-5	Leadership Retreat ☆
4	Coast Guard Birthday
7	Purple Heart Day
10-11	Membership Workshop ☆
14	National Navajo Code Talkers Day
15	Legion Link Articles Due
16	Airborne Day
16-21	AL Baseball World Series ☆
18-23	Legacy Run
19	National Aviation Day
21	Senior Citizens Day
24-30	100th National Convention ☆
26	Women's Equality Day
29	Marine Corps Reserve Birthday

☆ - Commander Dianne Boland's Attendance Tentative.
 Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at www.floridalegion.org. We share the information we are provided, please contact Program, Area, District and Posts for additional details and events.

Proceeds benefit Veterans and their families in the State of Florida.

TEAMwork

Eunice Butts, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org

Greetings Legionnaires. Welcome to a new year in Training, Membership and Programs. Training gives us more knowledge to add on to the present Membership, because it is the life of The American Legion. Programs let our communities know that we are here, and we need them to survive. They need us for the many programs we have to offer to our veterans, military, youth and community.

I am looking forward to working with The Northern Area Commanders; the

District and Post Commanders and our Legionnaires. I am looking forward to working together as a TEAM to enhance our membership and our awareness in our communities, state and nation.

The following is my tentative schedule for August 2018 (3rd thru 5th Department Retreat) (9th thru 12th National Membership) (20th Post 55 installation) (23rd thru 30th National Convention). August 13th thru the 19th is open.

Please feel free to invite me to some of your programs and meetings.



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Legion Link articles are due the 15th of each month.
floridalegion.org/submitarticle

VA Recruitment and Retention

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org

A 2017 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed significant challenges in recruiting and retaining clinical and human resources employees at VA. Exit surveys indicated that advancement issues or dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the work environment were common reasons for departure.

In September 2017 there were 49,000 unfilled positions at VA. The Veterans Health Administration alone had 45,000 clinical vacancies, and 1,500 were mental health openings. VA currently has more than 20

health-care systems without permanent directors nationwide; some have gone more than two years under interim leadership. The GAO determined that the largest critical needs were medical officers, nurses, psychologists, physicians' assistants and medical technologists.

VA also needs to do a better job showing why it is a good place to work and offer meaningful incentive to recruit and retain top talent.

The American Legion understands that filling high-skill medical vacancies at VA facilities around the country is challenging. Creative solutions can be achieved, many without additional legislative action, to continue

providing, through full staffing of top professionals, what has been defined as "the best care anywhere."

The acute shortage of doctors, nurses, and other health-care professionals across the U.S., is particularly acute in rural areas and low-income inner-city neighborhoods.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

Congress can pass legislation addressing the recruitment and retention challenges VA has regarding pay disparities among physicians and medical specialists who are providing direct health care to veterans according to the many testimonies The American Legion has provided to Congress.

Constitution & Bylaws

Larry Sheets, Judge Advocate

judgeadvocate@legionmail.org

First off, I would like to thank Commander Boland for the confidence she has in me and appointing me Department Judge Advocate again. I do appreciate it.

I get a lot of calls from Legionnaires with questions regarding something that happened in their Post, wondering what to do. My first reply is, "what does your Post Constitution and By-Laws say about it." The reply they mostly give is, "I don't know."

You will find that most of your concerns will be answered in the Post Constitution and By-Laws. If not, look in the Department Constitution and By-Laws.

I received a call yesterday from a Post Commander asking why Post Officers are installed by the District Commander. Seems this Post Commander has a personal dislike for the current District Commander.

I reminded this Post Commander of the Department Constitution, Article X Post Organization, paragraph 13 which says:

Post Officers shall be installed by the District Commander or his/her designated representative. Post Officers shall take office and enter upon their duties at a date to be fixed by the Post, which date shall be subsequent to, but not later than sixty (60) days after the adjournment of the Annual Department Convention, unless waived in writing by the incoming District Commander.

The only recourse for this Post Commander would be to write the current Department Commander requesting a former District Officer to perform the installation.

Centennial

Gerry Kaufman, Historian

historian@legionmail.org

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support during the elections and convention. Special thanks are sent out to the 5th district for affording me the opportunity to join in their hospitality suite and making my wife and I feel welcome.

The year ended with 4 great books winning the annual year book contest and a big shout out to Post 8 which took 2nd place last year in the National Contest. Congratulations to all of you for your hard work and dedication.

You all can go to the Florida Legion website and view the pictures from throughout the year and the convention.

This is a special year for every Historian in the Department. As we turn 100 years old I urge all of you to set up your own Post, District and area Centennial Celebrations. As you do so, please keep me informed so that I may place your events on my calendar. As you do this we have 3 items that can be checked out by any post, district or area. The two banners that were flown in the registration area and the framed picture that was in front of the emblem sales. The guidelines for this will be sent by email per request. The Centennial

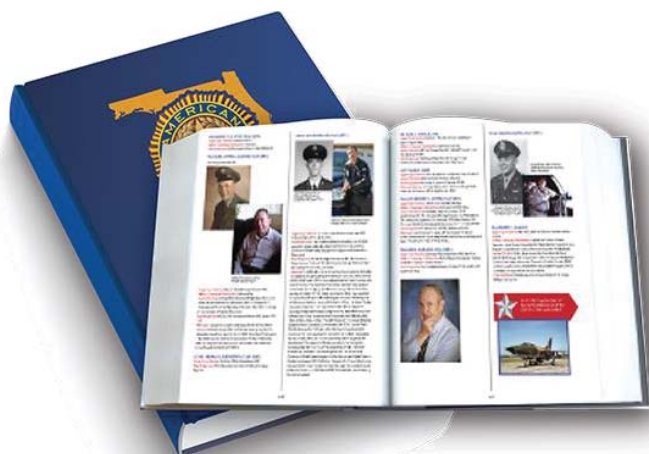
website is still lacking 24 entries. I would like to complete that task within the next 90 days so I will be contacting those posts directly. The user name and password is at the end of this article.

If any of you need guidance in setting up your events please contact me as soon as possible and I will give you as much assistance as possible. And last but not least; Congratulations to all of the newly elected officers and I look forward to an event filled year.

Centennial Website:

U/N: 100thannvdept@legionmail.org

P/W: melanie1969



The American Legion Department of Florida 100th Anniversary Member Directory Project is now underway!

The American Legion Department of Florida has contracted with Publishing Concepts (PCI), a trusted partner, to create this special member publication.

Watch for postcards and emails from PCI with instructions to update your information so we can take advantage of this great opportunity to celebrate our rich history and heritage!

[The American Legion, Department of Florida](#) has contracted [Publishing Concepts](#) (PCI), a trusted partner, to create a special **Florida 100th Anniversary Member Directory Publication**. This project was approved by Florida Membership at our 2017 Department Convention and has been approved by the National Headquarters office.

As member privacy is a concern to everyone, it is important to note that member's information will **ONLY be used or printed with their consent**. PCI has entered into a List Protection Agreement with National and as such PCI will only provide your information back to Department Headquarters. The publisher works under a very strict confidentiality agreement and will only use the information provided for the purpose of contacting members to gather data and to sell the directory.

There are 3 parts to the "Member Verification" process:

1. **Update and verify your information** for our records. During this portion, PCI will ask additional questions such as alternate addresses (for snow birds), date of birth, spouse name, etc. This will assist Department in maintaining accuracy in our records.
2. **Opportunity to OPT-IN to the Florida 100th Anniversary Member Directory Publication**. Here PCI will ask the member if they would like to have any or all of the following information printed in our directory: NAME, CITY, STATE, EMAIL, MILITARY STATUS, RANK, BRANCH OF SERVICE, LEGION POST, and WAR ERA. Members must OPT IN and may choose which information is printed in the directory.
3. **Ability to Purchase Directory and Florida Legion Merchandise**. PCI will attempt to sell the member a copy of the book and Department branded merchandise. Purchase is not necessary to be listed.

Every current member will receive a post card over the next few months. PCI will also be reaching out to expired members for the same information and will try to renew their membership, as a part of this call since they must be a member in order to purchase or be a part of the membership directory.

Watch for postcards, like the image below, and similar emails with instructions on membership verification so we can take advantage of this great opportunity to celebrate our rich history and heritage!

For any additional information, please visit our website, floridalegion.org, OR call 1-800-982-1590

Central Area

Jay Allen, Central Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org

The month of July started off getting everything ready for the 100th Celebration at the Department Convention in Orlando. Attendance was fantastic, and the training was very interesting and informative. Great milestones were achieved.

I have the honor of being elected as Central Area Commander for a second year. Thank you everyone for your support and I am

hoping that Central Area has another great year. You are the ones that make all this happen.

Posts are being contacted concerning membership and the push is on. We are getting membership out to find new members and receiving in the renewals to make everyone in the 100% plus before the new year or as close as they can make it and having a stronger effort if needed coming after the 1st of the year.

This year we are continuing the Legion Family

concept to work as a team. TEAM stands for Training, Educate, and Membership. It is the responsibility of each of the Legion Family (Legion, Auxiliary, Sons) to train all the family members in the respective area to each entity and educate them on how they work together and help each other in all aspects of the Family.

It is a very busy time visiting the various posts for installations in the Central Area and I am looking forward to the Leadership Retreat in Orlando this August.

Northern Area

Mike Hutto, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org

Thank you all for your support and I will do you proud! I have several goals and big guess what the first is: That's right, MEMBERSHIP!!!

As always, let us think out of the box. This is 100 years, so let's make it 100% once again.... Let us excel in the Northern Area!

Next is communication. I cannot help if I don't know what is going on. Please inform me on your monthly reports and never be shy to call and ask for advice. (I may not have any to offer, but I'll bet I can find someone who can.)

Next is a proposal to include husbands of modern day female hero's in our wonderful American Legion. These guys are basically stay at home "Moms" that get the responsibility for taking care of a family while

the wife is Defending our great country. Yet, the spouse cannot join any part of the American Legion unless he is eligible for the Sons, and I know several that are not. If we get the spouse, we'll get the service member.

If you need me, I can always be reached at northernarea@legionmail.org or by calling me at (352)221-4608.

Social Media, Friend or Foe?

Michael Raymond, Southwestern Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org

First of all, it is an honor and a privilege to represent the Southwestern Area in this, our 100th anniversary. It is also an honor and I am very excited to be working with our very first female Department Commander. This

year will be amazing! One thing that really gets to me is our use of social media, mainly Facebook. Used properly it can be a great tool to accomplish our goals of getting good news out to the world. We can talk about all the great things we do every day and let people know what we are all about.

Unfortunately, some people feel that they can air their grievances or worse, make

unfounded accusations or rumors against post members or officers. Legionnaires, this is not what is going to draw new members into our posts'. Please think before you post that comment because once you hit "post", there's no way to get it back. Let's all work together as a family and do what we do best, serving our community and our Veterans.



Western Area**Chuck Weber, Western Area Commander**
westernarea@legionmail.org

Please allow me to introduce myself, my name is Raymond C. "Chuck" Olsen and I am the newly elected Western Area Commander for the Department of Florida. I am also the Chairman of the Department of Florida Americanism Committee. I look forward to serving all of you for the next year. As background, I served as 1st District Commander for the two previous years and I am very proud of our accomplishments. Post of the Year (2017), Adjutant of the Year (2017, 2018), Legionnaire of the Year (2018), Most new members by a Post (Post 375) for the Department (2018), a Legion Yearbook award (2017) and ALR Yearbook Award

(2018) and 3rd place two years in a row for District Membership, with this year over 100%. We held both of the ALR traveling trophies for most of this year as well. Western area also made 100% and was the #1 Area this year. But if you think about all of these accomplishments, it was all of the Post members, Post Commanders, Membership Chairmen, Adjutants, and District Staff working hard to get things done along with the support of the Auxiliary members who helped collect dues and sign up new members, held fundraisers, provided food etc for all of the members of our Legion Family, the Sons of the American Legions working their special projects and helping the Legions rise to the top, and the ALR Chapters who are comprised of all of our Legion Family members, riding all of the rides including the

Legacy rides, showing the flag, recruiting new members visiting posts in the area and out of state. My goal is to inspire and assist all of you to continue these new traditions and keep the panhandle of Florida strong.

So obviously I have big shoes to fill. It is my goal to use Communication, Dedication, and Education to get the job done and make sure that you have the tools and information from the Department that you need to do your jobs, the answers you need when there are problems, and to have another successful year in the panhandle of Florida. I will be scheduling some training, Area Conferences, visiting your posts, attending as many of your events as I can. I look forward to serving as your Western Area Commander and Department Americanism Chair.

12th District**Chris Hamrick, 12th District Commander**
12thdistrict@legionmail.org

As your incoming 12th District Commander I would like to start with telling you how proud I am to have your confidence. It's very humbling to be elected into a position of filling the shoes of the leadership that has preceded me. You have my word that I will do everything possible to make your voice heard and do our District proud.

Having said this, I am asking for your help too. WE are the 12th District... each and every one of us. It will require the entire legion family in our District to keep us strong. A Family is a team. And we are family. There will be some wrinkles to iron out along the way. But we will iron them out together...as families do. To streamline this a bit I have went outside the box a bit. As we have a District that is around 150miles in length.. give out take,

and includes 4 counties north to south.. with 25 posts in between. I have a staff of District Service Officers in the North, Central, and South regions of the District. Also I have placed American Legion Riders Directors in these respective areas. My Service Officers will be there to offer training for new post service officers as well as standing in AS a service officer for posts in their respective areas for posts that are without a service officer. This position is a great membership tool. Our American Legion Riders Directors will be there to assist with the coordinating of Chapter and District events as well as supporting revitalization, starting new Chapters, or reinstating Charters.

- Our Riders are an awesome way to recruit new members. I'm giving my total support to this. Younger members that may not be attracted to certain daily post activities may be interested in the Riders program and join just for this...only showing up on weekends to start with. But that's a start. That's an opportunity to show them who

we are and what we do.

Our Sons of the American Legion are an anchor of our Posts with all that they do both behind the scenes and otherwise. We have an awesome SAL District Commander that is right on track with my views on the direction I would like to see our District heading. Reach out to him.

Our Auxiliary can't ever get enough applause from me as behind every good man is a good woman. These ladies have a great program coming into place this year and the District President stays in contact with myself and the District SAL Commander to work together coordinating events, meetings and programs as a FAMILY. This year is going to be a great one for the 12th District.

Once again I want to thank you for your confidence and look forward to serving the Family.

Renew, Reinstate, Recruit**Bruce Thurber, Membership**membership@legionmail.org

I am extremely honored to have been asked by Commander Boland to serve as your Department of Florida Membership Chairman. Moving into the 100th Year of The American Legion membership is the most critical focus we must have. If we do not get growth within the Family our ability to serve our Veterans will be gone. As we move on our priorities need to be:

Renew: Encourage members to renew, by focusing on their needs within the Legion Family.

Reinstate: Using the resources available find those members who haven't renewed over the past few years, contact them question why and see if you can help with fixing what drove them away.

Recruit: Finding potential members is easy but giving them a reason to want to join us takes a few minutes of your time. Ask yourself, do I know 4 good reasons to join the Legion and can I explain them.

One of the best tools for membership is MyLegion.Org:

myLegion.org is a FREE website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their Post and Department leadership, myLegion includes a site at each level of the organization:

Members - allows members to view information on file at National Headquarters, view messages and events published through the department and post myLegion sites, and network with other myLegion members using networking tools.

Departments - provides membership

information, reports and electronic membership tools such as data change forms for all posts and squadrons within their department.

Posts/Districts/Counties - provides Legion and SAL information for all members in their post. Allows post to submit member data change forms and Consolidated Post Reports electronically. Upload post image, newsletter, message, and calendar. Create membership listings, view members renewing online, search for members who have expired or are members of the department headquarters post, and chat with other officers discussing veteran's issues and sharing membership ideas.

I also suggest that posts encourage every family member to take the Legion Institute Basic Training.

RENEW-REINSTATE-RECRUIT

Children & Youth Fund**Dennis Boland, Children & Youth Fund**cyfund@legionmail.org

First, I would like to thank the Department Commander, for appointing me as you Florida Children & Youth Fund Chairman.

Your Florida Children & Youth Fund committee met at our Department Convention on Thursday, July 5, 2018. The meeting convened at 11:00 am by Chairman John Burroughs. Dennis R. Boland, Jerry Brandt, Tom Soeder, and Bruce Carl were in attendance.

First order of business was a motion to revise the maximum fund range granted to grantees to \$5,000., from \$30,000. Reason was that our funds available would run out within a couple of years and the Children & Youth Fund would become extinct.

Secondly, the applications from grantees would be consolidated to 10 pages adverse to the present 25 pages. This action became effective immediately.

This year we had 6 applications for grants. The actions of the board follows:

SEAGULL INDUSTRIES FOR THE DISABLED

- Requested - \$19,060.00
Rejected the request since funds would go towards staff salaries and travel

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF GAINESVILLE

- Requested - \$5,000.00
Rejected the request because the application did not have the Post recommendation letter.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

- Requested - \$5,000.00
Granted by the board that Post 88 receives the grant to go towards the Backpack for

underprivileged kids.

BIT-BY-BIT EAGLES EQUINE GROUP & HIPPO THERAPY

- Requested - \$10,000.00
Rejected since funds would go towards veterans and participants above the age of 18.

KIDS SAFE ZONE - AFTER SCHOOL SUMMER PROGRAM

- Requested - \$20,000.00
Granted \$5,000.00 to go towards food for their different trips. Rejected Van rentals and trip out of state.

ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION - JUVENILE ARTHRITIS PROGRAM

- Requested - \$30,000.00
Granted \$1,325.00 for camp supplies. Did not have a complete breakdown on how the total grant money would be used.



facebook.com/floridalegion

www.floridalegion.org
mail@floridalegion.org



Are You Prepared?

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness

disasterprep@legionmail.org

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department Commander Dianne Boland for appointing me to serve the Department of Florida as the Disaster Preparedness Chairman for 2018-2019.

It has been 10 months since Hurricane Irma devastated the state of Florida impacting 70,000 sq. miles with sustained winds of 185 mph, a storm larger than the state of Florida. Homes, communities, whole cities left in ruins. More than 6.5 million citizens returned to the "dark ages" for days, weeks in some

areas. Every Floridian has been affected in one way or another by this storm. It will go down as the 7th largest devastating cyclone in history.

The question we should all be asking yourselves, am I prepared? and do I have everything in place before, during, and after the storm. The answer should be yes, if not, it's time to prepare. It's never too early to prepare. There's that word again PREPARE it is vital to have all our preparations in order to make the transition through the 3 stages of the storm as easy and comfortable as possible.

I hope we learned how important it is to have a communication network set up for if and

when a storm does hit. I'm hoping that we can work together to achieve getting a network set up this year and for future reference. I would like all District and Area Commanders to comprise a roster of the chairmen in their districts and areas with the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of their chairman. Also, the posts that could be used as a shelter and the post that could be used as distribution center.

I am also available to give classes to those districts and areas at their request. You may email me at disasterprep@legionmail.org. I may also be reached at 305-968-7979.

Remember the key word PREPAREDNESS.

JSSP National Competition

Loretta Young, JROTC/Shooting Sports

jrotc@legionmail.org

Since the schools are out for summer break, there's little going on except the JSSP National Competition starting this week at the USA Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. I will be there all week and will have pictures and results for the next Legion Link. Thanks so much for all you do for our Veterans. Have a great week.

Failure is NOT an option!

Bob Brewster, Post Development

postdevelopment@legionmail.org

I have been on this program numerous times over the past 15 years. I have worked with over 20 Posts, and they are all in operation today. At the Fall Conference, I will give a brief on this program. I will have a written brief for all who will attend. I take this position very seriously, and it has a direct relationship with membership. Many past chairmen of this program

have just gone through the motions. I promise to be available to all Posts, District Commanders, Area Commanders, and Membership Chairmen and to do my best to make sure that we have nothing but strong Posts throughout the state. Many of you know me because recently I have been teaching the Commander's Class at both the Fall Conference and the Department Convention. Let me be clear – **FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION!!**

Wishing all of you good luck and good fortune during our 100th year!

Law & Order

Brian Gehling, Law & Order Chair

laworder@legionmail.org

I would like to say "THANK YOU" to Department Commander Dianne Boland for allowing me to serve this great department as your Law & Order Chairman for 2018-2019. I also want to thank T.C. Biddle, our immediate past Department Law & Order Chairman for all his work on this program last year.

I want to encourage each post to make

contact with your local law enforcement agencies and fire fighters for submissions. I believe this is one of the easiest programs a post can do. Department can provide certificates for your post winners if you so desire. Each post will be receiving a packet in regards to this program, if you don't you may contact myself and/or Ms. Elizabeth Douglas, Programs Director for the information. The information can also be found on the department web page under Programs & Services, Law & Order.

The American Legion will turn 100 years old this year and I would love to have 100 applications to judge from for Law Officer and Fire Fighter of the Year.

I believe that because of all the great posts, we have a great department. Let us continue this tradition and see if we can achieve a National Law & Order award winner.

Finally, if you are holding an event, please let me know and I will try and attend or try and have someone there.

POW/MIA**David Klug, POW/MIA**powmia@legionmail.org

First of all, I would like to thank Department Commander Dianne Boland for entrusting me with this very important Chairmanship. With the leadership and guidance of the Commander, and her Staff, and the support and confidence of my Comrades and fellow

Legionnaires I'm looking forward to a successful and rewarding year.

Secondly, I would like to briefly introduce myself to those of you who don't know me. My name is David Klug. I'm from Post 141 in West Palm Beach, where I'm Post Commander. I'm a Retired Army Veteran, and extremely honored to serve as your Department POW/MIA Chairman for 2018-2109. With the new Legion year just starting I

would ask that all Area, District and Post Commanders please appoint your POW/MIA Chairman and forward the names to Department Headquarters along with your other Officers and Chairman. I look forward to working with all of you this year! If you need any assistance, or have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

email: powmia@legionmail.org**cell:** 785-307-0777**It's Who We Are and What We Do!****Tom Gora, Public Relations**publicrelations@legionmail.org

I have been appointed the Department Public Relations Chairperson for the 2018-19 membership year, and I thank Department Commander Dianne Boland for my appointment. Although I haven't seen a position description as of yet, promoting The American Legion, and membership in TAL starts with public relations. This doesn't take special talents, if you can speak, write,

or just show up at community events, you can be a success at public relations. When I think of public relations and TAL, I remember a video I saw several years ago produced by The American Legion; "This is who we are and this is what we do." Public relations in the simplest form is illustrated by what you, other members, and our posts do in your local communities.

In order to help publicize what we do to your local community, there are scores of pamphlets available from The American Legion that

you can find on-line and print up. Some are free, and others can be purchased from Emblem Sales. Here is the link to find what's available...<https://www.legion.org/publications>. Visit that site and start printing what you need to get the word out about The American Legion and our many veteran and community programs! As I learn more about my assignment I will write more and make personal appearances as needed, required, or requested.

"IT'S WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO!"**Resolutions****Clarence Hill, Resolutions**resolutions@legionmail.org

Any Legionnaire can impact the priorities and positions of The American Legion at any level because the organization's focus is largely directed by resolutions. A resolution is a position-driven initiative written by members and put to a vote. They can be passed at any

level starting at the Post level and can impact any level of the organization. The optimal time to write a resolution is in the winter and spring, ahead of department conventions in late spring and summer. In future issues, I will go over how to write a resolution correctly.

Resolutions are not difficult to write, but they require a lot of attention to detail. The resolutions and amendments submitted at

our last convention lacked attention to detail. There were problems with poor grammar, poor punctuation, misspelled words and changes that weren't clear. On the amendment side, one cannot leave out words that are in the current version. If those words are to be eliminated, they must be lined through. Words cannot be added unless they are in bold and underlined. The rules are simple, but they must be followed.

Security Commission**Nancy Thomas, Security Commission**security@legionmail.org

First things first, Congratulations to all 2018-2019 Officers and your staff's. As we start the new year, this is an exciting year, the year we celebrate The American Legion's 100th Birthday.

In this position, it will be important for me to know and to talk about the ROTC, Shooting

Sports, Law & Order and the Blood Donor programs. And, those of you who know me, I like to talk! And, be passionate about The American Legion.

It has come to my attention that Facebook has become a great place to advertise various activities, recently several posts have been about the Youth Cadet Program with Mr. Bob Brewster. This is a great program along with all the other programs we work so hard for. Thanks Bob for doing a great job.

As the Administrator for my District's Facebook Page, I share this, so all of the people who like our page may see how much we do such a wonderful job we are doing. It is my honor to be able to work with the Chair's for the above programs. Let's make this year great for the entire Department of Florida and help those Chairpersons to have a great year, as well. Stay tuned for more information!

Social Media

Deborah Wheeler, Social Media

socialmedia@legionmail.org

It is with pride and honor to accept this position as Social Media Chairperson, over the years I have looked at a ton of Facebook pages within the Department of Florida, unfortunately many are out of date, or no pictures or not even a monthly calendar this

is a completely free way of advertising your post to its members and the public.

Find someone within your Legion family to take over your Facebook page and keep it updated on at least a weekly basis this is a great way to promote membership, your post events or even give more attendance to your Legion family events.

Take lots of pictures and have whoever is running your Facebook page post them online, for example take pictures of your installations, include everyone, the content, the better. Include pictures of your post home, your officers, etc. This is the best asset your post has to assume a major presence in your community. Should you need assistance I am here to help.

VA Overpayments

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements

veteransbenefits@legionmail.org

As the VA Entitlements Chairman and a Service Officer. I deal with some very disturbing issues, for example when veterans get letters from the VA for overpayments.

There are any number of life events that can result in an overpayment to the VA, and these can result in changes in the amount of benefits you entitled to receive.

It is important to let the VA know whenever there is a change that could impact your benefits. Not keeping these records current can result in an overpayment. When

discovered, those funds will be owed to VA, and those can often result in deduction of the monthly benefit amount until the debt is repaid.

Some common overpayment situations are:

- A Veteran receives care at a VA medical facility and fails to pay a required co-pay
- A Veteran fails to report that a school – age child has married
- A Veteran receiving education benefits drops out of school
- A Veteran or beneficiary is incarcerated, and benefits are reduced or terminated for period of incarceration

- The Vocational Rehabilitation program purchases a service or tools for Veteran, who then dropped out of the program without a good reason

- A Veteran or beneficiary receiving an income- based pension doesn't report a change in income

- A Veteran change in marital status without notifying VA

- Death of a dependent without notifying VA

If you get a letter from the VA for over payment it is very important to get with your County Service Officer and try to work this out.

VA&R

Alan Cohen, VA&R

var@legionmail.org

Greetings, fellow Legionnaires. With the Department Convention fresh in our minds, I'd like to start by once again congratulating the new slate of Officers and join with the rest of you in wishing them success in the coming year.

Also, in line with the Convention I'd like to take this opportunity to revisit an issue I spoke of in my report to the membership. We must keep an eye towards and head off

a potential shortfall in the VAVS Reps and Deputies. That said, I am and will continue to reach out to my brother and sister Legionnaires.

The two most important requirements for these positions are: 1) the willingness to help fellow veterans and the time to do it. By time, I mean perhaps as little as 1 or 2 days per week. Primarily, we're looking for help at the Lake Nona and Miami VA hospitals. Should you find yourself meeting the above relatively simple requirements, don't hesitate to contact me through Dep't Headquarters.

On another note and looking to the coming year, I will soon begin expanding the reach of our VA Benefits Chairman. His efforts have been of great help to veterans and their families and we want to make them more widely accessible. I look forward to working with him to make this happen.

Lastly for now, I'm proud to announce that we graduated a class of 114 Post Service Officers at the Convention. Their duties are many, their responsibilities are great and the impact they have on the lives of our many fellow veterans and their families is immeasurable. Thank you for all you do.

Youth Law Cadet Program

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet

youthlawcadet@legionmail.org

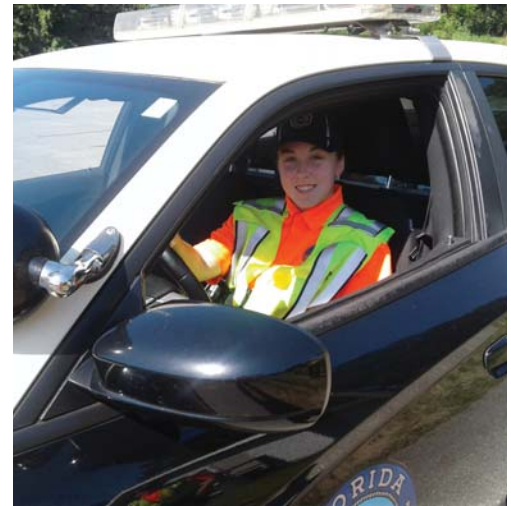
We have just completed our third Florida Highway Patrol/American Legion Cadet Program, which was July 8th through July 13th. It was a huge success. Attached you should find some great pictures of this year's program.

First, I want to acknowledge and thank two great American Legion family members – Tom Gora, who is the co-chairman of this program, a member of Post 54, and the past Department Sgt. At Arms, and Kathie Thomson, who is an Auxiliary member of Post 373. She is also my daughter. These two really carried me this week.

We had 18 cadets from all over the state of Florida. They were exceptional individuals who became a tightknit team the first day

together. This year each one of them got a turn driving a Highway Patrol vehicle, with the siren and lights fully on. They also did a lot of shooting on the indoor range and on the simulator. They also used the radar gun on unsuspecting traffic on the local highway. No tickets were issued. I also had the opportunity to fire on the simulator. Tom Gora has pictures of this to blackmail me with.

With a full discussion on how this program is growing with our staff and the Highway Patrol staff, we feel that 16 to 20 cadets is the right number for this program. We will be discussing with the Highway Patrol and our personnel ways to improve this program each year. Tom, Kathie, and I are extremely excited about the future of this program. We will be talking about this at the Commander's Retreat and at the Fall Conference with a slide presentation.



See additional photos at floridalegion.org under Programs.

PROJECT: VET RELIEF
A PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

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CELEBRATING





CONVENTION WRAP UP: *What a Success!*

We hope you were able to stop by and see us at some point during the American Legion, Department of Florida Annual Convention in July. We were excited to see all our VetRelief Advocates and share the accomplishments that they helped us achieve!

Check out a few of highlights:

- **Collected \$50,622.04** in Legion Family donations:
 - Legion - \$21,830.87
 - Sons - \$20,081.17
 - Riders - \$8,210.00
 - Auxiliary - \$500.00
- **52 Memory Box Raffle entries.** *Congratulations to the winner, Teri Strong, and a special thank you to Roger Main for donating the wonderful Memory Box!*
- **61 VetRelief Advocates** attended a PVR Training
- **Over 20 Advocates** came to our Exclusive Networking Event for our All-Star Advocates
- **Nearly \$400** was donated through our new dice game at the PVR vendor booth.
- Presented during the Legion and Son's General Sessions

If you didn't make it to the Convention and catch one of our trainings, don't worry! A class will be offered at the Fall Conference in November. There *will only be one opportunity*, so be sure to sign up when the details are announced. Stay tuned for more details.



OUR HATS ARE OFF TO *Steve Shuga*



THE RESULTS ARE IN - After collecting, adding, and reconciling all of the donations that we received over the past year, the final total that the 2017-2018 Department Commander Steve Shuga collected was **\$104,457.70!!!**

We are so very grateful to Steve for choosing PROJECT: VetRelief for his charity of choice. Not only did he raise a lot of money to provide more assistance to our service members and their families, but he increased the awareness of our program throughout the state of Florida. Because of him, more Legion Posts got involved in the program by either holding a fundraising event, making a donation, or getting their members to become VetRelief Advocates to help conduct applicant interviews.

Thank you to all of the Posts, Units, Squadrons and Chapters who helped Steve reach his goal!

CONGRATULATIONS *Dianne Boland!*

We would like to congratulate the incoming Commander, Dianne Boland, on becoming the first elected female Commander to the Department of Florida! We wish her the best of luck for a successful and productive year ahead.



MISSION MOMENT: *Community Impact*

"Not many organizations would do what you have done for me. You have taken some stress off my financial situation."

- Anonymous Veteran

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: *Upcoming Events*

SEPT 24: PVR Golf Tournament (*Monteverde, FL*)

OCT 13: Coral Country Road Concert (*Marathon, FL*)

JAN 18-19: Vets Invade Canyon (*Crystal River, FL*)

FEB 16-17: Coral Head Music Fest (*Marathon, FL*)



SUPPORT CASES
YEAR END TOTALS

*Numbers reflect PROJECT: VetRelief Cases ONLY

families helped

140

amount distributed

\$135,648.29

2017-2018 Convention Awards

July 5-8, 2018

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Eddie Humer Award
Joe Williams, Post 90

Runner-up Post Sgt-at-Arms
Malachy McGuinness, Post 163

Best District Sgt-at-Arms
Edward Manak, 11th District

Runner-up District Sgt-at-Arms
Jack Bennett, 4th District

RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS

District - Best Four Chaplains Ceremony
District 5

Post - Best Four Chaplains Ceremony
Post 56

District Chaplain of the Year
Chaplain P.T. Moore 1st District

Post Chaplain of the Year
Chaplain Harold Suggs, Post 4

AMERICANISM

Best Post Program
Post 63

Runner-up Best Post Program
Post 283

BLOOD DONOR

Margaret Skaggs
Post 54

Runner-up
Post 283

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Best Overall Post
Post 167

Runner-up Best Overall Post
Post 250

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Hurricane Appreciation Award

Jim Day
Barry Roberts
Derrick & Melissa Johnson
Steve Shuga
Bernie Wildrick
Dept. Staff
Aux. Dept Staff
Post 154
National Veteran Homeless Support

LEGION RIDERS

Chapter of the Year
ALR Chapter 237

SCHOOL MEDAL

Winner
Post 26

Runner-up
Post 273

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

1st Place - \$15,900
Post 117

2nd Place - \$9,654
Post 1

3rd Place - \$7,000
Post 252

ORATORICAL

State Oratorical Winner
Caleb Wilson

SCOUTING

Eagle Scout of the Year
N'Jhari Jackson

Best Post Scouting Program
Post 79

Runner-up Best Post Scouting Program
Post 110

ROTC

Cadet of the Year
Connor Beckman

Winner Post Program
Post 283

Runner-up Post Program
Post 90

SHOOTING SPORTS

Jr Shooting Sports (precision)
Kinga Aletto

Jr Shooting Sports (sporter)
Stephanie Salvucci
Chloe Bigwarfe
Jordan Timmons

Winner Post Program
Post 90

Runner-up Post Program
Post 79

SCHOLARSHIPS

General Scholarship 1st Place
Ryan McGary

General Scholarship/VSOA Winner
Francesco Teramo Pucci

BOYS STATE

2017 Boys State Governor
Landon Coles

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Teacher of the Year
Sharon Wade

LAW & ORDER

Firefighter of the Year - Department
Lt. Robert Donaldson

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year - Department
Deputy Sheriff Michael Vanzo

2017-2018 Convention Awards - Continued

July 5-8, 2018

EMPLOYMENT

Disabled Veterans Outreach (DVOP) of the Year

Samuel L. Denson

Homeless Veterans Outreach Program

House a Vet - Post 399

SERVICE OFFICER AWARD

Tracy Taylor Award

Paul Gawronski

Service Award

Kelton Sweet

HISTORIAN

Post Year Book National Contest - 2nd Place

Post 8

Best Post Narrative - 1st place

Post 8

Best Post Yearbook - 1st place

Post 250

Best Open History Book - 1st Place

Post 163

Best Legion Riders Book- 1st Place

Chapter 375

POST OFFICERS

Department Adjutant's Award

Susan Beach, Post 382

Wilson Timmons Memorial - Best Post

Post 63

Legionnaire of the Year

John Edens

FREEDOM RAFFLE WINNERS

Grand Prize Winner of \$10,000

George W Pettit

2nd Place Winner of \$2,500

William R Horne Jr

3rd Place Winner of \$1,000

Charles J Cunningham Sr

4th - 5th Place Winners of \$500

Ronald B Goodman

James S Rawlings

6th - 10th Place Winners of \$100

John Peacock

James A Cook

William r Boring

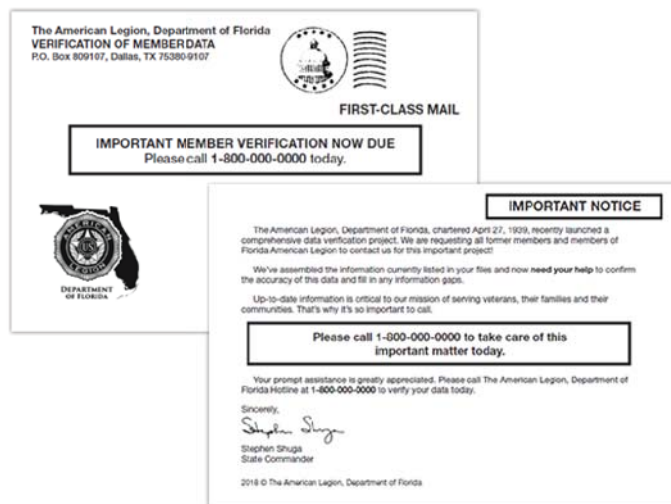
Steve J Guldan Jr

Michael G Hibbard



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Did you Receive a Post Card similar to this one?



See page 4 for details.

July 27, 2018 55% Target Report (Currently 16.57%)		
4	Cherie Korn	23.17%
11	Donna Wallace	21.58%
17	Willie Branch	20.02%
16	Raymond Perez	18.84%
7	David Tucker	18.55%
6	Timothy Tierney	17.77%
13	Peter Rabczewski	17.68%
15	Bruce Carl	16.97%
8	Jerry Faught	16.36%
5	Troy Horsley	16.18%
12	Stephen Hamrick	15.96%
14	Gary Decker	13.96%
3	Stuart Scott	13.17%
9	Teddy Pomerantz	13.07%
1	John Edens	12.11%
2	James Brennan	6.86%
Central	Jay Allen	18.33%
Northern	Frederik Hutto	18.17%
Southwestern	Michael Raymond	17.08%
Eastern	James Burk	16.99%
Southern	James Tewes	16.44%
Western	Raymond Olsen	11.18%
Post 400		13.33%
Post 208		24.18%



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

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The Legionnaire Insurance Trust products and services are there when you need 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

MEMBERSHIP GOAL
55% 9/5/2018

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If you're looking to vacation on one of the most amazing ships at sea, feel free... it's Carnival Liberty! And Carnival Liberty just so happens to be packed with some of the latest, greatest features you'll find anywhere. For instance, guess which was the first ship to serve up gourmet Guy Fieri burgers daily. And which one debuted what is perhaps the world's greatest sports bar, which combines live sports on TV, lively competition through the latest EA SPORTS titles... not to mention great drinks. It's the same ship with tacos and burritos on Lido deck, made fresh while you wait, plus two great bars — one rum-slinging, one tequila-wielding — dueling for your heart. This, however, is just the beginning of what to expect from the ship you'd call one great vacation spot. We'd agree — we just happen to call it Carnival Liberty.

- 110,000 GROSS TONNAGE • 2974 GUEST CAPACITY • 952 LENGTH IN FEET

Carnival Liberty - Nassau 09/13/2018

Date	Day	Port	Arrive	Depart
09/13/2018	THU	PORT CANAVERAL (ORLANDO), FL		4:00 PM
09/14/2018	FRI	NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
09/15/2018	SAT	FUN DAY AT SEA		
09/16/2018	SUN	PORT CANAVERAL (ORLANDO), FL	8:00 AM	

Pricing for an interior cabin based on 2 guest in the cabin.

Pricing starts at: \$229.00 per person cruise fare and \$83.50 per person taxes fees and port expenses.

Pricing for an ocean view cabin based on 2 guest in the cabin.

Pricing starts at: \$259.00 per person cruise fare and \$83.50 per person taxes fees and port expenses.

Pricing for a balcony cabin based on 2 guest in the cabin.

Pricing starts at: \$324.00 per person cruise fare and \$83.50 per person taxes fees and port expenses.

The deposit is \$100.00 per person and final payment is due 7/15/2018.

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICING AND AVAILABILITY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

We have not done this in about eight years. Its time to do it again. This will be first come first serve, so make your reservations asap as cabin space might fill up quickly. Im trying to plan some events for us on ship and also in Nassau and as we get closer, will keep everyone informed. My wife works for Carnival, so we will be taken care of. At least put your deposit down quickly and she will try to have us as close together as possible. Remember, this will be a FUN cruise and time to enjoy each other's company and to recharge for the year. Everyone have a great time and will see you aboard. ~ William R Johnson