



# The LEGION LINK

*"Securing the Future for All Veterans"*



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

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## From Your Department Commander Steve Shuga

[commander@floridalegion.org](mailto:commander@floridalegion.org)



Accomplished many milestones during the month of May and still have several more hills to overcome before our packs can come off before it starts all over again.

The pursuit towards retaining our current membership base has once again slowed down. This trend must immediately reverse otherwise the Florida Curse on Membership will continue to haunt us.

Congratulations to those Districts that have achieved 100% and climbing. I am extremely proud of the District's membership retention accomplishments. Florida needs to kick off its next century with a firm footing by being 100% membership strong!

Thank you to all who have recruited 5 or more to receive the covenant I Got My Five – Membership Recruitment Pin and Certificate. You have gone above and beyond to secure the future for all veterans and our American Legion. Wear your pin proudly.

Completed visit with District 6 posts. Attended the Children & Youth Golf Tournament at Harbor Hills Country Club Lady Lake, FL. Participation lacked this year with many of our community activities that beg one to wonder if this trend will continue. I thank all that participated in those events during this past year to support our chosen programs of

The American Legion.

Attended the 2018 National Spring Meetings at Indianapolis, Indiana. Congrats to Florida's American Legion Baseball Chairman Andrew Burkett for submitting a proposal and winning the ability to host the Southeast Regional American Legion Baseball Tournaments in the Tampa area for 2019.

Encouraged our Florida American Legion Posts to complete and submit on a timely basis, their Consolidated Post Reports. This is the time to claim and brag on what you have done well in your communities, state, and nation. It is a required report due annually. Our goal is no less than 100% turn in. District and Area Commanders will be calling to complete your CPRs for both Department HQ and National HQ if not already done.

We had the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all Mothers in a variety of ways for giving, educating, nourishing and supporting their husbands, sons, daughters, guests or visitors during their lives. We pray to remember those that are no longer with us by remembering them daily but especially during Mother's Day wherever we may be.

Attended a few funerals around the state for Florida American Legion members. Participated in activities during National Poppy Day – May 25th.

Department Commander's (Three Amigo's) Homecoming was held on May 26, 2018 at American Legion Post 347. Department

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MAY 2018

2	15th District DCC, Post 138
2	4th District DCC, Post 284
2	6th District DCC, Post 347
4	Hlstory Books Due
6	Membership Goal 105%
6	D-Day Anniversary
9	1st District DCC, Post 235
9	ALR Chapter 117 Year End Party
9	2nd District DCC, Post 100
14	Army Birthday
14	Flag Day
15	Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Post Office
16	14th District DCC, Post 31
16	16th District DCC, Post 104
16	9th District DCC Post 222
17	Father's Day
19	Homeless and In Need Stand Down
20	American Eagle Day
21	First Day of Summer
23	Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
27	National PTSD Awareness Day
July 5-8	Department Convention
July 5	Legion Family Kick-Off Event
July 6	Commanders & Presidents Banquet

- Commander Steve Shuga's Attendance Tentative.  
 Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org). We share the information we are provided, please contact Program, Area, District and Posts for additional details and events.

*Commander continued from Page 1*

presentations/raffles (proceeds go towards charities) were held. We thank all that were able to attend and participate and look forward to seeing all at our American Legion family during the rapidly approaching Department Convention July 5th – 8th, 2018.

Ended the month by attending Memorial Day Ceremonies. Visited cemeteries to honor, acknowledge, and to remember those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice or have departed this life as they continue their journey with life everlasting.

I encourage our Florida American Legion Membership to attend this year's 100th Annual Department Convention. Nothing better than

being part of history in the making as we end our first century and prepare to begin the next. Plenty to do, see, participate in, and to live out our Preamble of The America Legion. Would be great to see you all again in Orlando for a day if not the entire weekend.

I thank all of you for your service, support, hospitality, professional association, an educational history lesson, the opportunity to witness your American Legion Post homes and the American Legion Family. Thank you for the honor to serve you as your Florida Department Commander. I look forward to serving and supporting our American Legion soon, regardless at what level or position I may be granted or assigned.

**A Note from 1st Vice**

*Dianne Boland, 1st Vice Commander*  
[1stvice@legionmail.org](mailto:1stvice@legionmail.org)



**Greetings fellow Legionnaires:**

It's already June and you know what that means. Next month is the Department Convention (July 5-8). Actually, the convention itself is July 6-7, that's when

the gavel bangs for the start on Friday and the end on Saturday afternoon. The rest is meetings and installations because "yes", this is when we elect and install our Department Officers. Our National Executive Committeeman (NEC) and our National Executive Committeeman Alternate (NECA) will also be elected. They get elected for a two-year term, on the even years.

The election process has changed so read the rules very carefully. Make sure you do not have any monies owed to department and also make sure your Consolidated Post Report (CPR) and Addendum have been filled out and sent to the proper locations. The deadline has passed, but you can still turn them in. Be sure and bring a copy with you in case it doesn't make it in time.

Once again, a special "Shout Out" to District 11 Commander Donna Wallace and her entire district. The district has been in first place, for the Department, the entire 2nd half of the year plus they took 2nd place in National's "Race to the Top". Congratulations on a job well done. Also, a "Job well done" goes out to 4th District Commander Vicki Van Buren for reaching over 100%; 1st District Commander Ray Olsen, 16th District Commander Ray Perez and 7th District Commander David Tucker are at 99%+ as of this writing but I expect them to reach 100% by time of publication. The department is so close to reaching their goal. We need everyone's help now to make it a reality.

I hope everyone enjoyed their Memorial Day by remembering our past, our fallen veterans as well as our current ones. Also, that you got time to spend with your families as well as your legion family. One is as important as the other.

As always - Don't forget your "Basic Training". It is still being taught at the Convention and Fall Conference plus you can still take it online thru National ([www.legion.org/alei](http://www.legion.org/alei)). It is now FREE – no charge.

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





**A Note from 2nd Vice**

*Rick Johnson, 2nd Vice Commander*  
 2ndvice@legionmail.org



It's that time of the year. One month left till our Department convention. It has been a very unusual year to say, with a lot that has happened this year. I want to thank everyone in Zone 2 who made this year very special in many ways. The designation

of zones for the Vice Commanders will work as long as the communications continue to flow the way it is set up. No one is beyond themselves and has volunteered to do a job they were elected to do. If people stay on a personal agenda, it needs to stop very quickly and put to rest. With that being said, I sure hope that everyone got out and expressed their right to vote in there DCC and their

post level elections.

There will be a lot of events happening during the convention, so now is the time to learn more and most of all ask more questions on issues that you do not understand. The Department is here to assist you in doing your job and giving you the right answers to certain issues as they arise. All the newly elected District Commanders, Now is the time to set up your agenda for at least the first six months and to start your training at the beginning of your year. Insure you have a planning meeting with your new staff PRIOR to Department Convention and get your chairman assigned to their duties and get those names submitted.

CPR'S yes every year we harp on these end of the year reports that are very important to Department and the National Headquarters, as this is our fuel for our State Reps and National Reps on what the American Legion has done and continues to do

for the Community, State and Nation. Be proud of what your post has done throughout the year and continue to strive to be better the following year.

I want to especially thank my Post, 275 for the support this year and for the following years to come. I'm very proud to be a part of a great family and I will strive to make you proud. Keep doing what you have been and continue to be such a strong asset within the community. I look forward to seeing everyone at the convention and please come by our hospitality room sponsored by family 275 and say hello to everyone. With that being said, have a great time at convention and express your right to vote and be heard. Good luck to all the candidates that are running for a higher office and look forward to working with them all. I will continue to do the best job possible with your help in representing you at Department. Have a great year and most of all, have fun.

**A Note from 3rd Vice**

*Jerry Brandt, 3rd Vice Commander*  
 3rdvice@legionmail.org



**Comrades,**

As of May 10th we have the following:

- 1st District is now 101.71%, well done.
- 2nd District is now at 96.90% needing only 41 renewals for 100%.
- 3rd District is now 97.87% needing only 50 renewals for 100%.
- 4th District is now at 101.71%, well done.
- 5th District is now at 99.14% needing only 66 renewals for 100%.
- 17th District is now at 95.98% needing only 145 renewals for 100%.

Total of 302 for the Zone to be 100%. We started with needing 23,590 members for 100%. Keep up the good work. By the way, Congratulations to the Western Area for their

100% in membership. And we have a tie for the Zone 3 Trophy, between the long time lead, 4th District and now 1st District, both at 101.71%.

Please continue to push Membership, as of May 7th, Florida is number 11 in the Nation. Please continue to reach out to our members who have not renewed, if nothing else, find out why they did not renew so we can work on a resolution for the future.

The Commander's Visits are completed for Zone 3, if there are no issues, we will have clear sailing up to the Summer Conventions. Please take part in the upcoming Convention, training is available for every position in the Post. If you do not see the training you need, please let the District Commander and/or Area Commanders know so they can attempt to schedule it. We need each Post ready to go for the beginning of a great year.

I thank the leaders of the Districts last month, but they could not operate without the assistance and hard work of the Post Commanders and their staff. The Blue hats always do the work, but never get the praise, so thank you, for what you do.

Commanders, as I previously stated, now is the time to start pushing awards, it is nice to be able to come up to the stage at the Convention to receive your awards. Especially for 28 Posts, who are at 100%, they should be putting in for the Post Excellence Award and for 100% Post Award.

Some awards you should look for are the following:

- Post Excellence Award
- 100% Post Award
- Employer of the year
- Firefighter and Policeman of the year award
- Color Guard Award
- Membership Awards, (Gold and Silver Brigade)

Please look up Awards and Recognition under [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) for more details

I will see you either at the DCC's or the Convention in July, again, thank you for what you do.

**Sign up** for TEXT ALERTS. **TEXT FLCON TO 74121** **LEARN. PLAY. WIN**







## 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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 100<sup>th</sup> 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](http://floridalegion.org), OR call 1-800-982-1590**





**Direct Marketing Plan & Budget**

Dennis Boland, NEC  
[nec@legionmail.org](mailto:nec@legionmail.org)



The following was covered and reviewed by the Marketing Commission and reported to the Finance Commission while in Washington D.C.:

A review of the Direct Marketing plan and budget request for the 2019 membership year, which begins July 1, 2018. The Marketing Commission has reviewed and submits to the Finance Commission a DMS plan that, in summary,

involves the following key features:

1. The DMS membership target for 2019 is 120,000.
2. Similar to the current year, emphasis on solicitations to prospects, whereas in recent years a higher percentage of mailings have been sent to expiries. The statistics show that prospects do renew at a significantly higher rate than expiries.
3. The request, dependent on Finance Commission approval, for the 2019 DMS budget is \$6,200,000, compared to the 2018 budget of \$6,105,000. This budget belongs to the Membership Division at National Headquarters, but the Marketing Division carries out the program and manages performance.

4. The budget includes a new communications plan to the new DMS members that is designed to better communicate with these members and foster higher renewal rates.
5. The 2018 DMS program is on target to achieve its 120,000 member goal by the end of the current membership year and within budget.
6. In addition to print mailings, the 2019 DMS program will also look to continue to build on digital media momentum of 2018, which showed strong growth both for joins and renewals. Online renewals for 2018 is expected to exceed the 2017 finish within the next several weeks. By the end of the 2018 cycle, online renewals could exceed 250,000, which is another record year.

**Physician and Provider of the Year**

Art Schwabe, NECA  
[neca@legionmail.org](mailto:neca@legionmail.org)



I hope everyone had a great Memorial Day, paying tribute to Americans fallen.

We just completed the Spring Meetings in Indianapolis. The Convention Committee awarded:

Charlotte, NC as the city for the 2023 National

Convention and New Orleans was voted for the 2024 Convention. New Orleans has the largest WWII museum in the Nation.

On another note:

If you have a Doctor or Provider with exceptional care who should be recognized for their care please fill out the application.

The application deadline for the Physician and Provider of the Year Awards has been extended to September 7th. Thanks to our media staff in Indy, the online application has been converted

to an online fillable form, which you can access at <https://www.legion.org/veteranshealthcare>

"The job is not done till the paperwork is in!!"

State Legislation: I met with Paul Renner Speaker of the House regarding the "Green Alert." As a Navy veteran he was very interested in seeing this become a bill in the State. Will keep you informed as it moves on to becoming a law.

**Procedures**

Larry Sheets, Judge Advocate  
[judgeadvocate@legionmail.org](mailto:judgeadvocate@legionmail.org)



It seems as though Posts have forgotten the procedures to follow when reporting things. I get calls every day from Posts as well as Legionnaires about something being done incorrectly.

The procedure is to first go to the Post Commander, if he/she cannot help, go to the District Commander. If he/she cannot help, go to the Area Commander. If no help is there call Department and they will no doubt call Internal Affairs.

**Many Thanks**

Tom Gora, Sergeant-at-Arms  
[sgt-at-arms@legionmail.org](mailto:sgt-at-arms@legionmail.org)



This will be my final article as the Department of Florida Sgt.-at-Arms, and I just want to say thank you for allowing me to serve in his capacity 2015-18. A special thank you to PDC Jay Conti for first inspiring me to seek this office, and to PDCs Jim Ramos, Joe Magee and current Commander Steve Shuga for their support. During three years as your Sgt.-at-Arms I have had the opportunity to provide training to hundreds of members of The American Legion Family at the post, and district levels as well as at the Department

Fall Conferences and the Annual Convention. Neither I, or any other Department Officer could have accomplished many of the things we do without the support of our great Department Staff! These are very dedicated people who are there to help us, and I think they do a great job! Thank them when you see them at the convention in July, year after year they work so hard for us! My heart goes out to all those who serve as a Sgt.-at-Arms at any level in this organization, and to members of all Color or Honor Guard units. These are all volunteers who in my opinion are the faces of The American Legion. Whether it be a regular meeting, or special events, these volunteers are who the public see and interact with, and I can't thank you enough for what you do to promote The American Legion, support our programs, and

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*Sgt-at-Arms continued from Page 5*  
protect the integrity of the American Flag!

Finally, I can't leave office without thanking those who volunteer to serve as the Department Assistant Sgt.-at-Arms, and the Color Guard Unit of American Legion Post 331. These dedicated volunteers help make the Fall

Conference and Annual Convention such a success. While attendees and delegates at these assemblies can dress casually and relax between classes and sessions, come and go as they please, these dedicated volunteers present and retire colors, remain in uniform on duty to escort distinguished guests to the stage and keep order in the assembly room. To the Assistant

Department Sergeants-at-Arms who have worked these events, Edward Manak, Larry Luebben, Ed 'Radar' Henry, Kim Lombardi, Randy Eck, Gary Rand, and to Past Department SAA Oliver Kennedy and the Post 331 Color Guard THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOU DO TO HELP MAKE THE DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA SHINE!

**Resolution**

Barry Roberts, Chaplain  
[chaplain@legionmail.org](mailto:chaplain@legionmail.org)



Legionnaires,

We have accomplished much this year in being proactive in serving our veterans. Many veterans are returning home

struggling with trauma and are not getting the help they need. The resolution American Legion 4 Veterans H.O.P.E. Has been passed at Post level and will be brought up at Convention. I would like to encourage every Post to pass and support this proactive outreach. This program involves all 4 pillars and will help promote who The American Legion is and what we do while reaching out to our veterans and families in need. This will also create a web based social media hub where The American Legion is the Host of veteran outreach. This is also

a good way to reach out to your community for new membership! Let's host a community outreach event in your area!

Join us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/floridalegionchaplains](http://www.facebook.com/floridalegionchaplains)

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

**The Centennial**

Gerry Kaufman, Historian  
[historian@legionmail.org](mailto:historian@legionmail.org)



We have been working on the Centennial Website and the 100th birthday party and we are making strides towards our goals. The 100th birthday party is tentatively set for January 18th and 19th 2019 at ROCK CRUSHER CANYON in Crystal River Florida. Remember this is a department wide 100th celebration and I am looking forward to

seeing everyone there. The title of our celebration is VETS INVADE ROCK CRUSHER.

I want to talk directly to those posts that do not have a post home. If you do not have a post home then I am asking you to please take a picture of as many of your members as possible holding a poster board with your post name and number and post it on the Centennial website. If you do not have the ability to post the picture then take the picture with your phone and send it in a text message to my phone number which is 407-218-9139. Together we can get this task completed. If you have questions or need help again just call me and we can get it completed together.

I also want to remind everyone that your post year books are due at department no later than one (1) week prior to the convention. That date would be June 28th 2018. If you cannot get your books to department then please contact me and we will make arrangements to get them at the convention. Remember that this is the beginning of our 100th year and all of your work is extremely important not only to your post but also to the Department of Florida.

I look forward to seeing all of your yearbooks at the convention. Good luck to all of you and happy scrapbooking.

**Central Area**

Jay Allen, Central Area Commander  
[centralarea@legionmail.org](mailto:centralarea@legionmail.org)



Hello Legion Family, The month of March started off with Post visitations with Department Commander Steve Shuga. The first week we traveled the

7th District and visited most of the Posts and had representation from all the Posts. The Second week kicked off with Central Area Sunset Celebration Ball and I would like to say to everyone that participated in making it such a success, and Thank You to everyone for attending. The Central Area raised a total donation of a \$1,000 for Commander Shuga's charity of choice Project:VetRelief (PVR).

Then on Sunday, March 11th, started off very interesting with Commander Shuga touring District

16 followed by District 15 in Central Area until the 24th of March where he was able to reach out to all the Post homes and Posts without a home were invited to attend another Post. The Districts in the Central Area were able to take Commander Shuga to some very interesting sites such as the VA Hospital, Bay Pines for a tour, Hillsborough County Memorial Park and the Posts got to show off their Post home and show all the history which it encompasses.

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*Central Area Commander continued from Page 6*

Many thanks and Semper Fi to all for showing Commander Shuga such a wonderful time and how the Central Area works as a true Legion Family. Your hospitality was very much appreciated, your helpfulness and knowledge was tremendous and your generosity outstanding.

With Commander Shuga's charity PVR, the Central Area was able to put him over the top of his goal amount. I would like to Thank You, and all your Posts that made the donations to PVR. And a very Special Thank You to Post 158 for their generous

donation of \$11,505 to Project:VetRelief.

We all enjoyed having Commander Shuga here in our Districts/Area, where we all learned so much and received some great guidance and information to help the Post and District now and into the future. I am looking forward to our next Central Area Roundtable, as the first one with the 16th District with the District and Post Officers at Post 104 on the 30th of March was very informative and a great exchange of knowledge. I received positive feedback from the attendees. The next Central Area Roundtable with the 15th District with District

and Post Officers is in the scheduling process. The Central Area Training will be in District 7 at Post 3, the 14th of April. This is open to all of the Legion Family that wishes to attend.

And in closing, I would like to thank the 22 Posts in the Central Area that have achieved 100% or better in membership. With the great job that you are doing, this places Central Area in first place for Department since January. Keep up the excellent work!

**Western Area**

James Brennan, Western Area Commander  
[westernarea@legionmail.org](mailto:westernarea@legionmail.org)



The Western Area, comprised of District 1 & 2, has stepped into the unknown, "Membership". Every Post in the area has gone to the extreme to push Florida to the top.

I am one lucky Commander to have the privilege of being associated with such dedicated Veterans. Commander Shuga provided me the opportunity to learn so much about my home District, Thank You. District 1 has 12 Posts at 100% or better, with the rest in striking distance

of the goal line. District 2 has 8 Posts that have crossed the 100% goal line with several within sight of 100%. I thank each one of these Posts for the super effort to cross the 100% and I want to encourage all Posts to continue to push forward. **Thank you to all.**

Now, for something special from District 2, American Legion Post 84, Havana, FL. I recently sent an email about this project and I wanted to follow up with the details for everyone. We have an exceptional Patriot, a young lady named Elizabeth Hightower, currently a high school senior. Ms. Hightower is the daughter of a retired Navy Chief. She has started a program to save our National Emblem that has reached its useful life span. The idea is to save these flags and give them to local funeral homes, so it may be buried with a Veteran. The plan is to have a Legion

Post collect these flags along with a written history of where and how long the flag was flown (Business, State Office or home) and give them to a local funeral home. The funeral home would let the Veteran's family know a flag is available to be buried with their Veteran. If the family accepts this additional option, then the history of the flag is presented to the family as well by the funeral home. This **DOES NOT** replace the presentation of the burial flag to the family at the cemetery. Please visit her website, [flagsforourfallen.com](http://flagsforourfallen.com). OH! Ms. Hightower was presented a \$1,000.00 Book Scholarship from American Legion Post 84 and Unit 84 Havana, FL. She has a partial athletic scholarship to the University of Florida as a softball pitcher. She is good, Very Good.

**Thank you**

Donna Artola-Wallace, 11th District & Blood  
[11thdistrict@legionmail.org](mailto:11thdistrict@legionmail.org)



**11th District**  
 As we come to a close of the Legion Year 2017-2018. It has been a GREAT YEAR!!!! Our district has pulled together as a great working

team. You all have put the district back on the map. Thank you to each and every member of the legion family. It has been great working with the legion family as a whole. We have 20 posts in the district and 11 of them made it over 100%. Working as a team has made our district #2 in category 3 for national standings. We pulled together for great causes, working as a family. And speaking of family we were the first whole family to reach 100% in the state. Legion, SAL, and Auxiliary. I enjoyed having FAMILY district

meetings. It was my pleasure and honor serving as your district commander.

**Blood Chair**

As we close our legion year 2017-2018, I want to thank each, post, unit and squadron who has either held a blood drive or donated blood. This is a very important program to have with in your family, one never knows when blood is needed. Thank you again for letting me serve you as your Department blood Chair.

**2018 FREEDOM RAFFLE** Win up to \$15,000 Look For Details In Your Mail







**Membership**

*Fred Matthews, Membership Chair*  
[membership@legionmail.org](mailto:membership@legionmail.org)



It has been my privilege and honor to serve you as this past Legion Year's Membership Chairman. As with all of us, it time to move on to the next thing. But before I go, you may be reading this with just a couple

of weeks left before the official end of our Florida year.

If your Post is not at 100%, we are still accepting those memberships right up until the week before Convention. As you have heard me repeat many times this year; "We Can't Shrink Our Legion!" I sincerely believe that and with all of us pulling in the same direction, we still have the opportunity to reach 100% for the first time in 5 years.

Congratulations again to those District Commanders who crossed the 100% goal line last month. The leaders all year are 11th District Commander Donna Artola-Wallace and 4th District Commander Vickie VanBuren. The two Rays: 1st District Commander Olsen and 16th District Commander Perez stayed in the hunt all year and joined the 100% club early in May.

Both of the largest Posts in the American Legion

347 and 273 continue to prove that working the programs, providing services to their membership and Community make achieving the membership goal a secondary issue. Retention was a big deal this year, they were both successful in doing so. Area Commanders Jim Brennan(Western) and Jay Allen(Central) went above and beyond in keeping track of the Districts and Posts in their areas and again, crossed the goal 100 year line in May once again proving the worth of Area Commanders who are in touch with those Posts who needed assistance and being there to lend a hand and give advice when needed, not just when called upon. Congratulations Gentlemen!

Bright Lights in my travels across the State are Kurt Geis and Steve Hamrick. These two guys are the future of the Florida Legion that we all talk about. Kurt of Post 63 in Winter Garden, sponsored an excellent City-wide "Ruck Walk" that highlighted the need for more attention needed for the instances of Veteran Suicide as one of the central issues confronting veterans in our Country. Steve Hamrick, of Post 394 in Palm Bay, who will be the incoming Commander of the 12th District led the membership efforts in that area showed great organizational skills in support of Commander Bruce Thurber. 5th District Commander Troy Horsley consistently conducted one of the more effective and organized Districts and meetings in the Florida Legion.

Thanks for your advice and mentorship to PDC

Jim Ramos for your guidance through key points throughout the 2017 - 2018 year.

I look forward to seeing you at the Convention and your encouragement of your members to attend the Membership Workshop on Friday, July 6th.

And finally, thanks to Commander Steve Shuga for giving me the opportunity to serve and learn as my work with the Florida American Legion continues.

**Each One, Bring Five!**



*1st Vice Kathleen Bamberger, Old Town*



*Post 131 Greenville*

**Children & Youth**

*Bruce Carl, Children & Youth Chair*  
[cy@legionmail.org](mailto:cy@legionmail.org)



How fast this year has flown by! Our snowbirds have all left the coop, and summer is officially here. This will be my last article for the Legion Link as your Children and Youth Chairman. I want to thank our Commander, Steve

Shuga for appointing me to this position. It has been a learning, sometimes challenging, very interesting and rewarding experience. I have had the opportunity to visit many Posts

I have never been to, and met a great bunch of Legionnaires in the process. I wish I could have been able to visit more places and meet more people!

In addition to all I have done previously promoting the Children & Youth programs throughout the year, we held the Department Children and Youth golf tournament at Harbor Hills Country Club in Lady Lake. Although we only had half of the amount of golfers I was expecting, we all had a great time. After the golf outing, Post 347 hosted a dinner and we handed out prizes, held auctions, and gave out other prizes. I also presented Certificates of Appreciation to the Post, the Golf Course, and the Lake Weir JROTC, for their participation and volunteer work at the tournament. The JROTC cadets also each received a Children

and Youth Challenge coin, which just thrilled them!

Between now and the Convention, I will be judging applications for Teacher of the Year, Best Post Children and Youth Program, and also reviewing the applications for grants from the Children and Youth Fund. There are still quite a few Children and Youth coins available for a \$10.00 donation, and they will be available at the Convention.

I look forward to assuming my new position next year as the 15th District Commander, and all the challenges that come with it. I wish the best of luck to the new C&Y Chairman, and hope they receive support from our Posts and members throughout the State.





**Immigration**

Omer "Gene" Smith, *Immigration Chair*  
[immigration@legionmail.org](mailto:immigration@legionmail.org)



The Legion year has come and gone. Unfortunately, I received no request for assistance from any veterans who served in the US Armed Forces and are not US Citizens.

Over the past year statistics indicate there are thousands of foreign-born veterans of the US Armed Forces residing in the United States who are not Naturalized citizens. Joining the military has always been one of the quickest ways to obtain U. S. Citizenship. This is still true today. Thousands of troops with

green cards became citizens last year. However, it doesn't happen automatically. Veterans who did not go through the process of obtaining their U. S. Citizenship can be deported just like any non-citizen. Did you know that fellow veterans are unaware the United States deports military veteran's.

Naturalization used to be a part of basic training. However, that has changed. One must apply for citizenship. Many cannot. Why? They may have served their adopted country well until such physical or mental conditions such as PTSD, depression or substance abuse took control of their lives. These physical or mental conditions may result in some sort of criminal activity and should a conviction be rendered, the veteran may be subject to deportation. Many still think the citizenship is automatic and when they apply for a driver's license or other forms of identification, it is discovered the

individual is not a Naturalized U.S citizen and their "green card" had expired, they may be subject to deportation.

As your Department Immigration Chairman, I am asking you to assist me in identifying these individuals who have honorably served in the United States Armed Forces and have not Naturalized. They need our help. The Immigration Laws are constantly changing. For me to quote the law in this column would not be feasible since the law may change before my articles are published. How do we get them the help needed? You or they may contact me through Department and I will get them in touch with one of America's top Immigration Attorneys who can provide assistance or at least alert them to their status. Please contact me, PDC Omer Smith, Department Immigration at "[Immigration@legionmail.org](mailto:Immigration@legionmail.org)".

**Florida American Legion College**

Tom Gora, *Legion College Chair*  
[deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org](mailto:deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org)



Attending the Florida American Legion College (FALC) is an investment you make in your personal development, the future of

The American Legion, and the future of the Department of Florida. The class is offered one time a year on dates determined by the Department Commander. The class is

intended to provide participants information on the internal workings of The American Legion and the Department that you may not learn from the routine day-to-day post experience or from reading all the manuals that are published. FALC is designed to help participants better understand the relationship between the national organization, our department and districts.

Speakers in the past two classes have included a Past National Commander, or one of Florida Executive Committeemen to provide some insight on that relationship. The better you understand the organization the clearer our roles become while promoting programs in our communities. The class comprised of Legionnaires from all over the state also offers different views and interpretations

from class participants on how we all run our programs and posts.

Over the past two years we also have had members of the Auxiliary and Sons of the Legion graduate from FALC, all are welcome if you want to learn more about The American Legion. Watch for further details and scheduling of the next class to be announced soon after the Annual Department of Florida Convention and the election of the 2018-19 Department of Florida Commander.

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young. Henry Ford

**Legion Riders**

Jim Day, *American Legion Riders*  
[legionriders@legionmail.org](mailto:legionriders@legionmail.org)



Where does the time go? It is hard to believe that 3 years ago I was asked to represent PDC Jim Ramos as the Florida American Legion Riders Chairman. Wow, have we grown and become unified. First let me say there is no way I

could have done this without outstanding help from the District and Area Chairman each year. Thank you to my Vice Chairman for the past 3 years: Past Chairman Mike "Goat" Kirchoff, Manny Ayala, and Jim Wineland. It has been a great ride and never would have happened without such a dedicated group of riders. For the next 3 years I will be following once again in Mike Kirchoff's footsteps and serving on the National ALR Advisory Committee. The Florida ALR will be in good hands and continue to grow and move in new directions.

We just completed a crazy idea to take our Florida

In-State Legacy Ride and mix it up a bit and spread the support to our surrounding states. The ride was conducted as a UNITY ride and the intention was to get other Post, Units, Chapters and Departments working together to promote The American Legion Family programs. ALR Vice Chairman Jim Wineland and Western Area Chairman Jim Bowers worked with Florida ALR Adjutant Jennifer Day to organize a great ride. We collected around \$10,000 for Florida (in registration, merchandise and Florida Donations) along the ride. We started in Fernandina Beach and rode thru Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and

*Continued on Page 10*





*American Legion Riders continued from Page 9*

Louisiana. We visited a National Park, private WW2 museum, laid a wreath at a National Cemetery, stopped by the USS Alabama, had a ghost tour and saw The Vietnam Wall park in Pensacola. We had some great southern hospitality, spread the word with media coverage in 3 states and took a few "scenic" routes. The phrase "For the Cause, not the Applause" was repeated often and the spirit of UNITY was spread all along the path. Special THANK YOU to Jim Bower and Jim Wineland for all your organization and hard work. Beverly and Wayne Wooten for jumping in with registration. Dale and Janie Fish for handling the merchandise. To

those who completed the entire ride: welcome to the "Hardcore" club.

Summit 2019 will be in the same place as the last 2 years. Planning is underway, and the date has been nailed down. We will be in Cocoa Beach for one more year at the International Palms Resort January 17-20, 2019. As always, the location and or date is subject to change. So, mark those calendars and start making plans.

Convention: We will be looking at having some classes in the ALR Appreciation Room. Primarily for the Volunteer Tracking Forms and Unity Rides.

These classes will be limited in size. A sign up with times will be distributed in June. In addition a list will be going out for supplies needed for the Appreciation Room: cups, plates, utensils, mixers, liquors, snacks etc. If any District or Chapter would like to "host" a night, please feel free to let Jennifer know ASAP.

Please make plans to attend Convention and support our Legion Family. It has been a pleasure and an honor to be the ALR Chairman and I would love to see the ALR in force. Once again thank you all for the support over the past few years.

**Oratorical**

*Meri West, Oratorical Chair*  
[oratorical@legionmail.org](mailto:oratorical@legionmail.org)

Our Florida Department held its annual contest in March. A shout out to Elizabeth Douglas and her staff for making it happen in a way that looks so effortless!

Our Florida Area Finalists are named below:

- Southern Area: Chika Ojukwu, Hialeah, FL.
- Northern Area: Holly Stidham, Ocala, FL
- Southwestern Area: Sheyla Ravelo Perez, Lehigh Acres, FL
- Eastern Area: Ricardo Barios, Ocoee, FL
- Central Area: Greta Dieck, Tampa, FL
- Western Area: Caleb Wilson, Tallahassee, FL

Department Contest Winners were:

- 1st Place: Caleb Wilson
- 2nd Place: Greta Dieck
- 3rd Place: Holly Stidham

Caleb Wilson went on to represent FL at Nationals. He made it successfully through the Quarter Finals where he was competing against New Jersey, Virginia, Massachusetts, West Virginia, and DC.

Only 9 of 54 students make the first cut and the competition was very rigorous.

The following nine competed at the semifinals:

- Caleb V. Wilson of Tallahassee, FL
- Mattilyn L. Winburn of Bainbridge, GA
- Nathan L. York of National City, CA
- Emily M. Parker, Lino Lakes, MN
- Griffin L. Smith, Spearfish, SD
- Isaac Bock of Indianapolis, IN
- Britney N. McGloflin, of Cabot, AR
- Renee D. Betterson of Berea, OH
- Carlissa N. Frederich of Paducah, KY

First place went to Carlissa Frederich of KY. Second place went to Emily Parker of MN and Third Place to Nathan York of CA.

Our FL contestant Caleb made it to the Semi Finals and was competing against GA and CA. Ironically, the GA Department winner was a girl who has been Caleb's debate partner in the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association for the past four years! Caleb came in second, while Nathan York won first place.

Something I noticed about the contestants is that they are very competitive but also very good sports about it. Obviously, everyone cannot place first. But these students without fail are polite and diplomatic. These are traits that will serve them well in their careers and I think it speaks highly to the American Legion for fostering such characteristics among the students.

This year at the Department contest we had some

very special judges--three former National Oratorical Champions served as judges:

- Philip Bishop, the 2004 National Oratorical Champion
- Co'Relous Bryant, the 2007 National Oratorical Champion
- Geeta Minocha, the 2015 National Oratorical Champion

We also had Madison Moore, the Florida Department First Place winner from 2017 serve as a judge!

Also serving was Kim Long, Professor of Speech and Communications at Valencia College, Anna Eskamani, who is running for the Florida Legislature and was on the cover of Time Magazine in 2017, and US Navy Officer Luke Moragne from NAS Jax.

Our Department likely made history having so much Oratorical talent in one room at one time, in support of this program. Florida Legionnaires rock!

In closing, I am paraphrasing Commander Steve Shuga who said at the contest: Boy! If you leave here today after hearing these students' speeches and you have not learned something new about the US Constitution, then shame on you!







**Revitalization**

*Eunice Butts, Post Development Chair  
postdevelopment@legionmail.org*



This has been a very productive year.

July 2017 began by attending several post installations and identified posts who could use some help.

August 2017, Participated on Department Membership Team and Zone 1, Rick Johnson training team.

Attended American Legion National Convention, assisted seven (7) posts on the phone with their post concerns or issues.

September 2017 Assisted two posts development training classes, post 111 stand down and visited two posts on serious issues per Central Area Commander.

October, spoke to members of the community

at Post 111 of the importance of the American Legion to the community and the importance of the community to the American Legion.

Did two (2) revitalizations and gave lecture on Membership at the Central Area Training. Participated at two (2) schools for the Great American Teaching; was guest speaker at Post 111 Veterans Day Program and guest speaker at St. Peter Clavin Church honoring their Veteran members and attended an officers class of Post 111.

December Assisted with Four revitalizations, Post 5 Wreaths Across America, private conference with a post member per Central Area Commander, attended a conference with Central Area Commander and attended a PTSD Program at Post 5.

January 2018, handled 35 phone calls and attended the Southern Area Ball.

February, had numerous phone calls from post

members, officers, district & area commanders. Attended Southwestern Area Ball and Post 335 "Honoring Female Veterans" luncheon.

March, Attended Northern Area Ball, Central Area Ball, Department Commanders Visitation team. Assisted two female veterans per Department service officer and consultations by phone.

April, attended Children & Youth picnic and spoke on membership for the Central Area Training. This has been very rewarding. You have accomplished a lot in membership, Legion programs and revitalization of your posts. All of this was done by "TEAM WORK", and making a difference.

Thank you for all your support, the many "Thank You", letters and cards. Keep up the good work and I wish you a GREAT success IN THE YEAR 2018-2019.

**POW-MIA Logo Restrictions?**

*Kathryn Boyer, POW-MIA Chair  
powmia@legionmail.org*



Here is the answer to a question that I have been asked many times.

**I WANT TO USE THE POW/MIA LOGO; IS THERE**

**A COPYRIGHT RESTRICTION?**

The POW/MIA logo has never been trademarked; anyone can use it on their products and DPAA does not manage or oversee its use. The National League of POW/MIA Families, who designed and developed the logo, made a conscious decision to not pursue a copyright so that the design--and the mission it stands for--would get the broadest possible dissemination and recognition.

If you want to learn more about the design and background, you can visit the National League of Families website

**We Saw an Increase**

*Troy Horsley, School Medals Chair  
schoolmedals@legionmail.org*



Many thank you's for your support for the School Medal program this year. Our number of posts that have gotten out to the schools and awarded medals and certificates has

increased over last year's numbers.

Your undying support has made the difference to the future young leaders/patriots of our country. Hopefully your post's school medal report has made it to headquarters. Your numbers for next year's CPR report started on May 1st. The program runs from May 1, 2018- April 30, 2019. Start keeping track of your numbers that you are collecting now so you can submit them on your CPR report for next year.

**ATTENTION**

**Don't Lose Your Charter!**  
In order to maintain a charter, each Post in the Department of Florida shall participate in at least one recognized program of The American Legion each year. *Article X, Section 10c*

**COMPLETE NATIONAL CPR  
mylegion.org**

**COMPLETE ADDENDUM CPR  
floridalegion.org**

**\*\*All posts must complete a National CPR and the Department Addendum, or will be subject to review and possible revocation of charter.\*\***







# PROJECT: VETRELIEF

A Program of The American Legion, Department of Florida

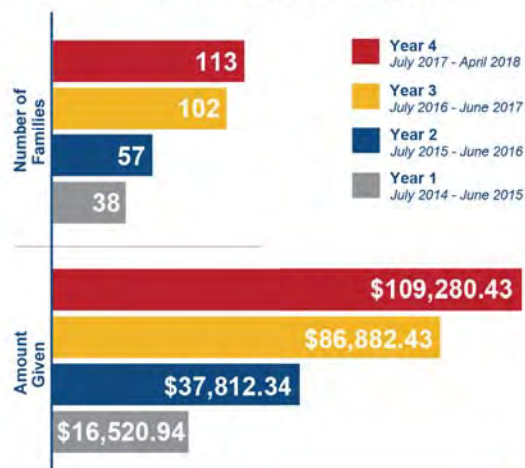
## WHY PROJECT: VETRELIEF?

If you are a veteran, active duty military or an immediate family member and are in a financial crisis, PROJECT: VetRelief may be able to assist. Maybe you've missed work due to an illness, experienced temporary layoff, lost your job entirely, or your car broke down, these service members can be assisted.

Our process and guidelines for funding are set by the Board of Directors and are designed to help those who need a hand up, not a hand out. These policies are in place so that we can be good stewards of our limited resources.

Last Legion year, we assisted 102 families by distributing \$86,882.43. As you can see, through April of this year, we have increased our impact to Florida service members by supporting **113 families** with **\$109,280.43**. All the support that we provide derives from funds donated from the Legion Family, corporations, and individuals who believe in the good work we do! We are so grateful for those who have made donations. But, as we continue to grow, the demand for additional funding increases, as well.

## THROUGH THE YEARS:



We encourage you to sign up for a class, or stop by our vendor booth for prizes!

### ADVOCATE TRAININGS:

<b>Thursday, July 5th</b> 9:00am - 10:00am Crystal E	<b>Friday, July 6th</b> 3:30pm - 4:30pm Crystal E
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### VENDOR BOOTH:

Thursday - Saturday July 5-7th  
8:00am - 5:00pm  
Vendor Area

## GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING

- **Veteran, Active Duty Military, Immediate Family Member** or current member of the Florida Sons of the American Legion
- **Type of Discharge:** *Honorable or General Under Honorable Conditions*
- **Must be a Florida Resident for 120 days**
- **Show sustainability** - must have worked within the last 90 days, have some other source of income, or have excellent prospects of a job within 30 days
- **Provided for necessities** - shelter, food, utilities, and some emergency transportation and/or critical medical expenses within the family
- **Application / Interview does NOT guarantee funding**
- **Awarded on a case by case basis**
- **Funded one time annually**



## OUR HATS ARE OFF TO COMMANDER SHUGA!!

Commander Steve Shuga chose PROJECT: VetRelief for his fundraising project during his tenure. We appreciate the support and awareness he has brought to the Florida Legion's newest program! Be sure to attend General Session to see the final total amount of money he raised in just one year. - **Thank you to the Legion Family members who contibuted through his efforts!**





**Scouting**

*Rick Hewett, Scouting Chair  
scouting@legionmail.org*



2017-2018 has been a great year for the Department. Now that school is out, our Scouts will be heading off to summer camps, high adventure bases, doing community service projects, and various week-long advanced youth leadership

courses. The Department Commander will recognize our Eagle Scout of the Year, Chartering Organization of the Year, and Post Sponsorship Award. The Charter Organization Award is only for Posts that charter, own, and operate BSA Units. The sponsorship award goes to the Post that gives the most money to Scouting based on the Post CPR data. There is a big difference between chartering and sponsoring. If you are unsure, ask your Post Scouting Chairman, Charter Organization Representative (COR), or see the Department of Florida Scouting Manual on the Department's Scouting Program website.

As you have likely heard, Boy Scouts of America (BSA) made national program changes-changes that will positively affect more youth in this country and increase American Legion Post membership

numbers. There has been a lot of false headlines in the media, even national media, in the last few weeks related to BSA. Allow me to clarify. No, BSA did not drop the "Boy" from "Boy Scouts." Like the American Legion, the U.S. Congress chartered BSA in law founded in 36 U.S.C. BSA is the umbrella organization and the name did not change. Also like the American Legion, it has many programs. BSA modified "Boy Scouts" (the male-only program for 11-17 year olds) to "Scouts BSA" (BSA still standing for Boy Scouts of America, now allowing girls).

BSA has been co-ed since 1971 starting at age 14 for Venturers, Sea Scouts, and Explorers. BSA has now provided a way that girls can participate in BSA at all ages, while still giving boys room to be boys in separate units. The program standards have not been modified and will remain exactly the same for girls as it is for boys.

American Legion Posts that charter BSA Units will have the ultimate choice on what type of program they operate. Cub Scout Packs have the option to be all-boy, all-girl, or a Family Scouting BSA unit with boys and girls in separate dens in the same pack. That determination is left up to the Post general membership. For Scouts BSA Troops, boys and girls cannot be co-ed in a troop per BSA. Girls will have their own troop separate from the boys, but will do the same program work and will

be eligible to earn Eagle Scout. Like any other Scouting unit, it is completely up to the chartering Post to make the decision. BSA allows a boy troop and a girl troop to meet at the same facility on the same night, and share the same troop committee, but the units must remain separate. Starting on 1 June 2018, many of our Cub Scout Packs will begin to register girls. Many existing Cub Scout Packs will opt to remain all-boy. That presents an opportunity for BSA Councils and Districts to work with American Legion Posts and Auxiliary Units to charter all-girl packs or troops. More chartered BSA Units increases membership in the Post.

Remember, after Department Convention, many Posts will hold installation ceremonies. Don't forget to include your chartered BSA Units in the ceremony. Be sure to have their unit flag posted alongside our SAL, ALR, and Auxiliary flags. It was my pleasure and honor serving the Department as the Scouting Chairman this year. I will not be able to address the convention or present awards due to training out of state the remainder of the year. Commander Shuga is a long-time veteran Scouter and will fulfill my duties. I look forward to getting back into the trenches with you again when I return from training in January 2019.

**Thank You**

*Taz Gehling, Security Commission Chair  
security@legionmail.org*



I would like to say "THANK YOU" to **Department Commander Steve Shuga** for allowing me to serve this great department. It has been a wonderful experience and the memories and friendships that I have made over the past year will be cherished. I hope that I will get another chance at serving this department and its

members in the future.

Our department and our state saw some turbulent times in Hurricane Irma as well as the tragedy at Stoneman-Douglas High School. I had the pleasure of attending the JROTC State Shooting Competition in Cape Coral where the cadets of Stoneman-Douglas competed showing the resolve of our citizens and the cadets of that school.

I hope that post participated in the Law & Order program honoring the first responders of this state. I am sure **T.C. Biddle, Department Law & Order Chairman**, wouldn't complain too much if he received packets from each and every post. If you didn't take advantage of this program this year, I

hope that you will in the future.

I would like to say that I hope posts also took advantage of the Blood Donor program and did at least one blood drive. Our **Department Chairwoman Donna Artola** will hopefully be judging some great Blood Donor chairman reports.

I believe that because of the great department chairs and the great members of this department which helped to heal and help our communities, our department will continue to be a leader in the American Legion.







### JROTC / JR Shooting Sports

Loretta Young, JROTC/Jr Shooting Sports Chair  
[jrotc@legionmail.org](mailto:jrotc@legionmail.org)



We are now down to the last full month of the school semester. It has been a very busy first half of the year, so I will just give an overview of some last events that I had the privilege of being able to attend.

The Army State Marksmanship Meet was held at Island Coast HS by the Army 6th Brigade. There were 31 teams competing in the all Sporter Category and the Meet was coordinated and sponsored by the American Legion, Post 90, 13th District and donations from the Department of Florida. There was a very good turnout and support from parents and others. The overall team winning First Place was Boca Ciega. Second Place overall team was Summerlin Academy. Two of the team members on the Summerlin Academy Marksmanship, Stephanie Salvucci and Jordan Timmons, will be attending the American Legion National Marksmanship Championship Meet in Colorado Springs, CO at the USA Olympic Training Center on July 23-28. There is also, Chole Bigwarfe, Sporter Category, from Oviedo NJROTC who also will be attending the National Legion Competition along with Kinga Aletto competing in the Precision Category from Sarasota Military Academy. I must congratulate the Department of Florida on doubling the amount of teams submitting for the National Postal Tournament with over 100 teams. Thanks so much for all your efforts.

I also had the privilege of attending the Broward

County Superintendent's Pass in Review and Cadet of the Year Ceremony held at Pompano Beach HS. This is held at the end of the semester and had all 29 JROTC Units and the Military Entrepreneur Leadership Academy are in attendance. The Units assemble in the gym and are given medals, trophies and scholarship awards to the highest achievers. There were many attendees from the Veteran and local Community. The program is coordinated by the Broward Curriculum Director and Staff and the Cadets are interviewed through two boards before selection as the Cadet of the Year and Runner Up. The program concludes with the parade of all the Units for the Superintendent and Staff.

I also attended a Special Award Ceremony for Marjorie Stoneman Douglas HS with numerous awards presented for students and one teacher for Heroic Deeds during the massacre at the school on February 14th shooting. These awards were presented by many of the Veteran Organizations throughout the local and National levels. The Department of Florida and American Legion Post 365, sponsored 26 Special Award Medals for Americanism and Citizenship including one for Heroism. There was also a Change of Command for the new incoming staff for next year and a special tribute for the graduating seniors. This program was coordinated by the JROTC SAI, MAJ. Peter Mahmood and AI, 1SG John Navarra. It was a very solemn tribute for a school and program that had so much loss for so many of our youth. They are always in our prayers and remind us of how precious life is each and every day.

I would like to thank all who participated in our JROTC Youth Programs this year and help keep the American Legion a leader in the support of our future generation of "Building Better Citizens".



Broward County Cadet of the Year Award Ceremony with Trophy for Runner Up and Superintendents Pass in Review Commander of Troops, incoming Battalion Cmdr. both from MSD JROC



Special Award Ceremony for MSD with donation of 26 Special Award Medals from the Dept. of Florida and Post 365.



Summerlin Academy 2nd Place winners at the Army State Marksmanship Meet at Island Coast HS. Banner and trophies sponsored by American Legion Dept. of Florida. American Legion Banner for Meet also sponsored by Dept. of Florida.

### Time is Running Out!

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet Chair  
[youthlawcadet@legionmail.org](mailto:youthlawcadet@legionmail.org)



We still have a few openings for this year's class. What is wrong with District 1, 2, 3 who are in very close proximity to the Highway Patrol Academy? District 5 is the farthest

eastern District, yet we supply several cadets to this program. Miami and southeast Florida and southwest Florida are sending kids here. Lehigh Acres is sending cadets for the 3rd straight year. Same goes for Post 373 and Post 54. I want to thank these Posts for all their support to this program. All it takes is finding some candidates, give them the information on how to download the forms, and the Post supplies \$350.00 for each cadet. This is not a "get 'round to it" program. We are very fortunate to be able to say that Florida

is the 17th Department nationwide to have this program in place. This falls under Children & Youth and working with and promoting our first responders. One main thing that kids learn that the police are human beings, and the police respect them as much as they are respected.

If you have any questions whatsoever, please call me at my home number which is: 904-272-1619. I am more than happy to talk to you about this program.





**Social Media**

Bob Colbert, Social Media Chair  
socialmedia@legionmail.org



**Hello EVERYONE!**

We are coming up on Memorial Day, July 4th and the 2018 Department Convention! It is going to be a busy summer and there is so much that needs to

be done. Am I preaching to the CHOIR? How about the rest of you? If you are planning events for the end of May, you need to start letting your members and the public know NOW!

Memorial Day is one of those events where the Veterans and Veterans groups can SHINE! Get those notices out to the local radio, TV stations and the press! A simple press release would be a one page (actually about 2/3 of page) with the basic details sent out NOW might get you on their calendars to show up at your event. It costs you nothing and it could really help your Legion Family and the event. And, put it out on **Facebook** NOW as a future event (you may even want to send an "invitation") and after event be sure to post some PIX of the event to show everyone what was there. Those that came will appreciate the photos and those that missed it will think better about coming to the next event.

It's not too soon to start spreading the word about any 4th of July activities that your Post Family has. Finally, don't forget to look for us at the **Florida American Legion Press Association (FALPA)** booth at the convention. We could use some assistance in staffing the booth, if you find that you have time and nothing to do. We do provide a seat.

Have a great Memorial Day weekend and a SAFE FOURTH OF JULY!



**Special Olympics**

Jamie Grinnis, Special Olympics  
specialolympics@legionmail.org



It has been quite a lot of fun for all the members of the Legion Family that have attended the Special Olympics competitions around the state. I wish to thank all of you that took time out of your busy schedules to attend these sporting events. It

means so much to our athletes when they see you at their competitions. Should you attend the Ceremonies this month in Orlando and around the state, remember to wear your covers and Post shirts to show a visible presence at the events.

June is our busiest month of the year as we prepare for the awards ceremony at our Convention starting July 5th in Orlando. The Legion Family has stepped up once again and shown that the American Legion Special Olympics Program is not forgotten. Your contributions help the athletes in your County right here in Florida. This year we will be presenting all awards from your contributions on the Convention Floor. Review your Convention schedule for time and place.

Post Families still have time to get their contributions into Department to be recognized. Send your Check and your Surveys to Department Headquarters today. Make sure you send your donations to the attention of Elizabeth Douglas our Department Program Director.

**VA Entitlements**

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair  
veteransbenefits@legionmail.org



As the VA Entitlements Chairman and a Service Officer, I deal with some very disturbing issues, for example one of the biggest issues is our battle buddies are committing suicide at an extremely high rate; 22 a Day (8,030 a year).

We have lost more veterans to suicide since September 11, 2001 than Vietnam War, Korean War and any modern wars combined.

Barry Roberts, Department Chaplin, and myself would like to challenge everyone. We would like to see at least 22 Posts do some type of a Challenge 22 event, these events are designed to spread awareness about this epic issue and where a veteran or a loved one can get help. These events can be a walk, dinner, bike ride, or any type of activity to reach out to our veterans and community. To show them that we care and there is help for them. If you have any questions about hosting a Challenge 22 event, please feel free to contact me.

Larry Roberts  
American Legion  
Department of Florida  
VA Entitlements Chairman  
(850)718-7773  
E-mail gunhunter1966@yahoo.com

**RECOGNIZE SOME OF THE SIGNS OF SUICIDE RISK**

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.
- Hopelessness, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse
- Withdrawing from family and friends

**THE PRESENCE OF THESE SIGNS REQUIRES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION**  
Veterans Crisis Line  
1-800-273-8255 Press 1







**VA&R**

Alan Cohen, VA&R Chair  
var@legionmail.org



Greetings, fellow Legionnaires. With May being Military Appreciation Month and June being National Service Flag Month I can think of no better way to close out the Legion year than by taking this opportunity to thank and recognize every member of the Legion family for their hard work and many contributions. I have spent much time attending District and Post meetings, visited several of the VA hospitals and Outpatient clinics in the state and have interacted with folks who are, in my humble opinion, truly unsung heroes.

In spite of what's been a noticeable shortfall of VAVS volunteers, ours have done a stand-out job giving selflessly of their time and efforts in the best traditions of the Legion. With that said, I would once again like to reach out and request that should you or anyone you know have any interest in joining that dedicated group please don't hesitate to contact me.

Our American Legion Post Service Officers consistently go "above and beyond" in what they do in the course of working to help our fellow Veterans and their families. With June Convention fast upon us, I hope to see many seasoned and new Post Service Officers at the 2-day certification class. Pre-registration is required and can be easily done at the Department website.

Our VA Benefits Chair has during the course of the year put forth extra effort and many Posts and groups have benefitted from his presentation. I encourage you to take advantage of this wonderful and total Legion family learning experience.

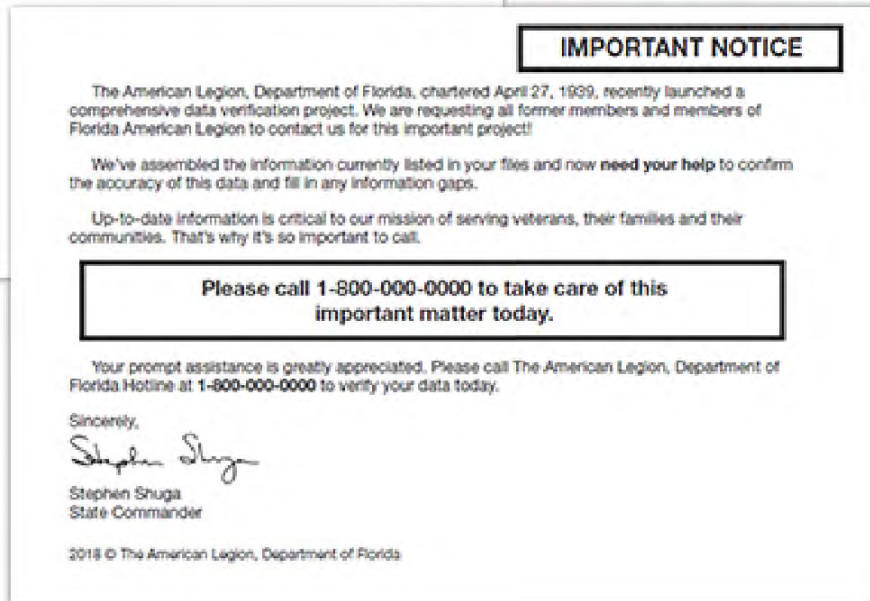
Lastly, I'd like to report that the decision to form a Women Veteran's team/committee has proven itself a good one. With a greater-than-first-realized women veteran population in the state they've made good progress in reaching out to those veterans, identifying their specific needs and addressing them.

In closing, I would again like to express my personal pride to have continued to serve in this capacity for yet another year. I continue to be humbled by this honor and look forward to being able to keep on keepin' on.



**Did you Receive a Post Card similar to this one?**

**See page 4 for details.**







May 24, 2018 105% Target Report (Currently 97.36%)		
11	Donna Artola	106.20%
4	Victoria VanBuren	103.09%
1	Raymond Olsen	101.80%
16	Raymond Perez	100.94%
7	David Tucker	100.06%
5	Troy Horsley	99.92%
15	Richard Little	99.55%
3	Frederick Hutto	98.96%
6	Michael Seidel	98.68%
12	Bruce Thurber	97.78%
8	Jerry Faught	97.67%
2		97.66%
17	Michael Wolohan	96.45%
13	Michael Raymond	96.09%
9	Donald Schwiesow	95.45%
14	Gary Decker	87.30%
Western	James Brennan	101.04%
Central	Jay Allen	100.44%
Northern	Jeffrey Durden	99.71%
Eastern	Daryl Bass	98.29%
Southwestern	Dennis Walsh	96.81%
Southern	James Tewes	96.52%
Post 400		95.07%
Post 208		89.20%



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



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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.



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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 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**  
**105%** 6/6/2018

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## 2018 CONVENTION VOTING GUIDE

During the 2017 Department Convention, the membership voted to adopt a new method for voting for Department Officers. All voting for Department Officers will now take place via ballots and scanned with electronic tabulation machines. This will provide a private setting in which to cast secret ballots and expedite the voting process. This guide will provide some pertinent information for the voting process at your 2018 Department Convention.

The annual election of Department officers shall be by special order of business, the results of which should be announced at 1:00 P.M., or as soon as practical thereafter, on the day set for adjournment of the Convention or at the call of the Chair.

Voting for all elected Department Officers shall be by official ballot provided upon registration to any Posts so registered based on paid delegate strength. All official ballots are the responsibility of the acting chairman of each delegation and shall not be replaced for any reason under any circumstances.

How does Department come up with delegate strength? Each Post shall be entitled to two (2) delegates and two (2) alternates and to one (1) additional delegate and alternate for each additional (100) one hundred members provided that the per capita tax is paid fifteen (15) days prior to the Department Convention.

Additionally, according to Section 6, Article 5 of the Department Constitution, a member of the Department Executive Committee shall be a delegate. Therefore, the Post that they are a member of will receive one additional vote.

Each Post will receive one (1) official ballot for every paid delegate at the time of registration with the exception of the Past Department Commander's ballot, which will be provided on the floor at the time of voting as detailed in Section 6, Article V of the Department Constitution. Ballots may either be voted collectively by the acting chairman of each delegation or individually by Post delegates to the Convention. The vote of any delegate absent and not represented by an alternate shall be cast by the majority of the delegates present from the Post.

Those candidates having an endorsement on file at Department by May

30, 2018, will be pre-printed on the ballot. The ballots shall provide for a write-in candidate for each office, should one be nominated off the Convention floor without prior endorsement by their respective Post.

Nominations for Department Officers shall be from the floor of the Convention. Nominating speeches shall be limited to five (5) minutes each. No more than two (2) seconding speeches shall be made for each candidate, each of which shall not exceed two (2) minutes.

Immediately following nominations, ballot voting shall begin on electronic scanning equipment provided by the Orange County Supervisor of Elections. All ballot voting shall be completed by 1:00 p.m. except Posts still in line to vote at that time. Once all the votes have been scanned the election is closed and tally begins.

A team of election officials will oversee the election process. These officials shall consist of an employee of the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office, the Assistant Department Adjutant, and the Department Assistant Judge Advocate or a representative appointed by the Department Commander in his/her absence.

The election officials will examine any ballot rejections to determine the intent of the ballot. If a ballot reflects votes for two (2) candidates for the same office that ballot will have that one (1) office's vote cancelled and the balance of the ballot cast as presented. Should duplicate ballots be presented, the scanners will reject the votes from both ballots.

The election officials will supervise the vote tally collected by the scanners. The candidate for each office that receives the most votes shall be declared the winner. The results will be placed in an envelope which will be presented to the Secretary of the Convention (Department Adjutant) on the Convention stage to be announced.

In cases of a tie vote, a roll call of Posts for the purpose of casting their votes for the tied candidates shall continue until one candidate receives the majority of votes cast, the roll call is complete or until there shall be only one candidate for a particular Department office.

All official ballots will be retained as permanent record of the Department for a period of two (2) years.





100TH ANNUAL  
DEPARTMENT CONVENTION  
WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT  
ORLANDO, FL



ENTERTAINMENT BY

**DJ PATRICK GIBSON**

**07.05.2018**  
**07:00PM**

**CANARY BALL ROOM**

FREE ADMISSION. FREE BEER AND REFRESHMENT, WHILE  
SUPPLIES LAST. CASH BAR AVAILABLE. EVENTS ENDS AT 8:30 PM.

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**THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY CRUISE**  
**September 13-16TH 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*





# THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA  
PRESENTS

— 2018 —

## COMMANDER & PRESIDENT

*Banquet*



FRIDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JULY

ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED

TICKETS: \$40 · BANQUET: 7:00PM - 10:00PM

CANARY BALLROOM · BUSINESS CASUAL DRESS

FOR MENU AND COMPLETE DETAILS VISIT [FLORIDALEGION.ORG](http://FLORIDALEGION.ORG)

6:00PM  
COCKTAIL  
HOUR

**PURCHASE ONLINE**  
[www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org)

*Join us, July 6, 2018, 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

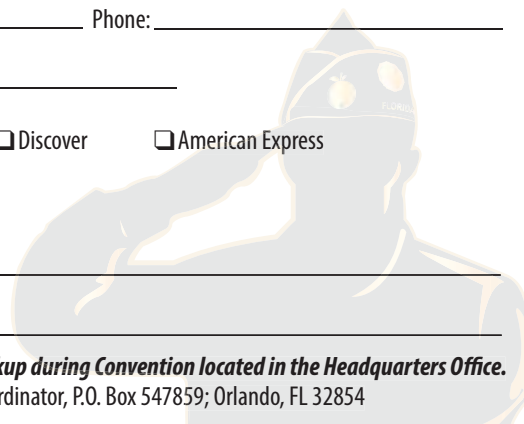
Yes, I authorize my card to be charged for the total amount above.

Credit Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**All tickets must be purchased in advance, quantities are limited. 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



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# THE AMERICAN LEGION

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## SPANISH BUFFET

### FIXINGS

*Grape Tomatoes, Charred Corn, Cucumber,  
Shredded Cheddar Cheese, Garbanzo Beans,  
Cilantro Lime Vinaigrette, Tortilla*

### ASSORTED ROLLS

### PICKLED JALAPEÑO & LIME SLAW

### MEATS

*Ropa Vieja, Tinga De Pollo*

### SPANISH STYLE RICE AND BEANS

### SPICED SWEET POTATOES

## DESSERT

### CHEF'S CHOICE OF DESSERTS

*Various chef choices*

*\*Menu is subject to change without notice.*

