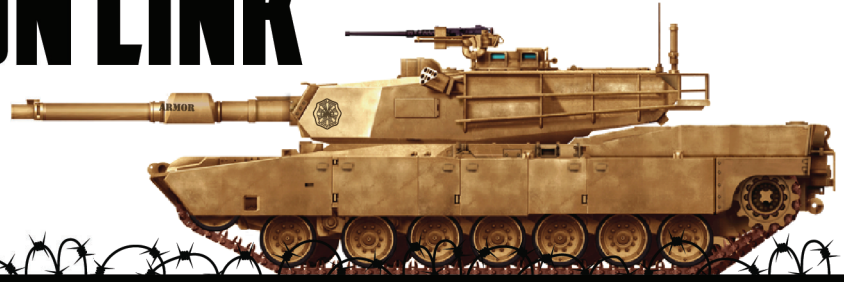




THE LEGION LINK

★ SERVICE
★ HONOR
★ SACRIFICE



DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

AUGUST 2019

COMMANDER WILLIAM "RICK" JOHNSON

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1

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From your Department Commander Rick Johnson

Commander, Rick Johnson

commander@floridalegion.org



Well it is that time again. Our first Legion Link article for the year. First I want to thank everyone who has supported me through these past eight years and who will continue to support this great organization. A lot has

been going on this month with all the installations and new officers in place our District Commanders have been very busy. I have been attending a few of my own out there on the road. Had the privilege to attend the 4th of July parade in Safety Harbor. What a great event especially with the kids being there and to pass our message out to everyone. Thank you Post Family 238 for all you do.

I then headed home to complete the move in to our new house as the saying goes, happy wife, happy life. Did a few admin duties at Department and attended the Forward March event in Miami with the local community. Did a few more installations in the 6th Dist. and 16th Dist. and had a great time and turnout at all of them.

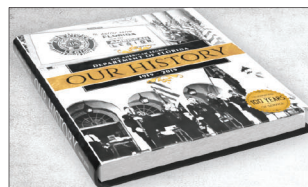
Decided to head to the panhandle and the 1st Dist. to attend some installations and to visit some posts up there. I was received like a king, thanks to all for the hospitality. Will be attending the annual NVHS fundraising dinner in Cocoa Beach.

August will be a very busy month as we have our membership meeting with the incoming National Commander to discuss the goals and the plan that Florida has in place. Will be riding in the Legacy run to Indy with the riders and then attend the National Convention.

We have two membership chairman this year who are ready to work for you and to assist you with anything you need. Just contact them and they will be there. Every post received the membership plan and the Adopt a Highway program for the year. Please review and sign up and adopt a highway within your community.

I just want everyone to have a great year and mostly, have FUN doing it. With your help we can achieve many great things and continue to grow this great organization into the future.

Service Honor Sacrifice



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DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
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Special Thanks

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



With heartfelt and humble gratitude, I thank you for your vote of confidence by electing me the 2nd Vice Commander for The Department Of Florida 2019-20. Special thanks to those

of you throughout the state of Florida who contributed to my campaign for 2nd Vice Commander. Know that your prayers for my safety, volunteering or other acts of kindness were greatly appreciated. My zone consists of the Central and Southwestern Area which consist of the 7th, 8th, 13th, 15th and 16th Districts.

My task is to ensure that the Area Commanders, District Commanders, and Post Commanders are achieving the goals of The Department Commander in Zone

2. Also, to assist when necessary the Area, District and Posts of Zone 2. I will also be available to perform such other duties that may be assigned by The Department Commander.

This year we have a lot of help to help you with your membership. Please do not be too proud to ask for help or assistance.

“THE AMERICAN LEGION NEED THE COMMUNITY; THE COMMUNITY NEED THE AMERICAN LEGION.

Thank You

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



A great convention and fortunately a great result for me from our 101st convention in Orlando. I'd like to thank my opponents in the race for Dept. 3rd Vice Commander. It was very difficult

since I was running against three very talented individuals. I will work very hard to exceed your expectations this year and

earn the right to be your 3rd Vice!

Our Commander has made it very clear that not only is he expecting us to work hard but also have fun! I've brought this message to the Post installations I've attended so far this month. My trip to Jacksonville and Pensacola went very well especially through the 1st District where the Legion Riders escorted me to the various Posts' I visited. Thank you Sonny for putting that all together.

I finished the week by attending the "Forward March" event in Miami sponsored by the Fl. VA. It was a very interesting

meeting and I'm sure good things will come from it. Thanks to our Dept. Chaplain Barry Roberts for the invite.

My plan for the year will be to visit each post in my zone to assist as needed with membership, programs and training. I will be available to all Post Commanders, District Commanders and Area Commanders 24-7 for any issues or needs that arise. I am here to serve you, the member.

So I'm looking for great things this year. Let's make Ricks year the year we turn things around. I'm in, are you?

2019 Department Service Officers School

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



The first session of the 2019 Department Service Officers School was held at the Washington, D.C. Hilton from February 27 – March 1, 2019. In attendance were 90 Department, State,

and County Veterans Service Officers from around the country, Germany and Puerto Rico.

The training session began with a welcome and greetings from Chanin Nuntavong, VA&R and Greg Nembhard, Deputy Director for Claims Services. Introductions

were made with our training partners Bergmann and Moore.

Following the welcome and introduction, the training curriculum broke out into three separate classrooms, each covering the same curriculum. Like the previous DSO School, service officers were assigned seating based on their experience; the purpose was to pair experienced service officers with those having less experience. The goal was to use the better-trained service officers to facilitate discussion and share their personal experiences with those less experienced. Attorneys from Bergmann and Moore facilitated all the training.

The theme for this training session was "Winning New Claims at Your Regional Office". Topics for discussion included: DSO

Ethics; the claims process and deadlines; applying for VA benefits, eligibility and entitlement; chronic conditions, secondary conditions and aggravation; gathering of evidence; requesting records; individual unemployability ; exposure claims; rating disabilities; recent court cases, survivor benefits, aid and attendance compensation and pension exams; and the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

The next Department Services Officers School is currently scheduled to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana from August 8-10, 2019.



Invite the Department Historian

Edward Lewis, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



Greetings fellow Legionnaires,

I would like to start off my first article for Legion Link by thanking you for your support and well wishes for the upcoming Legion year.

Your words of encouragement mean a great deal, they truly do. Now..., down to business!

As your Historian, I truly believe in communication. I promised you I would do the windshield time and try to visit as many Posts over the course of the next year as time would allow. So this is what I am asking of Post, District and Area Commanders. If you are having a special event in your Area, District or at your Post that you would like me to visit please let

me know.

My personal contact information is
 EMAIL: 16history@gmail.com
 PHONE: 727-239-3999

I also promised that I would work on a NEW curriculum for the Historian class being taught at Fall Conference and Convention. I would appreciate any input as to what areas you would like to see covered and taught. Please feel free to drop me a note via email. Until next month...

New Year and a Better Year

Jay Allen, Central Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org



The Convention and Leadership Training were both very good and informative. Now, down to work, I am attending nearly all the installations of officers on going until September.

Had some issues requiring troubleshooting and working with another post on post issues.

We all are working on Membership and the District Commanders had better turn out this year than last year. I found in the Central Area that DMS worked well for us and we are going to utilize the system more this year.

I have to thank my District for their support for my 3rd year as their Area Commander and with I hope I have their support for my bid for the 3rd Vice Commander position next year.

Next report I hope to have a much greater report to everyone.

Western Area News

John Edens, Western Area Commander
westernarea@legionmail.org



First let me thank the 1st and 2nd District Posts for allowing me to be your Area Commander for the 2019 -2020 year. I promise to give the job 110% of my time and effort. Our Area finished a rough year

with Hurricane Michael and I pledge my efforts to help each of our Posts that had serious damage. I know Post 375 in Southport had serious damage and will need to rebuild a Post of their own. We will coordinate at least one to two fundraisers to help in the effort. There were two or three Posts in 2nd District and two or three in 1st District that had serious damage but have managed to rebuild. I will be the middle man between your District Commander and the Department Staff. So, if there is anything, I can help with let me know. I have been to 9 of the 1st District installations and hope to make several in the 2nd District in the next week or two. I will keep you all updated in this monthly article.

A Year for Growing Membership

Bob Brewster, Team Brewster (North Membership)
teambrewster@legionmail.org



Well, it is a new year, and it is going to be a very good year. We will work hard, and we will have a lot of fun doing it. To all Area and District Commanders, we must work together and work with our Post membership teams to

make this a great year, and it must be a growing year. I have done this job a few times in the past, and I have been dealing with membership at Post level, District level, Zone level, Area level, and two years of Department Membership Chairman. What we must do is to work together. We must work with the Posts in our area that are having trouble GROWING their membership. I need dates and times of

all District and Area meetings and other membership drives. Those of you who know me, know that I will be at every event possible that will attract new members to our Post. All new Post Commanders are seeing membership right now flooding into your Posts. That is a good thing. But after about two months, this will start to dry up. You need, right now, to start communicating with all your members who have not renewed for 2020. Too many times the Post membership teams sit back and congratulate themselves on this flood of renewals. Before you know it, valuable time will have passed, and you will be struggling to get your membership goals. So, I advise all of you to set up a schedule of events that your Post can participate in and make sure that someone is doing the "buddy check."

I will be around attending all District and Area meetings and visiting as many Posts as possible. I want to work with each

and everyone of you and be part of your membership team. FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION! Many Posts complain that they can't get members to work membership. Consider me a member who will work with you. You can contact me at 904-272-1619 and e-mail: mr.bobbrewster@gmail.com.



Upcoming Program and Events

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders

legionriders@legionmail.org



The Convention is behind us, and it's time to put the final touches on our 2019-2020 schedule. I want to thank all involved that made this Convention a success. It was evident in our General Session that we are a successful program, but it's up to us to project a clear message on our purpose and that we are family first.

I would also like to thank Jennifer Cooper, Fundraising Director, for presenting "The Meritorious Service Award" from PVR to The American Legion Riders. It was an honor to receive this award on behalf of ALR.

Joe Marcheggiani, our new Post 10 Commander, is looking at setting up a new internal program, Junior Riders, for the ALR. It's going to be interesting.

Remember, in my last article; Sonny Decker was going to get involved to help build the program. He's going to develop an

advertising program through some of the Legion Rider's magazines in Florida. I know we have a few connections already established and I know he's looking for those individuals to guide us. We are looking at advertising our two Unity Rides and our Rally in Kissimmee. Beverly & Wayne have big plans for that Rally.

Another individual has stepped up, Jeff Hawk, and is trying to find us a venue to hold our Rally in Kissimmee. I think he has it narrowed down to just three locations. I know he will keep us posted.

Don't forget about American Legion Baseball! On Saturday, August 10th at 4:30 PM is Riders Day at the Southeast Regional Tournament. It will be held at the University of Tampa Stadium. We are to ride into the Stadium, and someone is going to throw the first pitch. National Legacy Ride to the National Convention starting from Post 347 in Lady Lakes in August, here is the link; www.legion.org/riders/legacyrun check it out. We should fill this up with the riders from Florida, even if you can only ride a couple of days.

Some dates to save for 2020: Summit will be at the same location from February 6th

through the 8th. We are trying something new with the Unity Ride next year. We will have two rides scheduled at the same time, one coming out of the Panhandle and the other starting at Post 154 in Marathon. The meet and greet will be on April 26th at Post 154 in Marathon, and the Panhandle M&G is yet to be determined.

The actual Unity Ride will start on Monday, April 27th and end on May 1st followed by our Rally on Saturday in the Kissimmee area. Net proceeds will go to PVR as always, and the "Round Robin" will be extended to include May 2.

Don't miss it, "Coral-Head Music-Festival and their new concert this year in England Bros, Pinellas Park, November 2-3. Their events support "Project Vet Relief, make sure you get it on your calendar. If you want to volunteer, Call Rich at 305 942 9862.

I do have one question before I close, which cover is the only one recognized by The American Legion Rider's? Once again, Thank You for what you do, and I am proud to be the Chairman of such a great group!

"For the Cause, not the applause."

Americanism Commission

Kurt Gies, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org



"TO FOSTER AND PERPETUATE A 100 PERCENT AMERICANISM" ...Americanism is the gist of the American ideals of freedom, justice, individual rights and unfenced-in opportunities. It embraces all the freedoms we cherish and all the rights that are guaranteed to us. It is the very opposite of hatred, bigotry and intolerance. Americanism is the creed that has blazed the world-wide trail for

justice, fair play, decency, belief in God, private enterprise, universal education, and progress in all human endeavors. It puts a premium on the virtues of loyalty, patriotism, hard work and thrift.

Americanism is a philosophy that flows through the American Legion organization. It can be found in the Legion's support for a constitutional amendment to protect the US flag from desecration. It can be found through participation in patriotic holidays and observances. Americanism comes in the form of naturalization and citizenship programs at hundreds of posts. The American Legion stands as the nation's utmost authority on patriotic observances and traditions, including flag etiquette and

proper behavior during the paying of the National Anthem or recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

As the 2019-20 Department American is in chairman, it is my honor to be selected to lead the Department of Florida's Americanism mission; one of the four pillars of the American Legion (VA&R, National Security, Children & Youth, and Americanism).

What does Americanism mean to you? This is the question we should all be asking ourselves quite often. To me, Americanism means taking action to express my love for this country and its

Americanism - continued on page 5



Americanism - continued from page 4

ideals and the freedom and liberty it offers all of us. My wife served in the military for 25 years. It is why I volunteer to serve the American Legion. It clearly helps define my "Why?"

Through our numerous programs, we are

able to install a little bit of our Americanism onto the youth and fellow citizens of this great nation by getting involved. My charge to you is to embrace Americanism. Take charge within your Post and become excited about one of the several one or several of the programs the Legion supports. Once you do, the feeling of

satisfaction you receive when you see your child take a pride in this great nation will be amazing.

Oh and it doesn't hurt to chat USA, USA, USA every once in a while to get the excitement going.



Protect Our Children

Les Martin, Children & Youth

cy@legionmail.org



July was the start of the new Legion year and August starts the new school year here in Florida. It's now time to start looking at our programs for our kids and to make sure Child welfare and safety are

our main concerns.

It's up to the adults to make sure our children are surrounded by positive role models and that we know how to notice the signs of problems and work to try and correct them. Since 2010, the suicide rate for children between the ages of 10 and 18 has been on a slow incline. Teachers, childcare facilities, babysitters, youth counselors, Church leaders, and PARENTS & GUARDIANS must look for these signs. Some of the warning signs of suicide in children are changes in sleeping habits (such as too much or too little sleep, waking up at night or insomnia), withdrawing from family and

friends (social isolation), changes in eating habits (eating too much or not eating enough), and psychosomatic symptoms (like stomachaches, headaches, other unexplained aches and pains.) Changes in school performance is also an indication. Most kids will have some ups and down during their schooling. However, a continued decline in performance is an indicator to look out for. Lack of interest in school or refusing to go to school are also signs among others.

There are many publications available through the American Legion that we all should have, such as Gateway Drugs, Make Halloween a Fun and Safe Night, National Family Week, Play it Safe and Warning Signs. These are all available for download at legion.org/publications. The deadline for the Halloween Coloring Book Competition is October 18th, so order your coloring books soon and let's get the kids in your Posts involved. Let them have a little fun.

Last year, part of our state was devastated by Hurricane Michael. The previous year it was Hurricane Irma. Now that we are into the Hurricane season, we all should

also keep in mind that there are programs available to Legionnaires and their families that can help if you're affected by a disaster. Two of the programs are Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) and Project: Vet Relief. These programs are in place to help American Legion Families when need arises.

I will be making every effort to attend at least one of each District's District Meeting during this upcoming year, and look forward to meeting all the District and Post Children & Youth Chairmen. We will start working on our two Children and Youth events for the month of April/May 2020, (the annual picnic and the golf tournament) shortly after the National Convention in Indianapolis, at the end of August.

If you have any questions or need any assistance please call me at (941) 201-7293 or email me at cy@floridalegion.org. I am also available to attend any of your District or Posts Children and Youth events.

Find us on: **facebook**

facebook.com/floridalegion



Looking for Posts to Serve as Storm Shelters and Distribution Sites

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness
disasterprep@legionmail.org



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department Commander Rick Johnson for appointing me to serve the Department of Florida as the Disaster Preparedness Chairman for 2019-2020.

It has been nine months since Hurricane Michael impacted the panhandle. Its impact was felt by everyone including the Legion family in the panhandle. Destroying one post and doing major damage to other posts in the area. The people of the panhandle are still rebuilding. It will take weeks, months, years and in some cases they will never rebuilt. In the past I have tried my best to educate each and every one of you in the importance of being prepared for hurricanes.

As we enter hurricane season June 1 to November 30 we must prepare for the possibility of storms. I am trying to comprise a list of all posts that could be used as a shelter and posts that can act as distribution centers for supplies if and when the need arises. I'm asking all Zone, Area, and District Commanders to comprise a list of posts that could be used as shelters as well as distribution sites for supplies and the contacts in each post. We are also in the process of obtaining containers for storage. The posts that have room to store 48 to 52 ft trailers please let me know. The reason for the trailers is to collect supplies and store them until they are needed. These trailers will be distributed throughout the state to cut down on travel time and a faster response time.

I am also available to give classes to areas, districts and posts if requested. You my email me at gonepost1@aol.com or telephone 305-968-7979

Employment Award Due in December

Dusty Douglas, Employment
employment@legionmail.org



The Department of Florida did not receive any nominations for the 5 employment awards for 2019. The nominations for the Department Employment awards are due to the Department by December 19th. You can find the criteria for the different awards on the www.floridalegion.org website under the Programs tab. Please take the time to review the criteria for the awards to determine if you have a local business that should be recognized for their

support of Veterans and Older workers. Are you looking for a job or know of someone who is looking for a job? A good website to utilize while looking for a job in the state of Florida is FloridaVets.org. This is the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs website. When you click on "Employment" on the left side of the website you can find jobs openings, a link to LinkedIn, Job Placement and Training opportunities and Outreach Assistance to help your job search plus other employment opportunities you may be eligible for. This website also has valuable information for all Veterans and their families. Please post this website on your Post Bulletin Boards to help ensure your Post are aware of the website. For God and Country.

Celebrating Everyday Heroes

Daryl Bass, Law & Order
laworder@legionmail.org



Greeting Legion Family,

I am Daryl Bass, your Law & Order Chairman for the year 2019/2020. I am a United States Navy Veteran (Vietnam Era) and Retired Florida Law Enforcement Officer, an American Legion Past Post Commander (Post 80 St. Cloud), 6th District Commander 2014/2016, and Eastern Area Commander 2017/2018.

This is my thirtieth (30th) year as a member of this great Organization. I will need every Post and District Law & Order Chairman's help in obtaining our goals of recognizing our exceptional Law Enforcement Officers, Fire Fighters, and Paramedics.

Your Goal will be to find them and recognize them at your individual Post. These are the everyday hero's that save

lives on a daily basis and maybe get a pat on the back but seldom receive the recognition they so intimately deserve. This is not all that difficult of a task. Reach out to your local Emergency Services and find out who they are.

Then let me know so that we can choose and reward these exceptional individuals and their families at the next Convention. When I became 6th District Commander and began visiting various Posts I was very surprised to learn that many of our American Legion members were both former or retired LEOs, Fire Fighters and Paramedics. Please let me know who they are in your Post also.

Yes, the Department staff is compiling a list for me of the Post and District Law & Order Chairman's but if you would be so kind as to re-notify me with your E-Mail address and phone number I would appreciate it.

My E-Mail and cell number is:
bassman1278@hotmail.com
 Cell Number: (407) 738-3357

Lets make this Work!



Department Development & Revitalization

Jim Ramos, Post Development
postdevelopment@legionmail.org



Let's Get Going First of all I'm here to help you and your Post get members and training; how you may ask.

Revitalization is Training to help your Post Officers do a better job, although this could be a very valuable tool, alone it is not enough, an American Legion Post should interact within a community.

1. The primary purpose is to indicate whether a post is:
 - b. Fulfilling a useful function,
 - c. Whether it is an organization attracting veterans, and
 - d. Whether it is truly a community asset.
2. Honestly evaluate the Post and Community.

Development Training is how to do your job to at the Post to better service the Post, community and our Veterans.

1. The American Legion online Basic

- Training course is free to all members of the Legionaries.
2. Go to The Florida Legion College more training.
 3. District training in your District and get the training.
 4. Get and read the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies it will help you in your leadership position (better do your job at the Post).

If I can help, please email or call me and remember I'm here to assist you in any way I can.

Public Relations Bulletin

Tom Gora, Public Relations
publicrelations@legionmail.org



Hot off the presses, The American Legion Membership Impact Report for June 2019!

How many times are you asked by potential members, "Just what does The American

Legion do?"

Here is a link to some great current data

that will help you answer those questions and recruit! The American Legion publishes this information on a MONTHLY basis to help us with public relations, USE IT!

It's what The American Legion does for veterans and your local communities that sells them on membership!

Here is the link to these reports. <https://www.legion.org/membership/impact>

SAL New Year

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org

This past year the Detachment of Florida posted another all-time high in membership. The SAL Detachment of Florida continues to do outstanding work with and for the veterans and their communities. I look forward to working with the Detachment this year. As a dual member I encourage everyone eligible to join the Sons. I would ask that all the District SAL Advisers contact me so we may keep in touch throughout the year. Remember to have fun this year.

ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports Events

Loretta Young, ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports
jrotc@legionmail.org



I would first like to thank Cmdr. Rick Johnson for appointing me to once again serve the Dept. of Florida as the ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports Chair. Schools are all on summer break and will not return until next month therefore activities are also on break but it's a time for our Chairmen to plan for this coming year.

I would like to give some highlights and accomplishments of the past year. Congratulations to the 12th District on holding the First Annual American Legion 2019 Invitational 3-Position Sporter Area Match held at Sebastian River H.S. on 30 March. This event was coordinated by the District Chairman, Wayne Newland and supported by the 12th District Family. It was well attended and Sebastian River as the host provided the targets. The scoring was conducted through the Orion System which afforded immediate results which was posted on-line. At the completion of the event, there were individual and team trophies and medals presented to the winners. I would like to thank Wayne for

all his hard work and would hope that this event will be a standard in the 12th District for years to come.

I would also like to give thanks to the 13th District for their continued diligence in coordinating the Army State Marksmanship Meet at Island Coast H.S. This event held by the Army 6th Brigade has evolved into a two day event with Post 90 Chairman, Don Teasley holding a local area event with the schools participating in a 3-Position Sporter Event with Trophies with the American Legion logo given to the top individual and team winners along with medals and ribbons. This District has set the bar high

ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports - continued on page 8



ROTC/JROTC/Shooting Sports - continued from page 7

as an example for the rest of the State of Florida to follow and many thanks to the Legion Family in the West Coast for your lead.

For those of you who missed the Department Convention and did not get to meet our Cadet of the Year First Place Winner, Michaela Traitz, she was really a hit with the Legion Family. Many members had the opportunity to meet her after the presentation for the First Place Plaque and a \$2,500 Scholarship check as she graciously shared conversation with all who stopped to talk to her. Michaela was a Cadet from Western H.S. AJROTC Program and I would like to thank the 9th District Chairman, Joe Motes for an outstanding job of getting the instructors to submit applications for the program. His performance proves that you must contact the schools directly with an email and application attachment and

follow up with them. Continued diligence resulted in almost a 50% return. Let this be an example for the rest of the District Chairmen to follow.

Our Legion National Shoulder to Shoulder JSSP Marksmanship Meet will be held at the USA Olympic Training Facility in Colorado Springs the last week of July. Florida has 2 State Winners who will be competing in the Finals. The Sporter Winner is Sara Maggard from Summerlin Academy in Bartow and the Precision Winner is Trinity Gomez from Sarasota Military Academy in Odessa. The top 15 winners in the 2nd Round Postal will be competing for the First Place Winner and a \$5,000 Scholarship and a trip to the National Convention in Indianapolis in August. As the Florida State Winners they are also invited to attend our Fall Conference to receive their Plaque and a \$500 Scholarship Check. I'm looking forward to another year of working

with our youth and our Legion Programs. Many thanks to all who put so much volunteer work and effort into helping our communities.



Cadet of the Year, Michaela Traitz, Western AJROTC

2019 General Scholarship Winners

Shirley Douglas, Scholarships
scholarships@legionmail.org



The Department of Florida received 100 General Scholarship applications this year. The Winner of the Department's 1st prize of a \$2,500 scholarship is Stuart Jacob Case. Stuart is eligible for the scholarship because his Grandfather James Tipps served in the Army during the Vietnam War. Stuart has a 4.0 GPA and ranks 1st in his class of 581 students at Palm Harbor University High School. He attended Boys State and is an Eagle Scout. He is very active in his school and local community. Stuart plans to pursue a degree in Microbiology with a focus on pre-med. His goal is to become a Dermatologist.

The 2nd place winner of the \$1500 Scholarship award which is sponsored by the County Veteran's Service Officer

Association is Angeline Marie Arnaud. Angeline is eligible for the scholarship because her Grandfather David Arnaud served in the Navy during the Vietnam War. She has a 4.0 GPA and is ranked 2nd in her class at Lennard High School. Angeline founded an Anti-Bullying campaign called Key to Kindness. her campaign made her classmates and other students more aware of the impact of bullying and provided preventive measures to drastically reduce bullying at her school. Angelina plans to pursue a degree in Business Administration and Film Production.

Other Winners:
 3rd place \$1000 scholarship winner - Robert Duckworth II from William R. Boone High School

4th - 7th place \$500 scholarship winners- Paris King from Leon High School, N'Jhari Jackson from Carrollwood Day Scholl, Zachary Frankson from Lake Worth Community High School and Tara Jeffcoat from Vanguard High School





OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF:



PROJECT: VETRELIEF

UPCOMING EVENTS MARK YOUR CALENDARS

All of our financial support comes from the generosity of individuals and corporations who believe in what we do. Join us at one of our next events, or hold your own fundraiser. Please contact 407-295-2631 or jcooper@floridalegion.org for more information.

SEPT 23

6th Annual Golf Tournament
Bella Collina, FL

OCT 19

Coral Head Blues Fest
Marathon, FL

NOV 2

Coral Head Music Fest
Pinellas Park, FL

NOV 16

Post 35 Golf Tournament
Mount Dora, FL



SUPPORT CASES JULY 2018 - JUNE 2019

146

families helped

-\$137,120.92-

amount distributed

*Numbers reflect PVR Cases ONLY

CONGRATULATIONS COMMANDER!

Congratulations to William “Rick” Johnson on becoming the 2019-2020 Department Commander for The American Legion, Department of Florida!

We are so thrilled to learn that he has chosen PROJECT: VetRelief as one of his charities for his Commander’s Project. Here’s how the Commander has chosen for the donations to be processed:

Any donation marked as “Commander’s Charity” will be divided equally between his two charities: PROJECT: VetRelief and Children’s Organ Transplant Association (COTA). If you would like your donation to go towards a specific charity, please note that on the check. For example, write “Commander’s Charity - PROJECT: VetRelief” in the memo line. **All checks should be made payable to the American Legion.**

Commander Johnson has set a goal to raise \$75,000 during his one-year term. Legion Posts are asked to make a one-time donation or hold fundraising event(s) to help him reach his goal. If you are planning an event for PROJECT: VetRelief, we can help promote it. Contact Jennifer Cooper by sending an email to jcooper@floridalegion.org with all of the details!



Dept. Commander (2019-2020)
William “Rick” Johnson

MAKING A DIFFERENCE - ONE VETERAN AT A TIME

Michael Beaven, alongside the entrusted DeLand Police Department Detective, visited the 82 year old veteran who was scammed of over \$50,000. Donations from all over the country were collected on his behalf through PROJECT: VetRelief and a check for \$18,300 was given to him.

We are still collecting donations. In fact, the Legion Family from Post 402 all pitched in and raised \$2,000! If you’d like to help, please donate through the link below or mail in by check. All donations are going directly to him!

DONATION LINK: <https://www.projectvetrelief.org/delandveteran/>



2019 CONVENTION RECAP

We hope you were able to stop by and see us at some point during the Florida Legion Annual Convention this past June. We were excited to see all our VetRelief Advocates and share the accomplishments that they helped us achieve!

Check out a few of our highlights from the event:

- Collected \$39,823 in Legion Family donations
- 48 VetRelief Advocates attended a PVR Training
- Over 15 Advocates came to our Exclusive Networking Event for a round table discussion
- The Board of Directors approved for the **Suicide Prevention Committee** to move forward with their plan of action. Details will be revealed in the coming months on their efforts.

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.

* For promotional items, such as brochures or fliers, contact Jennifer Cooper by sending an email to jcooper@floridalegion.org or call 407-295-2631



Kicking off the New Year - Time for Action

Chuck Weber, Scouting

scouting@legionmail.org



Fellow Legionnaires and Scouters,

I am pleased to be renewed as your Department Scouting Chair for the new Legion year. I hope to share with you my Scouting experience and to assist you in both establishing and maintaining Scouting units in your Posts.

Many who are reading this article will be first-time Post commanders or Scouting chairs. You will be new to Scouting and will have many questions and ideas. I hope to be your sounding board for them. I will

focus my energies toward you in future articles.

Whether your Post already has, or wants to start, a Scouting unit now is the time for action. Each of our Posts exists in one of nine Scout Councils in our State. These Councils kick-off their annual recruitment drives for new Scouts and new Units in August of each year. You can find your local BSA Council by a simple online search.

When you contact your Council for assistance you will be placed in contact with a professional, full-time Scout representative, typically called a District Executive. If your Post already has a Scouting unit, the Committee Chairperson will know your DE. These "DE"s are specifically tasked with helping the Posts establish and maintain their Scout units. Please be sure to make this important first

contact, as they will simplify the process for your Post to deliver your Scouting programs.

You will find many resources and information at the Department website under the Scouting tab. These items will be updated and revised with new information as it develops. There have been many changes in Scouting recently and we will devote future articles addressing each of them.

Remember that one of the Pillars of the American Legion is dedicated to our Children and Youth. Scouting is an important way to meet that commitment.

Please feel free to contact me at Scouting@legionmail.org.

Special Events for the Coming Year

Fred Matthews, Special Events

specialevents@legionmail.org



The Special Events is designed by the Department Commander to be a guidepost and assist in publicizing the good works being done by the Department, Posts, and Districts under the American Legion Banner in Florida. We are encouraging many of you to keep doing the things you do each year

for Active Duty personnel, Veterans, their families, and our communities. But we need to let everyone know about it. So this legion year consider the following:
 1) Make sure Veteran's Day is an Open House Event after your local parade. Take pictures of your event, Post it on Social Media. Get the local media to attend your Post and let the community know more about who you are and what your organization represents.
 2) Plan to make a presentation to your local Town Council, City Council or County Commission, commending them on the support they have given to Veterans in your area. Get this publicized and Posted on your Social Media and Department Media pages and let the local media know

you're doing it.
 3) Make sure your Post and District Activities are Posted on the Department Calendar for the coming year. Planning for the year's events should already be taking place at the Post level. Notify this office at specialevents@legionmail.org of your Post and District events and we will help you get the word out.
 4) Plan on sending a representative to the Veteran Day in the Florida State Capitol next year. The date will be announced later. It is another great opportunity to hobnob with the elected officials that make the laws that we as veterans must live by. It's also the time we talk to the Legislature about our priorities for Veterans in Florida.

Helping, Recruiting, and Retaining Women

Deb Wheeler, Women's Veteran Chair

womenveterans@legionmail.org



It is a pleasure to return to the position Women's Veteran Chair that I held under Commander Ramos. A lot of things have changed in the last several years and for me personally as well. In the last six months I have been contacted

by several homeless female veterans with children, other female veterans in need of assistance, some in their early 30s. As the Service Officer at my Post 275, my post has been wonderful in providing financial support to those men and women in need. In my 24 years as a member in this great organization this is a record number of women helped. They are beginning to feel comfortable to come to our Legion Posts for direction, help, etc.

On the District and Post level I am strongly encouraging to have a person available to

speak to our sisters in need. Most do not feel comfortable speaking to a male, no offense guys, they would like to talk to a female. I am available to help in the harder cases and give guidance as necessary.

We have a lot of new female District Commanders, Post Commanders, and Officers throughout the State of Florida! The Department and I need your help as legionnaires to help, recruit and retain these women, many that can contribute greatly to the American Legion.



*VA&R August Address***Alan Cohen, VA&R**var@legionmail.org

Greetings, fellow Legionnaires.

With the Department Convention barely behind us we're off to a new Legion year and wish our newly elected Department Commander as well as other officers every success.

With our partners, the Florida Dept of Veterans Affairs, we once again conducted

a Post Service Officer School and graduated 88 new Post Service Officers. Congratulations to each of them in advance for the valuable contributions they'll make to our brother and sister veterans.

Our dedicated VAVS hospital reps continue providing care and assistance to those of the Veteran community who have faced health issues and found better ways to do what they do every day including helping the families of hospitalized vets. We remain aware and grateful for the thousands of hours these dedicated reps give so freely. With that said I'm proud to announce that we've added new Deputy Reps at both the Lake Nona and Bay Pines VA hospitals as well as a new Rep at the Miami VA hospital.

I'd like to once again encourage every Post to reach out to our VA Entitlements Chairman who conducts a very well received and fun seminar covering a range of Veteran-related issues of interest to the entire Legion family. You should be able to see his article here in the Legion Link and I will add that he is available to conduct these seminars at Legion Posts throughout the state. Contact him or me for details.

In closing I'd just like to say that as much as we continue to grow in 2019, I personally welcome the opportunity to continue working with all the people I do. Nobody does it better and it's an honor to serve with you.

*Proper Tax Exemptions***Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements**veteransbenefits@legionmail.org

Traveling the state, I have been hearing that the biggest problem is that; veterans are just not aware of or understand benefits that they may be entitled to. Some of those benefits are:

Basic Property Tax Exemptions

Eligible resident veterans with a VA certified service-connected disability of 10 percent or greater shall be entitled to a \$5,000 deduction on the assessment of their home for tax exemption purposes. The veteran must establish this exemption with the county tax official in the county in which he or she resides by providing documentation of the disability. The remarried surviving spouse of a disabled ex-service member, who on the date of the disabled ex-service member's death had been married to the ex-service member for at least five years, is also entitled to exemption. (FS 196.24)

Additional Property Tax Exemptions

Any real estate owned and used as a homestead by a veteran, who was

honorably discharged and has been certified as having a service-connected, permanent and total disability, is exempt from taxation if the veteran is a permanent resident of Florida and has legal title to the property on Jan. 1 of the tax year for which exemption is being claimed. (FS 196.081(1))

Any real estate owned and used as a homestead by the surviving spouse of an Armed Forces member who died from service-connected causes while on active duty is exempt from taxation if the member was permanent resident of Florida on Jan. 1 of the year in which the member died. (FS 196.081(4)(a))

If, upon the death of the veteran, the spouse holds the legal or beneficial title to the homestead and permanently resides there, the exemption from taxation carries over to the benefit of the veterans spouse until such time as he or she remarries, sells, or otherwise disposes of the property. If the spouse sells the property, an exemption not to exceed the amount granted from the most recent ad valorem tax roll may be transferred to the residence if it is used as the primary residence and the spouse does not remarry. (FS 196.081(3))

Any partially disabled veteran who is age 65 or older, any portion of whose disability was combat-related, and who was honorably discharged, may be eligible for

discount from the amount of ad valorem tax on the homestead commensurate with the percentage on the veterans permanent service-connected disability. Eligible veterans should apply for this benefit at the county property appraiser's office. (FS 196.082)

Any real estate used and owned as a homestead by any quadriplegic is exempt from taxation. Veterans who are paraplegic, hemiplegic, or permanently and totally disabled who must use a wheelchair for mobility, or are legally blind, may be exempt from real estate taxation. Check with your local property appraiser to determine if gross annual household income qualifies. The veteran must be a resident of Florida. (FS 196.101)

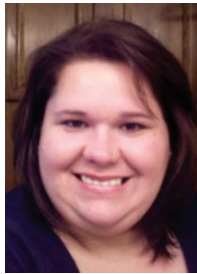
Service members entitled to homestead exemption in the state, and who are unable to file in person by reason of such service, may file through next of kin or a duty authorized representative. (FS 196.071)

For more information on State benefits, I recommend getting "Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide 2019". The information I wrote is from this guide. You can order the guide at www.FloridaVets.org.

Department Online Store

Carrie Kolze, Creative Services Manager

ckolze@floridalegion.org



Greetings!

As your creative services manager, I've had the opportunity to work with many of you in some capacity or another. It is truly a pleasure getting to know you all, and an honor to work so

closely with our veterans.

Here are a few things we'd like to update you on:

Online Store

Just prior to Department Convention, some of you may have noticed our online store at floridalegionstore.org was down. We apologize for this inconvenience. The provider we were working with discontinued the service, without notice.

However, we are pleased to announce that we have created a new store and are back up and running. Please visit floridalegionstore.org for all your patriotic, military branch, war era, and Legion Family merchandise. We will also be adding new products and restocking soon. If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to see something specific in our store, please email to emblemsales@floridalegion.org.

Commander's Polos

The 2019-2020 Commander's Polos are now available to order. You can order them through our online store or complete the mail-order form included with this month's Legion Link. Shirts are available in men's pocket or women's styles. The shirts are \$28.00 each with up to 2 lines of free embroidery. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery, we must meet a minimum before placing orders and it takes time to have them embroidered. Often times, delivery is much sooner.

Florida History Book

Your Department staff has worked tirelessly the last few months researching the history of the Department of Florida, scavenging photos and compiling a book

of full of YOUR rich history over the last 100 years. A limited number of books are available, in both softcover and hardcover. They can also be purchased through our online store. Get your copy before they're gone!

Florida Directory Book

Last year we partnered with PCI to bring you a comprehensive member directory. The participation in this project was tremendous. We are pleased to announce that these books have been completed and are now in the delivery process. We will have a small quantity available through our online store for purchase soon.

Website

Our new membership year brings lots of changes. We are working hard to update and prepare new materials for the 2019-2020 membership year. Our website serves as our primary and first resource for anyone looking for information. If you are an officer, please send us a monthly report for your section of the website. Program chairs should work with Bekki Tibbs, programs director, to make sure that they're sections are up to date. Area and District commanders, please send us your events for the Department Calendar. If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding our website, please email webmaster@floridalegion.org.

Legion Link

The Legion Link is our monthly newsletter, providing information from The American Legion, Department of Florida leadership to engage and inform members, veterans and other interested persons, of important Department objectives, events, benefits and official Department and National business.

We ask that all Officers, Area and District Commanders, and Program Chairs send us engaging and informative articles on a monthly basis. This is the perfect platform to share your messaging and involve others. Please see the "Legion Link Publishing Guidelines" in this edition.

All submissions, questions and comments regarding the Legion Link should be sent to legionlink@floridalegion.org.

AUGUST 2019	
1	Air Force Day
1	Samsung Scholarship Apps Due
1	Baseball Champion Due to Natnl.
2	Operation Desert Shield (1990)
3	District 13 Installation - Post 110
4	Coast Guard Day
5	District 8 Installation - Post 2
6-11	Baseball Regional Tournament ★ ☆
7	District 15 Installation - Post 111/167
7	Purple Heart Day
8	District 13 Installation - Post 130
8-10	DSO School
8-10	National Membership Workshop ★
8	District 7 Installation - Post 95
10	U.S. Dept of Defense Birthday
14	District 13 Installation - Post 123
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15-20	Baseball World Series ★
15	District 7 Installation - Post 201
16	National Airborne Day
17	District 13 Installation - Post 274
18-22	14th Annual Legacy Run ★
19	Aviation Day
21	Senior Citizen Day
23-29	National Convention ★
26	Women's Equality Day
29	Marine Corps Reserve Birthday

☆ - Commander Dianne Boland's Attendance Tentative.

★ - National Event

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.

Text Alerts

Last year we began sending Text Alerts, mostly through out our Department Conventions and Fall Conferences. These alerts are a great way to "Stay in the Know". You'll be the first to find out about any last-minute changes, special events, flash sales, etc.

To sign up for notifications during Fall Conference, please text **FLCONF** to **6622004303**.



July 25, 2019 50% Target Report (Currently 27.57%)		
4	Cherie Korn	36.47
6	Robert Suelter	35.38
11	Johnny Castro	31.90%
9	Arthur Barber	30.98%
16	Randall McNabb	30.14%
1	Lamar Carroll	30.04%
17	Hank Mangels	29.44%
7	Rick Orzechowski	28.78%
12	Chris Hamrick	27.69%
5	Troy Horsley	27.57%
8	Skip Felicita	27.42%
15	Bruce Carl	26.71%
13	Brian Gehling	25.34%
14	Gary Decker	24.48%
3	Stuart Scott	22.88%
2	Roger Hewitt	18.54%
Eastern	Timoth Tierney	32.07%
Southern	Paul Bosco	29.41%
Northern	Marie Conti	29.39%
Central	Jay Allen	29.07%
Western	John Edens	27.96%
Southwestern	Jerry Faught	26.28%
Post 400		16.61%
Post 208		22.33%



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



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



Emergency and Accident

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



Insurance Coverage

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



No Cost Protection

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

Cancer Care Insurance Plan

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

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

MEMBERSHIP GOAL
50% 9/4/2019

www.thelit.com



LEGION LINK PUBLISHING GUIDELINES



ABOUT THE LEGION LINK

The Legion Link is a monthly newsletter, providing information from The American Legion, Department of Florida leadership to engage and inform members, veterans and other interested persons, of important Department objectives, events, benefits and official Department and National business.

The Legion Link publishes on the first working day of each month, except for July. There is no Legion Link in July.

WHO CAN CONTRIBUTE?

Department Officers, Area and District Commanders, Chairs, and Staff may contribute to the Legion Link. Submissions from National, Posts, Legionnaires, Legion Family and any other individuals, may submit an article for consideration, however these articles must be relevant and considered valuable to our readers, and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. We reserve the right to refuse any article that we do not deem appropriate or relevant to our readers.

ARTICLE: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Content must be **engaging, informative**, and/or **relevant** to The American Legion and the Department of Florida.
- Articles may be submitted using our [online submission form](#), contained **within an email**, or attached to an email in Microsoft Word format (**.doc or .docx**) or Rich Text Format (**.rtf**). Emails should be sent to legionlink@floridalegion.org.
- If a piece has already been published elsewhere, please resubmit it as a **synopsis** or a **summary** of the original document.
- Be sure to **credit any other authors and/or publishers**, including references. Sources should be cited in the article.
- The working language of the newsletter is **English**.
- Although there is no word limit, articles are generally **no longer than 1200 words**. Longer articles will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- The editorial board reserves the **right to edit work** that has been accepted for publication. The author's message will not be changed, changes will include grammatical corrections, changes of inaccurate data, omission of unacceptable or irrelevant information.
- The **submission deadline is the 15th day of each month**, for publication on the 1st of the following month. Any submissions received after the 15th day of the month, will be held for the next publication. **Deadlines are firm**, unless prior permission has been granted. There is no Legion Link in July.

PHOTO: SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Photos/Images should be submitted in high resolution format, in one of the following file types: **.jpg, .jpeg, .png, .gif, .tiff, .pdf**.
- Photos/Images must be **sent separately and not embedded** with the article. They may be sent using our online submission tool, attached to an email, or emailed link from your personal Gmail or Dropbox account. DVD/CD and flash drives are also acceptable, if received prior to the deadline.
- **All professional photos should be given proper accreditation**. Please cite the photographer's name and affiliation.
- Please follow these guidelines when **taking photos of children**:
 - You must receive consent from the parent, guardian or caregiver of any child or young person up the age of 18, especially if they are clearly recognizable in an image.
 - Be sensitive when taking photos of children with disabilities.
 - Be inclusive. Include images of people from all different ethnic communities, backgrounds, sex and socio-economic status.
 - **Exercise caution at all times** to make sure that only images of children in suitable attire are taken.



COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2019-2020



Did you know you can order online? Just go to www.floridalegionstore.org

Name: _____ Post: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

DELIVERY METHOD

Pick Up at HQ Orlando Pickup at Dept Convention* Delivery**

*Must order by May 15, 2019 for pickup at Dept Convention. **Additional Shipping fee is required for delivery, see chart below.
Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery. You will be notified prior to shipment.

Shipping Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

SHIRT OPTIONS

Style	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty		
Men's W/POCKET	XS		S		M		L		XL		2XL		3XL		4XL	
Ladies' NO POCKET	XS		S		M		L		XL		2XL		3XL		4XL	

TOTAL

Shirts are **\$28 each**, price includes personalization. Please see next page for personalization options. If tax exempt, please include copy of exemption form.

DELIVERY FEES**

(Qty: 1) - \$7.95 (Qty: 4-7) - \$15.95 (Qty: 15-17) - \$33.95
 (Qty: 2) - \$8.95 (Qty: 8-10) - \$21.95 (Qty: 18+) - \$39.95
 (Qty: 3) - \$9.95 (Qty: 11-14) - \$24.95

Subtotal	\$
Tax (6.5%)	\$
Shipping	\$
Grand Total	\$

PAYMENT

Please return form and payment to Department Headquarters:

The American Legion, Dept of FL; Attn: Emblem Sales, PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32810

Cash Check # _____ Credit Card

Card Type: Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Card Holder Name: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____ Billing Zip Code: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM

2019-2020

PERSONALIZATION (Line 1 example: First Name Last Name. Line 2 example: Post # Title)

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

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Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

By signing below, I agree that I have verified the information provided as correct and free of errors. I acknowledge that The American Legion, Department of Florida is NOT responsible for incorrect information provided.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Join Us On

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

at the

**Saturday
September 21, 2019
10am - 3pm**

GATHERING IN THE PINES EVENT

Chapel of the High-Speed Pass - 6112 POW-MIA Memorial Pkwy, Jacksonville, FL 32221

Join us on National POW/MIA Recognition Day under the pines with many great veteran organizations.

Events of the day will include:

POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony

10 AM

POW/MIA Movies

Stolen Freedom & Missing Presumed Dead

shown throughout the day in the
Chapel Conference Room starting at 11:30AM



 **Car and Bike Show**

 **Food Trucks**

 **Live Entertainment**

 **Silent Auction**

 **Kid's Area**

Please bring your lawn chairs and spend the day!

**THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

All proceeds from this event to benefit the

The National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum

Hosted By

VETERAN COUNCILS OF

Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties