



THE LEGION LINK

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NOVEMBER 2019

COMMANDER WILLIAM "RICK" JOHNSON

VOLUME 28 ISSUE IV

IN THIS EDITION

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From your Department Commander Rick Johnson

Rick Johnson, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



So Much to Look Forward to This Season

Hello family members, I hope everyone had a great and safe Halloween. I attended quite a few events around the state and at the National level.

I want every member out there from the Department of Florida to know that we, the elected officers of this state work for you and carry your desires forward and follow your direction. As Commander I will keep doing that. I promise you that Florida's voice will be heard, and we will continue to move forward and make Florida the best.

Membership: quite a few districts are doing a great job out there with the training and DMS but we have a few that has no training planned or going on. The membership team is just a call or e-mail away to be used and set up training in your districts. A lot of changes have been put into place that the posts are not aware of and it's our job to ensure that everyone has the latest information as it becomes available.

When this article comes out, we will be at

the Fall Conference and there will be a lot of different classes and activities planned for this year. Nov 2nd Gambler and I will be getting our heads shaved on stage for COTA kids. Thanks for stepping up for such a great cause. Some other news, the National Riders made a big change in the chairman as our own Bob from Florida was not reappointed as the chairman. He and his wife have given up time for years to ensure that the Legacy Scholarship was well taken care of and that the National Ride was the premier event all year. It's a shame that this happened but we will move forward and do what we do best.

November 11th is one of our biggest days for the year. Get your post involved in the community and hopefully you have community events planned for that day to let your community know who we are and what we do. Working together will make us a stronger organization for the future.

Thanksgiving is another great day to show the community why we are here. I know a lot of post have many great events planned for that day as I will be at Post 252 to help prepare and feed our local veterans from Bay Pines and surrounding communities. This is such a great event.

Continued on Page 2



Commander - Continued from page 1

Christmas is around the corner, so here is my wish list, I wish that everyone has fun and enjoys this great organization that we

call the American Legion. Together we are one loud voice and we will continue to be that with everyone's help.

Thanks again for all you do and continue to do and have a safe Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day.

Thanks & Upcoming Events

Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



October has been a busy month, the Districts have been busy with a number of picnics and roast's to give our members a break before the busy season, and to thank them for their hard work.

A special thank you to American Legion Post 154, in Marathon Key, for hosting a training session for the Keys. Some of you complain about going to Orlando

for training, if you live in Key West, it is 125 miles drive and the fastest speed you can legally drive is 55 miles per hour, just to get out of the keys. So bringing training to the Keys, where members want to be trained, is a good thing, thank you Post 154 for hosting, and all the Keys Posts for attending.

I would like to thank the officers of Zone 1. Which consist of Eastern and Southern Areas, Districts, 6th, 12th, 9th, 11th and 14th. As of October 10th, 2019, Zone 1 is 799 members up from last year. Well done. District Commanders, please remember, you need 100% membership by March 31st to win the "Race to The Top". 12th District knows how this is done, let us achieve this again.

Fall Conference is coming up. I hope you go to the various training classes, especially the new ones like 'Protection from Internal Fraud', 'IRS 990 Rules / Filing Taxes Class', 'Financial Tips to Help the Post', 'District Commanders & Vices Round Table'. If you like them, please let the Department Staff know. If there is a class you would like to see, please let them know as well.

Thanksgiving and Christmas is just around the corner, please remember our troops still stationed overseas. But let us not forget those Brothers and Sisters who are here at home, with no one there to celebrate with. And again, thank you, for what you are doing for our Veterans.

Keep Up the Hard Work

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



Greetings my fellow comrades. This month is a very good month. The celebration of Veterans Day, The Great American Teach In, Community Awareness, and The Department Fall Conference.

Veteran's Day is a time for all Americans to reflect on the sacrifice that our Brothers and Sisters made in order for us to be free in our country. It would be nice if each post celebrated this day and invited the community to join.

Congratulations to districts 15, 8, and 16 for making the October membership goal for October 12, 2019. Thank you and congratulations to 7th districts post (23, 34, 04, 08 and 15) 8th district post (413, 317, 030, 011, 074, 002, 320, 069, 309, 266) 13th district (192, 404.) 15th district (147, 099, 005, 111, 278, 186, 026, 148, 108, 246) and 16th district (252, 104, 238, 275, 046.

Some of you are already over 65%. Keep up the good work. The goal for The Central Area and Southwestern Area post is to reach 100% by December 31, 2019 by 12 midnight. If your post gets 100% between 11PM and 12 midnight, please call your district commander and leave a message on his/her phone. Due to the holidays they will be processed on January 2, 2020. If your post reaches the goal they will receive

\$100.00 dollars. You can do it. I have faith in you.

I wish each of you and your families a Blessed Thanksgiving and wonderful Veterans day.

Special thanks to The Southwestern Commander and 8th District Commander on assisting me with visitations to posts 74, 25, 69 156, 24, and 325. It was very awarding to spend quality time with each commander. To the posts, thank you for your beautiful hospitality and sharing the things that you are doing in membership and programs.

LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT BEING THE BEST. LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT HELPING AND ASSISTING OTHERS TO BE BETTER."



Great Time to be a Vet

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



I've been around for quite a while, not as long as some in our great organization, but one thing is for sure, it is a great time to be a Military veteran! One reason is recent changes in policy concerning BX/

PX privileges. A couple years ago policy was changed to allow all honorably discharged Veterans to shop online at the Base Exchanges. They even went as far as offering the in-store credit cards. I thought this was great! As if that wasn't enough, new policy about to go into effect will allow all honorably discharged Veterans

with ANY service-connected disability, Purple Heart recipient's and ex POW's the use of all MWR facilities which include BX/ PX, commissary and even on base lodging. In other words, your 10% disability will allow you to enter the base and enjoy the benefits that were only reserved for retirees' and 100% disabled. I'm not sure how much influence the American Legion had on this decision, but I am sure we had something to do with it. This is just another great selling point when encouraging Veterans and their families to join our great organization. In fact, there are so many new and exciting changes that I encourage you to write them down, so you'll remember them all!

My first 3 months as 3rd Vice are now in the books and I can't tell you just how much I'm enjoying this job! Travelling around the State and experiencing the diversity of the

Posts and people in the Dept. of Florida has really opened my eyes to just how hard people are working to achieve our goals. From the "CURLS for COTA" fundraising activities to the many programs and local charities it seems no one has even stopped to take a breath! On a recent stop in Jacksonville I was blown away by a Riders Chapter that were raising money for a family that was recently burned out of their home. This is what we do folks. Another Post that takes membership seriously is sending a contingent of volunteers and setting up booths at a Veteran family fun day event and the big airshow featuring the USAF "Thunderbirds". These are great ways to get the word out on how great it is to be a Military Veteran and a member of our great organization. Keep up the good work and always have fun doing it!

Protect the Best Care Anywhere

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



In 2017, The American Legion contracted with Phillip Longman and Susanne Gordon to evaluate VA health care and determine if it remains a system worth saving. The report showed VA

performs as well as, or better than, other health-care providers on quality measures like patient safety, patient satisfaction, care coordination and innovative medical practices.

The VA operates the largest federally funded, integrated health-care delivery

system in the United States. It serves 9 million veterans, employs nearly 400,000 people, and is one of the largest employers of veterans in the United States, with one-third of its workforce having served in uniform.

In 2019, The American Legion System Worth Saving Task Force visited 18 medical facilities to identify best practices and challenges and to offer recommendations to improve the delivery of health care as VA hospitals and community-based outpatient clinics (VBOC). Those visits revealed that VA facilities continue experiencing growth in veteran populations, need improved physical and information technology infrastructure and struggle with shortages of physicians and nurses.

The American Legion supports legislation

that capitalizes on VA's strengths and core competencies while ensuring that veterans continue to have access to the best care.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

- Attend The American Legion's town hall meetings that are kickoff events for each System Worth Saving site visit. These meetings offer elected leaders the opportunity to hear directly from veterans about their VA health-care experiences.
- Do not sponsor or support legislation that authorizes VA to centralize operations successfully managed by local VA medical facilities.
- Enhance VA's ability to offer telehealth services and telemedicine to rural communities.



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Celebrate 100 Years of Florida Legion history

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floridalegionstore.org



Northern Area News

Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander

northernarea@legionmail.org



Congratulations to all Posts that have met or exceeded their 65% goal! Our Next Membership goal is 75% on 04 Dec 2019. Keep up the good work!!

Veterans Day is 11 Nov. Please remember to honor our Veterans. Is your Post having a Veterans Day event? Is your community having a Veterans Day Parade? This is a day for The American Legion to really shine. Veterans in the Classroom is a Great Way To teach the children about Americanism and History. Plus, being around the children is very invigorating for everyone.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Has your Post considered hosting homeless

Veterans for Thanksgiving Dinner? or Veterans from the local Nursing Homes? Now is the time to start planning for a Children's Christmas Party.

It's also time to prepare for Florida Legion College, which will be held in Orlando, 23-25 January 2020. Point of contact for the Florida Legion College is Tom Gora at deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org.

News from the Southern Area

Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander

southernarea@legionmail.org



Congressman Ted Deutch awarded the Legion of Merit at American Legion Post 222 in Oakland Park to our Southern area Chaplain, Comrade Steven Newman on October 10th. This award is issued for

exceptional meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services and achievements, it is the highest award given by Congress. There were local city officials, with his mother, wife, family, legionaries and friend in attendance.

We have lost another Comrade and he has reported to the Commander of us all. Joseph Thibault Passed September 14 2019 and was interred October 11. Joe was a past Post 141 Cdr., Past District 11 Cdr., Southern Area Commander, and Past Department Commander Ken Powell's Aid

de Camp. Joe was laid to rest in the South Florida National Cemetery in Lake Worth Fl.

I hope to see a lot of new faces at the Fall Conference this November 1st thru November 3rd. I also hope that posts in the Southern Area will send their Commanders, Adjutants, and other officers to the conference. A lot can be learned from what they may have read in their manuals. Just talking to other Post Commanders, collecting ideas, and trying to put those together from what they have learned can make your post excel. The same can also aid other officers at your post. If your post has the funds don't be greedy, pay for the training or transportation.

October 9th our posts membership should have been at 55%. November 14th we should be at 65%. A lot of you have a lot of work to do to reach that goal. To those of you who reached that goal and surpassed that goal, I want to say great Job. Thank you and keep up the good work.

November 11th is Veterans Day. Let's get those creative juices going. Have a parade

or get your post into the parade and carry your colors. Have a party at the post. Be proud of who you are. There is a lot of time to plan and get that parade application in. You have a three day weekend make the best of it. If you got a plan and you second vice Commander has it all set up let me know.



Congressman Ted Deutch and Chaplain Steven Newman

Commemorative Coin Program

Clarence Hill, PDC

pdchill@legionmail.org

Sales of the American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin from the U. S. Mint will end December 31, 2019. Sales to date have been relatively weak. Proceeds from the coin sales will be paid to The American Legion to support its

programs for veterans, members of the Armed Forces and other programs. Coins available are a five-dollar gold coin, a silver dollar coin and a silver half-dollar coin. They are also available as a three-coin set. To order online, visit catalog.usmint.gov; to order by phone, call 1-800-872-6468 (USA-MINT) (8 a.m. to midnight seven days a week); to order by TTY, 1-888-321-6468 (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m ET Monday - Friday).

While there were limited numbers of each coin minted, there is still time to get yours.



2018-2019 Resolutions Final Status

Clarence Hill, PDC

pdchill@legionmail.org

Three resolutions that were approved at our Department Convention in June were submitted to National for consideration at the National Convention in August. Final disposition of these resolutions is as indicated.

-Resolution 38-Abolish Premium Penalty

for Delayed Enrollment for Medicare Part B for Veterans Eligible for Medical Benefits—the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee recommended referring this resolution back to committee for further study and the recommendation was approved. The study was completed on this resolution and it came before the National Executive Committee on Oct. 16 at the Fall Conference as Resolution 11. It was recommended for approval and that recommendation was approved.

-Resolution 39-Effects on Environmental Exposures on Descendants—the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee recommended received and recorded and the recommendation was approved.

-Resolution 40-Gold Star Children Access to Base Exchange Facilities—the Military Benefits and Quality of Life Subcommittee of the National Security Commission recommended approval and the recommendation was approved.

We Can do Better...

Jim Ramos, Northern Membership

teamramos@legionmail.org



Thanks to all the members of Florida we are doing good, but we can do BETTER How you may answer well **let's see some suggestions:**

Let's get first the

2019-2020 Membership Plan and Awards Manual:

By going to the website FloridaLegion.org and go to Resources **click*** and

then go to **Forms & Documents** tap Learn More stroll down to the **Membership Forms** and you can download "**Membership Drive**" or stroll down to the "**Dept. Membership Manual**" and now you have the Membership Plan

Please reading and start with pages:

- Page 7-10 works from the Dept. Commander Rick Johnson "Stop the Slide"
- Page 13 Top 5 reasons to join & Top 5 reasons to renew
- Page 17 what you can do "membership ideas"
- Page 18 some suggestions to increase membership

- Page 21-28 Mylegion.org process membership
- Page 30 Renewal dates mail out
- Pages 35-36 Dept. Awards
- Page 44 Adopt-A-Highway Program

We need to grow so let's make 103% not just a 100% we need to "STOP the SLIDE"

Thank you, I'm here to assist you and your Post success. Let me know how I can help. Please don't hesitate to call me at 352-226-4370 or email me at jramos149@bellsouth.net.

Southern Membership Agenda

Ray Perez, Southern Membership

teamperez@legionmail.org



I want to start by sending prayers and well wishes to Steve Slachta who was in ICU this week. Please keep him in your thoughts. We have the entire Southern Area and have discussed the

boundaries with Commander Johnson and Jim Ramos. The Districts I'm assisting include 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th Districts for the rest of the year. We had a successful District Meeting at Post 4 in Lakeland this past weekend which was immediately followed by Central Area Membership Training. The

3 District Commanders, 7th, 15th, and 16th attended and in the audience was 2nd Vice Commander Butts. The Central Area Membership Chairman, Randy Holyfield, and I conducted the training. We covered the Department Commander's Membership Plan and guidance and an overview of MyLegion.org.

The next Membership Training opportunity is on October 24th which was coordinated by the Department 1st Vice Commander and the District Commanders in the 14th District. The Training Outline will cover Basic MyLegion.org, DMS Transfers and Membership. We hope to have at least 6 Posts in attendance. We have also been asked to give instruction on Social Media by the Department Historian, Edward Lewis. We encourage you to bring laptops or tablets to access Mylegion.org during

the class. On Friday we plan to travel through Miami and to Post 321 before getting to Palm Beach. Our priorities are still the Posts that were at 85% and lower in June of 2019 along with the current lowest 5 for that week. Jim Ramos, Northern Membership Chairman and I are in constant communication with the Department Commander, working as a team to Keep Florida in the top 5 and eventually #1. We are in Second Place this week so we thank you for striving to be the best. Jim and I want everyone to know that we tailor the training to the specific needs and request from the Commanders when we coordinate the event. Remember....We are still shooting for the 103%.

New this month is the "American Legion Department of Florida Membership Team"

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Membership - Continued from page 5

Facebook page. It is designed to get the word out on Membership Training and the events we conduct or attend. I encourage every Post to ask if they can join in at the event closest to them. Don't worry about what Area or District you're from, the

training is the focus. I have given admin rights to Area Commanders and District Commanders so they can feel free to post their training and membership events to the page. I want to keep from making it another advertisement Facebook site for individual Post functions and concentrate

on Membership and Training. Next month we'll discuss Active Duty and Reserve/ National Guard "Yellow Ribbon Programs". Remember.....JUST ASK!!!!

Americanism Bulletin

Kurt Gies, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org



By the time you are reading this, the Fall conference will have just concluded. Hopefully you were able to make it to the Americanism session or one of the Americanism

program sessions where we had some great information passed on and

some lively and energetic discussions about how to make Florida the best Americanism team in the Nation. Nothing would make us prouder than to have Commander Rick Johnson walk across that stage in Louisville, KY next summer to accept awards on behalf of the amazing people promoting Americanism to our communities and youth in Florida. But to do so, we need your help. Volunteer at your post to help with programs like, School Medals, Scouting, Boys State, Baseball, Oratorical, Blood donor, Youth Law Cadets, Jr Shooting Sports/JROTC,

Get out to Vote, Scholarships and Flag/ American Awareness initiatives. This way we can announce to our communities about the great and amazing things the American Legion has to offer.

How cool would it be to see our kids from Florida walking across that stage as National Champions or Award winners? It starts with you volunteering your time today and giving back once again. Based on the fact we all served our country once, this is just another chance serve again.

Recognize Your Blood Donors

Ray Perez, Blood Donor

blooddonor@legionmail.org



This month I'd like to bring up a subject near and dear to Commander Johnson and has made it a point to thank everyone for their hard work and especially all the volunteers at our Posts.

An important element in the success of your Post's continuing Blood Donor Program is the recognition to the donors and volunteers.

Your donors need to be aware of just how important their contributions really are. Keep adequate records of all donations. Publicize the program by listing the donors of each collection in your Post publications and on bulletin board roster which One Blood provides you.

There are special American Legion Blood Donor pins which should be presented to individual donors and those who reach significant quantity donations over an extended period. There also Blood Donor Certificates which may be presented at the discretion of the Post. Consult your current Emblem Sales Catalog for description and prices.

Adequate recognition of both the donors and those volunteers who help with the program helps return your participants and serve to recruit others. I thank you for your cooperation and look forward to seeing you at the Fall Conference in November. My number and email again are 727-412-5356 blooddonor@legionmail.org.



SAL Anniversary & Halloween

Richard Smith, SAL Advisory

sal@legionmail.org

Do you have a Sons of The American Legion Squadron in your post? No, why not? The Sons of The American Legion is a great program for every post and a great source of help in the post and

community. Starting a squadron takes a vote at the post and some paperwork. We all have sons and/or grandsons that are eligible. We may be eligible. If you are one of the few posts that are without a SAL squadron, now is the time to start one. If you need assistance you can contact the SAL District Commander in your district for

assistance and as always you can contact me. Remember to have fun and support your veterans and community.





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.

NOV 2

PVR Advocate Training
Orlando, FL

NOV 2

Coral Head Music Fest
Pinellas Park, FL

NOV 16

Post 63's 3rd Annual
Challenge 22 Ruck Walk
Winter Garden, FL

YOUR EVENT HERE

Planning a fundraising event?
We want to promote it! Tell us
all about it.



COMMANDER'S CHARITY • HELP HIM REACH HIS GOAL!

This year, the American Legion, Department of Florida's Commander, William "Rick" Johnson, chose PROJECT: VetRelief as one of his charities of choice. Donations 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 lofty goal to raise \$75,000 between the two charities. Before Fall Conference, the total amount raised for both charities this year was \$15,983; \$11,530 for PVR and \$4,453 for COTA.

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 the details!

Commander Johnson is in the middle of his District visits. While he's making his rounds, give your donation to him and he will turn them into the Department Headquarters for you.



SUICIDE PREVENTION

3RD ANNUAL

CENTRAL FLORIDA CHALLENGE 22 RUCK WALK

CROOKED CAN, WINTER GARDEN | 11:00AM - 11:00PM

On Saturday, November 16th, The American Legion Post 63 in Winter Garden and Crooked Can Brewing Company are once again partnering to raise money and community awareness of the 22 veteran and active duty suicides happening per day due to PTS. The Challenge 22 event is just one of the vehicles used to create awareness and raise money for this important cause.

WE NEED YOU! Everyone can help make the Central Florida Challenge 22 Event and Ruck Walk a success and help us reach our goal of raising \$100,000 to eliminate veteran suicide due to Post Traumatic Stress (PTS).

Individuals, families, businesses, community and civic groups are needed as walkers, sponsors, service providers, or donors/volunteers. Get involved and support this very important cause and save lives by registering to join the Ruck Walk, becoming a sponsor, donating, being a community partner, or volunteer.

The money raised will be distributed to organizations that provide help and hope to our fellow Americans, including PROJECT: VetRelief and K9-Line.



Children & Youth Golf Tournament

Les Martin, Children & Youth

cy@legionmail.org



Well, it's been a busy month. I have attended several District Meetings and have been working on completing the Golf Tournament for April. At the District Meetings, I have been providing each district with 30 canisters to raise funds for our programs. This would be only 1 or 2 canisters per Post. We don't want the canisters to be placed in your Posts, so we don't take away from any of the fundraising that your Post is doing. The canisters should be placed in local stores or business. If we can raise \$100 to \$200 per canister over the next 6 months, we could raise plenty of money for the Children.

The Golf Tournament is set. The final arrangement has been made with the IMG Academy in Bradenton to host the Tournament. The IMG Academy has been the training site for many world soccer,

lacrosse, or other teams and individuals. Their Golf Course has been recently upgraded to be in pristine condition. The date of the tournament is April 25, 2020. Flyers have been sent to all District Commanders for distribution to their Posts.

I have also been handing out at the District Meeting, flyers about our Best Post Children & Youth Program. The deadline for the submittal for this award is May 13, 2020. The teacher of the year award deadline is April 15, 2020. The applications are available on the Department Website. The teacher must be nominated by the local post and endorsed by the school Principal.

Our new Children & Youth pins are in and available at the Department online store for \$5.00 each. I have also been selling them at the District meetings that I attend. (this saves you the cost of shipping).

Dee Bell and Tom Soeder have been busy working on the Picnic. We had a meeting at the Fall Conference and the wheels of progress are in motion. If and when Dee or Tom ask for your help, please jump in

and assist. Dee has a big job in getting donations of baskets and other items to be auctioned off at the picnic. Remember, this is a Fundraiser for the programs within the Children & Youth Commission. Chris Hamrick (District 12 Commander) has volunteered to solicit sponsors for the tee shirts for the picnic. When he calls, please become a sponsor. With nearly 300 Posts in the state, the tee shirts should be loaded with Post, District and individual sponsor names.

I am trying to schedule the remainder of the District meetings that I have not attended yet. It is getting difficult as many are scheduled on the same day. Also many of the District meetings are not on the Department Calendar, so trying to communicate back and forth with the District Commanders to schedule these visits is getting harder.



The Fire Fighters Prayer

Daryl Bass, Law & Order

laworder@legionmail.org



I'll admit that most of my own experience is that of a Police Officer. However, like myself most Police Officers have assisted their Fire Departments and EMS with a menagerie of duties (ex: Traffic Control,

helping victims, ect) Their calling to their profession is very much the same as ours. That is to Save Lives. Danger is always with them. The possibility that there could be that one call where they wouldn't be going home is always prevalent.

Remember our duty as a Law & Order

Chairman for the American Legion is to not only recognize our LEOs but to also recognize our Fire Fighters and Paramedics.

While researching articles about Fire Fighters I came across "The Fireman's Prayer" and felt like Passing it on to our Legion Family. I changed it to The Fire Fighters Prayers because they don't like being called Fireman. Besides there's a lot of women Fire Fighters nowadays.

FIRE FIGHTERS PRAYER

When I am called to duty, God
Whenever flames may rage
Give me strength to save lives
Whatever be their age
Help me to embrace a little child
before it is to late
or save an older person

from the horror of that fate
enable me to remain alert
and hear the weakest shout
and quickly and efficiently
put the fire out
I want to fill my calling, God
and give the best in me
to guard my neighbor
and protect his property
and if according to your will
I have to lose my life
Please bless with your protecting hand
my children and my wife
-Author Unknown-



How can I assist your Post in Developing a plan?

Jim Ramos, Post Development
 postdevelopment@legionmail.org



Hello Florida Legionnaires: How can I assist your Post in Developing a great Plan?

Development is Training Tips on HOW to make it Better in your

Post?

- Items you will need for recruiting event are:

- Membership Application
- Member Data From
- Brochure like:
 - "Why You Should Belong to The American Legion"
 - "Membership Benefits"
 - "Legislative Articles on VA care, GI Bill and some History about The American Legion in the last 100 years"
 - Have all the Legion Family there to assist the Post
 - To work as a team to make things better for the Legion family and the community
 - To plan for the year to help our

- Veterans, Families and Community
- How to have fun and work together and still get the job done

I'm here to assist you and make this year better for all the Legion Family.

"The good Post will know the needs of the Community. It will know them by the simple process of planned contact by representative Post members with city official, educators, community leaders and with other civic and fraternal group."

A Good PR Program Helps Your Tank Make "OBJECTIVE ORLANDO"

Tom Gora, Public Relations
 publicrelations@legionmail.org

"There is only one thing worse in the world than being talked about, and that is NOT being talked about"

That is a quote from Oscar Wilde but it applies to what should be happening now all around Florida, EVERYBODY IN YOUR COMMUNITY SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT THE AMERICAN LEGION AND THE NEW MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY!

Membership, and the changes to membership eligibility made by the Legion Act MUST be a significant focus of your PR program this year. **With a good PR program regarding The Legion Act, all of Commander Johnson's tanks will reach Objective Orlando.** Membership is the lifeline of this organization, and now we have the chance to bring in an estimated 4.2 million members, nationwide, so there must be thousands here in Florida. THE MOST QUALIFIED MEMBERSHIP "SALESPERSON" AT YOUR POST ARE YOUR CURRENT MEMBERS! The better you know the product you

are trying to "sell" the more "sales" you are likely to make, and your "stock" will always be rotated and fresh. In the September 2019 edition of the American Legion Training Newsletter, National Commander Oxford thinks the same; KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION is vitally important so that existing members can recruit new members. So, don't take my word for it, the National Commander says so! Here is a link to that training newsletter, read for yourself what he says. <https://www.legion.org/training/newsletters>

AMERICAN LEGION BASIC TRAINING is available on-line, and **it is free!** You complete the course at your own speed! Don't have time to complete the course in one sitting? You can spread completion out over several days or even weeks if you need to! I estimate most can complete this in three hours, or less. IT'S FREE! Find it here: <https://www.legion.org/alei>. Trust me, if YOU take this course, YOU will be better prepared to do Public Relations for this organization and your post!

Here is a link to a series of videos played at the National Convention which I

also distributed via department e-mail October 3. These videos can be used at open houses or perhaps even in an orientation program for new members. The videos, each 10 minutes or less, are called 'To Strengthen America: The American Legion Story'; <https://vimeo.com/showcase/590082>.

There is information coming out from the Department Program Director regarding a new Department annual award to recognize a Post with the best public relations program. The information includes eligibility for the award and submission criteria. A portion of the criteria THIS YEAR will be PR efforts a post has made related to informing the community about The Legion Act, and new membership eligibility. So, save those articles, press releases, etc., submit and be recognized at convention for your hard work!

"There is only one thing worse in the world than being talked about, and that is NOT being talked about."



3rd Annual Central Florida American Legion - Challenge 22 Suicide Awareness Event

Kurt Gies, PROJECT: VetRelief - Suicide Prevention
americanism@legionmail.org



For the past three years, we have been holding events across the State of Florida to raise community awareness to the fact there are 22 veterans committing suicide everyday due to

Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). This year's **3rd Annual Central Florida American Legion - Challenge 22 Suicide Awareness Event on November 16th, 2019 in Winter Garden FL** is going to

be amazing and we hope to blow away all records. Our goal is to raise more money this year than all the previous years combined. What makes this event incredible is YOU! Considering the event is free, its success is predicated upon you, your friends and your Legion family showing to participate and spending a little money while you're there (maybe).

The event will include an opening Americanism ceremony, a 2.2 mile walk along the West orange Trail (looking to have over 1000 walkers this year), a Vietnam War pinning ceremony, a GWOT and Vietnam War replica walls, live music, food and lots of fun. The event starts at 11am in front of the Crooked Can/Plant St Market at 450 W Plant St, Winter Garden FL. The festivities will end at 11pm. The

following is a link to a video of last year's event. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVLs4zdKBxw>

To register for the walk, please go to the website www.WGAL63.org. The day is free, but we are asking people to register so we can know how many to expect.

100 years ago after WWI, the American Legion was founded by a group of veterans serving veterans, but engaging the community to solve veteran's issues. Post-Traumatic Stress Suicide is now the #1 issue facing veterans who served this great nation. As we transition into our next 100 years, it is our Dream that the American Legion and our communities will come together to do what is required to end this epidemic.

JROTC Events &

2019-2020 National Official Match Program

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



There are many events throughout our JROTC Program here in the State of Florida. I see an increase in our members wanting to get involved with our youth and their futures. I continue to follow

some of the programs that are posted on Social Media, however, I'm sure there are many that I miss and would hope that more pictures are shared to increase our community and veterans' participation. We're always looking to increase the awareness of our Youth Programs and for the community support. I had the pleasure of participating in the 2nd Annual Broward County JROTC Support Association Golf Tournament Fundraiser at Palm Air Country Club. It was coordinated by the County Curriculum Director, LTC. Kenneth Green, Ret. and his staff. All funds and proceeds collected were donated for the support of the JROTC Program and the Year End

Cadet of the Year Scholarship Fund. The all-day event began with a breakfast followed by the Shotgun Start at 0800. A Reception/Lunch was served immediately after the golf outing and was followed by the Awards Ceremony for the top winners. All entries also received a Goody Bag and there were numerous "door prizes". We owe many thanks to all the teams that came out for the event and the many Sponsorships and the volunteers. We will be looking forward to our next year's event in the fall and to a longstanding tradition for our Cadets.

The JSSP National Conference was held in conjunction with the Children and Youth Conference in Indianapolis and there were some changes to the 2019-2020 National Official Match Program. The online application will be available online 01 November and the deadline will be 15 December 2019. All payments will be by credit card only. Target prices will be \$15.00 per target. We now need to complete a prefill Affiliation Form each year. Previous forms submitted prior to 01 September will not be valid. The form must be uploaded as part of the registration process. None will be accepted at National HQ. Target Sets

cannot be paid for until all the steps, including the Affiliation Form is uploaded. There may be additional changes for next year so keeping updated on the National website will be important. The key to getting the teams registered is to contact the individual team leader or the JROTC Program Instructor directly. Florida has been very successful in the past and I would hope that this year with some minor changes will not make a difference. Please contact me if there are any questions or concerns. I thank all who are supporting our Youth Programs as they are vital to our future.



More Changes... a Heads-Up... and a couple of Tips

Chuck Weber, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



The BSA National HQ recently published a letter on registration fee changes, which reads in part...." **As we evaluate the growing cost of delivering the Scouting program.... the best way forward will likely require us to**

implement a national membership fee increase for youth members and adult leaders as of January 1, 2020. (It) is being driven by the significant cost increase of the liability insurance we must carry to cover all official Scouting activities."

This fee increase will apply to every adult and youth registered in Scouting as your Scout units recharter at the end of this year. As this article goes to press the amount of the increase has not been finalized. It

is expected to be made known in early November. Your Post Scouting Chair will need to be alert to the change when it comes so that your Scout units will be able to charge the correct fees when your units recharter.

The next change is a complete nationwide update of all registered Scouting adults aged 18 and over. Each will be given renewed background checks. The paperwork for this will be distributed as each leader approaches their registration renewal date. This is an absolutely MANDATORY and IMMEDIATE requirement. Again, Post Scouting Chairs will need to advise the adults in their units that this is coming. Adults who do not promptly address this issue will be dropped from Scouting.

On the subject of rechartering units, each year when this is done the completion of individual Youth Protection Training for each adult leader is checked. Due to lags in processing, a leader's YPT may be current when rechartering but may expire before

processing is complete. That will result in a failed recharter. Here's the tip, if a leader's YPT expires within 60 days after your Scout unit's recharter date, make the leader retake YPT before you recharter the unit.

And finally, if you didn't attend the Scouting Roundtable at the Fall Conference, here is another tip for finding youth for your Post's Scout units. On December 31, 2019 the LDS Church (unofficially known as Mormon) will stop chartering all of its Scout units nationwide and will be starting the church's own youth programs. That will leave MANY Scouts currently in LDS units without a Pack or Troop. You may invite them into your existing Post Scout units or you may even be able to start a new one. Your Post Scouting Chair may contact your Unit Commissioner, BSA district committee or the LDS unit directly to seek youth to transition to American Legion Scout units.

If you have any questions, please feel free to write me at scouting@legionmail.org.

Upcoming Events

Fred Matthews, Special Events
specialevents@legionmail.org



The Calendar of Events is filling up with opportunities to share the good news about the Florida American Legion and how it helps and can help Veterans, their families and the communities they serve.

In October, the annual 3-day Veterans Standdown took place in Jacksonville where American Legion and Auxiliary members have volunteered their time handing out winter clothing, food and shoes to Homeless Veterans in the area. At this events, homeless veterans received legal and mental health counseling, haircuts, and another opportunity to obtaining their VA benefits.

October has been a month for District and Area Training events. Northern Area Commander Marie Conti held the first of its kind Area training event at Post 57 in Lake City.

District Training events took place in the multiple areas of the state. They key is continuing to get the word out to those Legionnaires who don't normally pay attention to this kind of opportunity. That means letting them know that Training is not just for Post officers.

As you read this, the Fall Conference will have taken place. This event is always a great opportunity to network with Post and District leadership from across the state as well as providing a concentrated training opportunity for those interested in Membership, Service Officer School, IRS Rules and Protection from Internal Fraud with a session on Cash Handling for your Post.

It's great to see that Post and District

Calendars are being shared on Social Media. Now it's time to share more of what's happening with the Public at-large. The Florida Times-Union publishes a weekly Veterans Calendar each Monday which you can view at jacksonville.com. It would be a good thing to encourage your local paper, whether it's a weekly or daily to publish such a calendar.

Veterans Day is coming. Make sure your Post is open and welcoming after the Parade. Not just to the Veteran community but to the local Community as well. It's a great opportunity to take advantage of an event that not only memorializes the sacrifices made by military veterans, but it's another opportunity to tell the American Legion Story of your Post and its activities.



Free Health Care for Recent Combat Vets

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements

veteransbenefits@legionmail.org

We all know getting people to join the American Legion is getting harder and harder.

Here is one way that can help you get younger members to join let them know about.

Combat veterans who were discharged or released from active service on or after Jan.28, 2003, are eligible to enroll in the VA health care system for five years

from the date of discharge or release. The enrollment period begins on the discharge or separation date of the service member from active duty service, or in the case of multiple calls-up, the most recent discharge date. Veterans, including activated Reservists and National Guard members, are eligible if they served on active duty in a theater on combat operations after Nov.11, 1998, and have been discharged under other than dishonorable conditions.

This information is from the Florida Veterans Benefits Guide 2019 page 7.

Suicide Prevention

Deb Wheeler, Women Veterans

womenveterans@legionmail.org

Everyone is doing such a great job, however we are approaching the holiday season of joy and love! We need to remember all our veterans! This is a good time for buddy checks with increased suicide awareness. Our female veterans are at an increased risk of suicide, especially the ones with children. If you are aware of our sisters let's try to help them with gift baskets of food, toys, etc. They are slow to ask for help and afraid to discuss situations like being almost

homeless, late rent, even food. First, they are ashamed, embarrassed and afraid to be reported for anything. They are also veterans with unique circumstances- divorce, late child support, abusive spouses, PTSD, MST, and/or inability to provide for themselves or children. The programs you need to also keep in mind and learn more about include Project Vet Relief, TFA and Final Salute. At the District and Post levels find a Women Veteran as your first choice to be a point of contact to direct our sisters with sensitive issues. I will always be available to give guidance, information and support! I am accessible by phone or email, don't hesitate to ask.

FHP / AMERICAN LEGION CADET PROGRAM

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet

youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



As most of you know that last year, due to lack of communication, we had to suspend this program for a year. I AM VERY HAPPY TO INFORM YOU THAT THIS PROGRAM IS A "GO" FOR 2020. This year our Youth Law Cadet Program will be held on July 12 – July 17, 2020. The fee for each boy or girl attending this program will remain the same as previous years - \$350.00 per each cadet. It will be

paid by the Post sponsoring the cadets. Our new brochure will be available by the time you read this article. I will try to get Department to mail out a copy of the brochure to every Post in the Department of Florida.

One of the main reasons of this program is to demonstrate to the youth of today that the police are their friends, and they should be extended all courtesies. If you have any questions you can call me or see me at the Fall Conference. I will be very visible in my orange shirt. My home phone number is 904-272-1619. My cell phone number is 904-635-4492.

NOVEMBER 2019	
1-3	Department Fall Conference ☼
4	Headquarters Closed
1	Thanksgiving Dinner/Dance (Manatee)
2	Sallarulo Race for Champions
2	Putt N' Crawl
3	Daylight Savings Time Ends
3-8	National American Legion College ★
5	Election Day
6	District 15 Visitation - Post 111 ☼
7	District 15 Visitation - Post 147 ☼
8	Vet Appreciation - Titusville ☼
8	Friday Night Live Salutes Veterans ☼
9	Veterans Day Parade - Palm Bay ☼
9	Veterans Day Picnic - Palm Bay ☼
9	Palm Beach Basketball Competition
9	David Haines Memorial Golf Tournament
10	Auxiliary 100th Birthday
10	U.S. Marine Corps Birthday
10-11	Vet Appreciation Country Concert - Venice ☼
11	Veterans Day
11	Headquarters Closed
11	District 11 Veterans Day Ceremony
11	Veterans Day Service Post 331
12	Marion County Basketball Competition
14	Leon County Basketball Competition
14	National Membership Goal 65%
15	Legion Link Articles Due
16	Challenge 22 Walk - Winter Garden ☼
16	District 16 Meeting
16	District 1 Meeting
18-24	American Education Week
19	Manatee County Bowling Competition
20-22	Pasco County Basketball Competition
21	Drive it Like You Stole It
23	Duval County Basketball Competition
23	Roast Commander Rick Johnson ☼
24-30	National Family Week
28	Thanksgiving
28-29	Headquarters Closed
28	Holiday Blood Drive Begins

☼ - Commander Rick Johnson'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.



October 25, 2019 65% Target Report (Currently 59.79%)		
6	Robert Suelter	66.05%
4	Cherie Korn	62.58%
9	Arthur Barber	62.57%
11	Johnny Castro	61.02%
17	Hank Mangels	60.82%
12	Chris Hamrick	60.75%
1	Lamar Carroll	59.86%
8	Skip Felicita	59.83%
15	Bruce carl	59.76%
16	Randall McNabb	59.56%
5	Troy Horsley	59.14%
7	Rick Orzechewski	58.27%
14	Gary Decker	56.00%
2	Roger Hewitt	55.45%
3	Stuart Scott	55.15%
13	Brian Gehling	54.15%
Southern	Paul Bosco	66.22%
Eastern	Timothy Tierney	61.75%
Northern	Marie Conti	59.66%
Central	Sid Damsgard	59.17%
Western	John Edens	59.07%
Southwestern	Jerry Faught	56.65%
Post 400		54.95%
Post 208		52.44%



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

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

NEXT MEMBERSHIP GOAL
65% 11/14/2019

www.thelit.com



Veterans Picnic

Nov 9th
American Legion Post 117

189 Veterans Drive Palm Bay

Following the Veterans Parade

Guest Speakers

US Congressman Bill Posey

Brig General Schiess

Rep Randy Fine

Sherriff Wayne Ivey

Commander Rick Johnson

Other Local Officials

Presentation of Colors by

AFTAC Honor Guard

National Anthem by

Atomic Blue



Membership and

Information Booth

The Public is invited to Join Us

**1986 Daytona 500 winner Geoff Bodine will show his
2010 Olympic Gold Medal Bob Sled**



VVB Traveling Museum

Food and Entertainment

No outside food or Beverages



2019

VETERANS DAY PARADE

SAT NOV 9, 2019
Parade begins at 9am

Join Us for the first Veterans Parade
in Palm Bay



**Congressman Posey
is Grand Marshal**

Parade starts at Palm Bay City Hall (120 Malabar Rd, Palm Bay 32907)
Travels East on Malabar and ends at American Legion Post 117
(189 Veterans Dr. Palm Bay, 32909)

Participation Spots Available



American Legion Post 117
189 Veterans Dr. SE, Palm Bay, FL 32909

Contact: Bruce Thurber at 321-750-1067 // commander@al117.com
Florida Tax Exempt Certification: #85-8013902952C-2 FEI/EIN: 59-2417391



Win a New Cadillac XT5

Longest Drive Contest
Hole-in-One Contest
Closest to Pin Contest

\$75.00 per golfer, includes
box lunch, 2 drinks on course
and early dinner.

9:00 AM Shotgun Start
Scramble Play



BENEFITTING The Programs and
Charities of the Florida American Legion
Children & Youth Commission

Early dinner, awards, raffles, 50/50
at American Legion Post 24
2000 75th St. W., Bradenton, FL 34209



CHILDREN & YOUTH CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

APRIL 25, 2020
IMG ACADEMY GOLF CLUB
4350 El Conquistador Pkwy
Bradenton, Florida



Sponsorship Opportunities

- HOLE or TEE (Silver): \$100**
- HOLE or TEE (Gold): \$250**
- BEVERAGE CART: \$500**
- LUNCH: \$500**
- DINNER: \$1,000**
- TOURNAMENT: \$2,000**
- DONATE A RAFFLE GIFT**

**Cut-off date for sponsorships &
gift submission April 15, 2020**

Checks made payable to:
Sons of The American Legion Squadron 24
2000 75th St. W., Bradenton, Florida 34209
Attn: C&Y Golf Tournament

Hotel: Lantern Inn & Suites, 7251 N. Tamiami Trail (14th St. W)

Sarasota, FL 34243 941 355 7747



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12:00 PM - 6:00PM

www.floridalegion.org

ACTIVITIES

Carnival Games
Vendors
Chinese Auction
50/50 Raffle
Dunk Tank
Riders' Ride-In



Join Us at:

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1281 N Washington Ave
Titusville, FL 32796

Questions? Dept, Les Martin, 941-201-7293 | SAL, Tom Soeder, 410-707-2331