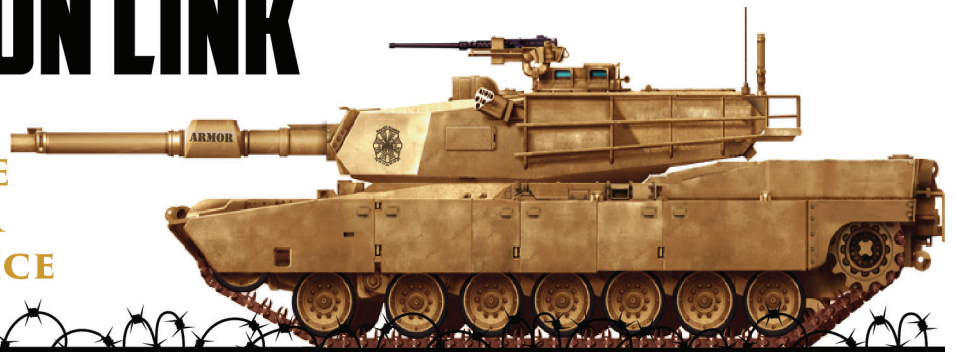




THE LEGION LINK

★ SERVICE
★ HONOR
★ SACRIFICE



APRIL 2020

COMMANDER WILLIAM "RICK" JOHNSON

VOLUME 28 ISSUE IX

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From your Department Commander Rick Johnson

Rick Johnson, Commander
commander@floridalegion.org



WELL, what can I say? Who ever thought that something like this would be going on around the world? Certainly not me. Now is the time that we step up as an organization and show the world what The American

Legion is about and what we stand for. We need to stay calm in these trying times and look forward to positive vibes and not "what if" scenarios. We can only fix things that are known, and we must disregard the unknown.

The Department Headquarters will keep everyone updated as more information becomes available. Now is the time to make sure you have e-mail addresses and phone numbers from your members, do buddy checks, and to put out information as it becomes available. We need to ensure information is being passed forward to everyone, either by e-mail or telephone. All members need to reach out to each other by phone as friends do. We are working on different scenarios with elections coming up and the DCCs on how they will be held. So please let your members know we

are working on all issues regarding these trying times.

THANK YOU everyone who has abided by the federal and state laws, recently passed down, and taking care of our families and communities. We have received numerous e-mails and phone calls that posts are remaining open, and we have been going by to check. To help us reserve time and resources, if you would like to report a post not abiding by rules in place, we require a photo, Post #, and statement of rules broken. Let's work together and get through this, as this crisis will only make us stronger in the long run.

All your elected officers are doing their best with the limited information that they have. Let's operate on facts, not rumors. Let's use the time we have in a positive manner. The Department Judge Advocate and the Assistant Judge Advocates are working hard to make sure that all supplement plans are put in place, when the time comes. The DCC dates will change depending on the timing of the crisis.

We will be putting out information on different sites around the state that are giving assistance to families and individuals in need. Let's make up small

Continued on page 2 >>



<< Commander - Continued from Page 1

teams to help family members who need help. The Commander's Homecoming has been postponed to June 13, 2020. Keep checking on the Department website, floridalegion.org and the Department Facebook, facebook.com/floridalegion, for updates.

I'm so glad to be your Department Commander during these times but

together is the only way we can combat this. My wife, Reenie, and I, send good vibes to everyone, looking forward to seeing everyone soon.

Again, THANK YOU to everyone taking a proactive stand during these times, and most of all God Bless Us All and God Bless the USA!

Service Honor Sacrifice.

Tank Out

National Security discussed items are:

- Pay the Coast Guard during Government shutdowns
- Helping the Homeless Veterans
- Support for the Gold Star Families
- Reaffirm Commitment to our Allies

Best part was visiting the local Florida State Representatives the next day, I went to the offices of Matt Gaetz and AL Lawson. While the house was in session and I was not able to speak with them, their staff was open and helpful. They also explain that the House is already working on many of the problems I noted, and hope to come to a resolution soon, and thankful that the American Legion is concern about those same issues. It is nice to know that the American Legion is still acknowledged in the Halls of Congress.

Washington D.C. Conference

Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



Comrades,

I was at the Washington D.C. Conference in the middle of March. What a trip, we had a full day of training, lectures and information given to us, not only by National, but also members of the U.S. Everyone is full of information.

Items discussed by the VA included,

- Toxic Exposure and Burn Pits
- Health Care for Women Veterans
- Suicide-prevention efforts

Buddy Checks

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



Greetings comrades.

We are now into April 2020. If you did not make 100% by March 31, 2020, now is the time to do a "Buddy Check," telephone calls, visitation, etc. Lets work

toward getting 100% membership for your Post and The Department of Florida.

Special thanks to all the Posts I visited in February and March 2020. Your show of hospitality towards me was marvelous. Thank you for all that you do in membership and programs.

Do not forget to send in your CPR's to National and Department on time. Also, Department sent a package to each post with forms to be filled out and returned. Please adhere to the instructions.

Wishing you an April Shower Month.

APRIL 2020	
1-1	ALR Round Robin
1-30	Children & Youth Month
1	April Fool's Day
1	Medical/Nursing Scholarships Due
3-5	Shark's Tooth Festival (CANCELLED) ☆
4	C&Y Picnic (CANCELLED) ☆
5	Gold Star Spouses Day
6	U.S. Entry into Wolrd War I
8	National Membership Goal 95% ★
10	Headquarters Closed
10	Good Friday
11	District 8 Golf Tourney ☆
12	Easter
13	Thomas Jefferson's Birthday
14	U.S. Air Force Reserve Birthday
15	Teach of the Year Due
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15	Tax Day
17-19	National Oratorical (CANCELLED) ☆
18	District 15 Picnic ☆
18	Commander's Homecoming (Now Jun 13) ☆ ★
22	Administrative Professional's Day
22	Earth Day
23	U.S. Army Reserve Birthday
24	Arbor Day
25	Law Enforcement of the Year Due
25	Firefighter of the Year Due
25	C&Y Golf Tournament (CANCELLED) ☆
26	ALR Unity Meet & Greet (CANCELLED) ☆
27 - 1	ALR In-State Unitry Ride (VIRTUAL) ☆ ★
30	Military Brats Day
May 2	ALR State Rally (CANCELLED) ☆

☆ - Cancelled or potential for postponement or cancellation, due to COVID 19 quarantine. Check Department website for updates, floridalegion.org.

☆ - 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.

For the latest Legion information regarding the Coronavirus (COVID 19) Pandemic go to:

www.floridalegion.org/pandemic/



Your Best Effort!

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



As most of us know, we are entering our final quarter of our Legion year. Some will tell you this is our slow time but in reality this should be your busiest time. Membership should be our top priority utilizing

all the tools that were provided to you by our outstanding membership team. Legion.org and our "Buddy Check" system are just a few ideas that have proven to be very successful over the past few years. Finding out why your members have not renewed their membership will open your eyes to the issues that affect them. Most of these issues can be easily fixed if you know

what they are. We have people in the Dept. that are ready, willing and able to assist you with all your membership questions. They are all just a phone call or an e-mail away.

Another priority you should be working on right now is mentoring your replacement for the coming year. Anyone running for a position at any level in the American Legion from Post level to National should understand what their position entails and what is expected of them. I don't care what position you are running for, there is a job description attached to it. The best place to look for this is in your Officer guide and Constitution and Bylaws. Most Posts' have additional duties attached to each position so find out what they are and be prepared to accept them. But most of all, current officers should be finding and then mentoring their replacements now. Your

new team should be in place and ready to get to work as soon as possible.

Finally I'd like to talk a little bit about our membership meetings. In my opinion the most important part of having a successful meeting is to be well prepared. There are very few people who can put a meeting together 15 minutes prior to the meeting but it would shock you just how many people try to do just that. You must have an agenda prepared beforehand and you must stick to it. Your Officer guide has a sample agenda that you can use and I guarantee, if you follow it line by line you can't go wrong. But most importantly, be prepared! Don't wait till the last minute.

Please don't hesitate to contact me for any reason. I work for you and I'm here for you. I need your best effort!

American Legion Baseball Resolution 3

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



With the onset of The American Legion Baseball program getting into full swing, I thought the Department should be aware of Resolution 3, pertaining to the National American

Legion Baseball program. This is a condensed version but still gives you the positive outcome.

Resolution No. 3: Extension Of Agreement With Baseball Factory:

WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee on May 6-7, 2009, by Resolution No. 4, directed the national commander to execute an agreement between The American Legion and Baseball Factory which commenced June 1, 2009; and

WHEREAS, The National Executive

Committee on May 7-8, 2014, by Resolution No. 10, directed the national commander to execute another agreement between The American Legion and Baseball Factory which commenced June 2, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Baseball Factory desires to continue their ten year business relationship with The American Legion, by providing clinics and showcase tournaments to assist American Legion Baseball players to further develop their skills; and

WHEREAS, This resolution has been reviewed by the Americanism Commission and, with concurrence from the Finance Commission, is recommended to the National Executive Committee for favorable action; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 16-17, 2019, That the current agreement with the Baseball Factory executed June 2, 2014, be extended for an additional five-year term;

and, be it further

RESOLVED, That as per the agreement The American Legion will continue to provide annual copies of American Legion Baseball team player rosters for use by the Baseball Factory in conducting mailings to team coaches and players (via their parents or legal guardians and when they have consented to receive communications) to promote Baseball Factory clinics and tournaments for the duration of the extended agreement; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will continue to be authorized to accept \$30,000 each year from the Baseball Factory for the duration of the extended agreement for the use of these rosters; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all funds received from this agreement with the Baseball Factory will continue to be deposited in the American Legion Baseball general operating account(s) to offset the costs of conducting the program and/or

Continued on page 4 >>



<< NEC - Continued from Page 3

for providing scholarships to eligible participants of American Legion Baseball; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That National Executive Committee Resolution No. 4, "Authorization to Enter into an Agreement with The Baseball Factory," May 6-7, 2009, and National Executive Committee Resolution

No. 10, "Authorization to Enter into an Agreement with The Baseball Factory," May 7-8, 2014, are hereby superseded and rescinded.

Northern Area News

Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org



Congratulations to everyone that has met or exceeded the 90% goal. The next membership goal is 95% before 04 APR 2020.

Congratulations to the Department Oratorical Winner, Conrad Hellwege IV, sponsored by Post 27, Ocala, 4th District, Northern Area. In my book, all the contestants are Winners! An outstanding job was done by both Brian Boge, Post 27 Oratorical Chairman, and Doug Hockenberry, 4th District / Northern Area Oratorical Chairman. This is the second time in six years that Post 27 has won the Department Contest; the last time was 2015 when Geeta Minocha also won the National Oratorical Contest.

The Northern Area Ball, scheduled for 21 Mar 2020, was regrettably canceled due to concern over the Coronavirus. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all those that were involved in the planning of the Ball, all who purchased an ad for the program, and all who donated their dinner ticket cost, to support the Northern Area Boys State Scholarship.

There is a basket of cheer that is still being raffled, with proceeds going to the Northern Area Boys State Scholarship. The new drawing date is 01 May 2020, a live video will be posted on Facebook. I also want to take this opportunity to personally thank American Legion Post 155, Crystal River, for their support.

Caution, common sense, and frequent hand washing are suggested with the Coronavirus. For more information on the Coronavirus, go to www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

End of year CPR Reports are still due as scheduled. Let's finish what we started last year and go out with a BANG!



From left to right, Doug Hockenberry, 4th District / Northern Area Oratorical Chairman; Cherie Korn, Department Oratorical Chairman / 4th District Commander; Marie K. Conti, Northern Area Commander; Conrad Hellwege IV, Department Oratorical Contest Winner; Brian Boge, Post 27 Oratorical Chairman

Southern Area Information

Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander
southernarea@legionmail.org



A lot of activities have been canceled and remember if you have a gathering use precaution. I'm not beating a dead issue to death, but please tell me why there is a run on toilet paper???

Please check your calendar and the Departments calendar for updates and changes. These are crazy times.

I hope you have had your elections and have your new officers transitioning into their new jobs, and If you are an officer who kept your position by choice, congratulation.

If you are still in your position and don't have anyone to replace you, well you screwed up. You should have gotten two

or three members to mentor at the beginning of your term. Taking a position blind is very difficult. Keep in mind your replacement will need some assistants in taking over, and remember he or she is in charge. Give them guidance don't try to take over.

Have a great April and keep working on your membership.



Western Area Bulletin

John Eden, Western Area Commander

westernarea@legionmail.org



Western Area has been working hard on memberships so far with over 8 Posts at or better than 100% so far. We just need to get the District staffs to help the AREA out by getting your staff out to the

Posts that are hurting with memberships right now. My staff and I will be more than

willing to go to Posts and help with phone calls and letters – just let me know when.

Both 1st and 2nd District has had their third district meeting and I have been impressed with the additional training provided at the district meetings. The Area staff would like to thank PDC Jim Ramos for his excellent Legion Training sessions throughout the 1st and 2nd District. We have the upcoming DCC meetings on June 6th for both districts and we need to push for as many Posts as possible to attend. We do expect some Department candidates

for the 20 -21 year to attend and politic for upcoming Department staff positions.

As far as the Western Area overall status, we are doing well for now. However, we do need to keep pushing memberships and help the other Posts in your district that need it. We still have two or three Post in each district that need financial help to rebuild their Post or need staff assistance to get all their paperwork back up to par. We (district and area staffs) are doing our best, but we need everyone's help to get the word out better for fundraisers.

Eddie Humer Award Nominations

Jeff Durden, Sgt-at-Arms

sgt-at-arms@legionmail.org



NOMINATE YOUR SGT-AT-ARMS FOR: THE EDDIE HUMER AWARD. The "Eddie Humer Award" for the most outstanding Post and District Sergeant-at-Arms will be presented

at the Department Convention. Now is the time for your Post or District to reward your Sergeant-at-Arms for his/her contribution to the success of his/her year of service to the American Legion.

A copy of your National Consolidated Post Report and Department Addendum must be on file with Department Headquarters to be eligible for this award. DEADLINE: MAY 15TH, 2020. A narrative is REQUIRED.

Mail submission to:

Florida American Legion
P.O. BOX 547859
Orlando, FL 32854-7859

E-MAIL submission to:

programs@floridalegion.org

Northern Membership News

Jim Ramos, Northern Membership

teamramos@legionmail.org



SERVICE is how we do membership: Congratulation to ALL District for working hard with membership and Let's continue with membership let's get that 103% we need to make our GOAL

working together for one Goal. We are doing a Great job, but we need to do a little more and NOW is the time. Thanks to all and each of the Post in each District that make 100% or more and for the ones who are still working if you need ideas Please let me know.

Our next Goal 95% by April 8, 2020, but if you can how about 100%. "Always do more

not less" and "We can do Let's Go Florida"

April is Children & Youth month: Celebrate do some for our "Children & Youth" a perfect time of the year get Legionnaires to demonstrate that we are a Legion family and let the Community know who we are. Plan an event, activities and/or some project to help your community know who we are as the American Legion and what we do for our Veteran's and their families. We care for our Children and Youth.

May is Armed Forces Day say Thank you to the active duty military month: But continue to recruit new members and retain old members work as a team and you will be successful. Also remember you have awards you can get now just check out the membership Plan and Awards manual. DO NOT STOP looking for members and Do not forgot you CPR report, addendum and other report to

Dept HQ.

HONOR by making a 100%+ membership:

Some ideas on how to make 100%+:

Do these steps today and continue getting members for your Post.

1. Develop a last month Post membership drive.
2. Get the membership team together to contact members who have NOT renews for 2020 check out mylegion.org
3. Make a list of things that your Post is doing to help our Veterans "Mutual interest, Topics, Concerns, and ideas are shared with other Veterans and their families.
4. Let them know what we do like the Benefits, Service Officer, Discounts,

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<< Northern Membership - Continued from Page 5

strength in numbers for lobbying Power.

5. BUDDY CHECK event toolkit is online (go to Legion.org) outreach to your members and do some personal contact
6. Get help from the Legion families have the Aux, SAL, and ALR to help: Use the families for Phone call to members (renewal and let members know what is going on at the Post)
7. Set up "carpool" to get Legionnaires to meeting, especially new members and see how older members are DOING?
8. Now is the time to get something DID if you NEED help just call
9. Remember that Membership is the life blood of the American Legion (Success)

SACRIFICE is what we do to "STOP THE SLIDE" and achieve 100% membership by May 15, 2020. 100%+ membership will be our only measure of success. But we need 103% to make it Happen!

NOW is your Post doing some:

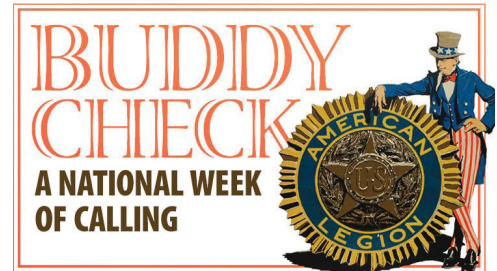
1. Public Relations with the community
2. Implement new ideas, being creative, being different, being flexible so your Post is better
3. Developing your Post and its members "Encourage, Positive Attitude, Establish Goals, Develop Trust, Building self-esteem in others"
4. Educating "our members, the public, doing newsletter, doing programs, and know our Legion History)

We still need to continue working with our

District and each Post's to see how we can make 103% goal

But whatever you do make it BIG. Communication is the Key to Success and Recognized your Volunteer and just say Thank You.

If you need ideas just ask me (call 352-226-4370 or email jramos149@bellsouth.net)



Southern Membership News

Ray Perez, Southern Membership
teamperez@legionmail.org



As we began to close in on the last few months of year, May 31st, the Department Commander issued a new mission on March 1st; "Tank Battle". This was issued to every District Commander with a Roster of the 2019 members who have not renewed for 2020. This has been your priority upon receipt! The battle ends this month,

April 10th. The incentive program will be out by the time you read this article and is currently being developed. So some tips on how you can still complete this is by Buddy Checks, letters generated by MyLegion.org and email using the system we have taught in membership training. Make annotations to your roster as you work them and track the renewals on the blank form provided on the email.

Posts and Districts should look to the membership and awards manual for awards that could be applicable to your command. (Go to pages 33-41) As of March 5th we have 64 posts over 100%, 221 posts are past their next goal or close

to achieving it. Together we can do this. Membership is still our #1 priority!

While I am the Membership Chairman I would be reluctant not to mention the Consolidated Post Reports. You should have started preparations to develop them with your chairmen! With CPRs, elections and DCCs, Post and District events, and convention on June 25th, we are in the Red Zone. Communicate until you have created redundancy. When they start complaining about how many times they're going to receive the same information, you know you've done your job. Everyone needs to be on board, this time of the year!!

Collect, Replace, Retire & Transform a US Flag!

Kurt Gies, Americanism
americanism@legionmail.org



Help Support a New US Flag Project we are starting in Florida!

At most American Legion posts, we collect flags from the community for proper retirement.

Some conduct their own ceremony; others farm it out to the Boys Scouts, the local crematory or some other patriotic organization to retire them. This honors our flags, but the process should not stop here.

Each year the American Legion collects thousands of flags from US citizens who want to make sure they are properly retired/disposed. They get in their car and drive to your post to drop it off. Most

do this because they love this country and want to make sure its main symbol is properly respected to the end. But the process shouldn't stop here.

- Did you know that Emblem Sales offers a 10% credit to your account at the end of each year based on your sales volume? It's as easy as signing up thru their website.
- Add a box with flag order forms for

Continued on page 7 >>



<< *Americanism - Continued from Page 6*

those who drop off their old flags to purchase a new one. They fill out and drop the form into the collection box and all you need to do is fulfill their order and deliver the new flag to them. Who knows, they may be a veteran eligible to join the Legion or a Legion family member, so bring those membership applications.

- Periodically hold a flag retirement ceremony to properly dispose of those collected flags.

- Once the ashes cool, retrieve the brass flag grommets. Bag them up and send those grommets to the Florida Dept Americanism Commission or bring them with you to the Dept Convention in June.

We are working with local artists to come up with a conceptual design where the melted down brass can be transformed into something beautiful while representing that the US Flag never dies. If you have ideas, we would love for you to share them as well. Let's get our

imaginings going and come up with something that really honors our country and our flags.



ALR Unity Ride is Now Virtual

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
legionriders@legionmail.org



So much for planning. I hope all our family is doing well and taking care of themselves. This sitting around must be driving us all crazy. I did get a chance for a little "Wind Therapy" over the weekend, but I sure miss the long rides and stopping at all the Post along the way.

Well, unfortunately we had to cancel the Unity Ride. We looked at the possibility of moving the ride, but really can't because it would conflict with other rescheduled Legion events.

HOWEVER, we are working hard to take this ride to a Virtual Event. Even though we can't ride together, we can still support our veterans and raise funds and awareness to **#EndVeteranSuicide!**

What does that mean? We are encouraging you to still register and ride with us, but on your own time. We are challenging you to ride 22 miles for the 22 veterans who take their lives every day. This will have to be done in a certain time frame and then documented on your social media accounts with **#iRideforthe22**. Points will be awarded

for funds raised, number of people registered, and for those who complete the challenge for the District Trophy.

We are working on fine-tuning the details, and those will be released very soon on the Department's website, social media pages, and on the campaign link below. The link to register and join us virtually is <http://give.floridalegion.org>.

A lot of work has gone into this one. Jennifer Cooper has utilized a new product to assist in our sign up and fund raising for the Unity Ride. Carrie has also done a great job updating our page on the Department Website. Our Chapter at Post 10 in Kissimmee has done a great job getting the State Rally together. However, this event will be postponed to a later date. Great teamwork putting this all together!

This was not an easy decision, as this event is something we all look forward to every year. However, we are doing our best to accommodate and still support PROJECT: VetRelief's Suicide Prevention Initiative in these uncertain times.

Once again, Thank You for what you do, and I am proud to be the Chairman of such a great group!



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

Rachel Castleberry, Executive Assistant

rcastleberry@floridalegion.org



Department of Florida Headquarters Office will be closed, and staff will be working remotely until such time as it is considered safe and appropriate to reopen. Calls are being directed to voicemail and employees are answering voicemails and emails. During this time all Posts are encouraged to process their membership using the MyLegion.org website.

All Posts should be conducting "Buddy Checks" with their members During these difficult times. National has created a new Buddy Check toolkit. The toolkit helps American Legion Posts touch base with

veterans in their communities during the coronavirus pandemic. "How to Perform a Buddy Check During the Coronavirus Pandemic" offers tips about how to reach veterans who may be sheltering and social distancing to find out if they need assistance. To access the Toolkit go to <https://www.floridalegion.org/coronavirus-covid-19-precautions/>.

The Florida Veterans Foundation has teamed up with the American Legion of Florida to create the COVID-19 Project: VetRelief Fund. This will help with emergency assistance for those veterans who are affected by this pandemic around the state of Florida. For more information see page 12.

The Coronavirus Act Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allocated \$350 billion to help small businesses keep workers employed amid the pandemic and economic downturn. See pages 22-25.

Beware of Scam donation solicitations!

As with holidays, and natural disasters and other times of emergency, the coronavirus pandemic has brought out those attempting to scam people wanting to assist others. Any solicitations for donations should first be confirmed as legitimate before donating. Anytime you receive an email from someone you know or any other email that you are unsure about, always reach out to the "supposed" sender and verify the requests. Use the contact information you have, DO NOT REPLY to the email, because then you are just asking the scammer.

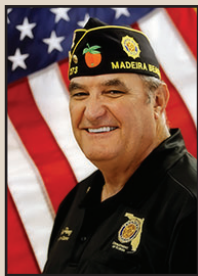
Any changes or updates on upcoming Department Events and Programs will be communicated through email and the Department website at <https://www.floridalegion.org/coronavirus-covid-19-precautions/>.

For information regarding COVID-19 in Florida, please visit <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>.

Blood Donor Program

Ray Perez, Blood Donor

blooddonor@legionmail.org



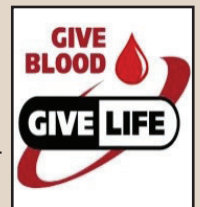
Let's start out by discussing the End of Year Awards Instructions. Posts should have received their packets from Department which include instructions for the CPRs. Deadline

for the Margaret Skaggs Memorial: Best Post Blood Donor Program Award is May 31, 2020. The blank form is in your packet! You must include a 2 page narrative, submitted the Post National Consolidated Post Report and Department CPR Addendum to Department Headquarters. In the narrative you must specify information or comments about your program. The reporting period is May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020.

If you haven't done so already there are individual awards for donors and volunteers

who assist with the program given at the Post discretion. We are expecting better reports than last year. Many Posts have started programs this year that never had one or were absent for quite a few years.

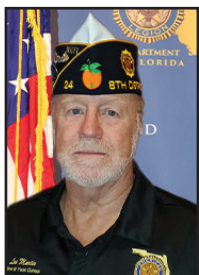
After convention there will be many changes in Post leadership. Make sure there is a smooth transition in chairmen to continue the Blood Donor Program.



Children & Youth

Les Martin, Children & Youth

cy@legionmail.org



This month is going to be a busy one for our Children & Youth Programs. April is Children and Youth Month. Remember, wear purple. Starting with April 4th, we have our Children & Youth Picnic at Post

1 in Titusville. Post 1 Commander Donna Hamilton and S.A.L. Detachment Children & Youth Chairman, Tom Soeder have been

working hard on this activity. Donna and her members at Post 1 have put in a lot of effort and time on this Picnic. Let her know that all their hard work was not in vane and come on out and attend the picnic and have a great time. Remember, this is a fundraiser. We need your attendance so we can continue with our programs for the children and the children of our veterans. Speaking of fundraisers, it's time for all Posts the collect their Children & Youth Canisters. Remember to put C&Y Canisters in the note section of your checks and submit.

I have been focusing most of my efforts this past month on getting the word out for our Golf Tournament on April 25th. We have very few registrations that have been

submitted so far. Again, this is a fundraiser, we need participants. It doesn't matter how good you are. Get a foursome together and come out and have some fun. I did pick up two foursomes in my neighborhood. Now if each of you who are reading this article can do the same thing, we will have a successful Tournament and really do some good for the kids. So come on, let's get out there and get some foursomes. We also need hole sponsorships for the Tournament. I did pick up some at the District 13 meeting last month, but we need many, many more. Just don't sponsor one hole, sponsor two or three.



The American Legion 2020 (60th) Washington Conference

James Douglas, Employment
employment@legionmail.org

As one of The American Legion Department of Florida Legion Members that attended The American Legion 2020 (60th) Washington Conference that was held in Washington DC on March 5-11, 2020, I was given the task of contacting the below 4 U.S. Congressman Offices to set up meetings to talk about the 11 agenda items The American Legion has for the 116th U.S. Congress.

- Congresswoman Debbie Mucarsel-Powell who represents Florida's 26th District serving western Miami-Dade County and the Florida Keys.
- Congressman Greg Steube who represents Florida's 17th District serving south-central Florida.
- Congressman Ross Spano who represents Florida's 15th District serving parts of Hillsborough, Lake and Polk counties.
- Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart who represents Florida's 25th District

...serving the southwestern Miami-Dade County and the northern portion of the Everglades.

Due to voting that was happening in the U.S. House of Representative, Shirley Douglas and I spoke to staff members from the above 4 offices. It was pleasantly surprising to find out that all of the staff members were aware of the 11 different agenda items. We received positive responses about the agenda items and answered a few questions that were raised by the staff members.

On a side note, I am happy to report the POW-MIA flag is prominently displayed though out the Capital.

- In the Cannon Building, which is the building that houses the offices of the congressmen/woman we visited, multiple offices had the Congressman's state flag and the POW-MIA flag displayed by their office doors.
- Prominently displayed in the U.S. Capital Visitor Center was a POW-MIA chair flanked by the U.S. flag on the left and the POW-MIA flag on the right. A black cloth with a POW-MIA emblem was also

draped across the arms of the chair. The plaque above the chair read "Let this empty chair serve as a memorial to those who served in the military of our great nation, but have not returned home to us. They are Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. America will forever be grateful for your bravery and sacrifice in service to our nation. We will never forget." I observed the majority of the people coming into the visiting center stopped and looked at the chair.

- In the Rotunda, the POW-MIA flag was standing next to President Ulysses S. Grant's statue.
- Directly below the Rotunda, in the room that has an area designated as the "Heart of the Capital", a POW-MIA flag was displayed on the right side of the room.
- The POW-MIA flag can also be seen in the hallway that leads to the U.S. House of Representative Gallery.

Also, everywhere we travel in Florida I see ads for help wanted. A good source for info or additional job training is the Goodwill. On the web if you type in job fairs you'll find the ones in your local area.

JROTC Post 359 Hosts National Cmdr., JSSP 2nd Round Results

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



We should all be knowledgeable of how the post can benefit from the JROTC Units as they can assist at events, serve meals at dinners, offer Color Guards for parades and many

other activities. I would like to thank Post 359, Port St. John for giving us the opportunity to see an outstanding performance for the JROTC Cadets for the POW/MIA Ceremonial Table during the National Commander James "Bill" Oxford on his official visit to the Eastern Area. Many thanks also to our Department Americanism Chairman, Kurt Gies for sharing the photo and the video that was posted on Facebook. I've had the privileged of seeing many different versions of this ceremony at Military Balls, Award Ceremonies and other events,

however this was by far the better of them all.

The First Round Results have been posted and the Florida Teams have done very well. Congratulations to Sarasota Military Academy for being the State Team winners for both the Sporter and the Precision Category. The top winner for the Precision Shooter was Dante Aletto with an Aggregate score of 576. Winner for the top Sporter Shooter was Thomas Reisinger with an Aggregate score of 544. The top teams and winners will all be receiving a Team Recognition Award from the National Organization. Many thanks to Post 266 Sarasota for their sponsorship for these teams. All targets for the final Postal Round must be returned to CMP and postmarked by 01 April. Further results will be posted on the National website and "Good Luck" to all our competitors.

Many of the schools have already

started with plans for the Year End Award Ceremonies and Military Balls, however due to the closure of many of the schools throughout the state and nation, these final plans could be disrupted. I would ask all District Chairmen to stay informed on the schools in your area and be governed accordingly. Thank you all for all you do for our Youth Programs and your continued support.



Always a Cop

Daryl Bass, Law & Order
laworder@legionmail.org



Once the badge goes on, it never comes off, whether they can see it, or not. It fuses to the soul through adversity, fear and adrenaline and no one who has ever worn it with pride, integrity and guts, can ever sleep through the "call of the wild" that wafts through bedroom windows in the deep of the night.

When a good Cop leaves the "Job" and retires to a better life, many are jealous, some are pleased and yet others, who may have already retired...wonder. We wonder if he knows what he's leaving behind, because we already know. We know for example,

that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times. We know that in the law enforcement life there is a fellowship which last long after the uniforms are hung up in the back of the closet. We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart, still is.

These are the burdens of the job. You will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see or choose to ignore and always look at the rest of the law enforcement world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing. Never think for one moment you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping the "job" and merely being allowed to leave "active duty".

So what I wish for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you never forget for one moment that "Blessed are the peace makers because they will be called the children of God"; and you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

There are those who think they understand. And then...there are Cops!...
Author Unknown.....

Article in Law Enforcement for Life!

by: Ron Skyrn, Retired LEO
All American Legion Post, and District Law & Order Chairman please remember that all Applications for Law Enforcement Officer, Fire Fighter and Paramedic of the year must be submitted to the Department by April 22, 2020 to be considered for the Department Convention Awards.

The Graduates of FALC 2020 Critique the Program

Tom Gora, Florida Legion College
deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org

Each year at the end of the session we ask Florida American Legion College (FALC) graduates to critique the program. Since organizing the annual FALC under an appointed committee in 2016 we seek these comments to improve the program for the next year. This year we had 21 students and received 19 surveys back from the participants that graduated January 25, 2020. The survey asks them to rate the hotel, training facility, course content and instructor effectiveness. This year the Class of 2020 rated the hotel and training facility a '5' on a scale of one to five with five being "most satisfied." Thank you to Michael Bratsch, Events Coordinator, for doing such a great job making sure the participants were comfortable, well rested, hydrated and fed. The Mission BBQ reception on Friday evening was enjoyed by all!

Resolution writing is a big part of the class and this year, one of the Resolutions written during the FALC may be

submitted for adoption at the Department Annual Convention. This Resolution deals with the Adopting a Highway program that provides American Legion Posts that participate the opportunity to serve the public and gain some additional notoriety in their local community. Yes, you may have to clean the side of a roadway a few times a year, good exercise many of us can use, and your post will have signs designating the fact your Post is sponsoring that piece of road for people to see 365 days a year; that's public relations, folks! When you "adopt" a two mile stretch of road you will get signs on both sides of the road at the start and end of your section. That's FOUR signs with your post name on it that hundreds of cars passing a day will see. Could it be a potential member or two are in those cars? You bet!

Participants gave all instructors high ratings and critiqued some material perhaps being out of date. We will correct that; materials for FALC need to be prepared well in advance and some material in the book had not been updated since the many recent changes taking place in membership and the organization

structure. Some participants said they want the college to be a five-day course, that is a Department level decision which I personally do not support. If participants must pay a fee to attend a five-day college this may be too expensive for many. Some, like younger members, may want to attend but they are still employed, and this would cost an entire week away from your paying job. Perhaps in the future the Department may consider a way to provide the FALC for FREE, but that's a decision above my pay grade as a volunteer. Perhaps some of the FALC can be on-line courses that need to be taken in addition to Basic Training, prior to attending college. Some FALC participants request additional time or training for specific positions such as finance officer, judge advocate, and chaplain. Once again, my humble opinion, these positions require very specific areas of instruction and interests, and this type of training is better to be provided at the fall conference, annual convention, or at the post or district level. More individual attention and time can be devoted to

Continued on page 11 >>

<< FL Legion College - Continued from Page 10

the many responsibilities these three specialty positions require than by just an hour or two of discussion at the FALC.

This was my 4th year as Chairman of the FALC and most of my personal satisfaction

for being the volunteer chairman over these years is watching FALC graduates move on to higher positions of responsibility in the posts, districts and department; that's what the FALC is all about! It makes me proud that participants say they want more training! This is more

than a "college" to get on your resume; this is leadership training to better prepare our leaders of the future!

Training is the Key to Success

Jim Ramos, Post Development
postdevelopment@legionmail.org



Hello Florida Legionnaires: We need to continue training at the District level so each Post can be successful to. We need to continue to pass information on to our Legionnaires within each Post to make the

Best for the next Generation of Veterans, so they are knowing our rich American Legion History since 1919.

From the District to Post Training we need to:

1. Motivation our members to learn more each time we train
2. Commitment to help our members accomplish each goal
3. Pride as Legionnaires to do the best for each veteran we sign up as a member and their Families
4. Be Success in everything we do for our Veteran

How do you tell our History of The American Legion you have to know it first? We started in Paris by members of the American Expeditionary Force in March 16-17, 1919 and was chartered by Congress (September 16, 1919 is Legion Day)

The American Legion our four Pillars are:

1. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation
2. National Security
3. Americanism (time for Boys State in June)
4. Children and Youth (April is C & Y month)

Each of these pillars encompasses a variety of programs that benefit our nation's veterans, its servicemembers, their families, the youth of American and ordinary citizens. These programs make a difference to hundreds of thousands of lives (veterans and their families) each year.

A little bit of Department of Florida History:

*Our Department of Florida History our Charter is Aug 1, 1920 and the First Department Commander was Albert Blanding and our First Adjutant was

Sumter L. Lowry Jr.

*One special Past Department Commander Bill Anderson was Commander 1956-1957 and I got to meet him.

*One more special Past Department Commander Nolie C. Deas Sr. was Commander in 1973-1974 and he woke (This is Hallowed Ground) Why you Don't walk between the Colors.

Questions how I learn more: (Tools and Resources)

1. Doing the Basic Training programs online by going at Legion.org
2. By going to the Florida Legion College in Orlando just wait for the next class
3. How to write a Resolution go to Legion.org
4. Check out and read the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies go to Legion.org

Need help or ideas call Jim at 352-266-4370 or email at jramos149@bellsouth.net Thank you

Important Time of Year

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org



We are rapidly approaching the close of the year. This time of the year is important for the SAL.

If you have not been keeping a running total for your reports, now is the time to begin getting the

information you will need. It is also the time of year to start your nominations and elections. When doing your report later this year, make sure to send in the Officers Report.

Any questions please call me or send me an email, sal@legionmail.org





PROJECT: VETRELIEF
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

UPCOMING EVENTS
 MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Due to the coronavirus, the below events are tentative. Please stay informed via our website and social media pages.

APR 26 - MAY 2 SPI
 ALR Unity Ride & Run
 TN Counties (North & South)
 Entire State of Florida

MAY 9
 CANCELLED
 2020 9th Annual Scoring, FL

MAY 8-9
 CANCELLED
 2020 9th Annual Event
 Jacksonville, FL

MAY 16
 SAL Detachment
 Commander Homecoming
 Crystal River, FL

JUNE 13
 Department Commander
 Homecoming / Luau
 Madeira Beach, FL

JUNE 25-28
 Dept Convention
 Orlando, FL

 **facebook**
 @ProjectVetRelief

SUPPORTING VETERANS THROUGH COVID-19

The coronavirus, COVID-19, is impacting Florida's veterans, active duty military members and their families. As many organizations are being forced to close their doors, our veterans are unable to work and provide an income to support their families.

PROJECT: VetRelief is teaming up with the **Florida Veterans Foundation** to support those who are affected by this pandemic. We are anticipating that we will see a substantial increase in the number of applications requesting assistance over the next few months. Both programs are privately funded and are not equipped to fund the expected demand of our veteran community.

Please find it in your heart to donate so that we can make a greater impact and support all service members who need us during this chaotic time.

EXISTING GUIDELINES:

- Veteran, Active Duty Military, or Immediate Family Member (Spouse, Legal Guardian, or Child)
- Acceptable Discharges: Honorable or General Under Honorable Conditions
- Florida Resident for minimum of 120 Days
- Show Sustainability - balance of income and expenses
- Experiencing an unforeseeable emergency
- Provided for necessities: shelter, utilities, food (in the form of a gift card), and some transportation and medical expenses
- Funds are granted one-time annually per household

ADDITIONAL PROCESS FOR COVID-19:

- Applicants who are experiencing loss of income must show proof via pay stubs or letter from employer.
- Phone interview with local VetRelief Advocate will be accepted.
- To avoid depletion of funds, a monthly financial cap will be put in place.

HOW TO SUBMIT:

Please send the application, DD-214 (member 4 copy), proof of temporary/permanent layoff due to coronavirus, and the bill for which you are requesting assistance to: aid@legionmail.org or by fax (407) 299-0901.

For the safety of our staff and volunteers, our office is closed to outside visitors. Therefore, we will not take any walk-in appointments or applications that are hand-delivered.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

PROJECT: VetRelief has partnered with the Florida Veterans Foundation on raising funds to accommodate the increased needs of our veteran community. Please donate so that together we can assist all those who need our support.

DONATION LINK: <http://www.helpflivets.org/covid-19-support/>

The American Legion 2020 (60th) Washington Conference

Shirley Douglas, Scholarships
scholarships@legionmail.org



It was my honor to be one of the Florida representatives that attended The American Legion National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission meeting that was held in

Washington DC on March 9, 2020. There were 6 key note speakers:

1. Dr. Paul R. Lawrence Under Secretary for Benefits U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs described a new banking program the VA has available for veterans who do not presently have a checking account and are still receiving benefit payments by check or debit card. The VA has partnered with several national banks who will provide no fee checking accounts to veterans. The website is www.veteransbenefitsbanking.org.
2. Mr. Randy Reeves Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs explained the National Cemetery Administration' Legacy Program which is electronically capturing the stories of 4 million

deceased veterans that are in National and Tribal cemeteries. Dr. Lawrence's goal is to make sure no veteran is ever forgotten.

3. Bill Brassard Senior Director, Communications National Shooting Sports Foundation provided information that 2/3 of all firearm deaths are due to suicide. 75% of veterans use a gun to commit suicide. His organization has a program call "Operation Secure Store" their goal is to have a gun lock on every stored gun and to promote gun safety education and safety to make sure guns are safely stored during summer months when children are home alone. For more information go to NSSF.org
4. Cheryl Mason Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs explained how the VA Benefits Appeals Hearings Boards have conducted 234 hearings utilizing Virtual Hearing Technology. She gave an example of a veteran who had a family emergency right before their hearing date. Instead of cancelling the hearing and having to reschedule a virtual teleconference hearing was held on the scheduled hearing date.
5. Dr. Stone Executive in Charge U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provided information on what the

VA medical facilities were doing to help combat the Coronavirus. The VA has started screening all individual entering VA facilities and have started to limit the visitors to VA nursing homes since the elderly are at the highest risk. Dr. Stone stated the VA has a lot of supplies stationed around the nation and the VA Emergency Ops Center is up and running.

6. Dr. Miller Acting Director for Suicide Prevention U.S Department of Veterans Affairs explained the VA wants everyone to Listen, Hear and Engage in conversation about Suicide. The VA is reaching out to state and local community leaders to help determine programs that could be developed in their areas to help combat the high rate of suicide. Dr. Miller explained a person contemplating suicide had a 5 to 60 minute critical time period before performing the act. If interrupted during that critical time there is a 90% chance that the person would not commit suicide.

James Douglas Jr. and I also visited 4 U.S. Congressman Offices and had conversations with their staff members about the 11 agenda items The American Legion has for the 116th Congress.

BSA Bankruptcy

Chuck Weber, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



By now you have probably heard about the national BSA filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The news reports given on this subject in the mass media have not always been complete and accurate. Given

the close relationship between the American Legion and the Boy Scouts of

America, it is important that the information regarding this action is made clear and understandable. We want to ensure that the American Legion, through its Posts, continues to be an active supporter of the Scouting movement. Here is the most accurate info currently published by BSA.

BSA filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on February 18, 2020, to achieve two key objectives: equitably compensate victims who were harmed during their time in Scouting and continue to carry out Scouting's mission for years to come.

It is important to remember that Scouting continues and its programs

are safer than ever. Additionally, only the national organization is included in the filing. Local councils – which provide programming, financial, facility and administrative support to Scouting units in their communities – are legally separate, distinct and financially independent from the national organization.

I want to highlight important points that are most relevant:

- **No BSA Councils in Florida have filed for bankruptcy.** Councils are legally separate, distinct and

Continued on page 14>>



<< Scouting - Continued from Page 13

financially independent from the national organization.

- **Scouting programs will continue.** This means that unit meetings and activities, district and council events, other Scouting adventures and countless service projects will take place as usual.
- **Scouting is safer now than ever before.** Over many years, BSA developed some of the strongest expert-informed youth protection policies found in any youth-serving organization.
- **Restricted donations – past, present**

or future – can only be used for their designated purpose. In addition, Friends of Scouting, United Way and any other annual donations made to our Council will continue to fund necessary day-to-day expenses that are critical to local Scouting programs.

It is **not** anticipated the national organization's bankruptcy filing will have **any** direct impact on the local Scouting experience or your Post's involvement with your Council. Understanding you may still have questions about these issues and things you will see in the news, the national organization has established a dedicated restructuring website, www.BSArestructuring.org.

This site includes a helpful Resources page, where you will find a short video explaining what Chapter 11 means for Scouting, as well as a FAQ. The site's Milestones page will be your best source for the latest updates throughout this process. If you have any questions about local Scouting, you can always feel free to reach out directly to your local Council.

Through the American Legion's engagement and dedication to Scouting, local BSA Councils will continue to bring adventures, values and lifelong benefits to youth and our communities for generations to come. Thank you for your trust and support as we continue this important mission.

Conference & Video Calls

Fred Matthews, Special Events
specialevents@legionmail.org



It has been a tough time for Special events in and outside of the Department. As this is written, the CDC is recommending no events be held with more than 10 people in attendance. While

many private businesses and organizations are not directly affected by this, it does dampen the hopes of fellowship and profit-making on a large scale.

Based on the average attendance at many Post and Executive Committee meetings, you should give some consideration to using the same communication methods used by the city, state, and national governments to communicate with your Executive Committee and carry out the basic needs of your membership: In

essence, use conference calls with your local phone service.

Also available is Video conferencing from your home or office computer. This is also the time to make sure your email addresses for your membership is up to date. Keeping everyone informed about the day to day changes that may take place is key to cutting out misinformation. Check with the Department Creative Services for some tips and suggestions on how to do this.

Youth Law Cadet Program

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet
youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



Our Florida Highway Patrol/American Legion Cadet Program is now accepting cadets for this year's program. The cadets really enjoy this program, and I know

this because we have not received a single complaint from any one of them or their families. Now is the time for the Posts to get their cadets' paperwork in, including a \$350.00 check per cadet. Make the checks out to the Department of Florida, not to me. All necessary paperwork that must be completed can be obtained from the Department of Florida's website.

As you should know, all this paperwork is needed by The American Legion and by

the Florida Highway Patrol Academy. We have our counselors in place again this year with 2 males and 1 female counselor. Please do not wait working on this program. Space is limited, so please get your cadets entered as soon as possible. We have a little flexibility, but not a lot. I have met with the Florida Highway Patrol Major in her office, and she is totally committed to this program. She has made a couple personnel changes to make this program more efficient.

Congratulations, Amanda

Ted Clark, Post 90

On Sunday, February 16th, the Post 90 candidate, Amanda Benitez, the winner of the American Legion (Post 90 and 13th

District) High School Oratorical contest, competed at the Area Contest at Post 110 in Port Charlotte. Amanda was successful in winning second place and receiving a scholarship from the Area contest in addition to the awards at the Post and

District levels. Amanda is the first student in 5 years, from Post 90, to reach the Area competitive level. Ted Clark, the Chair of Post 90's Oratorical Contest, was delighted with Amanda's success and looks forward to next year's competition.



An American Legion Success Story

William Hiltgen, Post 24

It happened right here in Bradenton. With very little time to prepare, a group of American Legion, Post 24 members, employees and friends resurrected the cancelled, 7th Annual, Post 24 Pig Roast. Their efforts saved the day and made the February 22nd event a huge success. The

food was excellent, and the event was well attended. Led by the inspiration and efforts of Doug and Tonya Lutz this small but mighty band of brothers & sisters carried the day. We owe a very special round of American Legion, Thanks & Appreciation to everyone involved. We would like to recognize the efforts of Loren Lasseter, Charlie Lambe and John Rauh who did much of the fire pit prep

work, on Friday the 21st and to Les King, Randy Sage and Doug Lutz who tended the fire pit throughout the evening and morning of the 21st and 22nd. Others who volunteered their skills and time include Robert Pearl, Rolland Doxey, Cleo Wertz, Louise Wertz, Adison Lutz and Colleen Field.

Detachment of Florida Legislative Commission

William D. Kelly, SAL NECA

kellyjrwm@gmail.com



Your Detachment of Florida was proudly represented at the Washington Conference this year and presented your Florida Wreath at the World War II Memorial in front of the Florida Monument on Sunday, March 8th, 2020.

James Bowers Squadron 402 along with your Detachment Legislative Chairman and National Legislative Commission man William D (Bill) Kelly Squadron 137 made the presentation on behalf of The Detachment of Florida to memorialize all that served and died in World War II from Florida. The SAL and The American Legion Family of over 100 members loaded into 2 buses to pay homage to our War Memorials and the SAL National Commander Clint Bolt presentation of a wreath on behalf of all members at the Tomb of The Unknown in Arlington National Cemetery was the highlight of the day.

The 60th Annual American Legion Washington Conference got into full swing the next day at 9 AM when our SAL National Legislative Commission and FL Legislative Commission attended the American Legion National Legislative Commission Meeting at the Washington Hilton. TAL National Legislative Chairman James Troiola opened the meeting and presided directly into business by

turning the program over to Legislative Director Melissa Bryant. She went point by point through The American Legion Legislative Agenda. This way we would be able to meet with and communicate to our Florida House of Representatives and Senators the concerns of our veterans.

Tuesday morning our Department Commander Johnson, Adjutants McDaniels, & Comer, NEC Boland, PDC Boland, PDC Smith, PDC Magee, Jim, & Linda Bowers myself and others attended National Commanders Oxford's Call. This is where the commander introduces various speakers, ALA National President Nicole Clapp and SAL National Commander Clint Bolt to an audience of over 1000 Legion Family Members including the keynote speaker Secretary of Veteran Affairs Robert Wilkie.

We then all split up to Storm Capitol Hill and call on all of our 27 FL. Congressman and 2 FL. Senators. Jim, & Linda Bowers and I present an American Legion Family approach to lobbying our legislators.

We had confirmed appointments with Congressman Neal Dunn MD (FL-2) and Congressman John Rutherford (FL-4). We provided our Congressman with an American Legion Legislative Agenda and presided to go point by point through the agenda. Some of the key points of the 2020 agenda were to thank them for our 2019 legislative victories they helped with including, The Mission Act and the Expanded Agent Orange Benefits. This year's Agenda's Key Points are Toxic Exposures and Burn Pits Exposure, Expanded HealthCare for Woman, and

Supporting VA's Suicide Prevention Efforts, and other agenda issues that help support veteran issues. We ended our appointments with a presentation of The Department of Florida's Commander Johnson's Challenge Coin as a token of our appreciation.

Wednesday is one of the most important days. This is the day when all of the volunteer work that you reported on your 2019 Consoladate's Reports is reported to a Joint Session of the Veterans Affairs Committee. Members of The American Legion Family attend to support The American Legion National Commander Bill Oxford explains to Congress the importance of supporting our veterans. Now you may understand better why your District Commander's are saying Fill out your Consolaided Reports, so my final request to you from 2020 Washington Conference is let's give the National Commander next year more to report.

PLEASE FILL OUT YOU 2020 CONSOLAIDED AND END OF THE YEAR REPORTS.



L-R Jim Bowers and Bill Kelly



March 26, 2020 95% Target Report (Currently 94.61%)		
6	Robert Suelter	99.63%
12	Chris Hamrick	99.33%
15	Bruce Carl	98.08%
16	Randall McNabb	97.32%
11	Johnny Castro	96.81%
1	Lamar Carroll	96.21%
4	Cherie Korn	95.44%
17	Hank Mangels	95.28%
8	Skip Felicita	94.90%
9	Arthur Barber	93.13%
5	Troy Horsley	92.71%
13	Brian Gehling	91.60%
3	Stuart Scott	88.20%
7	Rick Orzechewski	87.16%
2	Roger Hewitt	86.92%
14	Rocco LaPace	83.67%
Eastern	T.C. Biddle	99.50%
Central	Sid Damsgard	95.80%
Western	John Edens	94.55%
Northern	Marie Conti	93.40%
Southwestern	Jerry Faught	93.11%
Southern	Paul Bosco	91.82%
Post 400		91.69%
Post 208		85.17%



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



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

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The Legionnaire Insurance Trust products and services are there when you 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
95% 4/1/2020

www.thelit.com





102ND Annual Department Convention, June 25-28, 2020
The Orlando World Center Marriott, 8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Member, Post, Unit or Squadron

Contact Person

Title

Phone

Email

PROGRAM ADVERTISEMENT FOR LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS, POSTS, UNITS, AND SQUADRONS ONLY

<p>FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT \$175</p> <p>7.5" X 10"</p>
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<p>HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENT \$100</p> <p>7.5" X 5"</p>
<p>HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENT \$100</p> <p>7.5" X 5"</p>

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

Full Page Ad (7.5"x10") - **\$175**

Half Page Ad (7.5"x5") - **\$100**

Quarter Page Ad (3.75"x5") - **\$50**

Custom Design Fee - **\$25**

Advertisements must be submitted no later than May 13, 2020 to be included in the program. Please submit your advertisement artwork via email in one of the following image file types: .ai, .eps, .psd, .pdf, .tif, .jpeg, .jpg, .png. All artwork must be digital: no scanned or printed artwork will be accepted. All advertisements will be grayscale. All imagery must be legally licensed. The American Legion, Department of Florida reserves the right to redesign any advertisement due to required formatting or licensing issues. **Please email artwork to: events@floridalegion.org**

PAYMENT METHOD

Credit Card Check # _____ Please make checks payable to American Legion, Department of Florida

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

Visa MasterCard American Express Discover Total to Charge: \$ _____

Credit Card #

Cardholder Name

Expiration Date

CVV Code

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

Signature

Date

Submit to: The American Legion, Dept of Florida, Attn: Event Coordinator; PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854-7859



THE AMERICAN LEGION
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
FAMILY



2019 CRUISE

SEPTEMBER
16-21

THE ELATION



Maureen Williams PVP
1-800-819-3902 EXT 85931

GROUP CODE
5DSL69

Elation - Exotic Eastern Caribbean

DATE	DAY	PORT	ARRIVE	DEPART
09/16/19	MON	Port Canaveral (Orlando, FL)		4:00 PM
09/17/19	TUE	Fun Day at Sea		
09/18/19	WED	Amber Cove, Dominican Republic	10:30 AM	6:30 PM
09/19/19	THU	Grand Turk	8:00 AM	4:00 PM
09/20/19	FRI	Fund Day at Sea		
09/21/19	SAT	Port Canaveral (Orlando, FL)	8:00 AM	

**Please call for ticket costs. Earlier you book, the better the savings.*

Questions?

Maureen Williams, Vacation Planner
Carnival Cruise Line
800-819-3902 EXT 85931 OFFICE
305-406-6183 FAX
MON - THU 11:00 AM - 8:00PM EST
FRI 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM
mwilliams2@carnival.com

Welcome from 1st Vice Commander

Last years cruise was a great success. We had 22 cabins booked and everyone had a great time.

This will be first come first serve, so make your reservations ASAP as cabin space might fill up quickly. Please call to reserve your room as prices change all the time.

It's time to do it again. This will be first come first serve, so make your reservations ASAP as cabin space might fill up quickly. My wife works for Carnival, so we will be taken care of.

At least put your deposit down quickly and she will try to have us as close together as possible. Remember, this will be a FUN cruise and time to enjoy each other's company and to recharge for the year. I will

have hotel information as we get closer for the night before the cruise.

Everyone have a great time and will see you aboard.



William R Johnson
1st Vice Commander
American Legion
Department Of Florida
954-242-4496
rickjtank@hotmail.com



2020 STATE ORATORICAL WINNERS

March 14, 2020

Congratulations to all of our State Oratorical Contestants!

1st Place - \$2,500

Represents Florida at National Oratorical Contest

Conrad Hellwege

Northern Area, Post 27

\$500 Winners:

Dylan Cunard

Southwestern Area, Post 24

2nd Place - \$1,500

Wyatt Bedke

Central Area, Post 5

Leah Brent

Eastern Area, Post 117

3rd Place - \$1,000

Eric Singleton

Southern Area, Post 367

Samantha Dominguez

Western Area, Post 392

Special Thank You To:

All the Posts, Districts,
and Area Chairmen that
helped support these
students with their
journey to the State
Contest.

Department
Oratorical Chairman
Cherie Korn for her
dedication and
support for the
Oratorical Program.

The Judges,
Tabulators, Time
Keepers and staff for
your help and
support at the State
Contest.

Children's Organ Transplant Association®

The Trusted Leader Supporting Families ... For a Lifetime

LETTER TO THE EDITOR APRIL IS NATIONAL DONATE LIFE MONTH

March 2020

Dear Editor:

The Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) was founded in April 1986 when residents of Bloomington, Indiana, rallied around a toddler who needed a life-saving liver transplant. In only a few weeks the community raised more than \$100,000 to place the boy on the organ waiting list. But regrettably, the child died before an organ was found. Those community volunteers, along with his parents, turned tragedy into triumph by using the funds they raised to help other transplant families. That was the beginning of COTA, and those volunteers were our first Miracle Makers.

With the help of the men and women of The American Legion, COTA has assisted thousands of children and young adults by helping to raise funds for a lifetime of transplant-related expenses. COTA will honor The American Legion Family in 2020 as our Miracle Makers of the Year, as Post 18 in Bloomington, Indiana, stepped forward to help the first COTA patient in 1986. Extensive volunteer networks across the nation are working to ensure that no child or young adult needing an organ or tissue transplant is excluded from a transplant waiting list due to lack of funds.

Sadly, 22 people in the United States die each day waiting for an organ transplant. One organ donor can save eight lives. April is National Donate Life Month and COTA is asking everyone within The American Legion Family to go to www.RegisterMe.org and register to be a designated organ and/or tissue donor.

You can become a COTA Miracle Maker. Find out how your Post, Unit, Squadron or Legion Riders can help a COTA transplant family near you by visiting COTA.org and clicking on Find a Family at the top of the page.

Thank you,



Rick Lofgren, President
rick@cota.org 800.366.2682

The Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) is a national charity dedicated to guiding communities in raising funds for transplant-related expenses. COTA's priority is to assure that no child or young adult is denied a transplant or excluded from a waiting list due to lack of funds. 100% of funds raised in honor of patients assist with a lifetime of transplant-related expenses.

2501 West COTA Drive • Bloomington, Indiana 47403
800.366.2682 • EmmaM@cota.org • COTA.org

Dear Valued Blood Donor,

As the nation confronts the coronavirus we want you to know how important your blood drive is to ensuring a ready blood supply.

Now is the Time to Donate

OneBlood urges all eligible donors to please keep their commitments to donate and we urge all blood drive sponsors to please continue hosting blood drives. **Blood donors are needed now more than ever.**

It is Safe to Donate Blood. The coronavirus does not pose any known risk to blood donors in the United States during the donation process or from attending blood drives. The coronavirus only heightens the need for a ready blood supply. By making blood donation a habit you are helping ensure a ready blood supply at all times.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your OneBlood Account Representative.

We greatly value our partnership and thank you for your dedication and commitment to saving lives.

Sincerely,

Mike Rogers

Senior Vice President, Donor Operations

Prepared by the **U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY LOANS

Small Business Guide and Checklist



The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allocated \$350 billion to help small businesses keep workers employed amid the pandemic and economic downturn. Known as the Paycheck Protection Program, the initiative provides 100% federally guaranteed loans to small businesses.

Importantly, these loans may be forgiven if borrowers maintain their payrolls during the crisis or restore their payrolls afterward.

The administration soon will release more details including the list of lenders offering loans under the program. In the meantime, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has issued this guide to help small businesses and self-employed individuals prepare to file for a loan.

Here are the questions you may be asking—and what you need to know.

1 Am I ELIGIBLE?

You are eligible if you are:

- A small business with fewer than 500 employees
- A small business that otherwise meets the SBA's size standard
- A 501(c)(3) with fewer than 500 employees
- An individual who operates as a sole proprietor
- An individual who operates as an independent contractor
- An individual who is self-employed who regularly carries on any trade or business
- A Tribal business concern that meets the SBA size standard
- A 501(c)(19) Veterans Organization that meets the SBA size standard

In addition, some special rules may make you eligible:

- If you are in the accommodation and food services sector (NAICS 72), the 500-employee rule is applied on a per physical location basis
- If you are operating as a franchise or receive financial assistance from an approved Small Business Investment Company the normal affiliation rules do not apply

REMEMBER: The 500-employee threshold includes all employees: full-time, part-time, and any other status.

2 What will lenders be LOOKING FOR?

In evaluating eligibility, lenders are directed to consider whether the borrower was in operation before February 15, 2020 and had employees for whom they paid salaries and payroll taxes or paid independent contractors.

Lenders will also ask you for a good faith certification that:

1. The uncertainty of current economic conditions makes the loan request necessary to support ongoing operations
2. The borrower will use the loan proceeds to retain workers and maintain payroll or make mortgage, lease, and utility payments
3. Borrower does not have an application pending for a loan duplicative of the purpose and amounts applied for here
4. From Feb. 15, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2020, the borrower has not received a loan duplicative of the purpose and amounts applied for here (Note: There is an opportunity to fold emergency loans made between Jan. 31, 2020 and the date this loan program becomes available into a new loan)

If you are an independent contractor, sole proprietor, or self-employed individual, lenders will also be looking for certain documents (final requirements will be announced by the government) such as payroll tax filings, Forms 1099-MISC, and income and expenses from the sole proprietorship.



What lenders will NOT LOOK FOR

- That the borrower sought and was unable to obtain credit elsewhere.
- A personal guarantee is not required for the loan.
- No collateral is required for the loan.

3

How much can I BORROW?

Loans can be up to 2.5 x the borrower's average monthly payroll costs, not to exceed **\$10 million**.



How do I calculate my average monthly PAYROLL COSTS?



sum of
INCLUDED
payroll costs

-

sum of
EXCLUDED
payroll costs

=

**PAYROLL
COSTS**

INCLUDED Payroll Cost:

- For Employers:** The sum of payments of any compensation with respect to employees that is a:
 - salary, wage, commission, or similar compensation;
 - payment of cash tip or equivalent;
 - payment for vacation, parental, family, medical, or sick leave
 - allowance for dismissal or separation
 - payment required for the provisions of group health care benefits, including insurance premiums
 - payment of any retirement benefit
 - payment of state or local tax assessed on the compensation of the employee
- For Sole Proprietors, Independent Contractors, and Self-Employed Individuals:** The sum of payments of any compensation to or income of a sole proprietor or independent contractor that is a wage, commission, income, net earnings from self-employment, or similar compensation and that is in an amount that is not more than \$100,000 in one year, as pro-rated for the covered period.

EXCLUDED Payroll Cost:

1. Compensation of an individual employee in excess of an annual salary of \$100,000, as prorated for the period February 15, to June 30, 2020
2. Payroll taxes, railroad retirement taxes, and income taxes
3. Any compensation of an employee whose principal place of residence is outside of the United States
4. Qualified sick leave wages for which a credit is allowed under section 7001 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Public Law 116–5 127); or qualified family leave wages for which a credit is allowed under section 7003 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

NON SEASONAL EMPLOYERS:

Maximum loan =

2.5 X Average total monthly payroll costs incurred during the year prior to the loan date

For businesses not operational in 2019:

2.5 X Average total monthly payroll costs incurred for January and February 2020

SEASONAL EMPLOYERS:

Maximum loan =

2.5 X Average total monthly payments for payroll costs for the 12-week period beginning February 15, 2019 or March 1, 2019 (decided by the loan recipient) and ending June 30, 2019

4

Will this loan be FORGIVEN?

Borrowers are eligible to have their loans forgiven.

How Much?

A borrower is eligible for loan forgiveness equal to the amount the borrower spent on the following items during the 8-week period beginning on the date of the origination of the loan:

- Payroll costs (using the same definition of payroll costs used to determine loan eligibility)
- Interest on the mortgage obligation incurred in the ordinary course of business
- Rent on a leasing agreement
- Payments on utilities (electricity, gas, water, transportation, telephone, or internet)
- For borrowers with tipped employees, additional wages paid to those employees

The loan forgiveness cannot exceed the principal.

How could the forgiveness be reduced?

The amount of loan forgiveness calculated above is reduced if there is a reduction in the number of employees or a reduction of greater than 25% in wages paid to employees. Specifically:

Reduction based on reduction of number of employees



PAYROLL COST
Calculated on page 2

X

Average Number of Full-Time Equivalent Employees (FTEs) Per Month for the 8-Weeks Beginning on Loan Origination

÷

Option 1:

Average number of FTEs per month from February 15, 2019 to June 30, 2019

Option 2:

Average number of FTEs per month from January 1, 2020 to February 29, 2020

For Seasonal Employers:

Average number of FTEs per month from February 15, 2019 to June 30, 2019

Reduction based on reduction in salaries



PAYROLL COST
Calculated on page 2

-

For any employee who did not earn during any pay period in 2019 wages at an annualized rate more than \$100,000, the amount of any reduction in wages that is greater than 25% compared to their most recent full quarter.

What if I bring back employees or restore wages?

Reductions in employment or wages that occur during the period beginning on February 15, 2020, and ending 30 days after enactment of the CARES Act, (as compared to February 15, 2020) shall not reduce the amount of loan forgiveness **IF** by June 30, 2020 the borrower eliminates the reduction in employees or reduction in wages.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Look out for more information about eligible lenders and additional guidance from the SBA soon.

For more guidance and resources for small businesses, visit uschamber.com/co