



DECEMBER 2020

THE LEGION LINK

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IN THIS EDITION

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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

From your Dept Commander Rick Johnson

Rick Johnson, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving, shared with family and friends. It's hard to believe that 2020 is almost done.

I see a lot of Posts are doing many wonderful things in their communities. The Veterans' Day boat parade was a huge success, with more boats than ever before, 74 in participation. Post 273 did an excellent job keeping everyone safe.

The *Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans* event, in Port Charlotte, was a great time had by all. Membership and PROJECT: VetRelief joined, distributing valuable information. The committee did a fantastic job organizing the event. The parade and concert, by Lee Greenwood, provided great entertainment, and was enjoyed by all. Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander, received a special award from District 13 in recognition of a job well done.

District 13, with the help of many, organized the ruck walk at Post 110 and raised awareness for the 22 Veterans committing suicide every day. Special

thanks to Jessica for a well-planned event.

As we near the end of 2020, I hope this final month brings joy to everyone, after such a difficult year. Please continue to be safe, help families in need during the Holidays, especially those with children. That's what we are about! Make sure your community is aware of what you're doing.

In November, I sent an email regarding National passing a resolution to sponsor an Indy car, with a cost over \$7,000,000. All the responses we received were against the idea, stating "it was a bad idea during these times". We need to find better ways to spend OUR money to advertise. We have tried this with NASCAR in the past, and it failed. We need to make sure that we know about these resolutions before a vote is submitted. Only two states voted "no", Florida voted "yes". I am appalled by this choice and I am sure many Legionnaires will be too.

Many of our Posts have had multiple cases of COVID-19. Many Posts, I have visited, are following the CDC Guidelines, but unfortunately some Posts are not even making an effort. We must make sure that we are safeguarding our members, who visit our Posts. Putting them in jeopardy is wrong, and against all we stand for. Numbers are rising, another shutdown seems imminent. If we can follow

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guidelines and maintain safety protocols, hopefully the next shutdown will not involve us.

We have had training sessions for District Commanders, and above, who were to return and train what they were taught. It appears that the word is not being passed down as it should, to the right people within their districts. We have numerous Commanders who are doing an excellent job, we thank them for that. We hope others will quickly follow their example.

Constitution and By-Laws were discussed in training. We are at the one and one-half year mark, and still Posts are not done. I continue to ask but keep getting the response "we will have the templates soon". Everywhere I go, I am asked, "when are they going to be done". All I can respond is

that "I am trying to get them done". If it is necessary to put together a special team to do them, it will be done. Again, I apologize for this and take responsibility. I ensure you this issue will be resolved.

We have numerous resolutions, which were passed by the NEC at the fall meetings. We are currently trying to put them in "layman's terms" so that everyone will understand, as the wording is vague. As soon as we are done, we will forward them down to the post level.

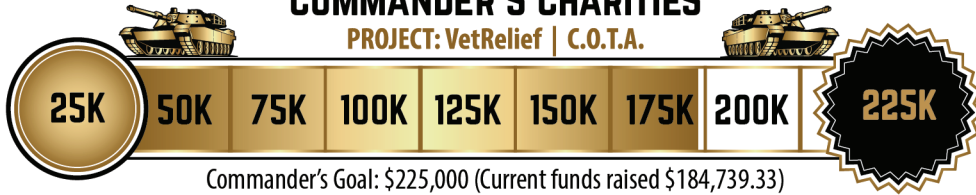
Enough of all that, my wife and I just want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please be vigilant in your travels, be smart, and follow CDC guidelines at any function that you might host or attend. God bless us all and do the right things for the right reasons.

DECEMBER 2020	
1	#GivingTuesday
1	Post 389 Visitation
3	Post 99 Visitation
3	Post 186 Visitation
5	District 15 Meeting
5	District 12 Meeting
5	District 2 Quarterly Meeting
5	District 17 Holiday Party
6	District 5 Meeting
7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
10-18	Hanukkah
12	District 6 Meeting
12	District 8 Meeting
13	National Guard Day (1636)
14	Post 278 Visitation
15	Legion Link Articles Due (No late articles)
15	Bill of Rights Day
16	Homeless Vets Outreach Awards Noms Due
16	Employment Awards Noms Due
17	Wright Brother's Day
19	Wreaths Across America
21	First Day of Winter
24	Christmas Eve
24-2	Department HQ Closed
26	Kwanzaa
31	New Year's Eve

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

PROJECT: VetRelief | C.O.T.A.



Buddy Checks, CPRs, and Mentorship

Jerry Brandt, 1st Vice
1stvice@legionmail.org



What a year - with COVID-19, closing Posts, opening Posts and then closing and then reopening of the Posts, and now a 2nd wave of COVID-19 is occurring. We have our work cut out for us. Currently we all should be doing a "Buddy Check", reaching out to the members who have not visited the Posts in a while. Ensure that they are ok or find out if they are in need of assistance, and invite them down to the Post. Those who do the Buddy Check find out that members want to hear from us, often those who are nervous about

COVID-19, do not want to leave their homes, we have a chance to invite them down for Christmas and ask them to join the celebration. In January/February a 2nd Buddy Check should take place; this is where you should ask about the dues as well as how they are doing.

Commanders, you should be documenting your accomplishments on the online CPR's. This a way for you to keep track of what you do within your Post. If you don't track your Post's accomplishments, you may have forgotten something. You may think this may be a small item or detail, but with the other items that are forgotten, it adds up. Use the Online CPR's to help you track what you are doing, what you are giving.

Commanders, one more item you should think about. Within six months, we will be

Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at www.floridalegion.org. We share the information we are provided.

having Post elections. Have you trained a replacement? Is your Post mentoring someone to move new people up? I often hear of the problem that there is no one to replace me. If we are mentoring our replacement, we have someone. Often a Post does great, under one Commander, if that Commanders leaves, the Post suffers. Don't let that happen to your Post, you made it great, pass it on to the next person, who will keep it great.

As for membership in Zone 3, we currently have 3 Districts in the 65% category, and 2 Districts at 64%, closing in on the 65% category, we are doing well. We have a POSITIVE membership total up from last year, in fact, we are up 206

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Legionnaires from last year in Zone 3 as of the 8th of November 2019. Please keep up the good work.

The Department needs members to step up, Jerry Brandt needs members to step up. If you want to be Chairperson for a program, please fill out the form listed in www.floridalegion.org > Resources > Legion Post Documents > Forms > Dept.

Chair Interest. The forms will be reviewed starting January and February, so don't delay.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kindness & Membership

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



I was honored to be the guest speaker for The American Legion Post 111 Annual Veterans Day program. I attended the Challenge 22 Ruck Walk in Winter Garden and Port

Charlotte. Hopefully, all who were affected by the storm are ok. If any post member or post needs help; please contact your post or district commander.

December 2020 is here. We should be at 75% in membership. Zone 2, I challenge you to 100% by December 31, 2020. For those posts that have reached 100%, congratulations. Please check the 0400 members, there are still many that can be transferred to your post.

Let us learn to love, help, be nice, and care for one another. We all need each other. As Christmas approaches it should be a reminder to love one another. May the blessings of the Lord be upon each of you. I wish you a very harmonious and merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Communication Equals Success

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



Effective communication is essential for any organization to be successful. Though we spend endless time and resources to alleviate this problem, we are still falling

short when it comes to communicating effectively. Communication is vital to our organization's success. Clear communication can help you avoid misunderstandings, develop strong relationships with your people, and will

establish yourself as a vital member of the Legion team. After a little research about communication I found there were four types: verbal, nonverbal, written, and visual. Each of these offer its own advantages from the Post level up to the National level. It ultimately depends on each individual situation. I found that the most effective form of communication for me is verbal. In person visits and over the phone are more effective because it's personal. This is the reason we put so much emphasis on buddy checks. I've also found that through my visits to the Posts in my zone I've established relationships that never would've happened if I had not been there in person.

One of the biggest problems I encounter

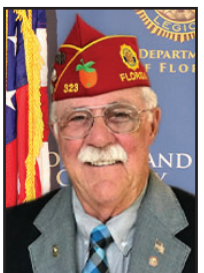
is the communication coming back to me. Although we are still in the middle of a crisis, there is still a lot going on in the Department. Every Post has its own life and to succeed needs the support of everyone in our Legion family. From events and ceremonies to issues within the organization, communication is the only way to get the word out for assistance. My only job as your Vice Commander is to assist you in achieving your goals. Please keep us informed so we can be there to make sure those goals are achieved.

Remember you can communicate without motivating, but you can never motivate without communicating! Be safe and communicate.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Grants

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation received 174 grant applications seeking consideration for a 2021 CWF grant by the Board of Directors. Following a review

with the screening committee, the board approved awarding 19 grants totaling \$740,889 for the 2021 calendar year.

The foundation recorded contributions totaling \$503,223.42 for the 2019-2020 program year (June 1, 2019 – May 31, 2020). The Sons of The American Legion (SAL) contributed over \$252,944 for the 2019-2020 program year; the SAL contributions comprised 50% of the total program year donations.

The CWF Foundation received its first distribution from Amazon Smiles this past August. A total of \$36.02 was donated to the foundation by Amazon purchasers having designated contributions toward the CWF.

The "Sons for Kids" Aprons and the CWF Piggy Banks are available through the CWF at National Headquarters.

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The following are the 2021 grants approved:

1. American Legion Auxiliary – \$75,000 for their Scholarship program
2. American Printing House for the Blind - \$23,500 will provide Braille Tales books
3. Angel Flights Soars, Inc. - \$50,000 fund flights for medically fragile children
4. Angel Flight Southeast - \$9,700 for print and produce advertising material for Leesburg, FL area
5. Autism Speaks - \$35,000 to update and expand current digital resources
6. Children’s Cardiomyopathy Foundations - \$20,000 will allow for the creation of a mobile storytelling app.
7. Children’s Hospital & Medical Center Foundation - \$12,400 for “Safe Sleep Education Program
8. Father Flanagan’s Boys’ Home - \$35,000

- for Boys Town National Hotline.
9. Gift of Adoption - \$25,000 will help adoption of vulnerable children in the U.S.
10. Illinois Spina Bifida Assoc. - \$9,847 for brochure about Spina Bifida for Expectant Parents
11. Kansas Braille Transcription Institute, Inc. - \$9,062 to produce and education material about American Flag in Braille
12. Mercy Medical Angels - \$25,000 covers transportation cost of children for medical treatment
13. Military Child Education Coalition - \$10,000 to supporting development and resiliency skills
14. National Autism Association - \$30,000 will fund Big Red Safety Boxes
15. Shwachman-Diamond Syndrome Foundation - \$6,380 for Commonly Used Shwachman-Diamond Syndrome Medical Terms
16. The American Legion National

- Headquarters - \$55,500 to support scholarships to the American Legions Boys Nation; Shooting Sports; Baseball and Eagle Scout
17. The American Legion National Headquarters - \$203,500 to provide scholarships for youth competing in the 2021 National Oratorical contest
18. The American Legion National Headquarters - \$75,000 for Temporary Financial Assistance for minor children
19. United Through Reading - \$31,000 for Special Books Distributions to Military Children

As President of The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, I would like to give my sincere gratitude for your contribution to the Foundation. Without your help the American Legion would not be at the forefront helping children throughout our Nation.

New Insurance Requirments, Resolution 35

Clarence Hill, Judge Advocate

chill@floridalegion.org



ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 14 -15 AND WHAT IT MEANS TO EVERY POST WITHIN THE

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

The National Executive Committee (NEC), without consultation with any of the Posts in the organization which has become the procedural norm, has approved the following resolution which will affect every Post in The American Legion. Below are the resolved clauses of Resolution 35

RESOLVED, By The National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled virtually on October 14-15, 2020, That because The American Legion owns, controls, protects

and defends The American Legion’s Tradenames, this resolution is necessary to dictate protective standards over the Tradenames; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion, via insurance policies, protect itself, and its Tradenames, from liability and subsequently strongly urges all American Legion departments, department-chartered intermediate bodies and posts do the same; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That due to the need to protect The American Legion’s Tradenames from liability it shall be required forthwith that when any American Legion department, department-chartered intermediate body, post or organization use The American Legion’s Name or Tradenames and an insurance policy is obtained, the group utilizing this insurance policy shall specifically in the insurance policy hold The American Legion harmless and named as an additional insured on any, and all, insurance policies; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion’s

national adjutant, or designee, has complete authority to independently investigate, confirm and report that any, and all, insurance policy(ies) purchased by an American Legion department, department-chartered intermediate body, post or organization shall specify that The American Legion is held harmless and named as an additional insured on any, and all, insurance policies; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion’s National Executive Committee strongly urges that all American Legion departments follow similar courses of protective action, to wit: (1) require all of the department’s own intermediate chartered bodies and posts that obtain insurance policies hold their respective

American Legion departments harmless and also named as an additional insured on any, and all, insurance policy(ies) and (2) that the department adjutant, or said designee, have the complete authority to independently investigate,

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confirm and report that any insurance policy(ies) purchased by the department's intermediate body or post shall hold its respective department also harmless and named as an additional insured on any, and all, insurance policies.

What does this mean to a Post?

Let's define some terms, what is Hold Harmless? A legal definition of hold harmless: is an agreement between parties in which one assumes the potential liability for injury (Post) that may arise from a situation and thus relieves the other of liability (The American Legion and AL Department of Florida). Say someone falls in your parking lot, breaks a shoulder, or is overserved in your Post and leaves, getting in a serious accident. Lawsuits follow. Under a hold harmless the Post is solely responsible for the lawsuits both Department and

National are protected from liability under the hold harmless. This "hold harmless" for The American Legion and The American Legion Department of Florida must be added to every insurance policy a Post holds in its name (General Liability, Liquor Liability, Property, Directors and Officers and Fidelity Bonds).

The next new term applies more to liability insurance, but an additional insured would have their names (The American Legion and AL Department of Florida) listed on all your insurance policies. Should a lawsuit or any other claim occur the Post is held liable, and the additional insured is protected, and should the additional insured incur costs they would be reimbursed by the insurance company.

Usually additional insured is commonly used in conjunction with an indemnity agreement (like Resolution 35) between the named insured (the Post) and the party

requesting additional insured status (The American Legion and AL Department of Florida). Every insurance policy held in a Posts name, must specifically reflect The American Legion and The American Legion Department of Florida as named additional insured.

The additions required under Resolution 35 are being implemented because the tradename The American Legion and the Logo of The American Legion are assets of the organization and require legal and financial protections through insurance coverage at all levels of the organization.

Please re-read the 4th Resolved clause as this will be the mechanism to assure compliance by Posts and Departments. I expect the Department Adjutant will be charged with monitoring compliance by every Post within the Department. Exactly how, has yet to be determined.

December Holidays

Barry Roberts, Chaplain

chaplain@legionmail.org



In the month of December, we have many things to honor and celebrate. Pearl Harbor Day December 7th to remember and honor the 2,403 citizens of the United States who were killed in the

Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941.

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire. It is also known as the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is observed for eight nights and days, starting on the 25th day of Kislev. The festival is observed by lighting the candles of a candelabrum with nine branches, called a hanukkiyah. One branch is placed above or below the others and

its candle is used to light the other eight candles. This unique candle is called the shamash candle. Each night, one additional candle is placed from right to left and is lit by the shamash from left to right until all eight candles are lit together on the final night of the festival.

Christmas December 25th is the celebration and remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in accordance with messianic prophecies. When Joseph and Mary arrived in the city, the inn had no room and so they were offered a stable where the Christ Child was soon born, with angels proclaiming this news to the three kings and they followed the star they had seen in the east ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. The Old Testament,

written hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, contains over 300 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled through His life, death, and resurrection. Our Savior was born!

Kwanzaa is a week-long annual celebration held in the United States and other nations of the African diaspora in the Americas to honor African heritage in African-American culture. It is observed from December 26 to January 1, culminating in gift-giving and a feast.

As part of our Challenge 22 efforts, I have been in contact with the American Association of Christian Counselors and we are being offered a faith based Mental Health Life Coach Certificate through Legion Church. It is about 45 hours of online training and the \$2400 tuition has been waived, so the only cost is a \$54.00 administration fee. I already have several people from around the state enrolled in the program. If you would like to know more please email me at bwroberts@rocketmail.com or call me at

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863-661-9999.

Let's be proactive together in preserving "For God and Country" and let's be

proactive together in reaching out into our communities and serving our veterans and their families. Let's be proactive together and go help somebody....

I am here for you, feel free to join and participate on Facebook, www.facebook.com/floridalegionchaplains

What have you done for the American Legion lately?

Edward Lewis, Historian

historian@legionmail.org



I have been asked by numerous people why I have not contributed to the Legion Link over the course of the last 7 or eight months, the reason is quite simple...

I have had nothing worth saying.

As the year winds down, I have plenty to say.

As a Department, COVID hit ALL of us hard! Posts, small and large, suffered through the numerous shutdowns. I never wrote an article about COVID, because I believed our Department Commander covered everything with his numerous posts on social media and the Department website. As the Department Historian, what else could I add? In retrospect, I could have written an article about watching your fellow Legionnaires' back, instead of raving them out on Facebook. The single-mindedness being displayed on social media during this crisis is quite disheartening.

Which brings us to our History lesson of the month...

At the 1976 American Legion national

convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, one hundred and eighty-two American Legion members acquired pneumonia from a previously unknown strain of bacteria now named "Legionella". Of those 182 Legion members, twenty-nine died. Between 1995 and 2005 over 32,000 cases of Legionnaires' disease were documented. Since that time, there have been dozens of documented fatalities caused by "Legionnaires Disease." So, ladies and gentlemen, how many Veteran Service Organizations have their own infectious disease named after them?

Based on that little piece of history and our current Coronavirus situation, decisions had to be made on the Department level regarding special events.

We did not have a Convention. Not the worst thing in the world, but elections would have been nice. We did not have a Fall Conference. Not a real big deal. Classes have been done over video conferencing in the last month or so. All taken care of.

However, to see the vitriol being spewed on social media because Legion members were not able to go to Orlando for a weekend of drinking and socializing makes my head spin. I suppose the attitude among some Legionnaires is, "who cares about the welfare of our members? We need a reason to party!" Edmond Burke wrote, "those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." For those reading this, I have a simple question. Would you

be willing to gamble with your life or your fellow Legionnaire's life for the sake of visiting a few a hospitality rooms? If you cannot answer the question, do not complain about the people that had to make the tough decision of cancelling the convention and conference.

Most recently, the Department held a leadership retreat. Based on the social media posts I have read and been the subject of recently, many unsatisfied Legionnaires were not happy because they were not invited. However, the ones complaining the loudest are the same ones that I have not seen during my travels around the state over the last eighteen months. I say to them, "step up and do your job, then maybe you will be invited to teach and contribute."

Me, I can rest easy knowing that I have tried to the best of my ability to cover as many events as I can, and to teach when called upon. I have done my best to represent our Department on a local and national level. This month's column will not be popular with a lot of people within our fine state. I can live with that. Anyone that wants to complain to me or about me, please feel to call me or email me directly.

Before I go, I have another simple question. What have you done for the American Legion lately?

Merry Christmas and a happy new year!





Northern Area

Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander

northernarea@legionmail.org



Congratulations to the Posts that have attained or exceeded their 75% membership goal! The next goal date is 80% before January 14, 2021. Congratulations to all the Posts that have already exceeded their 100% goal! Keep up the Great Work!

My goal for all the Districts in the Northern Area, is 100% by St. Patrick's Day. This is due to the Race to the Top deadline being set at March 31, 2021. This award is a national membership award that recognizes the top District Commander in five membership categories. More information on Race to the Top can be found in the Department Membership Manual.

Does your Post have members that have not renewed for 2019 or 2020 (last 1-2 years)? Contact them. Are there Post 0400 Members & DMS Members in your area? Use MyLegion.org to find out, then contact them.

Is your Post going to be hosting a children's Christmas party? Look around your Post for a Proper Santa. Beard & Belly are a plus, but the most important quality of a Santa is love of children. While the party is on, look at the parents for indications that they are eligible for the American Legion, (such as a hat, belt buckle, necklace, earrings, tattoo, etc.) and ask them to join.

Here are a few reminders and other important dates:

1. Boys State Delegate fee - \$450 per Delegate - is due before January 6, 2021.
2. Post Level Oratorical Contests must be completed January 2 – January

17, 2021. That means you should be conducting and finishing your candidate selection process this month if you have not already done so. District Oratorical dates: January 20 - February 7, 2021. Area Oratorical dates: February 8 – 21, 2021. Department Oratorical will be held March 13, 2021 at Department Headquarters.

3. Now is the time to start planning a Four Chaplains Memorial Service. This Honors Four Army Chaplains that gave up their lives on February 3, 1943, when the U.S.A.T. Dorchester sank.
4. Spring is coming. That means Shooting Sports, School Medals, and the ALR Summit.
5. The Northern Area Ball will be held on March 6, 2021, at American Legion Post 129 in Jacksonville Beach. Look for the Flyer on Department website.
6. Regardless which Religious Holiday you celebrate, Have a Happy & Safe Holiday Season.

May your Holiday Season Be Filled with JOY, LOVE, and PEACE

Jim Ramos, Northern Membership

teamramos@legionmail.org



May your Holiday Season Be Filled with JOY, LOVE, and PEACE. I look forward to seeing you all soon or in the New Year 2021. Please be safe, enjoy Christmas, and have a good time.

Thanks to everyone who is doing great with membership, but let's do better. December and January are the two hardest months to do membership because we forget to ask members to renew. Why? Because we plan something special for our members and some have NOT paid their dues. We know this is a bad time with COVID-19 and the holidays coming. December is big with the holiday spirit and good will, all the way to late January 2021.

Let's GO Florida! Our next Goal is 80% by January 21, 2020 and we can do it together. Let me know what assistance you need to make the 80% goal for Department of Florida.

Thanks to ALL the Districts for making the 65% goal and some are still working to catch up to make the next Goal of 70% and I know they can do it. "We can do it together," Call me if you need assistance, please do not wait until it is too late.

We need to stay on top of membership because we must meet the Goals from Department. The membership timetable is to help each Post make their new goal. We all are either an active or passive recruiter:

1. Recruit a friend, a neighbor or somebody who is a veteran.
2. Just ask if they look like a Veteran.
3. Show your pride by wearing your Legion gears (shirt, cap with the Legion Logo).
4. Buddy Checks are working Please

continue connecting with your members (Buddy Check FloridaLegion.org) to get it.

The Goal to get for January is 80% for the Department, how is your Post doing? Setting the Goals: (specific dates and timetable) below:

1. December 7 - Pearl Harbor Day, see if you have some WWII Veterans and do something to say Thank You.
2. December 25 – Christmas, do something for your members.
3. December 31 - New Year's Eve, 2020 cards are NO GOOD for 2021!!!
4. January 1 - New Year, welcome 2021.
5. Now back to membership with phone calls, emails and some face to face contact to get members to renew.
6. January - contact prospective members, new members and get unpaid/dropouts' member to renew for 2021.

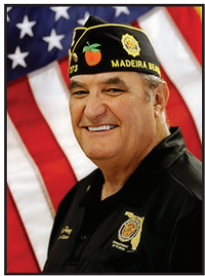
Continue to plan for February please look at the timetable plan.





Think Ahead for Membership

Ray Perez, Southern Membership
teamperez@legionmail.org



The Coronavirus outbreak has forced our Posts to reevaluate how employees deliver relevant customer experiences, where they work, and how digital channels can be used to support

business continuity through the crisis and beyond. The global COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed our experiences as customers, employees, citizens, humans and our attitudes and behaviors are changing as a result. The crisis is fundamentally changing how our members react and it takes a leadership role to make sure we are doing the right thing in protecting our members. Once

the immediate threat of the virus has passed, Posts will need to consider the impact of these changes on the way we communicate, build, and run the experiences that people need and want. Our membership will depend on it.

Department wide we have 21 Posts currently at or over 100%. In the Southern Area they are Posts 390, 317, 32, 26, 413, 268, 367, 390, 99 and 147 as of the November 12th Report. The National Report shows us at 2,346 renewals ahead of where we were this time last year (Again this is a November Report). Also, as of the weekly report of November 12th, Post 400 is reaching 79%. There are still 2,500 members you can reach out to that have not renewed. Chances are they are waiting until the last minute to renew so that gives you a short window to reach out to them and invite them to your Post.

Some dates to remember this month: 75% Goal by December 2nd. The day after Thanksgiving kicks off the Holiday Blood Donor month that last until December 31st. The 13th of December is the National Guard's Birthday which is a good time to reach out to the local National Guard unit and do a holiday meal at your Post. On the 19th is the Annual Wreaths Across America events. On the 31st the 2020 cards are no longer valid. This is a great month to conduct a Membership Rally or District Buddy checks for all non-renewals, in fact it is critical. If you need assistance with this, please call me.

We had some excellent training at the Department Commander's Retreat. Jim and I presented some great training concerning membership. Those that attended should have received a link to all the material taught.

ALR Summit & Upcoming Events

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
legionriders@legionmail.org



It is final, we will hold the Summit at Avanti Palms Resort and Conference Center, 6515 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32819. This is the same hotel I mentioned in last month's article,

and yes, they will have fire pits. We have negotiated an \$87 per night rate which includes breakfast. You can start making your reservations on Monday November 2 through December 31st. AAA will be handling all the reservations for us through Laura Lyden at 904-543-6864.

It has come to our attention that some of you are trying to go around AAA and making reservations with the hotel, which looks cheaper. A lot of people have worked extremely hard to establish the \$87 rate for our group. Our rate waives the parking and resort fees and many others. If you made your

reservations through the hotel your final rate will be around \$115 per night, plus your additional food expenses.

For those that have registered through AAA, you will be receiving a wrist band when you pick up your registration packet at the Summit. The band will allow you to pick up the free breakfast and take advantage of other meal discounts.

There will be two hospitality rooms on the main floor and four hospitality suites available to the group. One of the hospitality rooms on the main floor, will be the ALR Department's Appreciation Room sponsored by District 15. They will receive the room at no cost because of their winning performance in the last Round Robin.

The summit format will mirror last years. We will have the same topics with a few changes with instructors. We will add an active demonstration of the current program we are using to track our performance with the Merry Go Round and Round Robin. We will keep you

posted on other changes we will be making as the Summit comes together.

As I have mentioned before, Bev and I are looking for a little help. We are a little ahead of the schedule because we moved unused plans from last year to this, but we need more individuals to get involved and ready to step up as the needs of the program change. Please plan on attending our "Succession Planning Class" at the Summit, come see what it is all about.

Again, Thank You for all your Efforts! We already have our schedule put together for next year. More info coming. Here is our tentative schedule for next year for your review and comments

- November 5-8, Fall Conference – Cancelled
- February 3, Summit - Meet & Greet 6P – 8P
- February 4, 5, & 6, Summit - Classroom, we may add AM Sunday for

Continued on page 9>>





<<American Legion Riders Continued from page 8
Road Captain Training

- April 3, Children & Youth Picnic at American Legion Post #1, Titusville, Florida, 12P to 6PM
- April, all month, Round Robin, PVR/SPI

April 18, Meet & Greet - Marathon & Pensacola FL

- April 19-23, North & South - In-State Unity Rides
- April 24, In-State-Rally - Harley South Kissimmee FL

- July 1-4, Department Convention

Beverly and I would like to thank each of you for the support we received this last year! Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such a great group!

Challenge 22 Event was a Huge Success

Kurt Gies, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org



On Saturday, November 14th, 2020 the American Legion Post 63 held its 4th Annual Challenge 22 Ruck Walk and Suicide Prevention event in Winter Garden Florida benefitting PROJECT VetRelief.

With the help of a tremendous team of volunteers, many of who had no affiliation with American Legion or its family, we were able to put on an event while alerting the community to the crisis faced in the veteran community while having a ton of fun doing it. Many The opportunity to get outside and be part of something in our communities once again meant so much to many of our participants. This year we had between 220 and 275 walkers participating in the walk as well as an additional 150-200 attendees who weren't able to participate in the walk. Overall, about 450 attended for the day. The actual amount raised is still being tabulated, but once complete, we will let you know as all these funds will go towards helping save veteran lives.

We were honored to have the American Legion National Judge Advocate, Kevin Bartlett, as well as the National Media and



Communications director, Jeff Stoffer, in attendance. We were able to tell the story of the great things that the Department of Florida is doing to end veteran suicide in a way that hopefully will reach many.

In addition to an "in-person" event, this year Challenge 22 offered a "virtual" option. And though it was only our first year attempting to do this, via the power of social media, we had participants from all over the United States, including Puerto Rico, California, and Oregon.

Hearing the words from our guest speaker, Dr. Damon Friedman, it brought home the story of the trained the warrior who is given the tools to fight the battles we face from a physical enemy. Unfortunately, we have a long way to go in getting our veterans the tools they need to face the battles from the trauma experienced in carrying out those critical missions.

We also heard from two of our "younger" veterans, who both celebrated their birthday this weekend. Mr. Mel Jenner, a

WWII veteran who served as a crewman in over 45 combat missions including flights over Berlin, and who suffered from post-traumatic stress (PTS) for over 50 years, told his story about how he and his friends served their country. Mel celebrated his 98th birthday. We also honored Gilbert Waganheim. He too shared his story about how he did his best to liberate the concentration camps and Europe from Nazi fascism while serving in Patton's 3rd Army.



We celebrated his 99th birthday. Gilbert also actually participated in the walk, as he is done for the last three years.

The Challenge 22 events are fundraisers to engage our communities while raising money and awareness to the fact that we

Continued on page 10>>





<<Americanism Continued from page 9
 have 22 veterans a day committing suicide due to PTS. Project VetRelief has been the primary beneficiary of all funds raised from these Challenge 22 events around the state of Florida. The money from the last years events resulted in the following successes:

Other scheduled and planned Challenge 22 events include Port Charlotte, Avon Park, Brevard county, Kissimmee, and potentially Panama City, Tampa and Jacksonville. If you're interested in putting one together, please let us know so that we can help assist. Contact Kurt Gies at

KurtGies@gmail.com for any assistance. These events do not have to be walks; they can be anything that engages the community to help them understand the plight that veterans are facing from wounds suffered while serving.

Looking for Volunteers

Terry Phillips, Baseball
baseball@legionmail.org



Merry Christmas to all,
 As we approach the end of this crazy year and enter a new year, your Executive Baseball Committee is committed to this important program and the service we provide to the kid's and families of our communities. Please remember that what we do is more than just playing a game of baseball. We provide a summer activities and events that changes many lives for so many of our youth and families as we promote

Americanism, Patriotism, Sportsmanship, Exercise and Fitness.

Team registration for the 2021 season opens January 1 and runs thru June 1 which is our summer season opening day and games begin. We have a number of new posts and returning posts that are planning to field teams this summer as we have grown both the Sr. and Jr. divisions, if you are wanting to help support this mission, please contact me at baseball@legionmail.org or give me a call at 904-535-4114 for information.

As we have grown, we need someone who has the desire to serve on the baseball committee in various positions. I am looking for a Northern Area Commissioner, if you enjoy baseball and

the opportunity to serve our youth, please contact me and I will meet with you to explain the program and the requirements of this position on the Executive Baseball Committee. We will have a committee meeting in January (date and location TBD) to go over the baseball manual and updates for the upcoming season. We are also needing a number of Area Vice Commissioners (new position added) to help with the coverage and baseball operations in the larger areas, please contact me or your Area Commissioner for details.

Please visit the floridalegion.org website under programs / baseball for more information, dates and events.

Research on Blood Type & COVID-19

Ray Perez, Blood Donor
teamperez@legionmail.org



Two studies published today in Blood Advances suggest people with blood type O may have a lower risk of COVID-19 infection and reduced likelihood of severe outcomes, including organ complications, if they do get sick.

As the pandemic continues, the global biomedical research community is working urgently to identify coronavirus risk factors and potential therapeutic targets. The potential role of blood type in predicting risk and complications of COVID-19 infection has emerged as an important scientific question. These new studies add evidence that there may be an association between blood type and vulnerability to

COVID-19; however, additional research is needed to better understand why and what it means for patients. INDIVIDUALS WITH BLOOD TYPE O MAY BE LESS VULNERABLE TO COVID-19 INFECTION

Blood type O may offer some protection against COVID-19 infection, according to a retrospective study. Researchers compared Danish health registry data from more than 473,000 individuals tested for COVID-19 to data from a control group of more than 2.2 million people from the general population. Among the COVID-19 positive, they found fewer people with blood type O and more people with A, B, and AB types.

The study results suggest that people with blood types A, B, or AB may be more likely to be infected with COVID-19 than people with type O. The researchers did not find any significant difference in rate of infection between A, B, and AB types. Since blood group distributions vary among ethnic subgroups, the researchers also

controlled for ethnicity BLOOD GROUPS A AND AB ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK OF SEVERE CLINICAL OUTCOMES OF COVID-19 INFECTION



People with blood groups A or AB appear to exhibit greater COVID-19 disease severity than people with blood groups O or B, according to a separate retrospective study. Researchers examined data from 95 critically ill COVID-19 patients hospitalized in Vancouver, Canada. They found that patients with blood groups A or AB were more likely to require mechanical ventilation, suggesting that they had greater rates of lung injury from COVID-19. They also found more patients with blood group A and AB required dialysis for kidney failure.

Together, these findings suggest that

Continued on page 11>>





<<Blood Donor Continued from page 10

patients in these two blood groups may have an increased risk of organ dysfunction or failure due to COVID-19 than people with blood types O or B. Furthermore,

while people with blood types A and AB did not have longer overall hospital stays than those with types O or B, they did remain in the intensive care unit (ICU) for a longer average time, which may also signal a greater COVID-19 severity level.

Many of you have wondered whether you can or cannot give blood. The chart below shows the medications that would disqualify you and the deferral status

Medication	Deferral Status
Beef Insulin from UK since 1980	Indefinite <i>NOTE: Insulin derived from UK cattle was discontinued in the U.S. in 1999.</i>
Human Growth Hormone (HGH)	Indefinite <i>NOTES:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadaveric growth hormone was discontinued in the U.S. in 1985 • Recombinant human growth hormone (not from a cadaver) is acceptable.
Tegison (etretinate)	PD <i>NOTE: Discontinued in the U.S. in 1998.</i>
Accutane, Amesteen, Claravis, Sotret (isotretinoin)	30 day wait after last dose
Antabuse (disulfiram)	14 day wait after last dose
Anticoagulants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coumadin (warfarin) - Heparin and derivatives [includes Lovenox (enoxaparin sodium)] - Pradaxa (dabigatran), and other direct thrombin inhibitors - Xarelto (rivaroxaban), and other direct Xa inhibitors 	7 days after last dose
- All others	Medical Director approval
Avodart, Jalyn (dutasteride and dutasteride/tamsulosin) <i>NOTE: Flomax (tamsulosin alone) is acceptable, as it does not contain dutasteride.</i>	6 months after last dose
Experimental or unlicensed medication or vaccine	Medical Director approval or 12 months after last dose
Feldene (piroxicam)	6 months after last dose
Hepatitis B Immune Globulin	12 months from exposure to Hepatitis
Immunosuppressive Drugs	Dependent on medical condition
IVIG (Intravenous immune globulin)	12 months and then Medical Director approval
Investigational drugs and drugs from countries outside the USA if received within the past 12 months	Medical Director approval or 12 months after last dose
Plavix (clopidogrel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For platelet donations, 14 days after last dose. • For whole blood donations, no wait
Propecia , Proscar (finasteride)	30 days after last dose
Soriatane (acitretin)	3 years after last dose
Ticlid (Ticlopidine Hcl)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For platelet donations, 14 days after last dose. • For whole blood donations, no wait





Adult Worker Training Programs

Dusty Douglas, Employment
employment@legionmail.org

The Covid-19 virus has impacted some job careers (i.e. restaurant, bar, hotel and travel industries) more than others. Add to this, the recent passing of Florida Amendment 2 which will raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2026, it is very probable that many of these jobs will never come back.

If you are in one of these jobs, now might be a good time to look at training for a new career. For information on Adult Training Programs go to www.dol.gov/general/topic/training/adulttraining this US Department of

Labor website has links to the Employment and Training Administration, American Job Center and information on Adult Training Programs.

The American Job Center link takes you to the www.careeronestop.org website. This website provides you with information on local training opportunities. There is a Self-Assessments tab that can assist you in determining what new career would fit with your interests and capabilities.

Another avenue that I personally did at the age of 45 was the local Electrical Apprenticeship Program. There are several other union programs available i.e. Painter, Carpenter,

Electrical and General Mechanic, use your computer search engines to find the programs offered in your area. Many of the union programs have Veterans preference during the selection process. Do not be afraid to think outside of the box, many companies are looking for hard working people to hire and we vets are a step ahead as employers know we are a workforce to be reckoned with.

Thank you for allowing me to continue being your Legion Employment dude... Remember to always let people know that Legionnaires are "In The house" BE LOUD & PROUD!!!

Postal Match Registration Deadline December 15th

Loretta Young, JROTC/ROTC/JSSP
jrotc@legionmail.org



This has been a very slow month on all accounts for both the JROTC Cadet Program and the JSSP Program Postal Match. I have sent out several emails to the District Chairmen but have had little response on how the programs are progressing throughout the state or

the registering of any teams for the JSSP Postal Match which started September 1st. The deadline for registration is December 15th with targets fired and returned by February 1, 2021.

I'm sure this is due to the high schools operating mostly on a virtual level rather than in person. There are very strict restrictions in place for afterschool activities so therefore most have been suspended. There was a virtual Veterans Day Program that was conducted by Cypress Bay JROTC Cadets in Broward County and it was very well put together

by the students. I'm sure there were others, but none were brought to my attention.

The National Americanism Chairman posted the report that there were 151 competitors and 26 clubs registered so far throughout the country for the National Tournament. This is much lower than it has been in the past. I encourage you all to continue to support our Youth Programs as they are our future. Thanks always for the work that you do for our veterans and please Stay Safe throughout the upcoming Holiday Season.

The Pandemic Hit Close to Me Last Month

Darryl Bass, Law & Order
laworder@legionmail.org

I, like many of us at one time or the other, thought that this Coronavirus Pandemic was much less serious than what it was being reported as. For months I, at different events both Legion and private, in conversation would tell folks that I have not heard any of my friends had contracted COVID-19 or anyone I knew had died from it. That has changed. A dear friend and

Deputy Sheriff of Osceola County Don Shearer passed away from Pneumonia as a complication from COVID-19 in November. Don at 70 was still working with the Sheriff's Office at the time. He was a good Cop, Father, Husband and Christian. Don Shearer during his off time was a certified Kentucky Colonel (Auctioneer) for Disney World. Don was an Army Veteran. RIP Don Shearer 1950-2020.

Brother and Sister Legionnaires, please take this Pandemic seriously, especially

during the coming holidays. Remember to wear your mask and continue social distancing. If you are having an Award ceremony for our first responders please remember the sacrifice so many have made due to this horrible virus. Post and District Law and Order Chairman's be sure and turn in your application information to the Department (Bekki Tibbs) so that we can honor these first responders at Convention.

Happy Holidays

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org

I would like to wish you all a Merry

Christmas. This year has been anything but normal. As we look forward to 2021 being a better year, it's time to focus on any missed renewals before the end of the year. Your squadrons should be using MySAL.

org to process their membership. Anyone who needs help please contact me. Stay healthy and I look forward to seeing you all in the New Year.



PROJECT: VETRELIEF BULLETIN

AN OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

COMMANDER JOHNSON IS CHALLENGING YOU... WILL YOU ACCEPT?

As you may be aware, Commander William 'Rick' Johnson chose PROJECT: VetRelief as one of his charities of choice for the second year in a row! *We have a long way to go in order to surpass last year's efforts of raising over \$116,000.* Additionally, the Commander heard that the Legion Family from Post 359 will be holding their month-long fundraiser in January.

With that, **Commander Johnson is issuing a challenge to all American Legion Posts to see who can raise the most funds between now and the District Constitutional Conferences in the spring.**

He is certain that the entire Legion Family can step up and provide the necessary funding the program needs to continue to support veterans through the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, he is so confident that he set a goal to raise \$30,000 for PROJECT: VetRelief by April 30, 2021.

Every American Legion Post is encouraged to raise a minimum of \$100 and the Post that raises the most funds will receive celebrity treatment during our next Annual Department Convention, hopefully in June 2021!

As a bonus, if we are able to reach or surpass his goal of \$30,000, Commander Johnson will take the stage at Convention *in costume* and sing karaoke. We know you'd like to see Commander Johnson belt out his favorite patriotic tune!

Although this is all fun and games, the bottom line is... Florida's veterans need you to help them through their difficult times - and we know that Florida's American Legion Family can rise up to any challenge and be that support for our veterans and their families!

INCREASED VETERAN SUPPORT = MORE FUNDING

PROJECT: VetRelief continues to be in high demand, which allows us to help more and more of Florida's veterans each year. As you can see in the chart on the right, **we have more than DOUBLED our total number of approved cases** during the first 4 months of this fiscal year!

When the coronavirus pandemic hit in March 2020, PROJECT: VetRelief was able to take action and provide *life-saving assistance* to our service members by keeping a roof over their head, lights turned on, or food on the table. In fact, we have been able to help 147 veterans and their families avoid an eviction so that they could focus on staying healthy during this deadly pandemic!

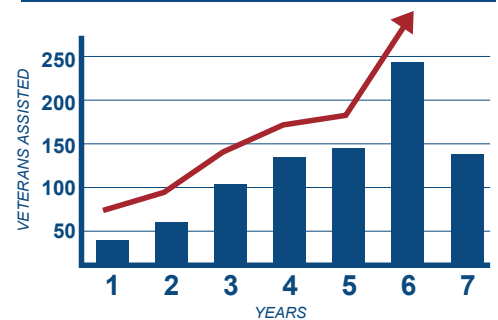
Truth is, since COVID-19 our funding has gone out a lot faster than it has come in. We *will not* be able to continue this level of support without your help!

Would you be willing to make a special tax-deductible year-end donation of \$25, \$50, \$100 or whatever you can afford to help us support these service members through their difficult times?

Donations can be made online (www.projectvetrelief.org/donate), mailed into the Department Headquarters, or given through the **Commander's Charity**.

Our veterans are counting on YOU to be there for them!

TOTAL SUPPORT CASES



The chart above shows the total number of veterans assisted per fiscal year, which runs from July to June. Keep in mind, Year 7 only shows the first 4 months of this fiscal year.

COVID-19 TOTALS

Category	Count	Amount
Shelter	147	\$158,219.81
Food	47	\$10,300.00
Utilities	48	\$29,894.30
TOTAL	242	\$198,414.11

The table above shows the total number of cases awarded where the coronavirus was listed as the hardship. These cases are since March 2020.



Veterans Affairs

Alan Cohen, VA&R
var@legionmail.org



With all the season's holidays coming up, let me take this opportunity to wish each of you a happy and healthy new year. Let's remember that with COVID-19 still upon us we need to continue to be diligent.

With conditions being what they are, our hospital and CBOC reps still aren't able to resume their normal volunteer duties to a great extent. Although some volunteer positions are being phased back in, very few of those affect us. Nonetheless our VAVS reps have been in contact with their respective facilities and continue to participate as they are able.

By now you're all aware that we conducted a Post Service Officer webinar and in spite of some technical glitches, attendance

was good, and we thank everyone who attended. While we have positive thoughts about holding a "live" class at the June Convention we're already thinking in terms of the necessity of conducting another class virtually. I'd also like to thank those Post Commanders who have responded to my request for the names of their Post Service Officers. For those Posts who do not have a designated Service Officer it's important to know where members and others can go for help so don't hesitate to reach out to us.

November brought, among other things, a significant judicial ruling in favor of the thousands of Blue Water Navy Vets who served off the coast of Vietnam. After four attempts at a positive ruling it was determined that the VA is obligated to honor and pay retroactively claims that have been filed since 1991. Obviously, this will have a positive impact on the lives of many of our brother and sister veterans. There will be a period during which the VA can respond to this ruling, but we are optimistic that we'll prevail.

I realize that this will be somewhat after the fact but during November there have been several VA-conducted virtual events including Women Veterans town halls and empowerment webinars and Virtual Career Fairs including one specifically for vets in and around Jacksonville. I encourage all to sign up for the VA News online publication for advance notices of these virtual events.

Another important announcement, this one coming from the Department of the Interior and specifically for Veterans and Gold Star families. Beginning Veterans Day November 11 and going forward, entrance to all the National Parks, wildlife refuges and other lands managed by that Department is free with proper forms of identification. This makes available access to approximately 2000 locations nationwide.

In closing this month's article I'm asking everyone to remain mindful and vigilant of not only the pandemic we face but that we're all in this together so continue to reach out to any veterans who need some help getting through it all.

Corporate Donation

Post 164

WINN-DIXIE Supermarkets re-opened their remodeled store in Boynton Beach at the Cobblestone Shopping Center - Boynton Blvd West and Lyons Road, on November 13, 2020.

As part of the opening ceremony,

Commander Edward Brown and a group of Officers from Post #164, representatives of SAL Squadron #164 and the Women's Auxiliary attended the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Chris Connolly, General Manager of the store presented Commander Brown with a generous Donation Check in the amount of \$5,000 ! Post #164 was designated for this donation

as the largest veteran's organization in the area and due to its commitment to veterans and community support for ongoing activities.

The donation is particularly significant during these difficult times to assist the American Legion in fulfilling its obligations. Thank you Winn-Dixie!

Honor Guard - Veterans Day

Post 273

Post 273 Honor Guard from Veterans Day 2020.

I would also like to thank our Post & Department Historian Edward Lewis for his exceptional photography!



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November 25, 2020
75% Target Report (Currently 71.93%)

11	Johnny Castro	76.93%
4	Cherie Korn	76.68%
15	Bruce Carl	75.62%
6	Kurt Gies	74.14%
12	Dennis mallon	73.42%
1	Lamar Carroll	71.23%
17	Jim Bowers	69.71%
9	Arthur Barber	69.65%
8	Skip Felicita	68.81%
7	Burl Thomas	68.11%
16	Randall McNabb	67.92%
5	Troy Horsley	67.82%
2	Roger Hewitt	67.09%
13	Jessica Moore	66.41%
3	Stuart Scott	63.59%
14	Thomas Frank	63.24%
Eastern	Chris Hamrick	73.83%
Southern	Paul Bosco	70.65%
Western	John Edens	70.50%
Central	Sid Damsgard	69.94%
Northern	Marie Conti	69.78%
Southwestern	Jerry Faight	67.52%
Post 400		83.60%
Post 208		67.09%



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The American Legion



**NORTHERN AREA BALL
COMMANDER**

MARIE K. CONTI

Saturday, March 6, 2021

**Legion Blue & Gold /
Military Theme**

American Legion Post #129 JAX BEACH

Tickets: \$25.00 per person

Dinner: Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Dinner Roll, Salad and American Legion Birthday Cake!

DRESS: Formal / Semi-Formal Social hour 5:00-6:00, 6pm Program/Dinner. **Entertainment after Program**

Hotel is less than 5 minutes from the Post at a very reasonable rate of \$109.00 per night Rooms can be reserved through Hotel (Please call Hampton Inn @ 904-280-9101 for Reservations & mention The American Legion (Group Rate).