



APRIL 2021

THE LEGION LINK

VOLUME 29 ISSUE IX

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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



Another month down and three more to go. I hope that everyone has seen the information on our Department Convention. If not, please review the details at floridalegion.org/flcon and be sure to

register. Although we will not turn anyone away, pre-registering allows us the ability to ensure we are able to provide adequate space and accommodations. The Orlando World Center Marriott and the Department of Florida, have also implemented safety procedures, please review those as well.

We had a second polar plunge on March 20th and what a great success for PVR and COTA, \$17,068 raised that day. Thank you Post 252, 7th District, 15th District and the 16th District for supporting the event. Bonnie, you are a rock star. We will have the C&Y Golf Tournament March 27th held by Squadron 275, which will be another great event.

The 3rd of April will be the C&Y Picnic at Post 1, so let's get out and support this event. April 10th is the Commanders Homecoming which is sold out. This will be a great time so let's have some luau time

and enjoy it. Starting April 15th will be the Vietnam Reunion at Wickham park. Come by and enjoy as there will be numerous events going on. April 18th at Post 117 will be the celebration of life for Erna Schwabe. See the flyer for the details. April 27th will be the Riders Rally going on at Post 10 with the whole month of April being Children and Youth month.

We must maintain our guard and do the right things to keep our members safe. Please follow all CDC guidelines that are in place. Overkill in this case is a good thing.

As you see, we are staying busy and safe out there. There will be some changes coming out soon for the better of our organization. We have had people out there trying their best to disrupt our organization with different views going on and making us waste time and money on trying to fix certain issues that have been happening.

District Commanders, please ensure that all Posts have the information for convention and update Department with your DCC date. Membership is doing well with three Districts in the Race to the Top, the cutoff date is March 31st. Good luck to everyone. It is that time again, CPRs are due, make sure to get them in. April 1st, my legion will be different so ensure you

Continued on page 2>>



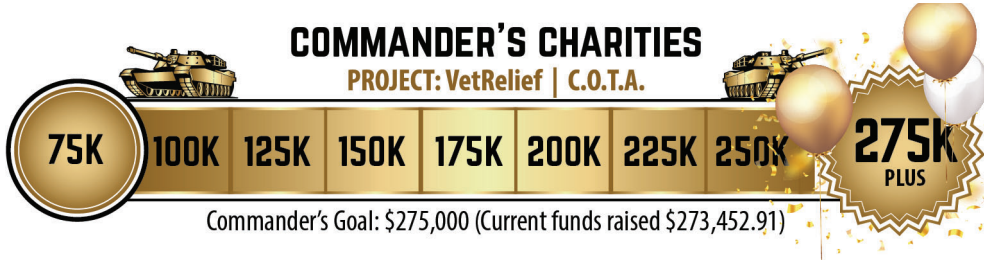
<< Dept. Commander Continued from page 1
log back on and adapt to all the changes again. Well after 19 months of waiting for Post CBLs, we finally got them done and sent back to the post. Thanks for all the hard work behind the scenes in getting this done. I want to give a special shout out to our new Judge Advocate Phil Mowry and Rachel Castelberry and thanks to all of you who are working behind the scenes getting it done.

I want to say thank you for all the support that you have shown to Department during these tough times. There's too many to list right now, but you know who you are behind the scenes.

So, my Legion family, thanks for what you are doing and continuing to do for the right reasons. I look forward to seeing everyone out there soon.

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

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



Be A Mentor

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



We have several events to look forward to. DCCs start in the beginning of May, with the elections of incoming District Officers, do you know the incoming officers? Have you been to a District meeting lately?

At the end of June everyone will be in Orlando for the Department Convention, yes there will be a Convention. After a Covid-19 year, it will be nice to get back to near normal with companionship at our meetings.

The information about the dos and don'ts is on the Florida American Legion Website / News & Events / Convention / Safety Protocols, please review the rules for COVID-19 for the Conference, please sign up now for your room.

by now, your Posts by now have had your first/second round of nominations for new officers. Potential new officers

should be thinking of what they wish to accomplish for the upcoming year. Please reach out to them and volunteer to help. Be a mentor to your Post. We need to keep our traditions at our Posts and at the same time grow new avenues among our membership. Be one of those who can lead your Post into a great future.

I would like to thank the Northern Area Commander and the 4th District Commander for their assistance with the Department Commander's visit in January. It was great to see the Posts and their members turn out to greet the Commander.

Several Legionnaires have asked me about Chairmanship, if you want me to look at you as a Chairman, please use the Florida Legion Website, at floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Dept_Chair_Interest_Flyer_2021-2022. This is the best way for me to choose new Chairs for the various communities. While a lot of good Legionnaires ask for a position, it is often forgotten in the rush, please fill out the Chairmanship form.

As always, let me know what I can do to assist you, your Post, your District.

APRIL 2021

1-30	ALR Round Robin
1-30	Month of the Military Child
1-30	Children & Youth Month
1	Medical&Nursing Scholarship Apps Due
1	Baseball Rulebooks Mailed
1	Eagle Scout of the Year Apps Due ★
1	District 15 Visitation - Post 5
2	Good Friday
2	Department Headquarters Closed
3	Children & Youth Picnic 🌟
4	Easter
4	District 5 Meeting - Post 54
6	US Entry into World War I (1917)
6	District 15 Visitation - Post 389
7	Membership Goal 95%
9-11	National Oratorical Competition (Cancelled) ★
9	In-Need Stand Down to Stand Up
10	Commander's Homecoming 🌟
11-18	Vietnam and All Veterans Reunion 🌟
13	Thomas Jefferson's Birthday
14	Boys State: Online Del/Alt Registration Closes
14	Baseball: Recruiting Maps Due
14	Teacher of the Year Award Noms Due
14	Membership Renewal Cut-off Date
14	Air Force Reserve Birthday
15	Legacy Scholarship Apps Due ★
15	Legion Link Articles Due
17	District 17 Meeting
18	ALR Meet & Greet
19-23	ALR Unity Ride
21	LEO, Firefighter & EMT of the Year Apps Due
23	Army Reserve Birthday
23	District 15 Visitation - Post 246
24	ALR State Rally
24	Children & Youth Golf Tournament 🌟
30	Arbor Day

🌟 - 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.



Children & Youth Month and CPRs

Eunice Butts, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



Greetings fellow legionnaires. Special thanks to you for all the well wishes and other acts of kindness during my illness. Mere words would never be able to express my thanks and appreciation.

Congratulations to all Posts in the Central and Southwestern Area who have attained their 100% membership as of March 31, 2021. To those who have not gotten their 100%, you still have time. Don't stop now.

April is Children and Youth month. Utilize the many opportunities, activities, and programs during the entire month to make sure the community knows what you are doing for the Children and Youth and the many other programs that your Post participates in.

It is that time of year again to prepare our CPR's. Please, let's have a 100% participation from the Southwestern and Central Area. I know that you can do it.

Continue to work on your membership and programs. You have done a very good job up to this point. I am very proud of you and the accomplishments you have made this year.

The same...Yet different

Michael Raymond, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



Since this article is coming out on April fool's day, I've decided to keep it real because after all we've been through no matter what I say you probably still wouldn't believe me.

But after a very busy last couple of months with visits to over forty-five (45) posts I will admit that each post is different in its own way. Different real

estate, operating hours, member priorities, community involvement and management styles. There are posts that really have it together and posts that only think they have it together.

There are even some posts that have reached out to us during our visits for help with the Legion side of the house for training in membership, program initiation and protocols. This is the area where we all must strive to be the same.

We all must reach out for guidance if we have questions about let's say running a meeting. There are plenty of manuals and guides available to you as a post officer, but you must realize that you have an army

of seasoned Legionnaires that are ready, willing and able to assist you in any way. Always remember that the American Legion is based on the four pillars. Guide your post on these principles of VA&R, Children and Youth, Americanism and National Security and you will never go wrong.

Remember one thing, every post can be different, but we are all a part of the American Legion and we must look and act like one! One quick reminder, CPR's. Get them filled out and sent in as soon as possible. We were 100% last year, let's do it again.

American Legion Legacy Scholarship

Dennis Boland, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



The American Legion assists families of U.S. military personnel who have died or became disabled while serving on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, by providing college scholarships for their

children. The program expanded in 2017 to include scholarships for students whose post-9/11 veteran parents have been assigned a 50 percent or greater combined disability rating by the VA.

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship

Fund was established by the National Executive Committee in October 2001. Since the fund's inception, more than 366 scholarships have been awarded, generating tens of thousands of dollars for students. The American Legion Legacy Run is a major contributor to the fund, often raising more than \$1 million a year.

Throughout our fifty-five (55) Departments, the American Legion Riders have made this program one of their special charities. Legion Riders in all Departments have consistently raised money for this worthwhile charity. Also, the American Legion Riders annually conducts the American Legion Legacy Run, a cross-country multi-day motorcycle event. As many as 500 participants ride more than

1,000 miles from a predetermined starting point, ending at the national convention city.

With the American Legion Legacy Run, and INSTATE runs raising money for the Legacy Scholarships, the Legion Riders have raised over \$16 million nationwide for the Legacy Scholarship.

In 2019 \$1,122,624 Legacy Scholarships Funds were awarded to fifty-seven (57) children. Since 2001 to 2019, 366 Legacy Scholarships have been awarded. Total funds awarded since the Legacy Scholarship inception is \$3,031,633.

For more information, email Scholarships@legion.org.



Humble Your Heart

Barry Roberts, Chaplain

chaplain@legionmail.org



We have much to be grateful for in the month of April - Palm Sunday, the sacrifice and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. I would like to encourage everyone to humble their heart before God and seek his wisdom and direction for your life. It could

be life changing! Feel free to call me with questions. I would like to remind everyone that submitting nominations for awards is just around the corner. Please don't forget to submit awards for your Chaplain. 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 forty-five (45) hours of online training and the \$2,400 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 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

Great Job

Sid Damsgard, Central Area Commander

centralarea@legionmail.org

This year's challenges have been overwhelming for the bulk of our Posts. Making our Posts safe for our patrons has become the biggest obstacle for most of us and a necessity. If everyone followed the CDC guidelines the task becomes a little easier but it is still not a guarantee that the virus will not invade our spaces. As Commander of Post 275, even with our stringent following of the rules we still fell victim to an outbreak that required us to shut our doors for an entire week. The real problem is we don't know where

it is coming from. Most of our patrons travel around within the community and socialize wherever they go. Even a trip to the local grocery store can result in someone getting sick. As a result, we purchased two Vollaro Air Purifiers. These units turn oxygen into Hydroxide vapor which coats all surfaces and kills the virus on contact. They are used by NASA and many other public places. It reduces the need to continually wipe down everything after a patron leaves. On a much happier note, the Oratorical contest for Department was a great success. Meri West did an awesome job, and the contest produced a truly

knowledgeable champion. As we try to recover some sense of normality, it's programs like this that brings us back to the missions we work so hard at especially in these difficult times. At this time of the year with many of our members have already paid and the virus remains an issue getting those remaining people to pay their dues is even harder. I want to commend the 15th District Commander for his diligence and hard work to get his district once again to the top. Great job Commander Carl the last lap of the race is around the corner and I expect that you will cross the finish line first.

GOOD EVENING NORTHERN AREA!

Marie Conti, Northern Area Commander

northernarea@legionmail.org



The Northern Area Ball, scheduled for March 6, 2021, was a HUGE Success! 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 attended, to support the Northern Area Boys State Scholarship. I also want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and appreciation to Ocean Beaches American Legion Post 129, Jacksonville Beach, for their support. Job

Well Done!

In accordance with tradition, \$500 was donated to the Northern Area Boys State Scholarship Fund. Other donations from the ball were \$500 to Girls State and \$325 to Project Vet Relief. There was also a Special One-Time Northern Area Boys State Scholarship in Memory of my Dad, Jack Kraemer, Northern Area Commander 1988-1989, in the amount of \$1000; for a Grand Total of \$2325.00.

Below is a picture of the Past Northern Area Commanders and Presidents, who were in attendance. From left to right: Bob Brewster, Jerry Brandt, Jim Ramos, George Wehrli, Clarence Hill, Erma Wehrli, Liz Hill, and Jeff Durden. Not pictured, but also

present, was Past Northern Area President, Carolyn Brown.



Congratulations to everyone that has met or exceeded the 90% goal. The next membership goal is 95% before April 7, 2021.

Continued on page 5>>



<<Northern Area Continued from page 4

Congratulations to the Department Oratorical Winner, and all Department Oratorical competitors.

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

End of year ROTC and School Medal Award Presentations are just around the corner.

Great Work Southern Area

Paul Bosco, Southern Area Commander

southernarea@legionmail.org



April first is April fool's day, keep your eyes open and your wits about you.

Southern Area's Oratorical first place winner went to state and came in second.

That was a great Job done by Eric Singleton. This young man is on his way to greatness.

I hope posts have completed their Officers Nominations. Election is coming up fast and you should be contacting your District Commanders to see when you can get installed. Don't wait till the

last minute.

I want to thank the 14th District for the great work in getting off the bottom of the membership list.

Keep up the good work. I know COVID-19 has made it a bit difficult in getting members to renew but it's not impossible to get 100%. If you can't form committees to call your members, do it yourself. We should be at 95% by the 7th and the renewal cutoff date is the 14th.

The American Legion Riders (ALR) District 11 Collected \$2,725 dollars in Gift cards and delivered them to the VA Hospital in West Palm Beach. The 11th District Rider Director Al Sroka delivered the gift cards on March 12, 2021. All the ALRs in the 11th District paraded by while Al presented the cards to the VA's Voluntary Service

representative.

I hope you are working on your CPRs, you need to be compiling your information now. Once you get your Commander and Correspondent sworn in, send in your officers' report with their names, address, phone number, and email address. Fill in the rest of the information and send it to the Department.

As a reminder, the 5th of April is Gold Star Spouses Day. Let's schedule an event for those who lost a love one while serving our Great Nation.

Remember July 1st thru the 4th is our Convention in Orlando. I hope that the Southern Area has a good showing. Plan it and save a few dollars to have fun. We all need a break.

Western Area News

John Edens, Western Area Commander

westernarea@legionmail.org



Western Area Posts have done a great job of following the Commander's request during these trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is looking like the vaccines are

getting out to most of our members and the ugly virus numbers are starting to decline. Thanks to all of the Posts that have followed the basic CDC guidelines to stay safe. Even though the District and Area staff have visited less Posts this year due to the virus, I was personally

impressed with every Post's hospitality to our staff for the one's we did visit.

Our 98%+ percent membership last year was outstanding, considering the hurricane chaos in the middle of that year and another hurricane this past year. Congratulations to all our Posts that have made 95% and better so far. This year, we are determined to get to 101 % for the Area to make up for last year. This can happen, if we continue our National Commander's recommended Buddy Checks to get our renewals to sign back up and get the renewals to help recruit.

Special praise this month to Post 33's (District 1) leadership over this past year.

This time last year, we were considering closing this 100-year-old Post. Their new staff and members have recruited over 103 % membership already this year. They have raised several thousand dollars to start the re-build of this Post, but they need thousands more, but they are determined. They still need all our Western Area's Posts support, and they say thanks for all your donations so far.

Please continue to keep our 2018 Western Area Commander, Raymond Olsen in your prayers as he recovers from more operations over the past few months. Stay safe; I hope to see more Posts of both 1st & 2nd Districts soon.



2021 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

JULY 1-4, 2021

Join us at the World Center Marriott, in Orlando, FL

PRE-REGISTER
<https://bit.ly/3pLxTo8>



Continue to Work Membership
We have Three Months to Go
Jim Ramos, Northern Membership
teamramos@legionmail.org



Thank you all for helping your District have a chance to win "Race to the Top".

Now we need to look forward to April - which is Children & Youth month - do something

to get your Post noticed within your community. Make it BIG - invite your local Leaders and other organizations to come and celebrate with you and your along with veterans and their families.

Please remember everything we do is done for our members and to make our community better. We also need to help our volunteers, they are priceless. Please use them and thank them for everything they do to serve one another, their Post, and the community. Always say thank you to your volunteer.

The "Race to the Top" is over so congratulations to those Districts that made 100% plus. We will know in a couple of weeks who the winners are in

each category. With that said, thanks all the District Commander's, District Vice Commander's, Post Commanders, and every member who has renewed for 2021. Thank you.

Now let's continue to move forward and get more members, we have three more months to finish off with 100% plus. We can do it Florida, let's go!

Part of membership is doing your CPR report and sending it to National, to the Department of Florida (and the addendum is for Florida only) and to keep one at the Post. Also, it is time for Post nominations and elections, the Post Adjutant should have already received all the documents that need to be returned to Department. If you need help, call your District Commander or someone to help you get it done. *Note: the Addendum is online under Resources, Forms and Documents, Post Resources.*

We all are recruiters, here are some tips:

1. Recruit a friend, a neighbor, or somebody who is a veteran.
2. Just ask to join if they look like a Veteran.

3. Show your pride by wearing your Legion gear (shirt & cap with the Legion Logo).
4. Buddy Checks are working Please continue connecting with your members (Buddy Check FloridaLegion.org) to get it.

April is Children & Youth month, coordinate some activities to recognize your Post.

Make a day for all the Legion families to get together and reflect on the good times of the Legion family. "It's never too soon to start". Make a BIG event at the Post and let everybody know. Have materials to handout like membership applications, Americanism Program and Children & Youth Programs to talk about. Make a BIG push in April with membership and help get more members in to your Post! We can do that!

*****For more suggestion call me*****
 If you have any questions, please contact me at Phone number 352-226-4370 or email at jramos149@bellsouth.net
 I am here to help you and your Post be the best in Florida.

Southern Membership Information

Ray Perez, Southern Membership
teamperez@legionmail.org



The remaining goals set by Department:

- 95% 7 April
- 100% 5 May
- Race to the Top 100% (National)
- 100% +1

May 31st (Department) This is also Memorial Day.

Remain focused, WE can do this! Out of ideas and need to try something new? Call me so we can discuss it. As of the March 11th, Report 56 Posts in the Southern Area have received Silver Coins for reaching 100%.

April is Children and Youth Month

- April 1st is the C & Y Picnic at Post 1 in Titusville.
- Also on April 1st is the start of the ALR Round Robin.
- The Department Commander's Homecoming is April 10th.
- The Vietnam and All Veteran's Reunion is April 11-18.

- The ALR In-State Unity Ride begins on the 18th.
- The C & Y Golf Tournament is April 24th.

Incorporate Membership opportunities at all these events. Invite your local community leaders to get involved. Reach out to your local National Guard and Reserve units.

Don't wait until the last minute, start your CPRs NOW, they are due May 12th.

Continue your Buddy Checks at the Post and District Level.



Summit Success

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
legionriders@legionmail.org



First, we would like to thank everyone that attended the Summit this year and responded to the survey. Your responses have been extremely helpful in planning our next Summit. One thing is for sure, you will not see Avanti on the hotel list for next year. We have already started looking for Avanti's replacement. We did find a very promising location, but we still have a lot to work through.

It is April and an overly exciting month for The American Legion Riders of Florida. I am finishing the Legion Link Article for April and it is March 15th and we already have ninety (90) Riders and passengers signed up for the Unity Ride and ten (10)

for just the Rally - with a month to go. Based on the registration to date, every District is being represented along with Riders from Alabama and Ohio. It is going to be a great week!

Post 10 in Kissimmee is busy putting together the Rally. Before I forget, has everyone heard from Jeff Hawk? He has the raffle tickets for distribution through the District Chairs to their respective Posts. This raffle replaces the bike that we had lined up through Harley that was killed by the pandemic.

Beverly & I have already started putting together next year's schedule. The Summit Meet & Greet will be on February 2nd, followed by classes on the 3rd, 4th & 5th. The Unity Ride will be the second week in May to avoid conflicts with Holy Week and Thunder on the Beach. We are still working on the In-State Rally, with more details to come.

Again, Thank You for all your Efforts! Here is our tentative schedule for the balance of the year for your review and comments.

- 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 – Post 10 Kissimmee
- July 1-4, Department Convention

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

2019-2020 Americanism Award Winners - Recap!

Kurt Gies, Americanism
americanism@legionmail.org



Our 2019-2020 Americanism Award winners and nominees were as follows.

Recognize and submit your Post nominees today for 2020-2021.

Applications are available on the Department website under Resources, Forms and Documents, Program Resources and it's inside the End of Year Awards file.

2019-2020 Best Overall Americanism Programs:

- Winner: **Post 117 Palm Bay**
- Runner up: **Post 24 Bradenton**
- Nominee: **Post 273 Madeira Beach**

- Nominee: **Post 318 Port St Lucie**
- Nominee: **Post 63 Winter Garden** (not eligible; Americanism Chair is from Post 63)

2019-2020 Outstanding Scouting Program:

- Winner: **Post 273 Madeira Beach**
- Runner up: **Post 138 Bradenton**
- Nominee: **Post 79 New Port Richey**

2019-2020 Best Shooting Sports Program:

- Winner: **Post 273 Madeira Beach**

2019-2020 Best ROTC Program:

- Winner: **Post 24 Bradenton**
- Runner-up: **Post 250 Middleburg**

2019-2020 Best School Medals Program:

- Winner: **Post 137 Jacksonville**
- Runner-up: **Post 273 Madeira Beach**

2019-2020 Best Blood Donor Program:

- Winner: No entries
- Runner-up: No entries

2019-2020 Best Four Chaplains Program:

- Winner: **Post 255 Deltona**
- Runner-up: **Post 63 Winter Garden**

2019-2020 Dept Youth Champions:

- Boys State Governor: **Andrew Tarmykin, Post 286 Pine Castle**
- Oratorical Winner: **Conrad Hellwege, Post 27 Ocala**
- Shooting Sports Best Precision & Sporter Team: **Sarasota Military Academy**
- Eagle Scout of the Year: **Joshua Katz**
- ROTC Cadet of the Year: **Lauren Conner, Post 24 Bradenton**

▶▶▶▶ Sign up for TEXT ALERTS.  TEXT **FAL** to **74121** ◀◀◀◀



Ready for Baseball Season?

Terry Phillips, Baseball
baseball@legionmail.org



Spring time is Here and BASEBALL FEVER is full steam ahead.

The Executive Baseball Committee has been working very hard for months to be prepared

for this 2021 season. My staff is almost at 100% with only one spot left to fill and we are set to have the best season ever in Florida.

We are reaching many new teams and players and registering new teams daily. Please check the floridalegion.org Baseball page for information and event dates and contact information.

Election Time is Here

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org

April is here and that means it is time to get serious about the new slate of officers for the Post and the Squadron. Current officers should be mentoring others to take positions soon or in the future. Make plans to attend the Department Convention in July.

The COVID-19 Vaccination

Ray Perez, Blood Donor
blooddonor@legionmail.org



There are some people out there that are hesitant about getting the vaccine and those that still believe it is all a government hoax. Frankly, I do not care for your reasons, so I thought I would give you something

to think about. If we genuinely believe in the care of our Veterans and their families how can you not do everything in your power to make our Posts as safe as possible.

Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

When You've Been Fully Vaccinated

People who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic.

We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated now that COVID-19 vaccines are available in the United States. While more COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine that is authorized or approved for use. Safety is a top priority, and there are many reasons to get vaccinated.

Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. [Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#). Below is a summary of the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination based on what we currently know. CDC will continue to update this page as more data become available.

COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting COVID-19.

- All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19. [Learn more about the different COVID-19 vaccines.](#)
- All COVID-19 vaccines that are in development are being carefully evaluated in clinical trials and will be authorized or approved only if they make it substantially less likely you'll get COVID-19. [Learn more about how federal partners are ensuring COVID-19 vaccines work.](#)
- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases and early data from clinical trials, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, [particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.](#)
- Experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep

people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection.

- COVID-19 can have [serious, life-threatening complications](#), and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.
- Clinical trials of all vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use, including COVID-19 vaccines. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine for use under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). [Watch a video on what an EUA is.](#)
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. Current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. However, experts don't know for sure how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.

Continued on page 9>>



<<Blood Donor Continued from page 8

There are some people out there that are hesitant about getting the vaccine and those that still believe it is all a government hoax. Frankly, I do not care for your reasons, so I thought I would give you something to think about. If we genuinely believe in the care of our Veterans and their families how can you not do everything in your power to make our Posts as safe as possible.

Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine

When You've Been Fully Vaccinated

People who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic.

We understand that some people may be concerned about getting vaccinated now that COVID-19 vaccines are available in the United States. While more COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine that is authorized or approved for use. Safety is a top priority, and there are many reasons to get vaccinated.

Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19. Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines. Below is a summary of the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination based on what we currently know. CDC will continue to update this page as more data become available.

COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from getting COVID-19.

- All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective

at preventing COVID-19. Learn more about the different COVID-19 vaccines.

- All COVID-19 vaccines that are in development are being carefully evaluated in clinical trials and will be authorized or approved only if they make it substantially less likely you'll get COVID-19. Learn more about how federal partners are ensuring COVID-19 vaccines work.
- Based on what we know about vaccines for other diseases and early data from clinical trials, experts believe that getting a COVID-19 vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Experts continue to conduct more studies about the effect of COVID-19 vaccination on severity of illness from COVID-19, as well as its ability to keep people from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection.

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.
- Clinical trials of all vaccines must first show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorized or approved for use, including COVID-19 vaccines. The known and potential benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine must outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine for use under what is known as an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Watch a video on what an EUA is.
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some natural protection, known as immunity. Current evidence suggests that

reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection. However, experts don't know for sure how long this protection lasts, and the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.

- Both natural immunity and immunity produced by a vaccine are important parts of COVID-19 disease that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic.

- Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC's recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the disease in communities, CDC will continue to update the recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.
- If you haven't pre-registered, try this link: <https://myvaccine.fl.gov/>

Washington Conference Week Virtual Meeting

James Douglas, Employment

employment@legionmail.org

As a member of the American Legion National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council, I attended the Washington Conference Week virtual meeting that was held on March 2, 2021. One of the guest speakers was Thomas Murphy, the Acting Secretary for Benefits in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Secretary Murphy explained VA Secretary Denis McDonough's three core VA responsibilities. 1. Provide timely world-class healthcare. 2. Access to benefits veterans have earned. 3. Honor our veterans with a final resting place.

He also informed us that during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2021, the VA Benefits Administration (VBA) distributed \$31 billion dollars in benefits. The following explains some of the recent milestone accomplishments of the VBA's different service areas:

1. The Veterans Readiness & Employment Service formerly known as the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service paid nearly 390 million dollars to 59,000 program participants.
2. 6 million Compensation & Pension Service exams were completed under VBA contracts.
3. The Pension & Fiduciary Service paid 1 billion dollars in pensions to 539,000 veterans.

4. Insurance Service provided 1.2 trillion dollars in insurance coverage to 5.6 million Service members, Veterans and family members.
5. Home Loan Guaranty Service guaranteed 112 billion dollars in housing loans for nearly 400,000 Veterans.
6. Transition & Economic Development Service reached out to more than 82,000 Veterans through VA Solid Start.

If you haven't been to the <https://benefits.va.gov/benefits/website> recently it is well worth the time to explore the website to ensure you are aware of all of the help that is available to active duty, veterans and their families

Year End Awards

Loretta Young, ROTC/JROTC/JSSP

jrotc@legionmail.org



We are at the end of the school semester with just two months left. Email blasts have been sent out as a reminder for Posts to order the Legion Year End of Year Medals early from Legion Emblem Sales.

Year End Awards will be issued in April and May either in person or

by a virtual ceremony. You must allow a few weeks for medals to be mailed in advance of the presentations. Do not wait for the schools to contact you. Give them a call to let them know you will be supporting the Legion Military and Scholastic Medals and get the names for the certificates. Cadets will still be graduating, and we should be supporting them for their efforts through a very difficult year. Our Department Cadet of the Year response was slower than usual this year, however, thanks to all who supported the program and encouraged your schools to submit an application. Announcements of the winners will be made at the

Department Convention.

National JSSP has sent National Certificates to all the Posts for the State Champions, both Precision and Sporter Category for Individual and Team winners. Please make sure your Posts are making these presentations either in person or by virtual awards. If you have any pictures, please share them with Department so that we can post them on the website. As we begin to close out the year, kudos to all who have supported our youth programs this year.

No Angel

Daryl Bass, Law & Order

laworder@legionmail.org



No Angel is a book currently on the New York Times best sellers list by Jay Dobyns. Retired ATF Agent Jay Dobyns states, "I infiltrated the Hells Angels Motorcycle gang-and ever since I've

been on their hit list". Law Enforcement Today interviewed with Retired Agent Dobyns regarding his exploits. Excerpts from their interview and the book

No Angel are as follows:

Being a Law Enforcement Officer is challenging- sometimes very challenging. And once in rare while, as challenging as you could ever imagine. But Jay Dobyns story is anything but imagination. It is one of true, extraordinary heroism and off-the-charts dedication to duty.

Jay Dobyns retired ATF agent, is most known for his undercover (UC) work in Arizona infiltrating an ominous group of outlaw motorcycle thugs known as the Hells Angels.

In April 2002, an infamous deadly brawl broke out in a civilian packed Nevada casino between two warring motorcycle clubs-the Mongols and the Hells Angels. This prompted Federal Law Enforcement Officials to open and investigate this threat to Society. And they knew just who to go to-Jay Dobyns.

By this time Jay has already been with ATF for well over a decade and had been on countless undercover operations. Being intelligent and quick witted, and dedicated to Law Enforcement, he was the perfect fit for this daunting task

Continued on page 11>>



<<Law & Order Continued from page 10
deemed operation Black Biscuit.

As he made his way through Operation Black Biscuit infiltrating the Hells Angels, he started earning the trust of several high-ranking members, even befriended them. But he always knew where to draw the line.

Jay said, "While UC I developed close, personal relationships. There is no doubt in my mind that while in a role, some of the suspects that I had befriended would have stepped in front of a bullet for the Jaybird. But I never lost sight of whose team I was on."

If Jay was to be successful in infiltrating this dangerous gang, the UC life would have to take priority. His character, Jaybird, had to come first-even ahead of his own family. However, that came with a heavy personal price.

"This is my biggest regret in life. My UC role became more than what I did, it became who I was. That is very dangerous. I am humiliated to now have to admit that I abandoned and betrayed

my own wife and kids in exchange for some false, hero-worship legacy that never came true."

"On one occasion I came home, and my wife Gwen told me " You can't just show up at this house and speak to me and the kids like we are your people on the street." Jay stated. "That was the harsh truth of how I was treating my family."

Jay tells LET that after two years inside the Hells Angels and collecting several indictments against several gang members it was time to leave the Angles which required him and the other UC Agents to commit such offense that they would be banned from the Angels.

" I was in a bar trolling the Sons of Silence (MC) in Colorado with an amazing team of UC agents. Our goal was to create a confrontation, be ordered to remove our fabricated gang clothing (aka colors), and leave town. The (SOS) found us in their bar! The critical threat was delivered and recorded, and the case was made."

That is when Jay and the other UC agents

were expecting to leave: Jay explained, "I overstepped. They outnumbered us 5 to 1. The right move was to follow their orders. But no, I started a massive bar brawl that resulted in us being locked inside and having the crap beat out of us with pool cues and brass knuckles until the became bored with kicking our asses."

They we're finally out of the club and returned to the Agency. (ATF) Several of the Hells Angels went to prison due to the agents efforts.

Jay Dobyms is now retired and coaching the Tanque Verde High School football team in Tucson, Arizona.

Jay also mentioned the current struggle facing Law Enforcement today and offered this inspiring message to the LEO community. He said, "We are underappreciated, who go underpaid to do the unthinkable for the often ungrateful. They report for duty knowing that they will be hated, despised, ridiculed, filmed, taunted, spit on, assaulted, sometimes murdered...and they still do the job."

Department Oratorical Winners

Meri West, Oratorical
oratorical@legionmail.org

On Saturday, March 13th, we held the Department Oratorical Contest, hosting six students from each Area of Florida. Many thanks to all the people that attended and helped pull the contest off without hiccups.

We had a strong judging panel, including:

- Gil West, the Chief Operating Officer from Delta
- Tony Ortiz, City of Orlando Commissioner
- Anna Eskamani, Florida House of

Representatives

- Capt. Tim Hill, Commander of the Naval Air Warfare Center Training
- Systems Division, Orlando
- Desmond Meade, President of Florida Rights Restoration Coalition
- Co'Relous Bryant, the FL Department and National Oratorical Winner in 2007



Front row left to right: Eric Singleton, Isabel Bequer, Miguel Toral, Max Schaked, Cheyenne Desonia, Gideon Jankovich. **Back row left to right:** Elizabeth Barahona, Co'Relous Bryant, Desmond Meade, Anna Eskamani, Capt. Tim Hill, Commissioner Tony Ortiz.

Continued on page 12>>



<<Oratorical Continued from page 11

- Elizabeth Barahona, the FL Department Oratorical Winner in 2015.

The winners of \$500.00 scholarships were:

- Cheyenne Desonia, a Junior at Bay High School in Panama City, sponsored by Post 392.
- Gideon Jankovich, a senior at Bradenton Christian School, sponsored by Post 24.

- Miguel Toral, a senior at Trinity Catholic High School in Ocala, and sponsored by Post 284 in Ocala.

In 3rd place and the recipient of a \$1,000.00 scholarship was Isabel Bequer, a sophomore at Academy of Holy Names in Tampa, sponsored by Post 5.

In 2nd place and the recipient of a \$1,500.00 scholarship was Eric Singleton, a senior at Royal Palm Beach High School in West Palm Beach, sponsored by Post 367.

And in 1st place, congratulations to Max

Schaked , a senior at Lake Highland Preparatory School in Orlando and sponsored by Post 63 in the Eastern Area. Max won a \$2,500.00 scholarship from the Department of Florida and also a \$5,000.00 scholarship contributed by the National office since the National contest was cancelled this year, due to COVID-19.

The video of the contest can be seen here: <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/oratorical-competition/state-winners/>

American Legion National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council Virtual Meeting

Shirley Douglas, Scholarships
scholarships@legionmail.org



The Annual Washington Conference Week meetings were conducted through Zoom meetings this year. As a Florida member of the American Legion National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Council, I attended the March 2, 2021 virtual meeting.

Dr. Richard Stone the Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) gave us an update on the VA's response to the COVID-19 virus. Over one million veterans have received the COVID-19 Vaccine which is roughly 20% of all veterans. The VHA staff have stepped up and volunteered to go where they were needed the most to support both VHA and civilian healthcare facilities. The pandemic identified the Just-In-Time Supply system was not adequate to provide the required medicine, medical supplies and personal protective equipment that were required to fight the pandemic. The supply chain has been modernized to ensure necessary supplies are always available. The VA has used 3-D printing to produce masks and other medical items. Tele-help lines have been expanded by 1,800 % resulting in

200,000 visits each week. The Cares Act Funding gave the VHA 17 billion dollars. The funds have been used to add 80,000 additional staff members, buy Covid-19 test kits, set up mobile medical facilities and to provide grants and pensions to help prevent veterans from becoming homeless during the pandemic.

I also attended the Cemetery subcommittee virtual meeting.

Did you know the Omnibus bill of 1862 authorized President Lincoln to purchase grounds for use as national cemeteries? Prior to this bill, soldiers were buried where they fell. Fourteen national cemeteries were established in 1862. Currently the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) has 155 national cemeteries comprising of 9,245 developed acres and provides perpetual care for 4.84 million veterans and family members.

The NCA in 2016 established a Veterans Legacy Program (VLP) that commemorates our nation's Veterans through the discovery and sharing of their stories. VLP encourages students and teachers at the University and K-12 level around the country to immerse themselves in the rich historical resources found within NCA national cemeteries. Participants research Veterans interred in national cemeteries and develop educational tools that increase public awareness of Veteran service and sacrifice. For more information go to <https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/legacy>.

[cem.va.gov/cem/legacy](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/legacy).

Do you know a veteran that is buried in a national cemetery? Would you like to post a short comment, memory or story about the Veteran? Just go to <https://www.cem.va.gov> and click on the Veterans Legacy Memorial tab. A search box will appear. I found it is best to use just the last name to do the search unless the last name is very common. Once you find the veteran's name scroll to the bottom of the profile page to enter your comment, memory or story about the veteran.

The VA Benefits website <https://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits> is constantly changing. Make sure you review the website periodically to ensure you are receiving all of the benefits you are eligible for. Also ensure your family reviews this site to ensure they know where to find information they might need in the future.





2021 STATE ORATORICAL WINNERS

March 13, 2021

Congratulations to all of our State Oratorical Contestants!

1st Place - \$2,500

Represents Florida at National Oratorical Contest

Max Schaked

Eastern Area, Post 63

\$500 Winners:

Miguel Toral

Northern Area, Post 284

2nd Place - \$1,500

Eric Singleton

Southern Area, Post 367

Gideon Jankovich

Southwestern Area, Post 24

3rd Place - \$1,000

Isabel Bequer

Central Area, Post 5

Cheyenne Desonia

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
Meri West 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.

PROJECT: VETRELIEF BULLETIN

AN OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

FLORIDA LEGION RIDERS.. LOOKING TO SURPASS LAST YEAR'S TOTAL OF \$60,374 TO END VETERAN SUICIDE!

The Florida Legion Riders kicked off their registration for this year's Unity Ride and State Rally. This event is a week-long motorcycle ride geared towards raising funds and awareness for PROJECT: VetRelief's Suicide Prevention Initiative.

Last year's event was altered due to the coronavirus pandemic. The annual in-person event was switched to a virtual ride. However, the Legion Riders knew their veteran community was counting on them and took on the challenge and was still able to raise over \$60,000. **They want to raise more this year, and it will take your help for them to do so!**

The Unity Ride will be split into two routes: North and South. Each route will include a Meet & Greet on April 18th and officially begin the next day. The NORTH ROUTE will start in Pensacola and the SOUTH ROUTE in Marathon, FL. Both routes will stop at Posts along the way collecting donations and will end in Kissimmee on Friday, April 23rd.

Hotels can be booked through AAA by calling Kelly Krupinsky at 904-543-6866.

We hope everyone will sign up and join the Legion Riders in their efforts to end veteran suicide. Once you're registered, we encourage you to create your fundraising page. The more funds you raise the more COOL PRIZES you'll earn.

If you are unable to attend the actual ride, we will have the Virtual Rider (\$5) option. You can ride at least 22 miles and post a photo on your social media account using #iRideforthe22. Virtual Riders will be eligible for the COOL PRIZES, too.

The **State Rally** will be on Saturday, April 24th at Post 10 in Kissimmee, FL. Tickets are \$20 each and can be purchased using the registration link. You can still also raise funds and earn the COOL PRIZES. **Please note, if you register for the Unity Ride, entry to the State Rally is also INCLUDED.** There is no need to purchase a Rally Ticket, too.

FLORIDA AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS UNITY RIDE RALLY

COOL PRIZES

- KEYCHAIN & MAGNET** —  RAISE \$50
- T-SHIRT** *PLUS KEYCHAIN & MAGNET —  RAISE \$100
- SPINNING COIN** *PLUS KEYCHAIN, MAGNET & T-SHIRT —  RAISE \$250
- LEATHER WALLET** *PLUS KEYCHAIN, MAGNET, T-SHIRT, & CHALLENGE COIN —  RAISE \$500
- STANDARD ROOM NIGHT AT 2022 SUMMIT** *PLUS KEYCHAIN, MAGNET, T-SHIRT, CHALLENGE COIN, & LEATHER WALLET —  RAISE \$1,000

REGISTER NOW: GIVE.FLORIDALEGION.ORG

CHALLENGE 22 EVENTS... KUDOS TO BOARD MEMBERS ON THEIR EVENTS

Thank you for everyone who attended last month's Challenge 22 Events at American Legion Post 69 in Avon Park and Jacksonville Beach hosted by the 5th District. Two successful events to raise awareness for veteran suicide!

Both events were well attended and included vendors from Veteran Service Organizations and companies who provided Veteran benefits. Additionally, they each featured an awareness walk



for Veteran suicide, attendees heard from expert speakers explaining warning signs and symptoms of mental health, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Many of our SPI strategic partners were also in attendance.

Congratulations to Board Members, Jim Wineland and Larry Roberts, and their teams for putting together such great events!

Awards & Upcoming Events

Chris Ragusa, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



Outstanding Post Scouting Program Recognition – Due May 13, 2021:

In May 2021, the American Legion Department of Florida will recognize three (3) of our Florida Posts with the Outstanding Post Scouting Program Award. This recognition will be bestowed upon Posts in acknowledgement of their excellence and leadership in support of the Boys Scouts of America's Scouting program from May 1, 2020 – April 20, 2021. For consideration, please do the following:

- Prepare a printed narrative of your Post's Scouting achievements for the current Legion year (May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021).
 - o The printed narrative should be two typewritten pages or less. Include copies of flyers, newspaper articles, awards or other information that demonstrates why what your Post did was above and beyond.
 - o Include information about support to both BSA Scouting units that your Post **charters** (legally responsible

with a signed agreement) and **sponsors** (supports financially or materially with no commitment).

- Submit your nominations to arrive no later than **May 13, 2021** by mail or email.

American Legion, Department of Florida Headquarters
 Attn: Programs Director
 PO Box 547859
 Orlando, FL 32854-7859

By email, send to both programs@floridalegion.org and scouting@legionmail.org. Recipients will be notified by phone or email by the Department of Florida Scouting Chair. Your Post will be given options regarding the formal presentation of this award. Ideally it will occur during the Department of Florida Annual Convention at the World Center Marriot in Orlando from July 1 – July 4, 2021.



Legion Scouting Exhibit at Florida State Fair April 22 – May 4 2021:

The Department of Florida Scouting Commission has secured an exhibit booth at the Florida State Fair from April 22 – May 2, 2021 in Tampa, FL. We will spend 11 days actively engaged in promoting American Legion-chartered BSA activities and highlighting the Scouting movement in general. Both of which should drive program awareness,

promote post chartering opportunities, and develop membership interest. If you have a minimum of 4-hours to spare while at the fair, we need dedicated Legion Scouters and Scouts to staff the booth. If interested, please contact me at the email address below, or sign up for a shift at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4AACAC2FA1FEC70-gtbacflorida>



MacDill AFB Cub Scout Camporee – Friday, November 12 – Sunday, November 14, 2021.

Lewis Lake Scout Camp on MacDill AFB in Tampa, FL has been reserved for a Cub Scout Camporee specifically for American Legion Post and Sons of the American Legion Squadron Cub Scout Packs. This weekend will be jam packed with tours of the air traffic controller tower and flight simulator, the base's flight line fire and rescue station, maritime patrol station and dock, an armory weapons orientation, and K9 Dog Handling unit demo. We'll have a cookout at the base marina beach, a catered BBQ dinner, and campfires and s'mores to finish off the night. Email me at the address below for an information packet about this event.

VA&R Bulletin

Alan Cohen, VA&R
var@legionmail.org



With the spring season underway, let's remember that the COVID pandemic is still with us and we need to continue to practice an abundance of caution. As you probably know - the VA, as well as private institutions,

are being proactive with administering vaccinations. By the time you read this, there may be many of you who've received one (if not both) shots. I urge you to take

advantage of this protection. To clarify, veterans must be registered with the VA to receive vaccinations at VA facilities. In connection with that, as many of us have noticed there's been an increase in the use of Community Care as well as virtual appointments. We have been repeatedly assured that these will not replace in-person or VA-provided healthcare.

While our hospital and CBOC reps still aren't able to resume their normal volunteer duties, some volunteer positions are being phased back in, some of our VAVS reps have joined with their respective facilities and are participating in Buddy Check and Compassionate Contact programs. Should you have as little as one hour per week to

volunteer for this, contact your nearest VA hospital.

I'm proud to say that even under current conditions our Post Service Officers continue to team up with County and FDVA Service Officers to continue to help our fellow veterans with claim and benefit information as well as a host of other services. Legion Post Service Officers have been instrumental in veterans receiving awards of approximately fourteen (14) billion dollars. Additionally, let's remember that Post Service Officers' responsibilities make them a valuable resource for many other services community-wide.

Continued on page 16>>



<<VA&R Continued from page 15

With the American Legion lending its strong voice in support, the VA has established its Center for Women Veterans. Through that program, both active-duty servicewomen and women veterans can easily access information regarding health services, the process and eligibility for enrollment and connecting with other women veterans. Veterans can access this information at: womenvet/docs/whtt/VAwhttParticipantHandbook.pdf.

A word of caution to veterans and/or their families who are considering filing compensation and/or disability claims. Do NOT fall victim to any offers by any person or entity other than those recognized by the VA. Many will "guarantee" results and charge fees for their service. There has been an increase in fraud and scams in this area. Be aware that no authorized individuals ever charge for their services.

Lastly for this month, we should band together and contact our Congressional

representatives to re-introduce the Toxic Exposure in the American Military Act. This addresses toxic exposure and Burn Pits for Post-9/11 veterans. As so many Vietnam veterans are aware, it took over twenty (20) years for Agent Orange exposure to be recognized by the VA. Our younger brother and sister veterans are now facing the same fight. Let's help them.

ATTENTION



MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED

2021 DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

JULY 1-4, 2021

Join us at the World Center Marriott, in Orlando, FL



PRE-REGISTER

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YOUR SAFETY

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Sign up for TEXT ALERTS.



TEXT FAL to 74121

MORE INFO AT floridalegion.org



March 25, 2021
95% Target Report (Currently 95.10%)

11	Johnny Castro	109.60%
15	Bruce Carl	107.53%
12	Dennis Mallon	104.11%
4	Cherie Korn	95.85%
1	Lamar Carroll	95.78%
17	Jim Bowers	95.44%
6	Kurt Gies	94.13%
5	Troy Horsley	91.11%
16	Randall McNabb	91.10%
13	Brian "Taz" Gehling	90.76%
9	Arthur Barber	89.16%
8	Skip Felicita	88.58%
3	Stuart Scott	87.90%
7	Burl Thomas	86.46%
14	Thomas Frank	83.31%
2	Roger Hewitt	83.23%
Eastern	Chris Hamrick	98.49%
Southern	Paul Bosco	95.35%
Central	Sid Damsgard	94.59%
Western	John Edens	93.55%
Northern	Marie Conti	92.78%
Southwestern	Jerry Faight	89.75%
Post 400		102.68%
Post 208		85.21%



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American Legion Post 117

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Hottest

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once

All you can eat \$10

Each Team must provide at
least 8 Quarts of Chili.

Condiments are of your
choice.

It will be a blind taste test

Judges Decision is Final

More Info: Tom Wood 321-729-8089



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PUBLIC INVITED TO ATTEND

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Wall Escort April 11th, 2021 Leaves at 10am
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Reunion Web Page at:

floridaveteransreunion.com

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Melbourne, FL

No Coolers, Glass or Pets allowed
in the Reunion Area

Per Wickham Park: Golf Carts Permitted
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Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall
<http://travelingwall.us>



Call For Info

321-690-0805

321-652-4185

Vendors call 321-652-4185

RaRusso1962@gmail.com

YVBSecretary@gmail.com

Club Escort Lineup Info

vvbreunionescort@gmail.com



**102ND ANNUAL
DEPARTMENT CONVENTION
JULY 1-4, 2021**



Orlando World Center Marriott

**BOOK
NOW
\$147**

plus tax | per night

800-399-7629
RESERVATIONS



USE KEYWORD

Be sure to mention
"The American Legion"



BOOK NO LATER THAN

To receive special rate you
must book by **June 2, 2021**




REGISTER TO ATTEND

Register to attend at
www.floridalegion.org/flcon

Book soon, room block will fill quickly!

MORE INFO AT
www.floridalegion.org

 **Orlando World Center Marriott**
8701 World Center Drive
Orlando, FL 32821



102ND Annual Department Convention, July 1-4, 2021

The Orlando World Center Marriott, 8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Member, Post, Unit or Squadron

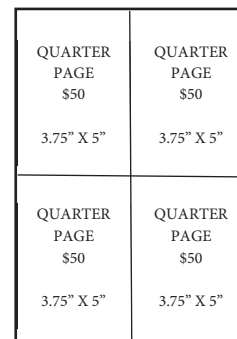
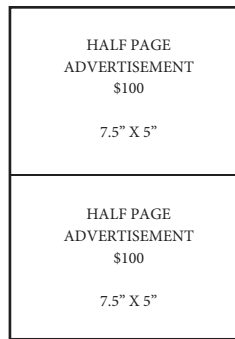
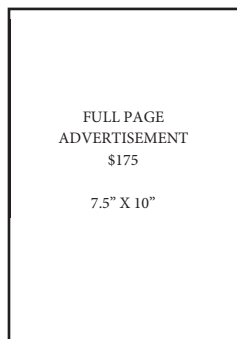
Contact Person

Title

Phone

Email

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



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 15, 2021 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



102ND Annual Department Convention, July 1-4, 2021

The Orlando World Center Marriott, 8701 World Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32821

VENDOR INFORMATION

Name of Business or Organization/Foundation _____

Contact Person _____

Job Title _____

Phone _____

Email _____

SPONSORSHIP LEVEL

General's Sponsorship \$750

Door Prize/Raffle Item: _____

Colonel's Sponsorship \$500

Door Prize/Raffle Item: _____

Lieutenant's \$250

Door Prize/Raffle Item: _____

*Each exhibitor will receive an 6' skirted table and 2 chairs. Additional chairs are available upon request.
Electrical outlets are not guaranteed.*

PROGRAM ADVERTISEMENT ONLY - Increase product / brand awareness! A great marketing tool.

Full Page Ad (7.5"x10") - **\$350** (included in General's)

Half Page Ad (7.5"x5") - **\$200** (included in Colonel's)

Quarter Page Ad (3.75"x5") - **\$100** (included in Lieutenant's)

Advertisements must be submitted no later than May 15, 2021 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 are in grayscale. All imagery must be legally licensed. The American Legion, Department of Florida will not be able to alter or create advertisements. **Please email artwork to: events@floridalegion.org.**

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Signature _____

Date _____

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

102ND DEPARTMENT CONVENTION T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



Please choose your method of delivery: Pickup at Convention Pickup at Headquarters Ship to Home*

Style	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty
Men's	S	Qty	M	Qty	L	Qty	XL	Qty	2XL	Qty	3XL	Qty	4XL	Qty	5XL	Qty
Ladies'	S	Qty	M	Qty	L	Qty	XL	Qty	2XL	Qty	3XL	Qty				

Shirts are **\$10 each**, plus tax and shipping. If tax exempt, please include copy of exemption form.

SHIPPING FEES* (Pickup is Free)

(Qty: 1) - \$3.95 (Qty: 4-5) - \$8.95 (Qty: 21-30) - \$21.95
 (Qty: 2) - \$5.95 (Qty: 6-10) - \$9.95 (Qty: 31-40) - \$24.95
 (Qty: 3) - \$7.95 (Qty: 11-20) - \$15.95 (Qty: 41-50) - \$33.95

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

PAYMENT

ORDER ONLINE: floridalegionstore.org

Please return form and payment to Department Headquarters:
The American Legion, Dept of FL; Attn: Emblem Sales, PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32810

Payment Type: Check / Money Order Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Credit Card Number: _____

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

Card Holder Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Make checks payable to The American Legion, Department of Florida - Include "Emblem Sales" in the memo