



THE LEGION LINK

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA PUBLICATION



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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

A Message from the Department Commander

Jerry Brandt, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



I hope everyone had a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. Now it is time to get back to work.

The Department of Florida is down 7,000 members as of December 7th, from last year. Posts

are indicating the membership is up, new members are coming in, and everything is great. If so, why is membership down? District Commanders, please reach out to your Posts, and have them verify if there are any inaccuracies in their numbers. Compare the cards they gave out to the weekly reports, (give time for transmissions to update) is there a difference? If there is, email me the following, Post number, Date of the error, and the number of members, that the Post indicates and what is on the report. Let us see if National can find out what is going on.

I know a lot of our members are concerned about the destruction in the Midwest, especially Kentucky. One of the best ways to help those in need is to donate to one of the following:

- The American Legion / Sons of the American Legion can use the **National Emergency Fund (NEF)**

www.legion.org/emergency

- **Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF)**

www.legion-aux.org/aef

- **Department of Florida** is also collecting donations will periodically send collected donations to the areas affected.

www.floridalegion.org/donate

These funds will be used to assist the members and Posts in those areas that were devastated by the Tornadoes affecting, parts of Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Please donate.

We are still traveling, in December, we completed the Visits to the 5th and 13th Districts, and a lot of great ideas came out of these visits. I would like to thank the following for traveling with me on the visits: 5th District Commander, Lena Heredia-Perez, and her 2 Vice Commanders, Miguel Garcia and Joe Maichle, Northern Area Commander Troy Horsley, Department Sgt.-at-Arms, Jeff Durden, 3rd Department Vice Commander Chris Hamrick, and Detachment Commander Brian Carter. We had District Commander, Harold "Bud" Boyer, SW Area Commander Jessica Moore, and Department 2nd Vice Commander Michael Raymond, escorting me through the 5th and 13th District. Great Visits, and best of all, vital information shared both up and down the chain of command. Thank you.

Department Commander continued on page 2 >>





<< Department Commander continued from page 1

Of the items, we learned from the district visits, and I would like to stress to the District Commanders, is training, we have too many new officers who have not received the basic training to operate a Post, yet they are elected to a position of responsibility each year. We need training prior to them taking office. Within the next couple of months, information will be sent to the current District Commanders about training the incoming Post Commanders. My suggestion, hold the training in April or May so that they know what they are getting into. Too often, training is done months after the changeover of officers, and also, the new officers are often not mentored, informed, or taught what they need to know, this causes major problems for the Post, and its membership. We need to assist them in this changeover, to ensure it flows smoothly,

without waves, for the Post.

Florida American Legion College had a great turnout. If we get enough members to request another class, we would like to set one up. Knowledge is what is needed in the Posts and this is a way we share knowledge through training. The Florida American Legion College application is in our resources, please fill out and send the form in. Once we have the numbers, we will set a date for training. This class is also open to all Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion as well.

I hope to see all of you on my travels. After all, we are brothers and sisters, in War and in Peace.

DUTY*HONOR*COUNTRY

Working on Membership

Eunice Butts, 1st Vice Commander
1stvice@legionmail.org



First and foremost: A belated, Merry Christmas and wishing each of you a very healthy, and Happy New Year. It is my prayer that your memberships and programs are a great success. I want to take this opportunity to personally thank all Posts that made 100% in membership, and all Posts that met their membership goals.

It is now time to work on MEMBERSHIP. As everyone is aware, membership is what we need to keep our Legion strong. Let us continue to do the Buddy Check. Someone may need help. If you need help please contact your district commander, district membership chairman, or department membership chairman. We have a lot of things coming up for the next five months. check your calendars for The Oratorical, Children & Youth, and other deadlines that we must complete.

Wishing each of your Posts a very successful year in both your personal and American Legion lives.

Remember Them

Michael Raymond, 2nd Vice Commander
2ndvice@legionmail.org



Last week approximately 20 Legion Riders, Patriot Guard Riders, others, and I, had the honor to escort and attend a memorial service for an unattended Veteran. This occurs on the first Tuesday of each month

at Bay Pines Cemetery and is led by Randall McNabb, the Post 273 Madeira Beach Riders, and the Madeira Beach Honor Guard. No TV cameras or newspaper people were there, just the Patriots that refused to let this Veteran go home alone! As I entered the gates of the cemetery a strange feeling came over me that I was being welcomed by the thousands of Veterans buried there. It was a feeling that they knew we were

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JANUARY 2022

3-4	Constitution & By-Laws Committee
5	FL Boys State: Registration Fee Deadline
6-8	District 15: Dept Commander Visit
6	Epiphany
6-8	Central Area Visit: Post 99
6	Central Area Visit: Post 186
6	Central Area Visit: Post 147
6	Central Area Visit: Post 152
6	Area Commander Visit: Post 119
7	Renewal Date
7	Central Area Visit: Post 26
7	Central Area Visit: Post 148
7	Central Area Visit: Post 139
7	Central Area Visit: Post 138
8	Central Area Visit: Post 108
8	Veterans Expo
8	Central Area Visit: Post 334
8	District 17: Meeting
8	Central Area Visit: Post 111
8	Post 1: Bike Day and Chili Cook-Off
8	Central Area Visit: Post 5
9	District 5: Meeting
11	PDC Think Tank
11	Central Area Visit: Post 119
12	Membership Goal 80%
12	FL Boys State Registration Opens
13-15	District 3: Dept Commander Visit
13	Central Area Visit: Post 34
13	Area Commander Visit: Post 34
14	Post 394: Riders Spaghetti Dinner Night
15	District 3: Meeting
15	Legion Link Articles Due
15	Post 392: Hotzee Run
15	ALR 69 Motorcycle Rodeo
15	Post 323: Casino Night
16	Oratorical: Post Competitions End
17	Matin Luther King Day
17	Department Headquarters Closed
19-22	District 11: Dept Commander's Visit
19	Area Commander Visit: Post 138
21	Oratorical: District/Area Contests Due
22	District 15: Meeting
22	District 11: Meeting
22	FL Everblades District 13 Fundraiser
24-28	District 12: Dept Commander's Visit
25	Area Commander Visit: Post 23
26-29	District 12: Dept Commander's Visit
29	Southern Area Ball
30	District 4: Meeting

- 📍 Commander Jerry Brandt'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.





<< 2nd Vice Commander continued from page 2

there for them, to thank them for what they sacrificed for us. It was a feeling I will never forget. Later that day I attended probably the best and probably the most attended Pearl Harbor Day memorial service I had ever witnessed. It was done with class and dignity! Great job by the officers and members of Madeira Beach Post 273.

Later this week I have the honor of being the guest speaker at the "Wreaths Across America" ceremony in St. Cloud. The American Legion is "all in" when it comes to this program to honor our true heroes during the Christmas season. Across the country, more than 1,100 memorial sites will conduct this ceremony, many of them sponsored in part by our local American Legion Posts.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars are raised year-round by Posts like 259 in DeBary to make sure every Veteran's stone has a wreath. We have a duty to our fallen heroes to never forget. And I for one will never forget. Have a wonderful Christmas and a fruitful New Year. Remember them!

Keep it Up

Chris Hamrick, 3rd Vice Commander
3rdvice@legionmail.org



Hello Legionnaires, as I'm writing Christmas is a week or so away, and the New Year is about to begin. The past 6 months have been a whirlwind with lots of training

and programs taking shape. Great work. Keep it up! Department Commander District visitation has begun and there will be lots of windshield time over the next few months as we visit your Posts and events. Keep in mind our goals and goal dates for programs and membership. They both go hand in hand. (Can't work a program without members). I anticipate more great things to happen in our Department over the next period of time. Keep doing what you're doing for our

families and communities and our fellow veterans. I'm proud to represent. Happy New Year.

Keep It Real. Peace... Out.

Volunteering

Dennis Boland, NEC
nec@legionmail.org



The American Legion is an organization dedicated to community, state, and national service. Service does not end when veterans take off their uniforms. Veterans can continue their service

in the community as an American Legion Volunteer.

The American Legion is a staunch supporter of the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program, the largest volunteer program in the federal government.

During the fiscal year 2020, Legionnaires volunteered at more than 200 VA facilities, which included VA medical centers, community clinics, Vet Centers, Fisher Houses, state Veteran's Homes, and national cemeteries.

A total of 3,656 regularly scheduled volunteers contributed 366,996 hours and 7,817 occasional visits contributed an additional 32,043 hours for a total of 398,082 hours volunteered by American Legion members. These numbers were significantly impacted by the COVID – 19 pandemic.

With more than one-third of a million hours volunteered. The American Legion saved the VA more than \$11.3 million in 2020.

Central Area

Bruce Carl, Central Area Commander
centralarea@legionmail.org



Happy New Year everyone!! 2021 is now behind us and we look forward to 2022. I sincerely hope everyone had a safe and wonderful holiday season. We still have six months left to work our membership and programs before the

Convention.

The Central Area has been busy during the holidays doing poker runs and fundraisers to support our Children and Veterans throughout the holiday season. There are way too many people and Posts to thank for the outstanding job they have done, so I will just thank the whole Central Area as a group. This is what the American Legion is all about!

The membership in the Central Area is doing

well for the most part. Albeit sometimes it does get frustrating with mylegion not working properly much of the time. Bruce Comer deserves a big "Thank you" for all he has done in trying to get us membership reports.

January and February look to be very busy months in the Central Area. The Department Commander will be visiting the 15th and 7th Districts. I will also

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be continuing my Post visitations and attending several of the Area Balls. The National Commander be visiting the Central Area at the beginning of February for a week, and everyone is looking forward to meeting him!

The planning for the Central Area Ball is in full swing, and the committee is looking for a very successful Ball. We have put a great

group together and they are all working hard to make sure everyone has a great time. This will be the first one in several years for the Central Area.

If anyone needs help with membership, programs, training, etc., please feel free to contact me. I am more than willing to assist you in any way I can. On the subject of training, I will be putting two training classes together between January and

the June convention. One of the classes will be on the duties and responsibilities of Post Officers. This class will be for all Post Officers and anyone who might be interested in running for an Office in the future. The second training will be on the End of Year reporting and the proper opening and closing of a meeting. Stay tuned for updates on the training dates and locations.

Northern Area

Troy Horsley, Northern Area Commander
northernarea@legionmail.org



Happy New Year. Hope Santa was good to all. We had a good time in the mighty 5th with the Department Commander's visit. Thanks to the Posts for the fellowship, food, and fun. With half of

the commander's visits completed in the Northern Area, there is a consensus of concerns that MyLegion has many issues and

most of them are dealing with membership. Please do not get discouraged and keep trying to get our members renewed. The numbers on the membership reports are also problematic and are not a true reflection of all our hard work, being accomplished by each of our Posts. Department is trying to get the issues resolved with National. If you have issues with processing membership, get a hold of our membership chairs. They are a great asset who maybe be able to assist/advise with the most current direction in processing with department assistance.

Boy's state registration is due January 5th.

If you have alternates, they will be able to register on the 12th. Post Oratorical Competitions need to be completed by January 16th. Our Department Commander will be visiting the 3rd District from January 13th – 15th. It is a good time to come out and get one on one contact with him. March on Tallahassee is scheduled for January 19th. The kick-off will be at Post 13 at 0800. Please wear your cover and a legion shirt. Getting into seeing our representatives in congress will show them we need their support. If you need more information, contact our Legislative Chairman Stuart Scott.

Western Area

John Edens, Western Area Commander
westernarea@legionmail.org



Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Year's celebration. Our Western Area has done very well the past 6 months. Not only did we win the Department awards

for Membership the first quarter, but we are still holding on to top Department

membership numbers as of late December. Our District Commanders (**Sonny Decker and Steve Mears**) continue to do an **outstanding job** promoting membership in their respective Districts.

Other than taking care of our own the past three hurricane years, Western Area Posts continue this year, **helping other Posts and States** that are in need due to natural disasters. Several Posts and the 1st District ALR have collected supplies and taken them to the tornado-ravaged states. We are

extremely proud of the special efforts of our Posts & the 1st District ALR here in the Western Area.

Everyone stay safe, healthy, and strong.

I look forward to seeing as many Posts as possible this winter and personally thanking those that are working on the great membership numbers and those that have helped the tornado devastated states to our North. **Thanks again for everyone's hard work and dedication to our Legion causes.** For God & Country.

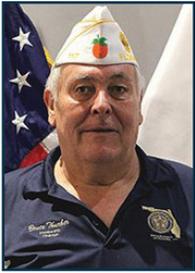
WE MARCH ON TALLAHASSEE
JANUARY 19, 2022
 SEE PAGE 13 FOR DETAILS





Engage last Paid 2020 Members

Bruce Thurber, Eastern Membership
membership@legionmail.org



The New Year has arrived time to thank those who have already renewed and ask them to help contact those who haven't. Remind them of the benefits of membership and how it helps our fight for veterans' benefits. We are currently a little over 67,000 Let's Shoot for 45,000 additional renewals by Ground Hog Day.

Thank you everyone for working so hard on Membership during the past 6 months.

Hopefully, you have folks watching and learning from you and during the remaining membership year, you'll have many more. Put them to work. We need to elevate our efforts in Buddy Checks and Revitalization. Remember when recruiting if your Post doesn't offer what a member needs another Post may so sign them up at the other Post.

Approximately 900 people a day are moving to Florida approximately 63 of these new Floridians are Veterans. If you go to the find

members in my area report, you can find many potential members. Another feeler for these new Floridians is looking for the signs of their Veteran Status and utilizing door hangers, welcome baskets if your local chamber of commerce distributes them, and the other recruiting tools.

Our Commander and Vice Commanders are working hard to bring us to a new level. Providing training, guiding us into a new mentorship mindset, and being there for us. Show our appreciation by hitting an All-Time High in every Post, District, and Area.

Western Membership Zone

Randy Holeyfield, Western Membership
membershipfal@legionmail.org



Well, 2021 came and passed, where are we, and where should we be?

Sure, there is, has been and continues to have sporadic issues with MyLegion. What does

that have to do with membership? Very little, because membership is a year-long venture, one that starts on July 1st and continues until June 31st (then starts over). Although there is a long grace period to pay your dues (though waiting doesn't provide any strategic value), you're delinquent on December 31st, losing all your benefits and access to your Post (or any other).

So, what is a reason to wait? It gains not one single thing, even if one thinks it does,

you are due every July 1st, so if one waits, there still due every July 1st regardless of any logic one may inject into it. No one gains or benefits any "stretching of my dues" based on when one may have joined. If you joined in February, your dues are still due in just a few months, it's just the way it is, you cannot change it. In these cases, you must give the short year to the team, it still starts over on July 1st for everyone, no exception.

I beat that horse enough, membership is a single matter, each member is the only one that controls their membership. If every single Legionnaire paid "their dues," membership would be over on July 2nd, sound too simplistic, well, because it is that simple. If YOU paid your dues (not relying on another members' renewal), just one member paying his or her dues at the first of the fiscal year (July 1st). The American Legion would save over three and a half million dollars every year. Yes, I said \$ 3 1/2 Million dollars, that's the average amount

spent to send out the six notices my snail-mail each year. All I can figure is that most members do not care about wasting millions of dollars or have no idea how all this works. Either way, it's a huge waste of funds that could be used in other ways to help our Veterans and other programs. I, myself, continue to be speechless (well, not really, I say this all the time), but I should be speechless.

I do not need to even go into a dialog about the DMS program, because renewals of our current members on our Post's roster is a big enough job, but if you're lacking numbers, the DMS is a good resource to pump up those numbers. We will talk about the DMS in the months to come. This year is perplexing, and we cannot blame it on COVID 19 or the MyLegion website, because the simplicity of it all depends on only a single member, YOU. And how about Auto-renewal, talk about saving time and money.

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES
PROJECT: VetRelief

	10K	15K	20K	25K	30K	35K	40K	45K	

Commander's Goal: \$275,000 (Current funds raised **\$22,834.59**)





Children & Youth

Les Martin, Children & Youth

cy@legionmail.org



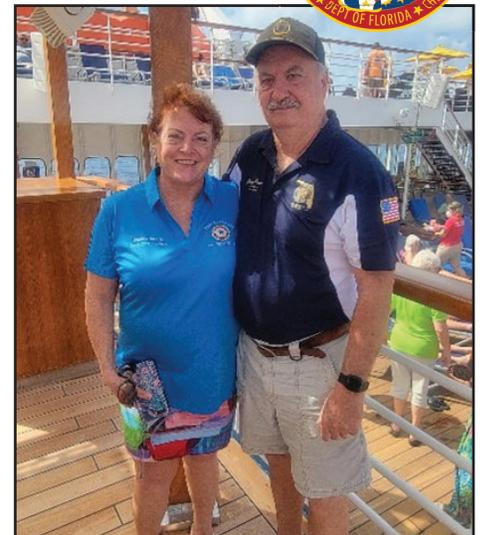
I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays and are now recovered, because it is time to start thinking about our two fundraisers on April 9th. We need each of our Posts to start thinking about making up a basket for the Children & Youth Picnic. If you can't attend the picnic to bring a basket, please hold a fundraiser at your Post and make a donation to the picnic. We need to raise a lot of funds this year. We are still trying to make up for the lost fundraisers in 2020.

The Children and Youth Golf Tournament is also on April 9th and we are looking for a record number of teams to sign up. The entrance fee is \$70 per golfer or you can be a GOLD sponsor and you will receive a hole sponsor sign and 4 golfers for \$325. Don't forget, your Post should send in the hole sponsor forms as soon as possible. The Manatee County Veterans Council is leading the way and bought 5 Silver Hole Sponsorships. Please take the sponsorship form to other groups in your area and ask them to sponsor a hole.

Well, our Florida American Legion Children & Youth Cruise is behind us. All who attended had a great time. There were over 35 Florida Veteran family members on board. Commander Brandt and President Brandt were extremely happy with our group.

I will be busy during the next several months attending District Meetings and Area Balls. I look forward to seeing all of you again after we last met at the Fall Conference. I will have our 2021 Children & Youth Pins available for sale wherever I attend. If you haven't purchased one yet, please consider getting one when I see you.

I see our Auxiliary has been very busy with Operation Homefront through Dollar Tree. It looks like many Districts have taken part in this program collecting toys and presenting them to schools and other worthy organizations. Great job ALAFL, keep up the good work. You should be proud of what you are doing for the youth of Florida.



Florida American Legion College

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College

deptlegioncollege@legionmail.org



"Happy New Year 2022"

"Oh, no I forgot to send in my FALC application!"

It's Ok. There will be another FALC class in 2022. The next class dates will be coming up later this year.

What can I do now? Just follow the steps below:

Until the next class comes around just do the following:

1. Basic Training online by going to Legion.org
2. Read the Officers Guide 2021 and get a copy
3. Go to District training
4. Go to Department training

5. Ask questions about training to your District Commander

Ask for help from someone that knows about training like your District Commander, District vice Commander, Area Commander, Zone Commander and/or PDC. Maybe one of them will give you some good information, but always check out the Officers Guide for information and read up on the following manuals:

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1. Adjutant Manual
2. Membership Manual
3. Training videos at (Floridalegion.org) and (legion.org)
4. Forms and Document at (Floridalegion.org) under resources

You need to do Basic Training online before coming or applying to come to Florida American Legion College.

Learning more you can help your Post, District, and Department to move forward by being educated the correct way of doing things the right way.

If you still have questions email or call me at 352-226-4370, I will answer your questions
deptlegioncollege@floridalegion.org



Important Contacts

Arthur Dudley, Homeless Vets
homelessvets@legionmail.org

ORGANIZATION	WEBSITE	PHONE NUMBER
County Service Officers	www.cvsoafl.org/	
Red Cross	www.redcross.org	1-800-733-2767
Salvation Army	www.salvationarmyflorida.org	1-800-728-7825
Food Pantry's	www.foodpantries.org/st/florida	
Food Assistance		1-850-300-4323
Homeless Shelters	www.sheltersforhomeless.com	
Volunteers of America	www.voaflorida.org	1-703-341-5000
Florida Veterans Affairs	www.FloridaVets.org	1-800-488-4181
St. Vincents (Families)		1-813-955-6099
HUDVASH	www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp	1-877-424-3838
FL Veterans Support Hotline		2-1-1
Vet Relief	www.PROJECTVetRelief.org	1-407-270-9204
FL Dept of Labor	www.dol.gov	1-800-204-2418
FL Veterans Crisis Hotline	www.cleanslatecenters.com	1-833-505-4673
Women Veterans	FloridaVets.org/our-veterans/women-veterans	1-727-319-7418
Legal Assistance	florida.freelegalanswers.org	
Veterans Affairs	www.Va.gov/homeless	





JROTC Recognition and JSSP Deadline

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP

jrotc@legionmail.org



I know there are many events throughout the state that are happening, however, I can only feature a couple. I had the pleasure of attending the 9th District Past Commanders and Presidents Ball at Post 321, Cooper City. It was a very good "Traditional Ball" put on by the District Cmdr. George Bagrakos and his staff. We were entertained with music by the amazing "Silver Wings" Band. There was a very good turnout for the invited Past Commanders and Presidents and many guests. The JROTC Color Guard did the presentation of Colors, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. We were also fortunate to have JROTC Cadets from Cooper City HS and Nova HS serve the guests with appetizers and dinner. Our guests rewarded them with a very nice donation of almost \$300 for each school for their hard work and service. This is a demonstration of how valuable our youth programs are and the benefit to the post with assisting our programs and events.

The Florida State Raider Meet was held last month at Camp Flaming Arrow Scouting Reservation, Greater Tampa Bay. Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, "Sentinels" placed First

in the Mixed Raider Meet, a first for their team. West Broward JROTC "Bobcats" was recognized for outstanding performance as well as the Everglades JROTC "Gators". Kudos to them and all that participated in this annual event as well as the coaches and instructors that go along to help make it all happen.

JSSP Postal Marksmanship Registration has come to a close. I know articles in the Link plus emails have been going out since Sep. 1st. We had a very low turnout again this year. I realize this is partly due to the current state of a shutdown on some activities due to COVID and the increased requirements of risk management and background checks, however, waiting until the last few weeks to start the process of registering a team is a problem. We need to have the post chairmen get with the schools and let them know that this is a National Program for JSSP and Scholarship Awards are the final reward. One example, I spoke to a team coach who registered 2 days before the deadline because he had just seen the event listed on the CMP website. My question is, it's been on the Legion National and Department website since September. We need the Post Chairmen and the District Chairmen to promote the program to the schools and teams that have marksmanship. Everything is done online including the Post Affiliation Form which the coach completes and has the

Post Commander sign and return to sponsor the team. The results for the marksmanship teams will be posted on the Legion National JSSP after all targets are fired and returned by the next deadline Feb. 1st. I'm available to assist you at any time, please contact me. Thanks for all your efforts and may you all have a pleasant year-end and Happy New Year.



MSD First Place in FL Mixed Raider Meet



West Broward Bobcats JROTC recognized State Raider Meet

2021 One of the deadliest years for Law Enforcement

Daryl Bass, Law & Order

laworder@legionmail.org



As of December 6, 2021, 60 Police Officers have been fatally shot in the line of duty as of this year. We're not counting the many Officers, Deputy Sheriff's and Correctional Officers

that have died in the line of duty from car crashes, physical encounters, training, Covid, and other means in 2021. This is about those who were KIA by firearm.

The FOP is the world's oldest and largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers. The organization proudly represents more than 364,000 members from more than 2,100 lodges.

As Breitbart News reported, this is a nearly 28% increase in fatal shootings of police officers compared to all of 2020 when 47 officers were shot and killed in the line of duty.

As of November 30th, FOP records confirm that 314 police officers have been shot since the beginning of the year. One hundred and

nineteen of those shootings reportedly occurred in the midst of 95 separate ambush-style attacks on officers, resulting in 28 of the total gunfire deaths. Since 2020, ambush attacks on Police increased by nearly 130 percent.

The strong increase in fatal shootings of police officers comes after 2020 being marked with a string of anti-law enforcement riots and the start of the devastating "Defund the Police" movement, which took momentum after the death of George Floyd.

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In addition to this, bail reform measures where cash bail has been abolished or reduced in favor of immediate jail release for suspects charged with violent crimes in states like New York, California, and Illinois, have drastically increased the number of repeat violent criminals who are back on the streets within hours of committed those crimes.

According to the FOP data, in 2019, there were 293 officers in total shot and 50 killed.

In 2020, there were 313 officers in total shot and 47 killed, and so far in 2021, there have been 314 officers in total shot with 58 killed. For 2021, states with the highest number of police officers being shot are:

Alabama with 15 shootings California with 21 shootings Florida and Georgia both with 17 Illinois with 25 shootings New York with 10 shootings North Carolina with 12 Ohio with 11 shootings and Texas with an astonishing 42 shootings.

Legion family there is a war going on in the streets of America. Please pray for our Police Officers, Firefighters, and Paramedics and their families. When you see them thank them for their service.

Remember April 20, 2022, is the cut-off date to send your Officer of the Year (Police, Fire, and Paramedic) recommendations to the Department so that we may Award these hero's with a plaque and a hardy American Legion Thank You.

Oratorical Contests

Meri West, Oratorical
oratorical@legionmail.org



Here is the most updated list of Oratorical Contests we have scheduled to date. It is not complete though the most recent information will be on the website: www.floridalegion.org/oratorical.

- 4th District
 1-22-22 at 9:30 am
 Post 155 6585 W. Gulf to Lake Highway,
 Crystal River, FL 34429
 4th District Chairman: Doug Hockenberry
 727-514-3742
- 5th District
 1-29-22 at 11:00 am
 Karpeles Manuscript Museum, 101 W. 1st
 Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206
 5th District Chairman: Meri West 904-
 704-0936
- 6th District
 2-5-22 at 9:00 am
 Post 53, 2874 Sanford Ave, Sanford, FL
 32773
 6th District Chairman: Bill Thompson 407-
 924-7148
- 9th District
 1-22-22
 Post 142, 171 SW 2nd Street, Pompano

Beach, FL 33060
 9th District Chairman: Alan Cohen 954-
 562-2547

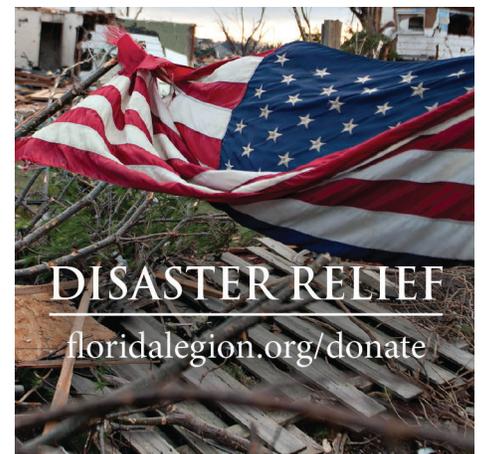
- 12th District
 1-15-22
 Post 394
- 15th District
 1-22-22
- 16th District
 1-29-22
 Post 119 at 9:00 am
- **Eastern Area**
 2-12-22 at 9:00 am
 Post 80, 1019 Pennsylvania Ave., St. Cloud,
 FL 34769
 Eastern Area Chairman: Shirley Douglas,
 352-874-6582
- **Northern Area**
 2-19-22 at 11:00 am
 Karpeles Manuscript Museum, 101 W. 1st
 Street, Jacksonville, FL 32206
 Northern Area Chairman: Meri West 904-
 704-0936
- **Department of Florida**
 3-12-22 at 9:00 am
 FL American Legion HQ 1912 Lee Road,
 Orlando, FL 32810
 Department Chairman: Meri West 904-
 704-0936

- **National Oratorical Contest**
 4-22-22 to 4-24-22 at 9:00 am
 Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel, 2544
 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241

What makes me most passionate about the Oratorical contest is that it gives deserving students money to attend college or a trade school. For a student that wants to gain knowledge and skills, it's a lasting legacy. For every student we can help, that student will likely go on to help at least one other person in their life. It's a great return on our investment.

Attending and supporting your Post or District contest is a significant contribution and you will likely learn much more about the Constitution than you ever knew.

Many thanks to everyone who is making a difference in a student's life.



**PROJECT:
VETRELIEF**



Bulletin

JANUARY 2022



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

// NEW YEAR, SAME GOALS! //

As we begin 2022, we must take a moment and reflect on the previous year! For 2021, PROJECT: VetRelief was able to meet many milestones despite still dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. We recently shared that our program surpassed *servicing 1,000 veterans*, and sometime this spring we will *provide over \$1,000,000 in support!* Although both are something we are extremely proud of, take a look at these other items we accomplished, too.

- **Welcomed 4 new members to our Board of Directors;** Legion's new Department Adjutant, Bruce Comer, Dr. Janell Royster and two (2) Auxiliary Representatives whose names will be shared soon - *stay tuned!*
- **Added 3 new organizations as strategic partners** through our Suicide Prevention Initiative (SPI)
- **Provided our largest funding round** to our SPI strategic partners - \$40,000!!
- **Hired our first full-time Veterans Case Worker,** Lenora James, to process our financial assistance cases

However, looking ahead to 2022, the PROJECT: VetRelief is full steam ahead on providing the necessary support our veteran community continues to rely on. Our Board President, Bob James, has set a goal to have 22 fundraising events throughout the year to recoup funds for our emergency assistance program and continue our funding cycles to our strategic partners for suicide prevention.

We know that our Legion Family will help us get there! If you are hosting an event or fundraiser to support Commander Brandt or President Brandt's charity of choice, PROJECT: VetRelief, let us know so that we can help promote it and add to our calendar of events! Contact Jennifer Cooper at 407-295-2631 or jcooper@floridalegion.org with all the details!

THANK YOU, FLORIDA VETERANS FOUNDATION

The Florida Veteran Foundation has been a tremendous asset and partner to PROJECT: VetRelief for a very long time! Over the years, they have continued to provide us with monetary grants or donations that has allowed us to continue our services to Florida's veterans and their families.

When PROJECT: VetRelief was first formed, it was difficult to gain support from individuals or corporations since the program was new and our future was uncertain. However, it was the Florida Veterans Foundation that stepped in and gave us a chance. They provided substantial funding that allowed us to show proof that our program was essential!

Then, when the coronavirus pandemic hit, they quickly

began to help us fundraise and develop a program to meet the increased demand of financial assistance requests.

In return, we have provided a detailed case analysis on how their funds were used. Since their offices are in the capital buildings in Tallahassee, they have used our reporting to show our elected state officials in Florida; which has helped them secure additional funds from the state.

All in all, we are eternally grateful for the partnership we have with the Florida Veterans Foundation and hope that we can continue to team up with them in a variety of ways to support our veterans and their families!

SUPPORT CASES

JULY 2021 - NOV 2021

*Reflect PVR Cases ONLY



70 FAMILIES ASSISTED



\$74,876.29
AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED

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@ProjectVetRelief

1912A LEE RD, ORLANDO • 407-295-2631 • WWW.PROJECTVETRELIEF.ORG



American Legion Scouters

Chris Ragusa, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



2021-22 Goals – Recognize Excellence:

As communicated during the 2021 Fall Scouting Conference, the following goals are in place for the 2021-22 year (01MAY21-30APR22). 1) At least

one Outstanding Post Scouting Program award nomination per District. Three of these awards will be bestowed upon the Department of Florida Posts with the most involvement in the Scouting program.

Applications are due by May 11, 2022, and the form can be found on the Resource tab on the Scouting page - <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/> 2) At least one Eagle Scout of the Year application per District! Applicant nomination packets, also located at the Resource tab, must be received by Department of Florida headquarters no later than March 1, 2022. 3) AL Citation of Appreciation for Support of the Scouting

Program to BSA unit leaders, meeting and event hosts, superior service to the BSA unit (Flag and Emblem Item Number: 733.121) 4) TAL Thank You! Challenge Coins for meritorious service or noteworthy volunteerism 5) Good News Legion Link input to Scouting Chair!

Post Scouting Survey: Thank you to those Posts that completed and mailed their Post-Scouting Survey to me. These surveys, which went out to the Post Scouting Chairs, are designed to help me focus my energies on sustaining and promoting Boy Scouts of American unit chartering and sponsorship by Department of Florida Legion Posts.

December 3-5, 2021 Cub Scout Camporee on MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL: Three Cub Scout packs participated in the first Annual Cub Scout Camporee for American Legion and Sons of the American Legion-chartered Cub Scout packs from December 3-5, 2021 on MacDill AFB in Tampa, FL. Cub Scout Pack 9 (chartered to Post 147 in Odessa, FL), Cub Scout Pack 3891 (chartered to Post 389 in Ruskin, FL) and Cub Scout Pack 1381

(chartered to Post 138 in Port Tampa City, FL) camped together over two nights at Lewis Lake Scout Camp and enjoyed a full weekend of base activities. Over 125 Cub Scouts, their siblings, and families had the opportunity to view the airbase and South Tampa from the Air Traffic Control Tower observed how air traffic controllers are taught their trade with a Flight Simulator, learned about the life of an Air Force firefighter at the Flightline Fire & Emergency Services station, crawled all over the Marine Patrol mission aquatic vessels, and had a visit from the Combat Arms trainers with weapons from the Armory. The Scouts enjoyed a cookout lunch on the base beach and a catered BBQ dinner and campfire with s'mores to close out the day. This will be an annual event, with March 2023 targeted for the next iteration. *We are looking for an American Legion-chartered Scouts BSA troop to organize and host a similar event in Florida for BSA's 11-17-year-old program.* Contact the Department Scouting Chair if your Post or squadron-chartered troop would like to discuss.





Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Alan Cohen, VA&R
var@legionmail.org



Greetings, fellow Legionnaires. Hard to believe that another year has come and gone. I'd like to start by wishing each and every one of you a Happy and (most importantly) Healthy New Year.

Looking back over the year it would be accurate to say that 2021 was eventful in more ways than I can list here so let's look forward.

As I'm sure you know by now, our Veterans Benefits chairman is coordinating what will be a fantastic Veterans Expo at Post 69, Avon Park, on Jan 8. I encourage you to attend as it will be not only a fun event with food and beverages but there will be multiple vendors there who provide services of all types for veterans and yet another Challenge 22 Walk to raise awareness about veteran suicide.

Since COVID continues, our VAVS hospital volunteers are each week finding ways to give of themselves and their time. Many have taken on projects working from home and all are still doing all they can for our hospitalized and housebound veteran family.

Post Service Officers are more and more proving their great value as resources for information and help of all types. One way they're helping is to direct veterans who are entitled to travel pay in connection to visits to VA medical facilities is directing those individuals to the right party at the facility to file for their travel pay. This has become necessary since the VA has announced that effective 12//31/2021, the kiosks located throughout hospitals and CBOC's no longer allow for that. Veterans who are able can also do so online at: <https://access.va.gov>. There is also a help desk phone number: 855-574-7292.

Some more bits and pieces of valuable information: Last month, December, the President signed a bill that requires the VA to aggressively launch a maternity care

coordination program, paying much-needed attention to the physical and mental/emotional needs of pregnant and Post-partum veterans. Also, the President now has on his desk for signature the National Defense Authorization Act. This year's Act is far-reaching and among many other things lays out a plan for a new Global War on Terror Memorial to be located on the National Mall. The new Act also allocates additional funds to enhance national security, a 2.7% pay raise for military service members and DoD personnel. Also significant, the new bill makes changes in the way MST perpetrators are prosecuted.

Lastly, congratulations to the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System on the groundbreaking for a new VA Outpatient Clinic in Jacksonville. Until it's completion, all current VA services will continue in place at the existing facilities.

In closing this month's article I invite you all to join me in looking forward to a new, healthy, and productive year.

Time to Roll Up Our Sleeves

Deb Wheeler, Women Veterans
womenveterans@legionmail.org



Now that the holidays are over, and the company is gone, as well as the turkey. It's time to think of our female veterans and what they could do to enhance our Post membership. With our

loss of members increasing rapidly and the new blood of members is slow in coming.

This untapped resource of female veterans is giving us a run for the money. I've asked this question before, what are we doing wrong? No one has all the answers in

due time this could happen but it's not something that can happen overnight. We all need to do our little part in making our Post more welcome for female veterans. It could be as simple as making our Post a little brighter turn up the dimmers during the day and early evening it's definitely a possibility.

No woman would feel comfortable coming into a semi-dark environment on the first visit. Lounge staff needs the education to stop ignoring a female when she visits. It could lead to her joining the Legion Family. Welcome them, you can talk to your regulars later. This has happened to many female Legionnaires too often including me. Educate your Auxiliary to welcome female veterans and be a mentor to a point. Don't push them to join the Auxiliary that will

come in time.

Make them feel at home like a sister. Your Post commander should make an attempt to speak in an auxiliary meeting to broach the subject. Lastly, we're getting too many complaints of bullying of female veterans. They serve their country just as our male counterparts, they don't need to be sexually harassed or bullied by other females in the Post. This must stop immediately.

This has been an ongoing problem for quite some time, and it will continue to be, but if we become proactive now the situation will resolve itself sooner than later. Should anyone have any better ideas or more ideas please share them with me.



facebook.com/floridalegion





Youth Law Cadet Program

Bob Brewster, Youth Law Cadet

youthlawcadet@legionmail.org



Great news! We have at Department all paperwork needed for every Post to get their Cadet Program started.

First, our dates for this program will be July 17, 2022, through July 22, 2022. This program is open to all young

men and women between the ages of 16 through 18. They will arrive on Sunday and go home on Friday. They are not allowed to have their private cars with them. They will go through an intensive week of training in all aspects of what the Highway Patrol puts their candidates through.

During the first 4 years of doing this program, we have had no complaints from the cadets themselves or their parents. Please start early screening your applicants

for this program. While they are there, they will be issued 2 bright orange shirts which they will wear daily. All questions you may have will be answered in the paperwork that you request from Department. Applications and brochures are already at Department for your use. We will have 2 Legion members and 1 female Auxiliary member with the cadets at all times. If you have any questions regarding this program, please do not hesitate to contact me at 904-635-4492.

March on Tallahassee

Stuart Scott, Legislative

legislative@legionmail.org



The March on Tallahassee, will be on **January 19th**. We will gather at Post 13, in Tallahassee at 0800.

At the post we will divide into teams

based on the number of participants and provide them a "know before you go" briefing.

Then we will regroup at the Capitol Building and go to several meetings and possibly attend some hearings that we may be testifying in (depends on the scheduling of the calendar, to which we cannot predict).

Any questions or concerns can be directed to the legislative email address: legislative@legionmail.org



Tornado Relief Donations

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness

disasterprep@legionmail.org



We've all seen the horrific news regarding the violent tornadoes that ripped through six Midwestern states, demolishing homes, leveling businesses, and taking far too many lives. These storms left miles upon miles of devastation in their wake. Can you imagine experiencing such desolation right before the holidays? I bet you can because the state of Florida is no stranger to natural disasters!

Lucky for us, the state of Florida was spared from this storm system, but we can certainly relate, with a long history of devastating storms throughout our state. Our Department has always received relief efforts from other Legion Family's around the

country, and we feel **it is now our turn to provide support to our fellow American Legion Departments and Posts who were affected by this tragic event!**

The American Legion, Department of Florida is collecting monetary donations to aid the victims of this recent tragedy. If you would like to contribute to our Tornado Relief Efforts, donations will be collected online using this link (<https://www.floridalegion.org/relief>) or by check. Please make checks payable to The American Legion, Department of Florida, and include "Tornado Relief" in the memo line. Checks and money orders can be mailed to the Department Headquarters at the following address:

The American Legion, Department of Florida
Attn: Tornado Relief
1912A Lee Road
Orlando, FL 32810

Our first contribution to the tornado victims

was issued December 23rd.

Please join us so that we can give back to our Legion Family who have experienced catastrophic damage to their lives and homes; something we Floridians are all too familiar with.





December 31, 2021 Membership Target Report (75%)		
6	Joe Marcheggiani	84.87
9	George Bograkos	80.64
16	Robert Matheson	79.71
1	Sonny Decker	79.44
8	Skip Felicita	79.12
7	Burl Thomas	78.95
12	Dennis Mallon	77.13
4	John Bennett	76.91
13	Harold Boyer	76.82
14	Thomas Frank	76.55
17	Jim Bowers	76.53
3	Stuart Scott	74.79
2	Steve Mears	73.82
5	Lena Heredia-Perez	73.73
11	Harry Malecki	70.53
15	Stephen Tyler	69.65
Eastern	Daryl Bass	81.33
Western	John Edens	78.57
Southwestern	Jessica Moore	77.87
Central	Bruce Carl	76.65
Northern	Troy Horsley	75.17
Southern	Johnny Castro	75.13
Post 400		65.34
Post 208		74.29



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

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

DEPARTMENT TRUSTED. LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.
We provide a wide range of benefits designed to protect you, your family and your health.



From Your American Legion Department



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



Emergency and Accident

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



Insurance Coverage

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



No Cost Protection

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



Cancer Care Insurance Plan

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

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

Next Membership Goal:
January 12, 2022

80%

www.thelit.com



Central Area Ball

March 19th 4 - 9 pm

Post 252

**11433 Park Blvd
Seminole, FL**

*Tickets \$35 per person
Couples \$65
Contact Steve Tyler for tickets
tylersf@hotmail.com
813-857-3671*

- * Raffles
- * 50 / 50
- * Cocktail Hour 4 pm
- * Dinner 5 pm
- * Specialty Drinks

~ Menu ~

*Hawaiian Chicken
Hawaiian BBQ Pork
Rice
Vegetable
Green Salad
Fruit Salad
Pineapple Upside Down Cake
Hawaiian Delight*



**Entertainment
7 - 9 pm
Billy "Elvis" Lindsey**



All proceeds to benefit Project Vet Relief and My Warriors Place



DEPARTMENT
OF FLORIDA

**DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
SOUTHERN AREA BALL!!**
DATE: SATURDAY JANUARY 29, 2022

Where: American Legion Post 142

**Please join us in celebrating the American
Legion Department of Florida's Southern Area.**



4 Chaplains, Sunday, January 30th 1pm

AMERICAN LEGION POST 222

4250 NE 5th Ave Oakland Park, FL

**Featuring Sounds by
(Don't Stop the Music)**

**Program ad forms: \$120
for inside front & back
cover and back cover. Full
pg. \$100 half pg. \$50.
Contact: Rob McCarten at
njirish11@gmail.com**

**Cocktail hour 5pm
with Hors d'oeuvres**

**Dinner served at
6pm**

**Chicken Marsala or
Salmon entrée options**

**Admission Ticket \$30
Zelle payment option @
Guamwarrior60@outlook.com**

STERLING MCCLELLAN

American Legion Post 142

**171 SW 2nd St
Pompano Beach, FL 33060
954-942-2448**

**Contact : Rob McCarten
njirish116466@gmail.com
njirish11@gmail.com**

CHILDREN & YOUTH GOLF TOURNAMENT



\$ 70 per Golfer
see registration form
for more details

PICNIC

Sat. April 9, 2022

Golf - Shotgun Start at 8:00am, Indian River Preserve Golf Club

3950 Clubhouse Drive, Mims, Fl

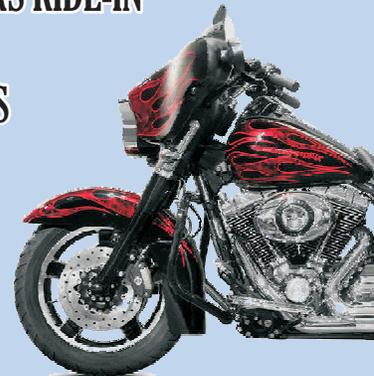
Picnic at Noon, Post 1

1281 N Washington Ave. Titusville, Fl

FOOD
FUN
ENTERTAINMENT
FUN
AUCTION
FUN
LEGION RIDERS RIDE-IN
FUN
GOLF AWARDS
FUN



Silent
Auction



Golfers, dinner is available on Friday the 8th, at Post 1. Call ahead at least one week to let them know you are going to dinner, so they can have enough food for the night. (321) 269-9959

Hotel reservations for the 8th and/or 9th, Best Western Space Shuttle Inn, \$59 per night - (321) 269-9100

THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
CHILDREN & YOUTH GOLF TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2022
Team Registration Form

GOLFERS

1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ 4) _____

SPONSORSHIPS & FEES

GOLD SPONSOR (4 GOLFERS & HOLE SPONSOR SIGN) \$325 _____
SILVER SPONSOR (HOLE SPONSORSHIP ONLY) \$100 _____
GOLFERS ONLY (\$70 PER GOLFER) \$280 _____
SPONSORSHIP CUT-OFF DATE: MARCH 25, 2022
TOTAL SUBMITTED _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT PERSON FOR THE TEAM _____
PHONE NUMBER _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: S.A.L. Squadron 325. Put "C&Y Golf" in memo
and mail to Squadron 325, 3412 HWY 301N - Unit 103, Ellenton, FL 34222

ANY QUESTIONS - CALL LES MARTIN (941) 201-7293