



THE LEGION LINK

THE AMERICAN LEGION, DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA PUBLICATION



AUGUST 2022

VOLUME XXXI ISSUE 1

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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

A Message from the Department Commander

Eunic Butts, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



Greetings Legionnaires, First and foremost, I would like to thank you for your support and confidence in electing me as your Department Commander for the State of Florida. Together we will do our very best to keep The Department of Florida on the top.

I attended Boy's State and was honored to speak at the awards ceremony. Special thanks to Bekki Tibbs for preparing me.

The retreat was very informational. We will continue the Mentorship program started by PDC Jerry Brant. These pins are only to be given out at the District meetings. Please bring your mentor to the District meeting. This program is also for the Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion. For the American Legion they will only be given out by the Area and Department Vice Commanders. Whichever one with the highest office in District. The Auxiliary will be given by Department President and Sons of the American Legion by Detachment Commander. Remember, we are family.

We will give the Department Commanders' Area Training in August and September. We would love for all Post Commanders', Vice Commanders' and Adjutants' to please

attend. Post who have members that may want to move up are welcome, all interested may attend. Currently, we have the following schedule:

August 6, 2022

Western area

District 1, Post 402, Panama City Beach, FL
10 AM

August 7, 2022

Northern area

District 17 Post 115 at VFW Palm Coast, FL
9 AM

August 13, 2022

Northern Area

Post 57 Lake City, FL
9 AM

August 14, 2022

Eastern Area

Post 80 St. Cloud, FL
10 AM

August 20, 2022

Central Area

District 7 Post 72 Mulberry, FL
10 AM

Augusts 21, 2022

Southwestern Area

District 8 Post 113 Rotonda, FL
10 AM

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September 10, 2022

Southern Area

Post 142, Pompano Beach, FL
9AM B'fast 10AM start

I received invitations to Post 275's installation and dinner, Post 69's Purple Heart program, and Post 147's installation. Thanks to each of you for your kind hospitality.

Please support my charities, PROJECT: VetRelief and Jackson in Action 83. My colors are purple and gold.

Commanders' affair; April 1, 2023 at Post 8, Winter Heaven FL. APRIL FOOLS DAY. Smile. Save the date, more info available soon. Let's

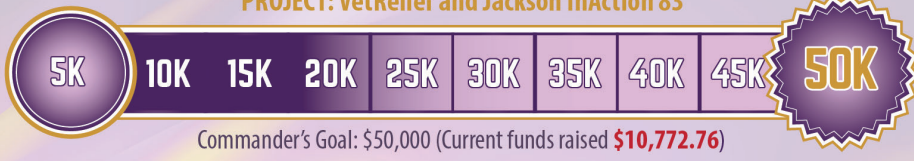
have fun while we work.

Special thanks to Central Area Commander Robert Matheson, 15th District Vice Commander Randy Holeyfield and Past District Commander Bruce Carl for a splendid show of working together as a team to carry out emergency situations at the spur of a moment.

I wish each of you a very good year in your personal, family and American Legion endeavors. Let us strive for 101% membership, more peace and harmony in The American Legion posts and in The Department of Florida. Continue to do your Buddy Checks.

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

PROJECT: VetRelief and Jackson InAction 83



Welcome Back!

Michael Raymond, 1st Vice Commander
1stvice@legionmail.org



First and foremost, thank you so much for your support in the June election. I promise to work hard and exceed your expectations in the coming Legion year.

Our new leadership looks very promising and I expect a banner year for the Department of Florida. When I look back at the numbers from last year, I see a trend appearing which in my estimation should not only meet but exceed our goals for the 2022-2023 year.

Commander Butts has an outstanding plan in place that I believe will get us to where we need to go. Her training plan is second to none led by the one and only NEC elect Jim Ramos, who has proven time and again

that Legion training is the key to success.

Our membership chair is already out of the gate ensuring that we have the minimum of glitches this year and that our concentration should be on renewals of current members.

We ALL must work together utilizing the tools that have been provided us to contact our members and see what we can do for them.

This is where the word **COURAGE** comes into play. The **COURAGE** to pick up that phone and make that call, the **COURAGE** to find out just what our members expect from us and carry it out. The **COURAGE** to reach out to those folks and no longer allow them to be a stranger.

Working together as a family sometimes can be hard, but the end result can only mean success.

| AUGUST 2022 | |
|-------------|---|
| 1-31 | Antiterrorism Month |
| 1 | Samsung Scholarship Apps Due ★ |
| 2 | Invasion of Kuwait/Operation Desert Shield (1990) |
| 3-7 | Baseball Regionals 🍌 |
| 4 | U.S. Coast Guard Birthday |
| 6 | Western Area Commander's Training ♥ |
| 6 | District 4: Training |
| 6 | Post 108: Adopt-a-Highway |
| 6 | Chapter 166: ALR Monthly Meeting |
| 6 | District 16: ALR District Meeting |
| 7 | Northern Area Commander's Training ♥ |
| 7 | Purple Heart Day |
| 7 | Friendship Day |
| 10 | U.S. Department of Defense Birthday |
| 10 | Agent Orange Awareness Day |
| 10 | Belgrana Department Narrative Due ★ |
| 10 | Chapter 35: ALR Meeting |
| 10 | Chapter 10: ALR Meeting |
| 11 - 16 | Baseball World Series ★ |
| 13 | Northern Area Commander's Training ♥ |
| 14 | Eastern Area Commander's Training ♥ |
| 14 | National Spirit of '45 Day |
| 14 | Navajo Code Talkers Day |
| 14 | Chapter 8: ALR Meeting |
| 15 | Legion Link Articles Due 🍌 |
| 19 | Aviation Day |
| 19 | Chapter 8: ALR Dinner Night |
| 20 | Central Area Commander's Training ♥ |
| 20 | Chapter 27: Monthly Meeting |
| 20 | Chapter 266: ALR Bike Night |
| 21 | Southwest Area Commander's Training ♥ |
| 21 | Senior Citizens' Day |
| 21-25 | ALR Legacy Run ★ |
| 21 | Chapter 81: ALR Monthly Meeting |
| 23 | Chapter 394: ALR Meeting |
| 25-1 | 103rd National Convention ♥ ★ |
| 26 | Women's Equality Day |
| 28 | Chapter 69: ALR Meeting |
| 29 | U.S. Marines Reserve Birthday |

- ♥ Commander Eunice Butts' Attendance Tentative.
- 🍌 Department Event
- ★ National Event

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

Will you muster the **COURAGE** to succeed this year? I know I will, with your help!



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legionlink@floridalegion.org

Supporting Our Members

Chris Hamrick, 2nd Vice Commander
2ndvice@legionmail.org



Another year is upon us and I would like to begin with thanking you for your confidence and support as you elected me your 2nd Vice Commander for the Department of Florida. I look forward to the

upcoming year.

As I write, our Posts are having Installations of Officers and planning their District meetings and District trainings.

The month of August will be very busy for myself and the Leadership Team as we travel to conduct Area Training in each Area... followed immediately by National Convention in Milwaukee. (See tentative

training schedule in Commander's article.)

I'm looking forward to seeing you on the road and assisting in making our Department stronger in our Programs and membership. Let's hit the ground running and not let up.

Keep it Real!

New Beginnings

Jessica Moore, 3rd Vice Commander
3rdvice@legionmail.org



First and foremost, thank you to all who supported my endeavor of becoming your Department 3rd Vice Commander.

I look forward to great things happening

this upcoming year and working with the Western and Northern Area Commanders and their respective District commanders.

I'm just finishing up at the Commanders retreat, with great learning and instructors, but most important, wonderful vibes with FUN!!! (I think I need new glasses!) Please check out the photos from the retreat on your American Legion Department of Florida facebook page: facebook.com/floridalegion/

I'm already filling up my calendar with installations, District Meetings and amazing events promoting the Four Pillars!

I can't wait to see you all as I continue to travel around, loving the American Legion Family. My phone is always on and you can also reach me by e-mail or text.

Always remember my motto, American Legion Family **#oneteamonedream!!**

Farewell

Dennis Boland, NEC
nec@legionmail.org



Thank you for giving me the honor of serving as your Alternate National Executive Committee Member and National Executive Committee Member for the last 22 1/2 years.

During my term, I can honestly say that I have NEVER EVER Lied to you, the members of the Department of Florida.

During my tenure I have served with integrity and honesty, keeping the American Legion, Department of Florida at the forefront of our National Organization.

I have always responded to you, the members, when questions were asked of me. I have never led anyone astray, but was truthful in all my responses to your

questions. If, I didn't know the answer to your question, I would always find the truthful answer before answering your questions.

I totally believe because of my longevity as your NEC, the Department of Florida had the honor of having two National Vice Commanders (Larry Sheets and Paul Martel), a National Historian (Susan Mason) and a National Chaplain (Robert Vick).

Having represented you, the members, at many functions in the Department of Florida and National has been a true honor, especially the friendships that were made and will last a lifetime.

As a PDC, I will still be active in the Department of Florida and also with National promoting the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation.

I look forward to working with old friends and new ones while I continue to work for the betterment of the American Legion.



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I'm Baaaaack!

Phil Crouthamel, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



It was great to meet my fellow Historians at the Department Convention.

First, my sincere apologies to the post from the panhandle that arrived late to have their book judged. To the Commander, I have

taken note of your complaint and I will make every effort to clarify the time schedule for submissions in a later article.

Well, this year was a vast improvement from last year in which only 9 books were submitted for judging. We had 21 books submitted. Unfortunately, we had 2 disqualifications for they were not in the proper formats. Congratulations to the following Post winners: Post 8 for National Narrative winner. Post 243 for Open Book. Post 138 for History and Post 273 for Narrative. These two books will advance to National for judging during the Fall Conference.

I made an error in announcing the Riders winner. The winner was Chapter 252 and

hopefully the plaque was retrieved and presented.

The Historian class presented at the Leadership conference had 23 participants. I am in the process of upgrading the training material so that each historian has a clearer idea of what the judging should look like. More to come. My main goal is to train, YOU, the post historian on how to be a better historian.

Again, I say that any information that I can give you, please contact me through my email.

Working Together

Bob Matheson, Central Area
central@legionmail.org



Thank You Central Area for allowing me to serve as your Central Area Commander in the State of Florida. I look forward to working with excellent District Commanders: Burl Thomas - District 7,

Victor Kelly – District 15, and Eric Nestler - District 16. As a team, I am thrilled to get out and work with them and everyone in each of the Districts within the Central Area.

Now that Convention is behind us, it's time to hit the road! Once this article has been published, most if not all, individual Post Installations will be completed. So, what's next! As always, the focus is on membership. Working with the District Commanders, we

will be scheduling membership trainings as soon as possible. With all the changes and nuances of the website: MyLegion.org, it's always good to have someone to help answer any questions you have and learn how to better navigate the membership system.

Once again, thank you and I will be seeing you soon at your Post!

Knowledge is Power

Jim Bowers, Northern Area
northern@legionmail.org



Take advantage of training offered, be it at Convention, Fall Conference, Area or District. I encourage all members to attend and receive all the training they can.

Oh yes, I have attended training sessions where the speaker was a perfect monotone and never changed their rhythm while speaking. I did not enjoy these sessions and I can say neither did anyone else in the room. However, what did occur was that after the class we used the lack of speaking skills by the trainer to share information between the attendees and go

on to further research the information or lack of information we received.

I have also been in sessions where the speaker was a trained public speaker, and the session would fly by. At the end of these sessions the attendees would stay and ask the trainer questions, or ask them when seen at a later date.

I remember Pat Williams former General Manager of the Orlando Magic. He would go into middle schools and encourage students to read. He would:

" say if you wanted to know about a subject read one book on the subject. If you want to know more about this subject than anyone else in your school read three books on this subject. If you want to be a leader in a subject, then

read five books on the subject."

This applies to knowledge about the American Legion. Attend one class to learn the basics. Attend three and no one will question your knowledge. Attend five and then you will find yourself giving the class.

Everyone has a point of view. Know this and combine what you know with the information you receive and formulate your knowledge of the American Legion. Listen, learn and formulate. Attend all the training that is available. Be the expert or at least very knowledgeable. Be a good leader and have the skills needed to lead your post this year and into the future.

Remember knowledge is never wasted.



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Here We Go!

Skip Felicita, Southwestern Area
southwestern@legionmail.org



Greetings from the Southwestern Area! It is my honor to serve as your Southwestern Area Commander this year. I am here to assist you to be successful!

One way to ensure we have a great year is to visit and support other post's functions.

Remember, we are all in this together.

Membership is one of our biggest goals this year! I know this is going to sound repetitive; however, it is important, there is a new technique for processing new and renewal members. This can be accomplished through mylegion.org, with the assistance of the membership chairman.

We will kick off this year with a **Southwestern Area training on August 21, 2022** at Post 113 in Rotonda for Districts 8

and 13. The post Commanders and Adjutants are asked to be in attendance along with District 8 and 13 staff.

This is a great opportunity to meet fellow legionnaires and to gain knowledge about the four pillars of the American Legion.

Finally, keep those still serving in your prayers! Also, if you are planning an event, please let me know and I will do my best to be there. My contact information is southwestern@legionmail.org.

Slow Start, but Picking Up Speed

Sonny Decker, Western Area
western@legionmail.org



I wish to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve as Western Area Commander. I am truly humble and honored to serve you and our veteran community.

Department convention was successful, in that the changes needed to bring the Department in compliance with National CBL was passed without issues. Now we can get on with our mission supporting our four pillars.

After convention, I came down with a case of COVID, which slowed me down. Now that it is getting behind me, I'm looking to the future.

Districts 1 and 2 have started their installations and will continue through the middle of August. I will be making as many of the installations as I can. District 1 is doing mostly weekends and District 2 is doing weekday installations. It is great seeing old friends and making new ones at each post.

Upcoming events in the Western Area: mark your calendar and plan on attending the **Area training**. The date is August 6th at Panama City Beach Post 402. Meet and greet will start at 9 a.m. and training will

start at 10 a.m.. I want to encourage all Post Commanders and any new officers to attend. Everyone in the Legion Family is invited to attend. The instructor will be from the Department leadership and like last year, very informative.

Lastly there has been a change to the ALR Chairman. After 7 years of helping the riders grow in the district and state, Jim Bowers has stepped down. I want to thank Jim for all his support and Legion "Love" that he has given the area and myself. THANK YOU Jimmy. Please welcome and continue to support his replacement, Jason "scubby" Skobel as the Western Area Chairman of the riders.

Let's Help Save Lives

Taz Gehling, Blood Donor
blooddonor@legionmail.org



First, I would like to thank Commander Butts for giving me the opportunity to continue serving this great department as your Blood Donor Chair. I look forward to another great year under her leadership.

I'd like to thank our immediate Past Commander Jerry Brandt for the opportunity he gave me last year to serve as the Blood Donor Chair. I learned a lot.

As a department we made a difference in

many communities and in many lives. Here's what was reported last year (These numbers only reflect 85 posts, which is about 30% reporting):

- 2,227 pints donated
- 1,682 donors reported
- 334 drives held

We have almost 300 posts in the department, imagine the numbers more post reported their numbers as well.

I'd like to congratulate Post 90 (13th District) for winning the Margaret Skaggs Award and Post 348 (12th District) for winning the runner up award. Both did an excellent job. I would like to add that we only had about a 10% award nomination rating from posts. I hope this year more posts will submit their

paperwork. I would like to see at least a 20% award nomination rating.

I have already been to a post blood drive this past month. If your post is hosting a blood drive, please send me an email at blooddonor@floridalegion.org to let me know and I will try and come to the event.

Remember that this is a program that usually involves very little work. Normally, the post just needs to reach out to their local blood bank to schedule a drive at their location. One thing that I usually tell people is that when doing so, try and schedule it during an event to try and increase the possible number of donors.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 239-785-8282.



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ALR Activities Scheduled

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders

alr@legionmail.org



Bev and I would like to thank Commander Butts for selecting us to run the ALR program this Legion year. We would also like to thank the "Riders" for another momentous year! Without your commitments to the post program, good things would have never happened. We had a record-breaking fund-raising year, first time for three Chapters of the year awards, Homestead 43, Marathon 154, Beverly Hills 237, a new "Classy" fund-raising Champion Chapter 129, and the trophies are on the move again between Districts.

We would also like to welcome the new Chair's to their positions. If you have any questions Bev and I are here to answer those for you. Remember, communication is our key to success.

LET'S GET THIS YEAR STARTED!

First event for the Department is the POW/MIA Seven Bridges ride and ceremony. Denny Luke is already deep into it, he has the Seven Bridges escort lined up, and he is working on the POW/MIA Ceremony.

The month of October is our Children and Youth month. The dollars collected go to support their picnic and other Children and Youth programs. As far as the competition goes for the trophy, remember all activities that fall under the definition of Children and Youth, those points go toward the trophy from now until October this year and next year they run from October to October.

November brings the Fall Conference. This has always been a critical timeline for us, as we try to have everything finalized for the balance of the year. Between the Convention and Fall Conference is really the only time we must put all the pieces together for the ALR schedule. With the help of Joe Marcheggiani's team of Zane Koonce, Jason Skobel, and Tim Morse, which takes the pressure off putting the In-State Unity Ride together. The hotels are usually the biggest challenge.

February is the Summit, we had to slip the schedule a week to keep the same hotel. As I mentioned before, the hotel has changed ownership, but gave us the best deal.

NEW SUMMIT SCHEDULE, MEET & GREET

Meet & Greet, February 8, 2023

Classes, February 9-11, 2023

Thanks to all that participated, Ride Safe, looking forward to seeing you soon.

Your 2022 – 2023 Schedule

National Legacy Ride

August 21-25, 2022

POW/MIA Ceremony, Jacksonville

September 17, 2022

"Merry Go Round"

Month of October 2022

Fall Conference

November 18-20, 2022

Summit

Meet & Greet, February 8, 2023

Classes, February 9-11, 2023

"Round Robin"

Month of April 2023

In-State Unity Ride

Meet & Greet, April 16, 2023

Ride, April 17-21, 2023

Rally, April 22, 2023, Orange County Chopper Museum

If you have any ideas, please share!

Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such an excellent group!

"For the Cause, not the applause"

Americanism Program Plan of Attack

Doug Hockenberry, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org

Let me start by introducing myself. I am Doug Hockenberry from Blanton-Thompson, American Legion Post 155 of Crystal River, Florida, and I am honored and humbled to be your Americanism Chair for Legion Year 2022-2023.

As you know Americanism is one of our Four Pillars, and within the American Legion we have key programs that promote Americanism amongst our youth. Through

these programs, we possess the ability to make a positive impact on the youth of today and influence their course in life, their future. We do this through the Oratorical Program, Youth Law Cadet Program, Boys State and Boys Nation, Junior Shooting Sports Program, and American Legion Baseball (just to name a few). You see we have the ability, and we possess the programs (the tools), whereby we can influence the youth of today to grow up and be good upstanding Americans who will honor our National Colors, show respect for each another and defend the moral fiber of everything we

stand for in the American Legion.

On that note, I ask that you look at the programs within the American Legion and discuss it with your Post Leadership to see which program or programs you want to take on. In return, I ask two things of you. First, if you take on a program, give it your all, give it 100% of your time and effort. Secondly, do not take on more programs than you can effectively manage. I would rather you do one or two programs and do them to perfection.

Americanism continued on page 7 >>



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<<Americanism continued from page 6

Now is the time to prepare for the successful deployment of an effective program throughout your respective School Districts. As we all know school will be back in session starting in just a few weeks. That being said, now is the time to think about how you are going to present Americanism Programs to your school administrators and teachers within your schools. There is a plethora of information on Americanism and its' programs located on both the American Legion National

website as well as the Department of Florida American Legion website. Take advantage of those resources to enhance your knowledge on these programs before you present them to the schools, their staff and most importantly to the students. Remember – you possess the ability to make a positive impact on the youth of today.

Okay Legionnaires, the ball is in your respective Post courts. Start looking at the Department 2022-2023 Event Timeline that lists key event dates for programs so you can

develop your "Americanism Program Plan of Attack".

In closing, I want to reiterate that I am honored to be your Americanism Chair for 2022-2023. I look forward to collaborating with you, as we promote Americanism to the youth of Florida. Should you have any program questions feel free to give me a call or send me an email at americanism@legionmail.org .

Hang Tough!

Let's Play Ball

Terry Phillips, Baseball
baseball@legionmail.org



The Baseball Executive Committee has been very busy over the last several months as we started the 2022 Legion Season on June 1st opening day and over the last 6 weeks preparing for the State Tournaments for the Sr. Teams July 20th - 24th and the Jr. Teams July 28th - 31st played in Jacksonville.

There has never been a time in our history when all of the American Legion Programs have been more needed and important for kids, families and even our entire country than today and going forward.

Our Americanism, Patriotism and Pride in our nation is under attack every day and our youth are being bombarded from all directions that America and our Flag is not something worth being proud of.

As the Chairman of our Department Baseball Program, I am proud to say We Are Founded and Solid on our commitment to Service, Honor, Respect and Love for our Country.

Our players, coaches, parents and program supporters are all in one accord....
AMERICANISM.

At the time of submitting this article for the August Link, I do not know who our State Champion Team is as we have not played the State Tournament yet, however I can tell you that this is going to be the most competitive State Tournament we have had in many years. Usually there are a few teams that really stand out above the rest, but this year all teams are loaded with talent and have a chance to win the State Tournament and represent the Department of Florida in the SE Regional and even hopefully on to the Legion World Series.

For those who support and believe in our program and mission, I say THANK YOU and you rock. For those that do not, I say shame on you, whether you like baseball or not, you have to like the kids, families and communities we serve and what we stand for....right?

We need your support and involvement in our program, we start our planning for the 2023 season in September to have our Baseball Manual, updates and event dates ready for the fall conference.

If you would be interested in serving in our mission, please contact me or one of the Area Commissioners. All contact information is listed on our Baseball Site at floridaamericanlegion.sportngin.com

Thank You and Blessings

Training Our Minds

Judith Richards, Post Revitalization
revitalization@legionmail.org



Welcome to the 2022-2023 year! All of the Areas have trainings scheduled with the Department team members offering the sessions. Be sure to check with your Area and District

Commanders. As TAL and SAL are on the same system, encourage all to attend the trainings.

Now is a great time to run a report for the DMS members in your zip codes. Plan a day to have your membership committees gather and make phone calls to invite them to join a local post. Remind these individuals that by joining a local post, the dues remain local.

Have a MYLegion.org registration day! Have individuals with laptops at the post to assist your members in registering and they can renew online at the same time!

Bruce Thurber, the Department Membership Chair and I are here to offer any guidance and assistance that you need.

I look forward to a great year!



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Children Are Our Future

Dianne Boland, Children & Youth

cy@legionmail.org



Hello from your new Children & Youth Chairman, PDC Dianne Boland. After following Les Martin as the Chairman, I know I have big shoes to fill. He's done an outstanding job for the past few years but don't worry, I'm looking forward to working

towards another great year in support of our Children & Youth.

As you all should be aware of by now, **April is Children & Youth Month**. I've already started planning on this year's picnic so **save the date April 1st**. No fooling. April Fool's Day is easy to remember. We have been having the last few year's picnic on the east coast, so I decided to move it to Post 323, Lehigh Acres for better access from the west coast. Add the date to your calendar. More info will follow. Anyone interested in helping to put this together please contact me.

I will be putting together a schedule to visit during District meetings. I hope to keep everyone informed on what's happening and also to use this as a means to educate our legionnaires on the various programs and charities involved.

There will be a golf tournament this year, info will follow soon. Also, I have been approached to have another C&Y cruise. I need to know how many are interested. Please contact me if you're willing to go on a 4 or 7 day cruise.

FALC New Application 2023 Class

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College

falc@legionmail.org



Our next class will be held **February 16-19, 2023**. A new application will be released soon. Please keep an eye on our Dept. website for more info: www.floridalegion.org.

I would like to Thank Department Commander Eunice Butts for allowing me to be the FALC Chair and conduct Training.

Below is information to prepare you for FALC.

Complete Basic Training online by going to Legion.org (must be within 2 years)

Some Topics at the FALC are as follows:

- 2022 Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
 - Parliamentary Procedure, on page 99
 - Resolutions, on page 121
- Legion Protocol
- PowerPoint 101
- Leadership and Mentor
- All Programs Overview
- Team Building and Goals
- Developing, instructing, and supporting your District and Department level training platform

Complete Basic Training online before coming or applying to Florida American Legion College. (Attach a copy to your application).

Remember FALC is \$200.00 to apply, and every application will be checked before you can attend. Make sure you provide a good working email, phone number, and address so we can communicate back and forth. When you send your application with a check of \$200.00, we will let you know that we have your application and if you've been accepted or not, within two weeks of receipt.

If you have not heard from us within two weeks, or have questions, email or call me at 352-226-4370, I will answer your questions falc@floridalegion.org.

You must be ready to work hard and long hours, your day is not finished until the homework and group assignments are done.



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DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA
LEGION COLLEGE

Building Better Citizens

Loretta Young, JROTC / JSSP

jrotc@legionmail.org



I would first like to thank Commander Eunice Butts for appointing me as the ROTC/JSSP Chairman for this 2022/23 year. It's a program that I take most pride in for the lives that it has changed

both in the past and will in the future.

The ROTC Program is one of the Legion Programs that needs more support by our posts throughout Florida. We focus most on the JROTC Program which has a Mission Statement to "Build Better Citizens". This year let's make an effort to bring more support to the ROTC Units in the State of Florida. Please follow up with me with any Units that you are supporting so we may

document your progress. We have both the Silver and the Gold Medals that are available on Emblem Sales that would be given at the end of the semester year, 2023 to the outstanding Cadets. The following will give you a better understanding of this valuable program.

For over 100 years, ROTC has been widely

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<<JRTOC/JSSP continued from page 8

regarded as the leadership standard for the world, producing over 600,000 men and women who have earned a commission through the program. Among them are two chairmen of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, seven Army Chiefs of Staff, two Cabinet secretaries and a sitting Supreme Court associate justice.

Over 1,700 colleges from across America such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Ivy League Schools, and institutions known for producing some of our greatest academic professionals, offer ROTC programs.

ROTC Cadets are introduced to more than a just rigorous syllabus during their tenure.

They are taught what it means to be a great citizen of this country and placing the needs of a nation before their own. All while simultaneously living the life of a college student.

It is agreeable that most college students graduate with some form of a leadership foundation and commitment based on an understanding of their specific academic discipline. But none focus on the citizen and servant in support of our great nation as the ROTC program.

By highlighting some of the notable ROTC graduates such as current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Mark A. Milley, Colin Powell, Leon Panetta, Lou Holtz, James Earl Jones, and the Founder of Walmart, Sam Walton, one could understand

how important building a citizen while commissioning an officer is for this nation.

The JSSP National Championship will be held in Colorado Springs at the USA Training Facility from July 20-23 with the top 15 qualifying marksmanship winners in both the Precision and the Sporter Events. The event and the results will be on the National website for review and follow-up. It's an honor to have been chosen to once again serve on the Volunteer Staff to assist in this very worthwhile event. There will be a First Place Scholarship Winner of \$5,000 in each category and a Runner Up Scholarship of \$1,000. Good luck to all the participants and thanks to all the posts who supported the teams throughout the entry and qualifying process.

Helping Fellow Veterans

Bruce Thurber, Membership
membership@legionmail.org



I am Honored to have been asked by Commander Butts to return as your membership chairman for the 104th Membership Year of the American Legion.

Membership is going to be a struggle this year.

As the cost of living continues to rise people are looking at ways to save. They are giving up pets, cancelling insurance and becoming homeless. Paying dues is not a priority unless we have something to offer them in this terrible time. The American Legion provides life-changing assistance and guidance for veterans, military personnel, their families, and communities in thousands of ways every day around the world. Help comes in the form of personal assistance, cash grants, donated goods, disaster relief, labor, networking, volunteerism, and advocacy.

In 2015 we had a \$5 National per capita increase in dues and 2 million members. Our 2022 goal is 1,579,502 so we are losing members quickly. If this small amount of money affected us then what is going

to happen now. We need to find ways to encourage renewals and returns by making our Posts something our members need. Human beings are inherently social creatures. As far back as we can trace, humans have traveled, hunted, and thrived in social groups and for good reason.

Humans who were separated from their tribe often suffered severe consequences. Social groups provide us with an important part of our identity, and more than that, they teach us a set of skills that help us to live our lives. Feeling socially connected, especially in an increasingly isolated world, is more important than ever. The benefits of social connectedness shouldn't be overlooked. The largest Veterans Social group is The American Legion. We can help by keeping them active with little or no cost events that include their family.

1. It costs the average family of 4 around \$40 plus tax to go out for Fast food. What if we provided a meal to all Veterans in town on a regular basis at the same cost and add in socializing with other veterans. We discount it for Legion Family.
2. Offer discounted dues.
3. Have fund raisers to cover dues for active members who are low income and can't afford to come back due to

the economy. Recipients should be kept secret we don't want to embarrass anyone.

Membership Training Links

- <https://www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays>
- <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8720069/video/583373153>
- <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8720069/video/583374026>
- <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8720069/video/583374170>
- <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8720069/video/583374300>
- <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8720069/video/583374385>

As American Legion members, our most sacred responsibility is to look out for each other and our fellow veterans. A way to reach out to members and former members who may need help, is Buddy Checks conducted on a regular basis, American Legion posts are encouraged to perform this vital function whenever it makes the most sense in their communities. The idea is to reconnect with veterans who may need assistance but don't know where to go or who to ask. These contacts may be made by a personal visit, phone or email, or a combination. The important part is to reach out to veterans in your community to let them know you care and can provide whatever assistance they may need. It's what we do for our battle buddies.



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What is the 3rd Pillar?

Raymond Olsen, National Security

security@legionmail.org

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Ray Olsen. I have been appointed by Commander Butts as your National Security Chairman for the Department of Florida. I want to take this opportunity to thank her for having the confidence in me to fulfill this position.

National Security is one of the 4 Pillars of the American Legion. There are many programs that fall under the National Security Umbrella. I want to give National Security its due and create an annual award for the Post that has the best National Security program and presence.

According to the National CPR, the following programs fall under the National Security Umbrella: Blood Donor Program, ROTC Medals, Law and Order, Disaster Relief, Law Enforcement, Color Guard/Honor Guard, Fire Prevention, POW/MIA, Immigration and Citizenship, and Memorial Services. Obviously not every post can have an active program in all of these areas but certainly they have some. I envision that the winner of the award will have participation in some of these programs, have an active National Security Chairman, submit awards for Firefighter and Law Enforcement officer of the year and submit Articles about events that they may have sponsored in their local communities. As far as I know, I have not seen a National Security Award in the recent past.

National Security is a Pillar of the American Legion. We are known for our Americanism efforts and our strong programs supporting Veterans and their families and of course Children and Youth. But we are the Subject Matter Experts on National Security and always have in America and always have been.

So, my goal this year is to bring National Security back into the forefront of what the American Legion in Florida is all about. But I cannot do it without the District and Post National Security Chairman and the Commission members appointed for the Department of Florida, and of course the membership of the American Legion Department of Florida.

Fireworks and PTSD

Kathryn Hockenberry, Public Relations

pr@legionmail.org

Blanton-Thompson American Legion Post 155 in Crystal River, Florida makes local news channels and American Legion National HQs headlines for hosting the 'Escape the Fireworks' event. Auxiliary Unit 155 member, Vicky Post, organized the event in memory of a friend, Sean Liebman, who took his life by suicide last July at the age of 30 years old.

Staff Sgt. Liebman, a ten-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force, who served most of his time as a field medic, was assigned to an Army unit in Afghanistan. He received an honorable discharge and a 90 percent disability rating in June 2020, after which, he moved to Crystal River and began bowling at Manatee Lanes, where he met Vicky Post and became friends.

It was in Crystal River where, in the early morning hours of 5 July of last year, Liebman took his own life. He was battling post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), so any loud noise could upset him and make him restless.

It is believed that the loud booms and the flashes of the fireworks took him and his PTSD to a place he couldn't come back from, which resulted in him taking own his life.

When she found out what he went through, she knew that something needed to be done. Veterans with PTSD needed a safe haven to go on the Fourth of July so they wouldn't have to hear the loud noises and booms from the fireworks.

That's how the "Escape the Fireworks" came about. From 6 PM to midnight, the event provided Veterans a safe haven away from the fireworks with a DJ, Karaoke, food, and beverages.

When Post lost her original venue for the event, she approached Post 155 Commander, Douglas Hockenberry, about renting out the post's back hall for the event. Commander Hockenberry didn't hesitate and committed the Post to host the event, at no charge. The American Legion is here to support our veterans, so this was the least Post 155 could do to support her and our community

Veterans.

Post wasn't sure how many people would come out. She anticipated more of her friends and people she knew would come out in support, but there were, actually more she didn't know that attended. In total, by the end of the evening, 92 people had signed in – many more than she had expected. One of her main goals was to increase awareness – mission accomplished.

Post is hoping to make "Escape the Fireworks" an annual event in Crystal River and hopefully, expand it to other local towns that have fireworks around the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve holidays.

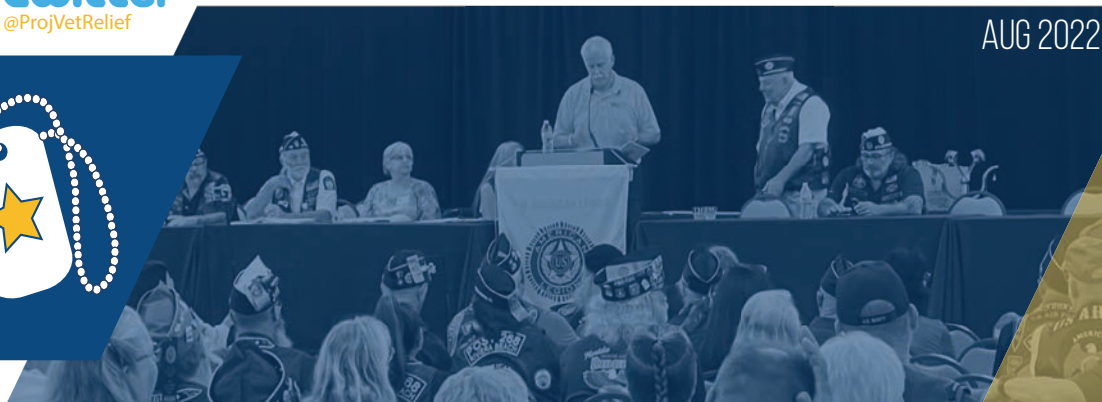


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10 STRATEGIC PARTNERS WORKING WITH PVR/SPI TO END VETERAN SUICIDE

As we closed the books on another fiscal year, it's time to stop and reflect on all the growth that took place over the last 365 days. One cannot deny the progress our Suicide Prevention Initiative (PVR/SPI) has experienced!

Each quarter, we support our strategic partners through our funding cycles. In 2021's 4th quarter, we provided \$21,000 to six (6) strategic partners. However since then, we have grown our strategic partner list to ten (10), and during this past quarter, we granted \$46,000 in support! Our funding sponsors veterans through their processes or allows these *thoroughly-vetted* organizations to expand or enhance their programs. Since 2019, we have given nearly \$240,000 in our quarterly funding rounds!

This growth is largely due to the support we have received from the Florida Legion Family, primarily the Florida American Legion Riders. Additionally, our PVR/SPI Committee has been dedicated in establishing quality relationships with veteran organizations who have proven results and are positively impacting mental health in veterans. We pride ourselves on knowing that these organizations listed below are on the same mission we are... **ending veteran suicide!**

OUR 10 STRATEGIC PARTNERS LISTED BELOW (in order):

22 Zero, First Orlando Counseling, IGY6 Foundation, K9 Line, Liberty-OVE, Veterans Counseling Veterans, Norman Bissel (LMHC), Paint 22, SOF Missions, Grey Team



NORMAN BISSEL, LMHC

CONGRATULATIONS, COMMANDER BUTTS!

Congratulations to Eunice Butts on becoming the 2022-2023 Department Commander for The American Legion, Department of Florida! We are so thrilled to learn that she has chosen PROJECT: VetRelief as one of her charities for her Commander's Project. She also selected Jackson in Action 88, which is a veteran organization based out of Tampa.

When supporting Commander Butts' efforts, please make sure your donations are properly marked with "**Commander's Charity**" in the memo to ensure she receives credit. She has set a goal to raise

\$50,000 for both charities. Donations can be given during her Commander visit to the District or mailed directly to Department Headquarters.

Commander Butts has been a long-time supporter of PROJECT: VetRelief and we are grateful she continued to show her dedication to her fellow comrades through our program!



EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE STATS: YEAR END (2021-2022)

202 VETERANS ASSISTED

\$222,299 FINANCIAL AID AWARDED

2022 General Scholarship

Shirley Douglas, Scholarships
scholarships@legionmail.org



It was my honor to serve as the General Scholarship Chair this year. My committee is responsible for selecting students to receive the Department of Florida's 7 General Scholarships. The students need to be direct descendent of a veteran, be in their senior

year at a Florida High School. Their parents must be Florida residents. My committee reviewed 60 scholarship applications this year.

The 4 individuals that were awarded a \$500 scholarship are:

- **Maxwell Fletcher**
Brandon River High School
- **Madison Fiske**
Cardinal Newman High School
- **Thomas L Roesner**
Winter Springs High School
- **Mark Thomas Levine II**
Newsome High School

Cooper James Kappeler from Indian Rocks Christian School was awarded a \$1000 scholarship.

The winner of the \$1,500 scholarship that is funded by the County Veterans Services Officer Association of Florida (CVSOA) is **Lucas Dye**. Lucas attended Winter Springs High School and was eligible for the scholarship by the Service of his father Retired Army Lt Col Erik Dye.

Not only did Lucas attend the Florida American Legion Boy State program in 2021, was also the Director of the 2021 Boys State Video News. He was the President of the Winter Springs High School Video Cub. The Chronic Illness Collective organization benefited from his unique ability to utilize video media when he made video commercials and social media graphics for their Christmas Program advertising campaign. He also helped edit several parts of their prep-work for the 2021 calendar year. Lucas' Community service activities involved numerous organizations. Some of the organizations were American Legion Post 243, Chronic Illness Collective, Penguin Point productions, WSHS JROTC, Special Olympics, Wreaths Across America, High School Leadership, and Gary Sinise Foundation.

The winner of the \$2,500 scholarship is

Sage Alexandra Hall. She attended Gulf Breeze High School and was eligible for the scholarship by the Service of her Grandfather Army Chief Warrant Officer Donald Hall.

Sage founded an organization called "Between the Lines of Literacy". Her group provided free books to children and families. They focused on abused and neglected children who resided in the Gulf Coast Kid's Home. Her efforts resulted in over 1200 books being donated. She was recognized by her community by being awarded the Proactive Community Service Award. She also received the Rho Kappa History Honor Society Dedication Award for her efforts in organizing and raising over \$14,000 to support 3 service projects: Gulf Coast Kid's House, Wildlife Sanctuary of NE Florida and Pensacola Humane Society. She was also selected to be a Messenger in the Florida House of Representatives. The following year she served as a Page in the Florida Senate. Her education goal is to become a psychiatrist.

This report was presented to membership during the Florida Department's Convention in June 2022.

Scouting at its Finest

Chris Ragusa, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



Congratulations once again to the Eagle Scout of the Year, and Outstanding Post Scouting Program recognition recipients!

Eagle Scout of the

Year: During the Champions session in the program on Saturday, June 18th, we announced our Department Eagle Scout of the Year, Mr. Erik Dyer of Lithia, FL (District 15). Erik received a \$2,500 scholarship for this recognition, and his nomination was forwarded to National for consideration.

Our second place Eagle Scout with a \$1,500 scholarship is Joshua Williams (of Niceville in District 1), with third place and a \$1,000 scholarship going to Hunter Christ (of Sarasota, District 8).

Outstanding Post Scouting Program:

And as part of the Program Review session, we recognized three of our Florida posts with the Outstanding Post Scouting Program Award! This award is bestowed upon Department of Florida posts with the most involvement in the Scouting program. Involvement can consist of both chartering BSA units, sponsoring the activities of BSA units, or both (see below). Congratulations to (in numerical

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A New Year

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor

sal@legionmail.org



We begin the new year with great hope. As the Posts get back to a normal operation the Sons should be as well. The squadrons should be collecting 2023 dues and all the current officers should be paid up. I

am hoping we have the SAL membership cards by the time you read this but if not take the dues, process them and send the cards out as soon as they hit the door. Have your planning meetings over the rest of the summer and hit the door running. Enjoy your year. Raise money to spend money and have fun doing it for our veterans, children and community.



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Veterans Network

Alan Cohen, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
var@legionmail.org



With the Department Convention recently behind us our new leadership and chair team has picked up the mantle and hit the ground running. We wish them all every possible success and continue to pledge our support. One new addition is Deanna

Hall, our new Women Veteran's Chair. She has already conducted what was a successful Woman Veterans Forum and several more are already in the planning stages. Her vision is to reach out and offer a helping and welcoming hand to as many of our sister veterans throughout the state as possible.

I'm proud to announce that we once again conducted the Department's Post Service Officer class, graduating a total of 74 Post Service Officers, many of whom have stepped up to this invaluable position for the first time. I've begun work on creating a PSO network within each district so that no veteran will have to wonder where to go for help.

Some important pieces of information for all: The PACT Act, referring to Burn Pit Exposure has, with tremendous support and effort, passed through Congress and awaits the President's signature. It is estimated that as many as 20% of ALL living veterans will be able to benefit one way or another from this landmark legislation.

Regarding legislation, we're asking that you contact your elected representatives and ask for their support with H.R 1282, the Major Richard Starr Act. This bill was introduced by Florida's own Rep. Gus Bilirakis and addresses concurrent receipt issues that face so many military retirees here in Florida.

In cooperation with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, at-risk veterans can now dial a 3-digit number..988..and instantly be connected to one of over 200 crisis centers to receive help that can often get between the veteran and suicide.

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order) Post 78 (Milton in District 1), Post 273 (Madeira Beach in District 16) and Post 356 (Lynn Haven in District 1). The three posts received a Department of Florida plaque acknowledging this achievement for display at the post.

Scouts BSA Troop 53 Support to Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Flag Day Ceremony: On June 14, 2022, Scouts BSA Troop 53, chartered to American Legion Post 139 in Tampa, FL, provided support to the annual Flag Day ceremony sponsored by the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE) Tampa Lodge 708. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is the first and only fraternal body to require formal observance of "Flag Day." In July of 1908, the Grand Lodge of this Order assembled in Dallas, Texas and directed the annual nationwide observance of "Flag Day" on the 14th of June in each year by making it mandatory for each Subordinate Lodge of the Order. Pictured with the Troop 53 representatives are Tampa Elks Lodge 708 Officers Rita Smith (Exalted Ruler) and Camden Lynn (Esteemed Leading Knight).



Boy Scouts of America National Membership Fee Increase: The value of Scouting is undeniable for those within the program and the greater public, and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is committed to continuing to offer this unmatched

opportunity to young people and families nationwide. As costs on many daily goods and services continue to rise dramatically, the BSA has worked to keep its membership fee as low as possible. However, these external pressures continue to have an effect, and the annual membership fee must be increased to address the fiscal realities necessary to continue delivering a safe and quality Scouting program. To ensure the organization has the resources to fulfill the promise of Scouting, the following national membership fee structure will take effect August 1, 2022. ***If your post charters a Cub Scout pack, Scouts BSA troop, Venturing crew and/or Sea Scout ship, please work with the Chartered Organization Representative assigned by your post to that BSA unit to ensure that those Scout families that may have difficulty accommodating the fee increase have as much support as your post can provide.***

- \$75 for Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts participants (\$3 increase)
- \$45 for Exploring participants (no change in cost)
- \$30 for council-paid memberships (no change in cost)
- \$45 for all adult volunteers (no change in cost, includes cost of background check)
- \$100 for a unit charter/affiliation fee (\$25 increase)
- \$25 one-time joining fee for new program participants in Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts (Not pro-rated, no change in cost)
- \$15 for Scout Life magazine; this is the first price increase since 2005 (\$3 increase)

It seems that the VA has finally recognized what we've known for quite awhile..that Florida is one of 4 states that has the fastest growing veteran population. With that said, the VA has begun evaluating how best to shift their resources to better serve veterans.

In closing this month's article I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their unselfish cooperation and hard work. I look very much forward to the coming year and what we'll be able to accomplish together.



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Women Veterans Forum

Deanna Hall, Women Veterans
womenvets@legionmail.org



"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'"—Mary Anne Radmacher

Thank you, Commander Butts, for allowing me to serve you, the women veterans, and the Department of Florida!

There have been women in the United States Military since the Revolutionary War, and women continue to serve today. According to the Defense Department, women now comprise 20% of the Air Force, 19% of the Navy, 15% of the Army, and almost 9% of the Marine Corps. Women now make up approximately 10% of the current Veteran population, the fastest growing demographic.

According to the female veterans at the forum, the VA should increase the range of services available to women, including mental healthcare explicitly tailored to women Veterans. The women at the conference sincerely expressed how they feel the VA lacks in ensuring that women veterans are served well across the entire VA. One of the female veterans in attendance encouraged all women to enroll for the benefits they've earned by serving their country.

The Commander of the American Legion, Eunice Butts, was in attendance to greet and stated, "This is a historical event; this is the first-time female veterans have met to discuss particular challenges." She continued, "This will not be the last time!"



WOMEN VETERANS' MANTRA: JUST BREATHE

When you feel angry, sad, frustrated, anxious, depressed, or just need a moment to **JUST BREATHE**

Please just repeat your mantra as many times as needed:

- You are **B**rave
- You are **R**esilient
- You are **E**ssential
- You are **A**marzing
- You are **T**imeless
- You are **H**eroic

AND YOU ARE ENOUGH! Just BREATHE!

Approved Amendments and Resolutions

Department
mail@floridalegion.org

Amendments Approved

Thirteen proposed Department Constitution and By-Laws amendments that the Department Executive Committee submitted were approved by the membership during the 103rd Department Convention. Please see the list of amendments with their article and section numbers below. The updated Constitution and By-Laws can be located on the Department website, under "Resources, Forms & Documents, Official Documents".

Constitution Amendments:

- Amendment #1 - Preamble
- Amendment #2 - Article VI Department Officers, Sections 1 - 3 and 5
- Amendment #3 - Article VII Department Executive Committee, Sections 1-14

- Amendment #4 - Article IX District Organization, Section 2
- Amendment #5 - Article XI Finance, Sections 7 and 11-13
- Amendment #6 - Article XI Finance, Sections 11-13
- Amendment #7 - Article XII The American Legion Auxiliary, Section 2

By-Laws Amendments:

- Amendment #8 - Article I Department Convention, Section 15
- Amendment #9 - Article II Department Executive Committee, Sections 1 - 3 and 8
- Amendment #10 - Article IV Finance, Sections 1 and 4 - 5
- Amendment #11 - Article V Duties of Officers, Section 3
- Amendment #12 - Article V Duties of Officers, Section 6
- Amendment #13 - Article V Duties of Officers, Sections 7

Resolutions Approved

The following Resolutions were approved during the 103rd Department Convention:

- **Resolution #2C – United States Sea Cadet Corps**
- **Resolving Clause:** That due to the educational opportunities provided by USNSCC and that Youth is a Pillar of The American Legion, The American Legion Department of Florida, here by recognizes the United States Sea Cadet Corps, as an official youth program of the American Legion, Department of Florida.
- **Resolution #6 – Omer Smith for NVC**
- **Resolving Clause:** The American Legion, Department of Florida hereby unanimously endorses Omer E. Smith for the high office of National Vice Commander of The American Legion.



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DEC Meets In Regular Session

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DEC MEETS IN REGULAR SESSION

A regular meeting of the Department Executive Committee (DEC), called by Department Commander Jerry Brandt, was held at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista on Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 3:00 PM. Sixty-three DEC members were present.

Decisions of the DEC in the order in which they were discussed, included:

1. Ratification of Appointments

Commander Brandt appointed Roger Hewitt to fill the vacancy caused by the untimely passing of 2nd District Commander Steve Mears, which were ratified.

Commander Brandt announced that he appointed Kevin Bartlett as the Parliamentarian for the remainder of the Department Convention.

2. Post Charters not at Charter Strength

Reports were heard on four Posts (59, 131, 195, and 114) that were not at charter strength. The District Commander for those four posts will continue to work with the posts and conduct revitalizations. The District Commanders will provide an update on these posts at the DEC meeting during Department Fall Conference in November.

3. Ratification of New Posts

The temporary charters of Moore Haven Post 416 and Defuniak Springs Post 417 was ratified. In addition, the Department of Florida will lease property to Post 416 for \$1 a year. The property is located in Moore Haven and previously belonged to Post 299 before losing its charter.

4. Post Charters to be Pulled

The Charter of Hastings Post 102 was pulled due to not having volunteers to step up and assume leadership roles.

5. Post Name Change Requests

A motion passed to accept Post 390's name change request to American Legion Post

390, Wellington, Inc.

6. Department Finance Committee Report

A report on Department's financials as of March 31, 2022, was given by Finance Chairman Larry White. Department's Profit & Loss statement shows total income of \$2,789,367, total expenses of \$2,886,951, giving a deficit of \$97,583. This deficit does not reflect income from LIT of \$331,770 and National Fundraising of \$76,677, which was received after March 31, 2022. The DEC approved the proposed 2022-2023 Budget. The budgeted total income \$3,429,100, and total budgeted expenses is \$3,425,910. With a net income difference of \$3,190.

7. Ukraine Fundraiser

There was a discussion on the Ukraine relief effort fundraiser and how to utilize the funds already obtained. The total amount raised to date is about \$10,500. The Southern Area is collecting items to create care packages to send to Poland for Ukraine refugees. The DEC approved using the funds to cover shipping costs to send the care packages overseas. Any remaining funds would be used to purchase products to send overseas.

8. Sale of Formal Post 52's and Formal Post 102's Property

The DEC approved for the Department of Florida to sell the property of formal Post 52 in Panasoffkee, Florida, and formal Post 102's property in Hastings, Florida.

The DEC went into Executive Session for post trial appeals following the above discussions.

DEC MEETS IN REGULAR SESSION

A regular meeting of the Department Executive Committee (DEC) was held on Sunday, June 19, 2022, at 9:30 AM at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena as required per Article VII, Section 10 of Department's Constitution. Department Commander Eunice Butts conducted the meeting. Forty-nine DEC members were present.

Decisions of the DEC in the order in which they were discussed, included:

1. Department Commander's Appointments

Commander Butts announced the following appointments for the ensuing year: Department Finance Officer, Ken DeMello; Department Judge Advocate, David Pleasanton; Department Assistant Judge Advocate, Robert Jaegers; Department Membership Chair, Bruce Thurber; Department Finance 5-year appointment, Robert Plafchan; and Department Finance Chair, Larry White, which were ratified. The DEC also approved any necessary appointments throughout her term.

2. Department Adjutant's Briefing

Adjutant Bruce Comer gave a brief overview on the following topics:

- All Department Officers, Area Commanders, District Commanders, and District Vice Commanders must provide their DD214 to Department along with a current Distinguished Legionnaire Form.
- Accidental Death Insurance and Dismemberment Insurance provided by Department for all Department Officers if the incident occurs while conducting Legion business
- Role as Department Officers, Area Commanders, and District Officers.
- Expense Reports and Monthly Activity Reports.
- Important dates for the upcoming year:
 - Leadership Retreat – June 30 – July 2, 2022
 - National Membership Workshop - July 28 – 30, 2022
 - 103rd National Convention - August 26 – September 1, 2022
 - Department Fall Conference – November 18-20, 2022

3. Duties of Department Vice Commanders

There was a discussion on the Department Vice Commander's duties since the amendment to remove the Zones was approved. A motion passed that the Department 3rd Vice Commander would assist with training, Department 2nd Vice Commander assist with programs, and the Department First Vice Commander will assist with membership.



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POST EVERLASTING

Mark Wilson

It is with deep sorrow and regret that I must announce the passing of Post Commander of 139, Mark Wilson. He passed away yesterday May 4th. As more details on his services become available I will inform everyone. Please keep his family and the Post 139 family in your thoughts and prayers.

William "Bill" Walsh

Funeral Services for Past Eastern Area Commander William "Bill" Walsh, who passed away on June 14, 2022, will be held on Tuesday, July 12, 2022. The interment will occur at Florida National Cemetery, 6502 SW 102nd Ave., Bushnell, FL, at 10:00 A.M. A Celebration of Life will follow at Post 347, 699 W. Lady Lake Blvd., Lady Lake, FL.

Clifford Dean Collins Jr.

Loving husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend passed away peacefully Wednesday June 15, 2022 in Ocoee, FL after a long illness at age 76. Born in Davenport Iowa to the late Clifford D. Collins, Sr. and L. Elaine (Handley) Collins. He was predeceased by his sister Cheryl (Collins) Sargent and nephew Joseph (Joey) Platt. He is survived by his wife JoAnn (Flannery) Collins of Ocoee FL, his son Clifford D. (Dean) Collins, III, his sisters Barbara (Barbie) Platt and Mary Helen Collins-Weldon all of Jacksonville FL, his stepsons Gregory Blotzer of MA, Brian and Kevin Blotzer both of FL, 6 grandchildren, Christopher Brock of AL, Aryette and Emilyn Collins of FL, Ethan and Ava Blotzer of FL and Esme of MA.

Growing up the son of an Insurance salesman his family moved several times from Iowa to Pennsylvania to Florida before settling in Jacksonville when his dad began working for the US Postal Service becoming President of the Postal Union. It was while living in Pittsburgh that he became a lifelong fan of (in this order) the Pirates, the Steelers and the Penguins. He joined the Navy in 1967 during the Vietnam war where he was awarded the National Defense Service Medal and Meritorious Unit Commendation. After Honorable discharge he briefly attended Georgia Tech and the University of Florida, Gainesville before starting to work for Seaboard Coastal Railroad which later became CSX Railroad. After leaving the railroad he opened King Video in Jacksonville and when Blockbuster took over the video scene he sold it and started a home renovation business where he bought run down houses and brought them back to their original beauty. He enjoyed turning houses into homes. Sadly, that business came to an end when we moved to Ocoee. He gained employment with the American Legion, Department of Florida working with what began as the Gilchrist Fund and evolved into what is presently Project VetRelief. He assisted countless Veterans obtain financial assistance with rent and utilities. He also had the privilege of being on an Honor Flight, being the escort of a WWII Veteran. In his time working at The American Legion he made several lifelong friends. He never met a stranger. Cliff was a kind and caring soul, he will be forever loved and missed.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to your local Humane Society or Project Vet-Relief, both organizations were special to Cliff.

A gathering of family and friends to Celebrate Cliff will be held at The American Legion, Department Headquarters 1912 A Lee Rd., Orlando FL 32810 on Saturday, August 13, 2022 from 11am to 4pm.

Norma J. Walker

Norma J. Walker (Dept of South Carolina) 143 California Ave, Oak Ridge, TN 37830-4001, died June 10, 2022 at the age of 81. Source: Department Adjutant. A Vietnam War Navy Veteran and a member of Post #71 with 38 continuous years of membership. Memorial donations may be made to American Legion Post 71 at PO Box 6036, North Augusta, SC 29861-6063. Condolences may be shared online at weatherfordmortuary.com or William Walker and family at 143 California Avenue, Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

Madeline (Lindy) Jordan

With our sincerest condolences, we are sad to announce that Madeline (Lindy) Jordan passed away yesterday, July 17, 2022, at 5:00 pm in Charlotte, NC. Lindy was Past Commander of Flagler Post 115, Past Commander, 17th District, served on Department Committees, and the nurse at Boys State during my tenure as Director.

Several years ago, she sold her home in Palm Coast and moved to Charlotte to be near her family. She was very active in Legion work prior to her departure from Florida. She traveled extensively participating in Legion golf tournaments. She was a high-spirited, fun lady, but also very dedicated and committed to Legion work.

Anyone wishing to send condolences to the family may do so at the following address: 14901 Wyndham Oaks, Charlotte, NC 28277.



| June 30, 2022 Membership Target Report (100+%) | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| 6 | Joe Marcheggiani | 104.06% |
| 13 | Harold Boyer | 101.45% |
| 3 | Stuart Scott | 101.35% |
| 1 | Sonny Decker | 101.22% |
| 16 | Bob Matheson | 101.01% |
| 9 | George Bograkos | 100.37% |
| 8 | Skip Felicita | 98.71% |
| 7 | Burl Thomas | 98.12% |
| 5 | Lena Heredia-Perez | 97.66% |
| 12 | Dennis Mallon | 97.44% |
| 14 | Thomas Frank | 97.36% |
| 2 | Roger Hewitt | 95.98% |
| 17 | Jim Bowers | 95.65% |
| 15 | Stephen Tyler | 95.42% |
| 4 | John Bennett | 95.42% |
| 11 | Harry Malecki | 88.76% |
| Eastern | Daryl Bass | 101.02% |
| Western | John Edens | 100.40% |
| Southwestern | Jessica Moore | 100.22% |
| Central | Bruce Carl | 98.95% |
| Northern | Troy Horsley | 97.09% |
| Southern | Johnny Castro | 94.44% |
| Post 400 | | 83.33% |
| Post 208 | | 83.14% |



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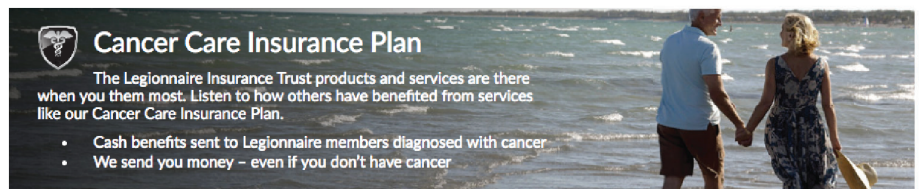
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