



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

Eunice Butts, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



This has been a hectic Month. I attended Challenge 22 in Navarre, FL, a Golf Tournament for Project: Vet Relief, post visitations of Posts 383, 155, and 166, a Disaster Preparedness meeting, National Fall meetings in Indianapolis,

IN, the completion of "The Department Commander's Area Training," the unveiling of the Historic Plaque/Marker Ceremony at post 168, Key West, FL., and the completion of "Train the Trainer."

Special thanks to the Department Vice Commanders, Department Membership Chair, Department Revitalization Chair, Department Legislation Chair, Department Women Veterans Chair, and Department Sgt-at-Arms, and 5th District Commander for your contributions to these events. Many positive reviews were received via emails, phone calls, etc.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, I visited the 13th District. Special thanks to Bill Hoppner, his team, and all of you who have worked diligently to help The American Legion posts

and communities during these trying times. Let us continue to pray for those who are victims of hurricane Ian. Communication is sent regularly from the Department. Please adhere to the communications as they are updated and follow the guidelines. At the present time, monetary donations are encouraged.

Due to the hurricane, we do not know the status of many of our members in the affected areas. Membership tracking and renewals have also become an issue. Department has taken several requests to have Post/Squadron membership cards reprinted. Those requests have been processed and will be shipped upon completion. Along with Membership cards, Posts lost other important documents, memorabilia, and other important assets. I pray that each of us will try to get new memberships and retain the present members. Continue the Buddy Checks and utilize the 400s.

We have a busy Month in November. Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Great American Teach-In, etc. Let us continue serving our homeless and less fortunate veterans, communities, and families.

I wish each of you, your families, and your post a very Thankful Thanksgiving with peace, love, and happiness surrounding you.

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

PROJECT: VetRelief and Jackson InAction 83



10K

15K

20K

25K

30K

35K

40K

45K



Commander's Goal: \$50,000 (Current funds raised **\$12,630.76**)



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Action/Reaction

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



Just like any other person with instincts, I decided not to "ride out" the storm in my mobile home near Port Charlotte and proceeded to the other coast to wait it out. As I traveled back to my home halfway between Port Charlotte and Arcadia, not expecting to find much, if anything, left, I started noticing the devastation left by hurricane Ian.

As I approached Desoto County, I first noticed the massive damage done to the Desoto prisons, remembering the blue-tarped roofs just a few years back after Irma. As I passed through Arcadia and headed south on highway 17, my hopes were slowly being diminished of finding anything left of my home or even my park after seeing the devastation.

I stopped by Post K-11 and was pleasantly surprised to see that the building, although surrounded by flood waters of the Peace River, was still high and dry. As we all know, that did not last long as the surge from the

river completely decimated the post again, with flood waters later in the week at least 12 feet above the flood stage.

As I approached my home park, I was in total shock at the damage and destruction in full view from Highway 17 that Ian had bestowed upon us. Park models and 5th wheels thrown about like matchbox cars, and large oaks and palms snapped like twigs and ripped out of the ground like you're pulling a weed. As I pulled onto my street, I could see that my next-door neighbor's carport had been torn from its support. But as I got the first view of my home, there it was, my motorcycle still standing, without the beautiful cover given to me by the 13th District SAL Commander. Torn beyond repair.

But the house, not a scratch, was visible. The devastation was all around me, but we were safe and secure. I then realized that there was a reason why we were spared. Because we are the ones that people count on during these times. We are the volunteers that help people get through times like this. I am so proud of the action/reaction of the entire American Legion family. You heard the call and reacted; we will continue to react and respond as needed. Hang in there, God Bless.

Legion Family Strong

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



We're beginning another busy month with Fall Conference, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving. The past month has been filled with relief efforts for victims of Hurricane IAN.

Namely in our 13th and 8th Districts. Efforts will be ongoing, and we'll stand by one another until the very end. Big shout out to the 16th District as one of the first to get mobilized. Great teamwork. Many other

posts and Districts are working hard to collect donations, supplies, and manpower as I write this article. This shows the resilience of our LEGION FAMILY. Florida is Strong!!

Bear in mind that we still have our normal day-to-day operations to tend to outside of Hurricane relief, and let's continue to do what we do. I am proud to represent all of the Florida American Legion Family. Keep It Real. Peace.

NOVEMBER 2022	
1-31	★ Member Retention Month
2	🍊 Department Membership 65% Goal
2	Chapter 136: ALR Mystery Ride
2	Chapter 136: ALR Meeting
5	Chapter 166: ALR Monthly Meeting
6	Daylight Savings Ends
8	Election Day
9	★ National Membership 65% Goal
9	Chapter 136: ALR Mystery Ride
9	Chapter 35: ALR Meeting
9	Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
10	US Marine Corps Birthday
10	American Legion Auxiliary Birthday (1919)
11	Veterans Day
11	🍊 Department Headquarters Closed
11	Remembrance Day
11-17	Buddy Checks
11	Post 108: Veterans' Day Fundraiser
12	Post 63: Challenge 22
13	Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
14-20	American Education Week
15	🍊 Legion Link Articles Due for December
16	Chapter 136: ALR Mystery Ride
18	Post 108: Golf Tournament
18-20	🍊 Department Fall Conference ♥
18-20	🍊 Department HQ Office at Fall Conference
18	Chapter 8: ALR Dinner Night
19	Chapter 27: ALR Monthly Meeting
19	Chapter 10: ALR Kissimmee Bike Night
20-26	National Family Week
20	Chapter 81: ALR Monthly Meeting
21	🍊 Department HQ Closed
23	Chapter 136: ALR Mystery Ride
24	Thanksgiving Day
24-25	🍊 Department Headquarters Closed
24-12/31	★ Holiday Blood Donor Drive
26	Chapter 69: ALR Meeting
29	#givingtuesday
20	Chapter 136: ALR Mystery Ride

- ♥ 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.



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Thank You

Jessica Moore, 3rd Vice Commander

3rdvice@legionmail.org



First, I don't know if thank you is enough, but Thank you for all the support I've seen this last month in SW Florida after the devastation of Hurricane Ian. Teamwork, togetherness, and helping hands are just

a few words I can use to describe what I've witnessed from across the country. We've seen trucks from all over our state, plus many others wanting to help.

This past month, we had one more Department Commanders training in the Southern Area. Mission welcomed and accomplished.

We are all gearing up for Veterans Day, Fall

Conference, and Thanksgiving. I hope you all have well-attended events and family time. I know I can't wait to see you all at conference.

seeing #oneteamonedream in action!

Explanation of National Executive Committee

Jim Ramos, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



Attention all Legionnaires, Please read this article in full.

"How does the National Executive Committee work."

The National Commander, the five National Vice Commanders, one National Executive Committee Member, and one Alternate National Executive Committee Member, elected by each Department, comprise the National Executive Committee. Past National Commanders are considered life members; they can join the debate on issues but have no vote. The NEC has the Legion's administrative power, responsible for drafting an annual

budget, approving contracts, and signing off on Legion spending. NEC members are delegates with full voting power during the Legion's Fall and Spring meetings in Indianapolis and during the national convention. In short, the NEC serves as the organization's board of directors.

Leadership

The American Legion is led by its National Commander, five National Vice Commanders, and six National Constitutional Officers. The National Commander and Vice Commanders help compose the National Executive Committee; and play vital roles during the national convention; the Legion's annual meeting is to establish programs, pass resolutions and make changes to the organization's Constitutions and By-Laws.

Please, if you are reading this article, you must read the "Rules of the National

Executive Committee of The American Legion," Revised October 14-15, 2020, to educate yourself and others. I am here because you, the members of the Department of Florida, voted for me. I am here for you doing the job you, the members of the Department of Florida, asked me to do.

Thank You all. My name is still Jim, and if you have something you would like Jim to know, first use your chain of command, and if you do not get answers, call 352-226-4370, and I will get your answers for you.

Have a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

Resolutions and Praises

Jerry Brandt, ANEC

anec@legionmail.org



On my last newsletter article, I mentioned the National Convention was voting on Resolution 1. Subject Amend the American Legion Constitution and By-Laws to allow Multi-Year and Rolling Memberships.

This Resolution PASSED. I have since spoken to National Judge Advocate, my question

was: "Since this resolution has passed, what does the Department do?" His answer was "Nothing at this time" What will happen next is the study of the feasibility of the change, and if it will be cost effective? For Posts wondering what they need to do, there is nothing to do at this time. No need for Changes in the Department Constitution and By-Laws, no need for changes in Posts Constitution and By-laws. National will let everyone know if and when the change will take place so we can update our Constitution and By-Laws at that time.

As I indicated on my last article, National held our Fall Meetings October 8-13, 2022. There was a lot of information that came from the meetings, one of the items that came out is the attendance and assistance for the meetings and calls of the National Commissions, Committees and Boards. One of them is the National Security Council, which has 500 members on it, however, when a call goes out to contact their Senators and Congress members, only 100 members reach out to their Senators and

ANEC continued on page 4 >>



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<< ANEC continued from page 3

Congress Representatives. My point is, if you accept a position, on any Committee or Board, or even in your Post and District, do the job. Otherwise resign, so someone else can complete the needed tasks.

Last month, I mentioned on the National Commander's Platform and No. 1 Priority, of tackling the Veterans Suicide problem. Since then, the word has been getting out. Examples, include interviews by the National Commander on various networks, as well as INDYCAR Team interviews both on and off the track. Florida is already leading the way with our VET Relief and Challenge 22 programs. There is a National Suicide hotline

(988 + 1) for Veterans, and even a Chat or Text (838255) is now available. You can go to 'BETHEONE.ORG' for additional information and remember, you can 'Be The One' to save a life.

One last item that needs to be mentioned, while at National, I heard praise for what Florida's Disaster Preparedness Team, under Bill Hoppner, has performed. With coverage from local media and from National Media, Florida shines on getting assistance and help to not only our Posts, but also to the general population. I also want to thank the number of Posts who step up and open their doors to those in need in their community. Serving food, being a distribution point, being a shelter. I also want to thank the number

of Departments who are sending supplies and funds down to Florida. Through your actions, you show what the American Legion is about.

Also do not forget, additional funds can be obtained for assistance from: Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) Legionnaires (<https://www.legion.org/financialassistance>) National Emergency Funds (NEF) for Legionnaires and Posts (https://www.legion.org/documents/legioin/pdf/NEF_Application.pdf)

Let me know if there is anything I can assist you with.

Inspiration through Prayer

Barry Roberts, Chaplain
chaplain@legionmail.org



While recovering from hurricane Ian, we are approaching Veterans Day and Thanksgiving. Our Country would not be what it has become without all those that have served to protect our great Nation! We do

have much to be thankful for. Thank you for your service!

While our world is changing and I meet and serve, I have had many people tell me that God does not speak to them or inspire them the way I describe. God inspires through His Word. The Bible tells us things about history and lessons learned. The Bible also warns about the future and what is going to happen. The Bible speaks about wars, rumors of wars, natural disasters, disease, pestilence,

and trials. We are living and seeing all that happen. The Bible says the mysteries of the Kingdom of God are for those that seek it. You must read the Word and seek God for wisdom and understanding of what is going on. Call me if you need to talk or have a prayer. I am here for you.

God Bless you,
Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

Checking In

Phil Crouthamel, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



Not much to report on. I did submit a Narrative History Book from the Department of Florida to National for judging. I am awaiting the results.

Once again, I will be conducting a one-hour historian class at the Fall Conference. I will have updated training materials and handouts for all.

The class will be held on Friday, November 18, from 10-11 am at the Caribe Royale, Orlando, in the Grand Sierra G room.

I will also have a sample Narrative & History/ Yearbook for you to look at. For anyone who cannot attend, I ask you to please send me your email address, and I can get these materials to you. I am shooting for 30 yearbooks for the Department Convention.

Also, please remember our brothers and sisters who were affected by Hurricane Ian. Do what you can to help the Department's relief efforts.



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Indy Car Partnership

Clarence Hill, PNC
pnchill@legionmail.org

A resolution passed unanimously at the Fall NEC meeting in October of 2020, establishing a 2-year contract with Chip Ganassi Racing sponsoring an INDYCAR at \$3.5 million per year. At the Fall NEC meeting this past October, a 3-year extension to the agreement was unanimously approved at \$4.5 per year. The purpose of this high-profile marketing investment is to shift brand perception, grow membership, support the "Be The One" campaign for suicide prevention, and drive revenue.

Some of the reasons INDYCAR was chosen include:

- Approximately 57 million fans
- Average TV viewership is 1.2 million, with 19 million viewers a season
- 2.5 million followers across INDYCAR social media channels
- Audience is military friendly: approximately 70% are serving or have served in the military and contribute to military/veteran causes
- One of the most affordable sports marketing properties, as 2022 was the

most watched INDYCAR season in NBC's history of broadcasting the sport and the sport, is experiencing massive growth.

- Hometown ties to Indianapolis

Some of our return on investment to date include:

- \$55 million in advertising value in two years
- NBC's total airtime for The American Legion in 2021 was 1 hour, 3 minutes, and 54 seconds. After adding the "Be The One" campaign in 2022, total airtime increased by 100%
- Traditional new membership was up 12% since the campaign began, and the smallest net decline in membership in over a decade was achieved, indicating positive membership results.
- Penske Entertainment donated a NO COST, 3-year contract with INDYCAR to be An Official Charity Partner of INDYCAR (2022-2024)
- Received commitments for \$3.7 million in new donations directly attributed to the INDYCAR Partnership including Jimmie Johnson's \$1.5 million pledge; Chip Ganassi's \$500,000 donation and 1,000

race tickets (\$45,000 value); Chip Ganassi Racing donation of 5 liveries (\$1.3 million value); Carvana's \$5,000 donation, a new car (\$25,000 value) and 2 liveries (\$500,000 value); Blake Shelton/Jimmie Johnson fundraiser raised \$13,353 (plus \$5 million worth of PR value).

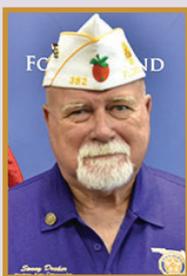
The American Legion Mobile Marketing Truck was open 42 days across 15 different race weekends in 10 states resulting in 1,861 people signing up to learn more about The American Legion; 253 people donated onsite with an average donation of \$26 and 221 new members from 31 states signed up.

Jimmie Johnson also appeared in two 30-second PSAs promoting The American Legion that were aired by TV stations nationwide an average of 11 times per day in 2022.

To support paying for the increased cost of this extension, the national marketing team is reallocating money from underperforming marketing programs, which has resulted in their budget being \$1.3 million less than their 2022 budget.

Raising Community Awareness

Sonny Decker, Western Area
westernarea@legionmail.org



We all know that membership is the lifeblood of our Legion. I am often asked about the best way to Recruit new members. There are a couple of ways that I think are good. We have our buddy check program, and it's

always good if the district gets involved in making the Buddy checks with the post. I would also like to add when doing a buddy check, that it is a wellness check, also. When doing a buddy check, "Be the One," let the veteran know they are not alone; they have a friend who's got their six.

I believe that the best recruiting tool we have in our Arsenal is working with the

American Legion programs. I don't care which one of the programs you choose and you work, but by doing that program, you are putting your legion out in the community. You're letting the community see what we do and what we are all about, we are not about staying in the lounge and entertaining ourselves.

District 1 and Navara post 382 just had a very successful project that released a suicide prevention event for the community. Not only did this event raise funds and awareness of the Veteran's suicide initiative, but there were 22 new members signed up at the event. Getting the word out into your community does more in my mind to help membership than anything else we can do, and it's repeatable year after year.

With a membership goal of 55% by October 5th, I would like to congratulate District 1 on achieving a 55.9% by October 5th. District

2 is not far behind and is very respectable, 53.01%. I'm very honored to be the area commander for these two great districts and the progress being made, and not just membership but all areas of becoming a true American Legion Post.

I would also like to recognize what we call a little Legion, Post 378, for their inaugural "Children with Cancer ride." This ride raised awareness that only 4% of the funds go to Children's Research for cancer, which is not nearly enough. The legion is located in Gulf Breeze; the ride was so successful that the City of Pensacola came and recognized them through a proclamation for the Post. Outstanding job by Post 378 Riders. This post is on the rise.

I'm always available to help, and work the program unless it continues to grow. For the "Cause, not the Applause."



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Working Together

Bob Matheson, Central Area
centralarea@legionmail.org



Living in Florida, we all know the chances we take in storm season. It's always a roll of the dice if we get a storm or we don't. While the Central Area survived IAN with only minimum damage, it was certainly not the same for the

8th and 13th Districts. As you all know, IAN caused significant damage to the area and devastated 5 Legion Posts. In true American Legion Family fashion, the Posts in the Central Area responded. First to get a truckload of supplies and items to the

area was 15th District Vice Commander and Post 108 Commander Randy Holyfield. On October 1st, Randy and his team coordinated with the 13th District to bring a trailer full of donated goods to Post 323 in Lehigh Acres.

This was just the start; soon after, the 16th District, led by District Commander Eric Nestler and District Riders Chairman and Post 104 Commander Bob Ordner, coordinated a massive effort throughout the 16th District. Working with Posts within the District, they put together a list of desperately needed items, and the Posts responded immediately to assist the communities in need.

Coordinating with the Department of Florida, on Saturday, the 8th of September,

a large convoy of trucks and supplies, led by Riders from Post 104, 16th District Riders, and AMVETS #7467, headed out to Lake Placid Post 25. In total, 10 Posts within the Mighty 16th District, the Boy Scouts of Troop 431, and Post 138 in the 15th District donated items or money to assist in the IAN Hurricane relief effort. I want to thank all that donated, loaded items into the truck, and then escorted them to the area. A special thanks to Commander Randy Holyfield for his quick response and efforts, and a tremendous thanks to Commanders Eric Nestler and Bob Ordner, whose commitment and teamwork put together the massive effort from the 16th District. I've been told its not the last trip! As always, the Legion Family steps up to help those in need!!



ALR Activities

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
alr@legionmail.org



Fall Conference is right around the corner, and it is usually our goal to have everything set up for the balance of the year. I am happy to report that everything is coming together, but I am sure we will have

items to discuss.

The ALR Chair's meeting will be held on Friday, November 18th, from 1:00 – 2:00 PM in room Curacao 5-6. The ALR General Session is scheduled for Saturday, November 20th, in Palm 3, from 3:30 – 5:30 PM. District 6 will host the Appreciation Room.

Updates on the following activities will be given by the individuals listed or their designated individuals.

- Area and District Chairs, please review your reporting responsibilities in our SOP.
- Summit, Jeff Hawk finished negotiations on the hotel. Beverly, Kristi, Joe, and I will review last year's class attendance to see if we should change some classes. We will check Survey Monkey as well to make sure we have the input of your suggestions.
- Children and Youth picnic, I may have missed it, but I did not see a date posted in the calendar. I will post it when I find out. JCW
- In-State Unity Ride, Joe Marcheggiani

and Zane Koonce are working on two routes, and Jason Skobel is working on the Western route. All three of the routes will end in Clearwater again this year.

- Bev & Wayne Wooten are putting the Rally together. If all the pieces come together, it will be the best Rally we have ever had.
- Do not know if I have mentioned this, but Bert's Barracuda Harley, which is next store to OCC, has donated a new 2023 Black Harley Davidson Street Glide at cost for the ALR to Raffle off. The Raffle should go live this month. Beverly/JCW.

That is the update for now; if you have any

American Legion Riders continued on page 7 >>



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<< American Legion Riders continued from page 6

ideas or would like to become part of our volunteer team, please do not hesitate to let Bev or me know. We are always looking for help.

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

Your 2022 – 2023 Schedule

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”

“Communication is Paramount”

Doug Hockenberry, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org

Hello, Department of Florida, American Legion Family. Before I begin, I want to extend my sincere best wishes to all those affected by Hurricane Ian. Kathy and I both have you in our thoughts and prayers. I would also like to thank everyone throughout the Department of Florida, American Legion Family, who has stepped up to lend a hand to our fellow Legion Family members affected by Hurricane Ian. Keep up the impressive work. HOOAH!!!

In my last article, I asked you to develop your “Americanism Plan of Attack” to ensure program success. Based on that article, I received several inquiries via phone calls and email messages from various Posts seeking guidance on how to conduct or effectively manage a program – and I was thrilled to assist. If you recall, I mentioned reviewing the Department 2022-2023 Event Timeline, which breaks down key events/goals by month. It is a great tool to use. By now, I hope your District Americanism Chair has reached out to your respective Post to help you with your Americanism Plan of Attack.

October is in the rear-view mirror, and by now (hopefully), you have contacted the schools in your locale to introduce yourselves (your Post) and let them know about the great opportunities the American Legion has available to help their student body. Remember, through our programs; we can influence those young minds, promoting

Americanism. Additionally, your presence in the schools and at different community events go a long way. Most schools already have sporting events like football, wrestling, and volleyball, to mention a few. In addition, most Debate Clubs already have meets scheduled, as do Marching Bands and Drill Teams. Yes, they too compete, and these are ideal venues for you to represent your Post while supporting your community – and do not forget to wear an American Legion shirt or ball cap. Please make yourself known, stand out, and let them know that the local American Legion Post is there rooting them on. It truly makes a difference to those in your community by simply showing up and supporting the local teams. Again, those little things go a long way.

I also mentioned in my last article about engaging with your local school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers. Ensure you keep those lines of communication open. Make it a routine to stop by your local schools every few weeks to see if there is anything your Post can do to help them and, in turn, extend an offer to see if the JROTC (for example) would like to help you with a Flag Retirement Ceremony, or offer to have your Honor Guard teach the students how to properly fold a flag. As we are in November, a couple of events come to mind. Election Day is November 8th. Veterans Day is November 11th, is your Post going to be in the community Veterans Day Parade? November 14th-20th is American Education Week, another ideal reason

to have good communications with the schools. You see, there is always something encompassing Americanism. Lastly, have you contacted your District Chair to let them know if you are holding any Americanism events? If so, invite them to attend.

Communication is paramount in conducting Americanism Programs. Keep the dialogue going with your schools regularly, and make sure that your Post is known in your community. A PDC, who I highly respect, is always saying, and I quote, “If your Post was gone tomorrow, would the community miss you” Unquote.

As I stated when I first started as your Department Americanism Chair for this Legion year, I want to ensure I am providing helpful, valuable information to you. If you have a question or have a subject that needs to be addressed, please reach out to me at Americanism@legionmail.org.

In closing, I want to thank you all for your support. I am honored to be your Americanism Chair this year, and I stand ready to assist you to carry out your Americanism Plan of Attack. Remember, each of us in the Department of Florida, American Legion, can make a positive impact on our youth, thereby promoting Americanism.

Hang Tough!



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Fall Conference and Holiday Season

Terry Phillips, Baseball
baseball@legionmail.org



As we prepare for the Fall Conference Baseball Meetings, the board will work on the end of the 2022 Season, updates to the Florida Baseball Program, and the 2023 Season.

Please contact me if you are interested in serving with us in the Florida Baseball Program.

Blood Donations are Needed

David Clinger, District 16 Blood Donation
 Calling ALL LEGIONNAIRES, AUXILIARY MEMBERS, SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION, AND RIDERS

BLOOD DONATIONS ARE NEEDED!

Hurricane Ian has left, but the NEED for Blood donations is NOW more important than ever. It is as easy to coordinate a blood drive at your post as it is to donate.

If you cannot donate to the disaster relief fund, there is little clean-up to do.... Donating

blood takes a little of your time.

Benefits of Donating Blood

- Get a free wellness checkup.
- You may be less likely to have a heart attack.
- Donating can keep your iron level balanced.

PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE MANY ORGANIZATIONS TO ARRANGE FOR BLOOD DONATIONS:

www.oneblood.org; www.suncoastblood.org; www.redcross.org OR contact the nearest blood donation site nearest you.

Children & Youth Events

Dianne Boland, Children & Youth
cy@legionmail.org



This month, I aim to keep you all informed with communication – whom do you go to for questions, problems, and answers? The Department C&Y Team (Together Everyone Accomplishes More) is me for the Legion,

Robin Burk for the Auxiliary, and Tom Soeder for the Sons.

Our Department Roster, which can be found on the Department website, has the name and contact info for the C&Y Commission and C&Y Committee (an Area and District member for each).

You will need to work closely with everyone (including the Auxiliary and the Sons) to plan for your C&Y events during the month of December. Also, remember that Thanksgiving week is National Family Week. This is about the whole family – whether you are related to them or not – the Legion is also our family. Remember those who live alone or cannot get out on their own.

The Fall Conference is November 18-20, 2022. I will hold a class on Friday, November 18, 2022, at 8:00 am. We will get together with a brief overview of what I learned at the National C&Y Conference. Also, we will share experiences and make suggestions to those who might be new to the program. All are welcome to attend.

In closing, I want to remind everyone that the C&Y Picnic is being held this year on April 15th at Post 323 Lehigh Acres. Mark your calendars now.

Florida American Legion College

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College
falc@legionmail.org



The 2023 Florida American Legion College (FALC) will be held on February 16 – 19, 2023. The new application can be downloaded at <https://bit.ly/3sJ5ItW>,

All FALC applicants must have completed the Basic Training online course within the last two years before submitting their application. A copy of the Basic Training certificate must be attached to the application.

In completing your essay portion of your application, in addition to “why you want to attend the FALC” and “how you would apply the knowledge you will acquire to help your District and the Department of Florida,” include what your future goals are in The American Legion, Department of Florida, or how you can assist your District in training others.

Some of the topics to be addressed during the FALC are as follows:

- 2022 Officer’s Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
- Legion Protocol
- PowerPoint 101

- Develop, instruct and support Posts, Districts, and Department level training

Within two weeks of submitting your FALC application, you will receive a confirmation that it was received and additional instructions. Please make sure the contact information is printed clearly on the application, including email, phone number, and mailing address.

While attending FALC, you should expect computer-based training (please bring your laptops) in class training modules as well as after-hours group homework, which will be expanded on from day to day. This

Florida Legion College continued on page 9 >>



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<< Florida Legion College continued from page 8 means not only full class schedules but also homework that will need to be completed

each night. If you should have any questions, email

falc@legionmail.org or call me at 352-226-4370. Thank You!

JSSP Registration in Progress

Loretta Young, JRTOC / JSSP jrotc@legionmail.org



I would like to emphasize that the JSSP Postal Target Orders are well underway. The deadline for registration is Dec. 14th. The time quickly passes, and I cannot stress enough how important it is to get to your schools or teams that have a marksmanship program to register early. The deadline to register is Dec. 14th. Registration and payment are made online through the Department or National website with a credit card.

The Legion Post Commander/Officer must see the document receipt/certificate for the background check and Protect Youth Sports training prior to signing the Post Affiliation Form. Since this part of the registration takes a little time, it's important to ensure that your sponsored team has this step completed before you sign the form. I have had several individuals contact me regarding Legion Posts, which have a marksmanship program at the post. Although I have had several posts contact me regarding a startup program, I have not had anyone advise that they have already started their program. The startup and operation of a marksmanship program is on the Department website and is a great guide to putting one in place.

As a backup to any request regarding current programs, I refer to the Civilian Marksmanship Program website as an excellent source to find active youth clubs that offer Air Rifle Programs.

I hope the posts are in touch with your JROTC Units and will be sharing some time at their Raider, Color Guard, Drill Events, or any other after-school or weekend programs. They are also an excellent partnership for next month's upcoming Veteran's Day Programs or assisting your veterans at the posts or your events. Thanks so much for your support of our Youth Programs, and please share any photos of events that you may be having in your communities.

The Gift of Giving

Bruce Thurber, Membership membership@legionmail.org



Welcome to November; some important happenings this month are Veterans Day and

paying their dues and not losing them. This may be done by an individual member for a friend, or the Post may decide to take care of members in need.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Bill Hoppner and the great team he put together following Hurricane IAN. The efforts of this group of Volunteers helped thousands of people recover. This is what makes me proud to be a member of The American Legion.

Thanksgiving. Some other days I enjoy are Nov 2nd, Deviled Egg Day, Nov 5th, Doughnut Appreciation Day, and Nov 6th, National Nachos Day.

As we enter the Holiday season after Hurricane Ian, many of our members will find that they may be unable to renew. They have lost a lot and need to put their money into their needs. Many of these members are our best assets and volunteers. With Christmas coming, what better gift could we give them by



Gift of Membership 2023

Dear Post _____ Adjutant:

It has been brought to my attention that Legionnaire _____ a member of post _____ is unable to pay their 2023 dues. As this member is a valuable asset I _____ would like to give them the Gift of Membership.



Gift of Membership 2023

Dear Legionnaire _____

You are special. You served your country with honor and are a valued member of American Legion Post _____. To ensure your continued support (I/We) have paid your 2023 dues to thank you for everything you have done on behalf of The American Legion for the Community, State and Nation.

Have a great Holiday Season and see you around the Post soon.



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Now is the Time

Raymond Olsen, National Security
security@legionmail.org

I wanted to touch on two topics for this Legion Link item.

The first is Disaster Preparedness. IAN has devastated the majority of the state of Florida, especially along the path it took, starting in the Ft. Myers area. I have seen the aerial views on the news, and I am reminded of when Michael devastated the 1st District and Second District while I was Western Area Commander. There was a significant amount of time between the storm ending and when relief efforts were able to get through to those who needed help. We have a Disaster Prep team in place, and they are closely monitoring the situation.

We need to coordinate our efforts through Chairman Hoppner because we do not want to interfere with ongoing First Responders Rescue and Recovery efforts. I know that

damage is extensive to at least 5 of our posts. I am sure that Chairman Hoppner and the Area and Zone Commanders affected will have plans in place and can tell us what to bring and where to take them so that they can be routed to where they are needed most. Stay current on communications within Legion Media Postings to know what to do. Also, be very careful about transferring money. Make sure you use safe and reliable methods to get cash donations into the areas. I thought that the recovery efforts for Michael were very good, well-organized, and very effective. But it was several weeks before traffic was allowed into the area due to safety concerns on the damaged roads. When the time comes, we need to be ready or have already delivered our help to the distribution points.

Now is not the time to ignore Blood Drive efforts, the second topic of this Link item. I can only imagine that getting the needed blood to anywhere in the southern part

of the state may become a critical need and difficult task while recovery efforts are ongoing. Get your posts organized to support blood drive efforts. Make sure each member that donates individually outside of Post Events lets the Red Cross or One Blood know that the donation is on behalf of the Legion Post they belong to. For Post sponsored Blood Drive events, this is not as important, and the number of pints will be counted and attributed to the post through the event. Every Post should have a Blood Drive Chairman or a Blood Drive Coordinator. This is the time when we can come through for those who need help.

As you can see, the internal portion of National Security is in full operation after IAN. It is one of the 4 Pillars upon which the American Legion was built, and now is the time for the posts that can help to let our communities know that the Legion is here for them.

Lessons Learned

Meri West, Oratorical
oratorical@legionmail.org

In September, I attended the Americanism Conference in Indianapolis. Here we are above in our group photo. Dave King, Department of Kentucky, was the Conference Chairman. A resolution proposed by the Department of Illinois to reduce the time for the Prepared Oration to 6 to 8 minutes instead of the 8 to 10 it currently is. Additionally, the resolution asked that the number of Assigned Topics be reduced to two instead of the four it is now. Their argument was that students are involved in many sports and activities outside of school and doing this much preparation was arduous.

All Departments agreed that there was no need to reduce the time for the Prepared Oration as often, students could easily go over the 10 minute limit.

There was some discussion about reducing

the number of Assigned Topics to two. This would mean that students only have to prepare 3 speeches to be competitive—the Prepared Oration and two Assigned Topics. There was quite a bit of support to reduce the number of Assigned Topics but it would have to be introduced as a separate resolution and likely will be introduced next year.

Most people felt that making the contest easier, was de facto dumbing it down. Since the National awards were just increased significantly and the number of students who can compete in the semi-finals, most people thought this was not the time to be making the contest easier.

Some believe that homeschooled students have an unfair advantage because they don't have to participate in all the testing and be in class like other students. They argued that reducing the Assigned Topics would go a long way to giving regular school students

some reprieve.

The contest is in its 84th year and while participation is lower than other programs, like Boys State and baseball, we don't want to dilute the importance of it.

Another topic that was discussed was the importance of following the script and running a contest that is very similar, if not identical, to the National contest. Florida makes me proud as our manual and our contests are run exactly like the nationals. We were told to follow the script precisely and if you are going to do any adlibbing, do it before you start the script.

This past year, I was asked to be the Moderator at a Quarter Finals contest. I was psyched. No joke. But, the hotel was getting renovated and the carpets were all messed up. Many chairs were broken or unsteady. My assigned timekeepers

Oratorical continued on page 11 >>



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<< Oratorical continued from page 10

and one escort did not show up. I was busy taping down the carpet so no one would trip. I felt pretty sure I knew the script since FL follows it anyway. The contest commences and one judge they assigned me is mentioned in the next paragraph. I asked her to remove her cap and she refused. THAT was not covered in the script. I was a little rattled by it but thought, okay, just keep on. Everything was going well and then we got to the Assigned Topic portion and my script had the Assigned Topic written out in Roman Numerals. I blanked out. I wasn't even sure I could see it correctly. The Xs and Vs seemed to run together. I didn't want to read it wrong so I paused and fortunately, the timekeeper read it out for me! Our FL script has it written out in words but lesson learned!

Now the issue was raised that at the Nationals, an American Legion member was asked to be a judge as there was a shortage of judges. She had her cap on and refused to take it off because it would mess up her hair. Dave King said that is NOT to happen again and reminded us that it's best to not have Legionnaires as a judge except in extenuating circumstances. I had politely asked her to remove it, but when she refused, I did not know how to handle it without creating a scene. At our contests, I choose judges and get to brief them beforehand so that would never come up. This led to further discussion about the national contest.

At Nationals, we had one person do all the briefing of the judges and he ended up giving some erroneous information to them. The fix for this situation is that each moderator will get to meet with their timekeepers and escorts and judges ahead of time, instead of having them briefed by someone else. The hotel where the contest is held is huge and it's very busy. I had been assigned an escort who was using a walker and was very slow and could no way get the students to the holding room and back

on time. It was pretty chaotic. But, we were coming back after missing a year or two from Covid and we have a new Program Director there and this was her first time organizing a contest. Thankfully, you can count on veterans to step up though and do whatever it takes to make it happen.

On a more local level, every department says it's difficult to reach the students to increase participation. Using social media can help drive up interest. But in the end, it often comes down to having a chairman who gets to know a few teachers and build on that. When we have chairmen who have been involved for a year or more, it makes it easier to forge those connections. While change can be good and invigorating, there is something comforting about having the same chairmen. It takes a few years to build solid rapport with some teachers.

One way to demonstrate to teachers what the contest is about, is to have teachers be your judges. Once they see a contest in person, they have a greater sense of which students might be up for the challenge. I try to get at least one judge who uses social media and can tweet about the contest to their followers. Try to get former contestants from your area to tweet or make a Tik Tok video. Or post on Instagram.

One aspect I have struggled with is focusing on the schools that have speech and debate teams. It's easier to get students from those schools, but the students who may really need scholarship money often come from schools that have no speech and debate

team. It's important not to neglect those schools.

Stress that participation is a great learning experience, that it doesn't matter if you win or not. I think inviting teachers from these schools to be a judge, will go a long way towards promoting the contest at their schools.

One other issue that came up at the conference was....who can be an Oratorical Chairman? It turns out, that Alaska has had a lady be the chairman for many years but she was not a Legionnaire. She was a member of the Auxiliary. I believe the Department of GA has a Son's of the American Legion be the Department Chairman for many years. He's a retired federal judge. The general consensus was that if you have a person willing to act as a chairman, then take advantage of whatever they will do, provided they abide by the rules and regulations and that they coordinate with the other chairman and Program Director frequently.

Thanks to everyone for all that you are doing to make the program successful. I think we have some students returning this year who competed last year and will make for a very good Department contest. Feel free to text or email with any questions. If you need a conversation, text me to arrange it.

My cell is 904-704-09036. Email is oratorical@legionmail.org.



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FALL CONFERENCE IS ON THE HORIZON

We are gearing up for the Annual Fall Conference in Orlando. It will be held November 18-20 at the Caribe Royale Orlando.

There will not be an Advocate Training course, however, we will be having a roundtable discussion with those who we have been in contact with to help us expand the PVR program within the Districts.

Our PVR/SPI Strategic Partners have been invited to attend Fall Conference this year, too. Be sure to stop by our vendor table to possibly meet them and see our Case Worker, Lenora.

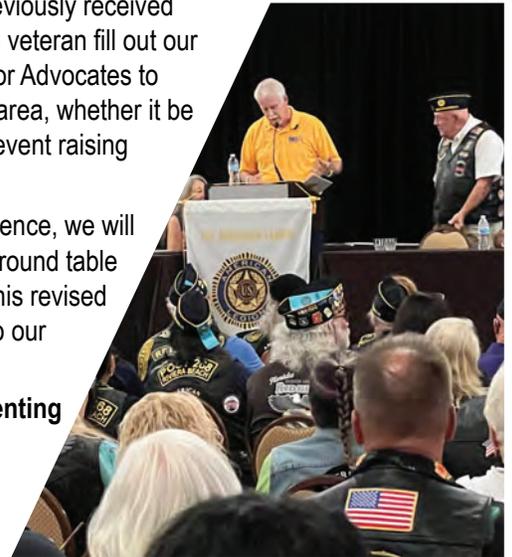
DISTRICT ADVOCATES ARE NEEDED

PROJECT: VetRelief is on the lookout for District Advocates! These Advocates will assist our program by

reaching out to veterans who previously received financial assistance, or helping a veteran fill out our application. We would also like for Advocates to participate in events within your area, whether it be a Post fundraiser or community event raising awareness on our program.

During the upcoming Fall Conference, we will be having a special training and round table discussion on the full details of this revised Advocate role and introduction to our PVR/SPI Strategic Partners.

If you are interested in representing your District and supporting PROJECT: VetRelief, please contact Jennifer Cooper at jcooper@floridalegion.org.



FLORIDA VETERANS FOUNDATION JOINS PVR TO SUPPORT VETERANS FROM HURRICANE IAN

Hurricane Ian caused massive destruction to many people across the state of Florida, specifically to our friends and family in the Southwest. However, the PROJECT: VetRelief Team quickly started to develop a plan of action with our long-time sponsor, Florida Veterans Foundation, to determine how we can best support our veterans as they recover and rebuild.

Since the storm, we have seen a substantial increase of calls and submitted applications to our program. For veterans who have experienced damage or were displaced due to Hurricane Ian can complete our condensed application for Publix food cards. As of October 21, **we have already provided 31 veterans and their families with \$8,300 in food cards!**

NAVARRE CHALLENGE 22

Despite Hurricane Ian, Navarre Post 382, led by our newest Board Member, Jason Skobel, held their 2nd Annual Challenge 22 event to raise funds and awareness to end veteran suicide. Although funds are still coming in from their motorcycle raffle and other items, it's been rumored to have raised over \$50,000 for the veteran community!

They chose two beneficiaries to receive the proceeds from their event, our Suicide Prevention Initiative and Defenders of Freedom.

Thank you to all those who donated, sponsored or attended this outstanding event! Their combined efforts will certainly make an impact on veterans and their families and allow us to continue our support to our 10+ Strategic Partners.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE STATS: YEAR 9 JULY-SEPT 2022

64 VETERANS ASSISTED

\$90,334 FINANCIAL AID AWARDED

Post Development and Revitalization

Judith Richards, Post Development
revitalization@legionmail.org



Just completed all of the Department Commander's Area Training, with the final one being in Marathon. Thank you to all of the Posts, Districts, and Areas who hosted the training and attended!

Now is an excellent time to hold your Buddy Check calls. Show your members that you are supportive of their well-being. If they haven't renewed, ask what the post can do for them! Host a family day!

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!

Those needing a replacement Member ID

card can be printed by the member or by the individuals at the post who have access to the post's data.

I am assisting several districts with outreach to members, with reports and training. If you need any assistance, please let me know.

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

Happy Veterans Day & Thanksgiving

Richard Smith, SAL Advisor
sal@legionmail.org

We have rolled into the holiday season quickly this year. Post liaisons, please get with your SAL Commanders and help them

with their membership. We still have a few too many with zeros.

I wish all of our veterans a very Happy Veterans Day. I also want to wish our entire

family a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

American Legion Scouters

Chris Ragusa, Scouting
scouting@legionmail.org



Hurricane Ian Relief Drive: During the recent American Legion Department of Florida Hurricane Ian Relief drive, Seminole Scouts BSA Troop 431B delivered three (3) new generators to Madiera Beach Post 273 to be included in

the District 16 disaster relief collection. That aggregated collection was delivered on Saturday, October 8th, by Pinellas Park Post 104. Troop 431B consistently demonstrates its commitment to the Scout Oath and Law as evidenced by the generous way they associate with The American Legion and its causes.



Post 139 Commander Mark Wilson Memorial: A memorial service was held for

(past) Post 139 (District 15) Commander Mark Wilson on October 8th. Commander Wilson, an Eagle Scout, was instrumental in Post 139's decision to charter Scouts BSA Troop 53. Troop 53, a long-tenured BSA unit in South Tampa, had been chartered by the United Methodist Church. When the UMC changed its position on chartering BSA units, Troop 53 was left without a Chartered Organization. A contingent from Troop 53 attended the memorial service to recognize Commander Wilson's achievement in Scouting, service to the nation and the American Legion, and steadfast support of the Boy Scouts of America by chartering Troop 53. Pictured are Troop 53 Scoutmaster Rich Jackson (a retired US Army Colonel), three of his Scouts, and the Department Scouting Chair presenting an Eagle Scout recognition coin to Commander Wilson's widow, Dee Wilson.

February 3-5, 2023 Cub Scout Camporee Reminder: The American Legion and SAL-chartered Cub Scout Camporee at MacDill AFB in Tampa, FL, will take place from Friday, February 3 – Sunday, February 5, 2023. This campout, at Lewis Lake Scout Camp on MacDill AFB in Tampa, FL, is a two-overnight Cub Scout Camporee specifically for American Legion Post, Auxiliary unit, and Sons of the American Legion Squadron-chartered Cub

Scout packs. This primitive camping weekend will be jam-packed with tours of the Air Traffic Control Tower and Flight Simulator, the base's Flightline Fire and Rescue station, Maritime Coastal Patrol hanger and dock, an Armory weapons orientation, and a 6th Security Forces Squadron Military Dog Handling unit demo. At a cost of only \$20 per participant, the event will include a cookout on the bay in a marina beach pavilion, a catered BBQ dinner, and campfires and s'mores to finish off the night.

The MacDill AFB Cub Scout Camporee Guide from the last event is available in the Resources folder at the Department Scouting site. I am the POC for this event - please spread the word to your Cub Scout packs to put this on their calendars!



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Buddy Checks/Suicide Prevention

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements

benefits@legionmail.org



With Hurricane Ian hitting us hard, it's time for us to step up and do what the American Legion does, take care of our families.

Start by doing more Buddy Checks

It is very vital that we check on our members and let them know we are family.

HERE ARE IMPORTANT CONTACTS That you can share while doing your Buddy Checks

- 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.foodpantrie.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 Foundation www.FloridaVets.org 1-800-488-4181
- St. Vincents (Families Only) 1-813-955-6099
- Hudvash www.va.gov/homeless/hud-vash.asp 1-877-424-3838
- Fl.Veterans Support 2-1-1
- PROJECT: VetRelief www.PROJECTVetRelief 1-407-270-9204

- 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
- Housing for Homeless miram@housingforhomeless.org 321-639-0166 (ext102)
- VETSTOCKAMERICA vetsockamerica.com 1-917-731-1944
- Vet Center www.va.gov/find-locations 1-877-927-8387
- Liberty-OVE www.libertyove.com 1-910-581-1258
- National Veterans Homeless Support nvhs.us 1-321-208-7561
- Employ Florida: Vets veterans.employflorida.com 1-800-438-4128

Please remember the National Commanders theme this year is:

How you can "Be the One"

(Came from the September 2022 American Legion Magazine)

The American Legion's "Be the One" campaign encourages American Legion Family members, veterans, service members, and others to take action when they believe a veteran is at risk of suicide. The program's primary goal is to reduce the number of veteran suicides. It will do so by destigmatizing the simple act of asking for mental health support, providing peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities, and educating people on how to "BE THE ONE."

For Veterans

- Talk with fellow veterans about how you're feeling.
- Ask for help when you think you need it.
- Know that millions of people are ready to help you.
- Remember that your family and friends care.

For non-veterans

- Ask veterans in your life how they're doing.
- Listen when a veteran needs to talk.
- Reach out when a veteran is struggling.
- Pledge to "BE the One" at betheone.org by signing up for email updates.

For American Legion posts

- Educate members on the "BE the One" campaign.
- Display resources at your post or in your community.
- Share events or success stories at legiontown.org.

"BE THE ONE"

To recognize the symptoms

(Recognize The Signs is from the VA's Suicide Awareness cards)

The presence of these signs requires immediate attention

- Thinking about hurting or killing yourself
- Looking for ways to kill yourself
- Talking about death, dying, or suicide
- Self-destructive behavior such as drug abuse, weapons, etc.

Mild signs

- Hopeless, feeling like there's no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, mood swing
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug abuse

VA Entitlements continued on page 15 >>



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<< VA Entitlements continued from page 14

- Withdrawing from family and friends

Resources

If you are a veteran experiencing a crisis, VA has resources available 24/7:

- Call 988 or 1-800-273-8255 and press 1.
- Text 838255
- Visit veteranscrisisline.net

Strategic Partners with Project VetRelief

- 22 Zero (813) 221-6304
- Veterans Counseling Veterans (407) 516-8398
- First Counseling Veterans (407) 468-0004
- Paint 22 (727) 490-7338
- IGY6 Foundation (321) 505-9005
- SOF Missions (910) 382-6492
- K9 Line (386) 566-7438
- The Grey Team (561) 203-3815
- Liberty OVE (757) 778-5337
- Norman Bissel, LMHC (614) 259-7414

Vet Centers

If you have served in a combat zone, Vet Centers are in your community to help you and your family with readjusting counseling and outreach services.

- Clearwater Vet Center (727) 549-3600
- Clermont Center Vet Center (352) 536-6701
- Daytona Beach Vet Center (386) 366-6600
- Fort Lauderdale Vet Center (954) 714-2381
- Fort Myers Vet Center (239) 652-1861
- Gainesville Vet Center (352) 331-1401
- Palm Beach Vet Center (561) 422-1201
- Jacksonville Vet Center (904) 399-8351
- Jupiter Vet Center (561) 422-1220
- Key Largo Vet Center (305) 451-0164
- Lakeland Vet Center (863) 284-0841
- Melbourne Vet Center (321) 254-3410
- Miami Vet Center (305) 718-3712

- Naples Vet Center (239) 403-2377
- Pasco County Vet Center (727) 372-1854
- Ocala Vet Center (352) 237-1947
- Orlando Vet Center (407) 857-2800
- Bay County Vet Center (850) 522-6102
- Pensacola Vet Center (850) 456-5886
- Pompano Beach Vet Center (954) 984-1669
- Sarasota Vet Center (941) 927-8285
- Okaloosa County Vet Center (850) 651-1000
- St. Petersburg Vet Center (727) 549-3633
- Tallahassee Vet Center (850) 942-8810
- Tampa Vet Center (813) 228-2621

“BE THE ONE”

Please look at the Departments Web site for updates on Hurricane Ian Relief and Suicide Awareness Events.

VETERAN’S DAY: Honoring All Who Have Served and Continue to Serve

Deanna Hall, Women Veterans
womenvets@legionmail.org



“Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices.”— anonymous

First, our hearts and prayers go out to the Veterans, their families, and all the communities affected by hurricane Ian. The American Legion family came together to

help their neighbors across the street, city, and state.

One group of Women veterans who impacted history in the military was during Vietnam. These women encouraged and empowered women to join the military due to their unwavering service to America. Even though American leaders were reluctant to send women abroad during the Vietnam War, that did not discourage American women from serving their county.

Whether the women of the Vietnam Era served abroad or in the USA, I am in awe that these women chose to set aside their ambitions and dreams. Thank you, ladies, for opening the door

for future women in the military. Your bravery and dedication changed social stereotypes about women and their capacity in the military arena. In fact, by 1973, the military officially lifted the prohibition against women joining the armed forces because of their courage, patriotism, and sacrifice.

I would personally like to thank the women of the Vietnam Era who have paved the way so that I had the opportunity to serve in the United States Marine Corps! Thank you! As a female veteran, I know it can sometimes feel lonely in a world where no one understands what happened to you in the military. Also, it can be harder to connect with

Women Vets continued on page 16 >>



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<< Women Vets continued from page 15

non-Veteran females. The American Legion Department of Florida has heard you. We are conducting District/Area wide Women Veteran Forums throughout Florida to ensure we listen to women veterans and understand their challenges. The forums are open to any female veteran; they do not have to belong to the American Legion.

The following is the schedule:

- 8:00-9:00 am Breakfast. Everyone is welcome to come and support female veterans.
- 9:00-9:30 am Introduction of guests.
- 9:30-11:00 am Female Veterans Forum (FEMALE VETERANS ONLY)

Our following two forums are:

1. Women Veterans Forum November 5, 2022

- 8:00-11:00
American Legion Post 26
2207 W, Baker Street
Plant City, FL 33653
2. Women Veterans Forum
November 9, 2022
8:00-11:00
American Legion Post 69
1301 W. Bell Stree
Avon Park, FL 33825
3. Women Veterans Forum
December 10, 2022
8-11:00
American Legion Post 75
898 E. James Lee Blvd
Crestview, Florida 32539
4. Women Veterans Forum
January 14, 2023
American Legion Unit 323
1124 Ashlar Avenue
Lehigh Acres, Florida 33936

WOMEN VETERANS' MANTRA: "JUST BREATHE"

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

Please repeat your mantra as many times as needed:

You are "Brave"
 You are "Resilient"
 You are "Essential"
 You are "Amazing"
 You are "Timeless"
 You are "Heroic"
 AND YOU ARE "ENOUGH"

"Just BREATHE"!

Thank you for supporting Women Veterans!

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

Alan Cohen, VA&R

var@legionmail.org



It seems as if we've just wrapped up the Department Convention, and all of a sudden, it's Fall Conference time. With there never being a dull moment in between, I'd like to share that recently, I had the honor to, along with our Department

Commander, present a deserving veteran with membership in the American Legion family and a new (to him) car! In partnership with Carvana and Jimmie Johnson from the Chip Ganassi Racing team, Barry Gordon, a Marine veteran who had fought successfully against some serious adversities, received an automobile. The event was an emotional moment and a surprise to Mr. Gordon, and he has already attended his first Post 5 meeting. Welcome to the Legion family, Barry.



In line with the upcoming Fall Conference, I'm happy to announce that with our partners at the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs, we have revamped the Post Service Officer class to embrace the duties associated with that position. Along with that, I have sent out to all Districts a list of which posts have dedicated Post Service Officers with the goal of making our services accessible to more of the veteran community.

As many, if not most of you, are aware by now, beginning Jan 1, 2023, those veterans who receive VA compensation will receive an increase of 8.7%. Those who also receive Social Security benefits will receive an increase in the same amount. Please be aware that while this represents a significant increase, it may also put individuals in the position of being required to pay some taxes.

Three pieces of information regarding the 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 facing many military retirees here in Florida. Also, you can know that a bill has been introduced that addresses MST claims, making the date of the claim retroactive to the time of occurrence. Lastly, in this area, please also make your voice heard so that the VA opens VA healthcare to WW II veterans without the need for a means test. They earned this recognition and treatment.

As I mentioned in a previous article, in cooperation with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, at-risk veterans can dial a 3-digit number..988..and instantly be connected to one of over 200 crisis centers to receive the help that can often get between the veteran and suicide. Let's do all that we can to help our brother and sister veterans.

In closing this month's article, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their unselfish hard work. I'm proud to serve beside you and look forward to seeing you all in Orlando.



PLEASE SUPPORT PROJECT: VETRELIEF

GOD ♥ FAMILY ♥ COURAGE

www.floridalegion.org
legionlink@floridalegion.org

Legion Family Jumps Into Action

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness
disaster@legionmail.org



Where do I start to explain the events of September 28, 2022? Hurricane Ian intensified in the Gulf of Mexico. At 3:05 p.m. EDT, Ian, a "high end" Category 4 storm, with maximum sustained winds of 155 mph, hitting the southwest coast at Cayo Costa island near Fort Myers and Cape Coral.

Ian trashed the western coast bringing intense winds, heavy rainfall, and a catastrophic storm surge of 12 to 15 ft. On September 30, 2022, the American Legion Department family went into action to account for its members and to assess the damages. As the disaster preparedness chairman for the last 11 years, I have never seen a cyclone as destructive and devastating as hurricane Ian.

We have different phases of helping with the needs of survival and rebuilding. We ask for financial support for those in need.

It will take months, and some will be unable to recover from the devastation. The legion is a family, and as a family, we will get through this as we have before because WE ARE STRONG!

We are diligently working on the specific needs of the areas that were affected in different ways. Flood damage, wind damage, and much

DONATE
floridalegion.org/aid

VOLUNTEER
floridalegion.org/volunteer

RESOURCES
floridalegion.org/relief



October 13, 2022 Membership Target Report (55%)		
4	John Bennett	61.18%
1	Ronnie Grover	57.14%
7	Burl Thomas	55.02%
17	Bruce Howe	54.39%
9	Geo Bograkos	54.28%
6	Joe Marcheggiani	53.74%
5	Lena Heredia-Perez	53.47%
2	Roger Hewitt	53.37%
11	Harry Malecki	52.55%
16	Eric Nestler	52.39%
3	Stuart Scott	51.93%
14	Angela Glover	51.61%
8	John Rauh	50.66%
15	Victor Kelly	50.35%
12	Wayne Mulligan	49.07%
13	Bud Boyer	47.37%
Western	Sonny Decker	56.58%
Northern	Jim Bowers	55.23%
Southern	Johnny Castro	52.87%
Central	Bob Matheson	52.20%
Eastern	Dennis Mallon	51.66%
Southwestern	Skip Felicita	48.83%
Post 400		51.86%
Post 208		49.10%



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Next Membership Goal 2022-2023:
December 7, 2022
75%

www.thelit.com

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PRESENT



HILLBILLY HOEDOWN

COME DRESSED AS A HILLBILLY!
JEANS—OVERALLS—STRAW HATS
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SATURDAY JAN 21, 2023
STARTING AT 12:00PM



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RAFFLES!
DINNER!
& MUCH MORE!

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\$25/PERSON \$40/COUPLE

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CHRIS: (321) 313 - 3469

JESSICA: (239) 839 - 0602

AMERICAN LEGION POST 117

189 VETERANS DRIVE PALM BAY, FL



PROCEEDS
BENEFIT



PROJECT: VETRELIEF
They Fought for Us. We Fight for Them.

**American Legion
Hillbilly Hoedown**
Advertising Agreement

YES! I want to advertise in the American Legion Department of Florida's Hillbilly Hoedown
Program Book.

Full Page \$50.00
Half Page \$25.00

Business Name: _____

Point of Contact: _____

Phone#: _____

E-mail: _____

Amt. Paid _____

Cash: _____

Check # _____

Must be submitted by December 30, 2022.

Business Signature: _____

Signature:

Make Checks Payable To:
American Legion Post 117
261 Comet Ave SE
Palm Bay, FL 32909
Memo: Hoedown Ad
E-mail ads to:
J_moore71@yahoo.com



THE HOLIDAY RAFFLE

31 WINNERS DRAWN IN DECEMBER is BACK

GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON...

31 CHANCES TO WIN & UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This December, The American Legion, Department of Florida Holiday Raffle will provide 31 lucky winners a cash prize, one on each day of the month. To maximize the success of this program, we truly need every District and Post to participate.

Here's what you need to know:

- The requested donation for each raffle ticket is \$5. Posts can pre-order tickets \$3/ticket **The Post keeps ALL proceeds from their efforts!**

JUST THINK - IF EVERY POST SOLD JUST 4 BUNDLES OF TICKETS, THERE'D BE A TOTAL PRIZE POT OF OVER \$28,000 IN CASH PRIZES AND OVER \$100,000 RAISED FOR DEPARTMENT AND POST PROGRAMS!



- **Tickets will be available exclusively at Florida Legion Posts** through October 31, 2022. Online tickets will be offered from November 1 through December 30, 2022 at midnight.
- **Posts can pre-order tickets NOW** in bundles of 25 through November 25th. Actual tickets will be shipped in late September.
- **Posts still receive credit for online tickets.** Be sure to request individuals to put the Post number on the entry form. Posts will receive \$2 per ticket for every online donation using their Post number. Funds will be given to the Post within 14 days after the Holiday Raffle is complete.

- **Tickets can be picked up at Department or shipped** for a flat rate with tracking information to the Post contact provided using a priority service.
- **Return tickets to Department before December 1st** to be entered into the drawing.
- **Department will handle the promotion** of the Holiday Raffle through the website, social media, and emails.
- **Marketing materials are available** (posters, business cards, tabletop displays, etc.) for Posts to highlight the program, upon request.
- **Use the link below or enclosed form** to pre-order tickets or view the full list of rules.

www.floridalegion.org/holidayraffle

5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD PARTICIPATE:

1. More funding for your Post
2. Ability to support Florida's Veterans at a higher levels
3. Chance to engage your local community and potentially bring in new members
4. Department eases the heavy lifting by providing materials and promoting the campaign
5. It's just plain FUN!





Post Ticket Request HOLIDAY RAFFLE

Pre-order your tickets now.
Actual tickets will be delivered in late September.

Post # _____

Your Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Post Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Number of Tickets _____

Delivery Method

Ship to Post (\$7 Flat Fee) Pickup - Dept HQ (Free) Pickup - Fall Conference (Free)

Total Amount ($\$3 \times$ Number of Tickets + Delivery Fee) \$ _____

Payment Method: Check Cash Credit Card

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____

_____ Office Use Only _____

Delivery Method: Pickup at Headquarters Mailed to Post Pickup at Fall Conference

Date Sent: _____ Sent by: _____



THE AMERICAN LEGION
FLORIDA
FALL RAFFLE



\$500
FOURTH-FIFTH
PRIZE

\$2.5K
SECOND PRIZE

\$10K
GRAND PRIZE

\$1K
THIRD PRIZE

\$100
SIXTH - TENTH
PRIZE

WINNERS DRAWN
AT FALL CONFERENCE
CARIBE ROYALE ORLANDO

GET TICKETS BY
MAIL



Your 2022 Fall Department Raffle is on its way. Return completed tickets to:
The American Legion, Dept of FL
Attn: Raffle
PO Box 547489
Orlando, FL 32854

Return tickets by November 10, 2022.

SUPPORT FLORIDA
VETERANS



Our Department Raffle proceeds go toward helping our Florida Veterans, their families, and their communities through more than twenty-seven programs. Visit our website for more information at floridalegion.org.

Thank you for your support.

GET TICKETS
ONLINE



Didn't get a packet in the mail? No worries you can enter online at:

floridalegion.org/raffle