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Submit Articles at floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

BE THE ONE

A Message from the Department Commander

Michael "Gambler" Raymond, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



In my first article, as Department Commander, I feel that I should show my appreciation, respect, and gratitude for three very special people. The three immediate past Commanders that have guided me through the maze we call Department leadership. Rick, Jerry, and Eunice were and still are a big

part of my growing up in the Department, and I know I'm a better leader for it. Each has a different mentoring style, and I learned that early on. As we worked in unison to achieve their goals, I was educated and well-educated. I want to thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

Of course, each of us has our own leadership style, and I have mine. Surround yourself with people who will do the job and do it to the best of their ability. In the area of membership, I've done just that. Seven of the most accomplished individuals in Department membership today. They are all striving to achieve our goals and educate our members. This will be challenging, but I know we can do it. Department Membership Chair Bruce Carl is a proven membership genius, having won not one but

two back-to-back "Race To The Top" awards while serving as District Commander.

I'm also very proud of our training team, led by National Legion College Grad and currently Northern Area Commander Lena Heredia Perez. Along with another Legion College grad, Randy Holeyfield, and Southern Area Commander Johnny Castro, we have a team that cares about the future of our Department. Along with the over forty "Train the Trainer" graduates, there is no limit to the Post level of training we can accomplish. Please don't hesitate to ask if you could use a little help or direction in your Post.

As some of you know, I will be traveling quite a bit in the next 11 months. Along with my official visits, there will be times when I will stop by your Post, sometimes unannounced. It's just the way I am. I understand everyone has other things going on in their lives, and I don't expect you to drop everything. I'm here to serve you, not the other way around.

Finally, I want to thank all of you that have supported me through the years. Some of them are no longer with us and will be missed. I promise to serve you to the best of my ability with Integrity, Loyalty, and Purpose. Because just like you, **"I'm Proud To Be Legion!"**

Commander continued on page 2 >>

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES

Disaster Relief and C.O.T.A.



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<< Commander continued from page 1

Coming along, "Thanks to you!"

As I promised before our convention, Southwestern Area Commander Bud Boyer, Dept. Historian Edward Lewis and I made it our priority to tour the area devastated by Hurricane Ian. Many of you, I'm sure, are wondering just what the current status is of the 6 Posts that sustained the most damage, where they stand today, and if they still need assistance. On the 6th of July, we were met by the Post Commander or designee at each of the Posts, and here are the results. The great photos courtesy of the one and only Edward "Snappy" Lewis.

Arcadia, Post K-11

We met with Commander Ron Jones at the Post and were very impressed with the progress. They had opened the Tiki Bar about two months earlier to help generate income. The interior of the main building is now open and has hosted several District Riders meetings. If you are familiar with this Post, it has been flooded a few times before, but never to this extent. They have taken steps to remedy the flooding issue by replacing the walls with waterproof insulation and metal sheeting, which can be removed to allow for drying out the interior. They are doing well and, under Commander Ron's guidance, will come back as strong as ever.

Port Charlotte, Post 110

We were greeted by incoming Commander Steve Copeland when we arrived at Post 110. Current Post Commander Jay Hemingway joined us to tour the up-and-coming, totally refurbished interior of the main building. The new roof has been completed for a while now, and ceilings and walls are currently being replaced. They have a goal of a soft opening on July 16th, which I believe is a bit aggressive, but I wish them luck. The Tiki Bar out back has been in operation since the hurricane, so technically, this Post never closed. With your help, they were able to feed hundreds of people daily thanks to all the volunteers at the Post. They will be back, stronger and better!



Post 192, Ft Myers

We were greeted by the new Commander, Craig Brock of Post 192. This family has come together so well after the devastation of Ian. The building now has a new roof, bathrooms, paint, and tile. It has been transformed thanks to the assistance of its members, local businesses, and people from around the State and country. A lot of the work has been done by Craig and his crew on a self-help basis. They are now open and welcome you to their Post.

Post 303, Bonita Springs

Rod Rodriguez of Post 303 met us at the Post and gave us a tour of the interior of the Post. He explained that the plans are in place, and they are just waiting on the permits to begin construction. According to Rod, they will rebuild, and it will be better than ever. They are looking at reopening around the end of the calendar year. Post 303 is currently working with the Bonita VFW, conducting their meetings and fundraisers.

Post 274, Ft Myers Beach

After Hurricane Ian destroyed Post 274 from the inside out, Commander Joe Bullock wasted no time getting his Post back in business. Utilizing self-help and Post funds and your donations, they initiated the clean-up in record time and began the rebuild. They completed the rebuild of the west side of the Post and were ready to open for business, but as luck would have it, red tape would delay the opening. But perseverance paid off, and they are now open. They offer a full bar and lunches every day.

Post 123, Sanibel

Commander John Hird of Post 123 has had a few hurdles to overcome through this whole ordeal, with very little money and even fewer volunteers. But he felt he had to do something. He communicated with the 13th District about cleaning up the Tiki and opening for the Road Race they have every year. When asked for volunteers to help, more than 30 Legion families from all over the 13th District showed up in the sweltering heat. And they got the Job done! They were open the following weekend. The building itself will be a challenge, but with the strength of District 13, they will get the job done.



UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 2023

- 1-31 Antiterrorism Month
- 1 U.S. Air Force Day
- 2 Invasion of Kuwait "Operation Desert Shield" (1990)
- 2-6 American Legion Baseball Regionals ★
- 4 U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
- 6 District 3: Meeting
- 7 Purple Heart Day
- 9 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 10 U.S. Department of Defense Birthday
- 10 Agent Orange Awareness Day
- 10-15 96th American Legion Baseball World Series ★
- 13 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 14 V-J Day (1945)
- 14 Navajo Code Talkers Day
- 15 Legion Link Articles Due ✨
- 16 National Airborne Day
- 19 Aviation Day
- 20-24 American Legion Legacy Run 🇺🇸 ★
- 25-27 51st SAL National Convention ★
- 25-31 104th National Convention 🇺🇸
- 25-31 102nd Auxiliary National Convention ★
- 26 Women's Equality Day
- 26 Chapter 10: ALR Kissimmee Bike Night
- 29 U.S. Marine Reserve Birthday

🇺🇸 Commander attendance tentative.

✨ Department of Florida event.

★ National event.

Events are subject to change. More details at floridalegion.org.



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Plans for a New Year

Chris Hamrick, 1st Vice Commander

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Greetings, Fellow Legionnaires.

As of this writing, we are off to a good start to the year. Our Commander has set a high mark for us to achieve, and I'm excited to have the opportunity to work with you toward that goal. In my travels so far, I see motivation and

innovation. Thinking outside the box will get us over the top this year and having fun while we do it makes it better. I'm looking forward to getting into your areas and sharing some of the innovations I've seen so far... spreading the cool ideas around. I'm talking about the "M" word. Yes. MEMBERSHIP.

We hear it constantly and will continue to listen to the word because it is integral to every other conversation that we can have whether that conversation is Programs, Volunteerism, or other. It comes back to MEMBERS willing to take part. Members are the lifeblood of our organization. I'll be working alongside the Department Commander and Area membership chairs throughout this year working on our plan.

August will be a busy month as we continue gathering momentum and getting our feet under us. Lots of events are happening all over, and installations are coming to a close. Training will be the key to success, and our Department training team will be available to assist. Continuity is going to be a must. Everyone is trained on the same information and working on the same Department goals. Let's dig our feet in and work together.

Looking forward to National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis, IN, at the end of the month. Keep it Real. Peace.



Leadership

Jessica Moore, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



I heard this quote about leadership, and it made a deep impact on me. "Leadership is the creation of an environment in which others are able to self-actualize in the process of completing the job."

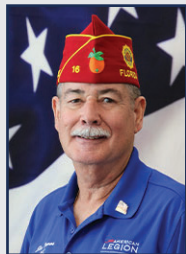
I believe if all of our actions inspire others to dream bigger, learn as much as we can do as much as possible, and become the best we can, then we are all leaders in our own way. I'd love to challenge every one of you. Whatever your position in your Post is, be the best you can.

As American Legion Department Second Vice, I am challenging myself as well. As I travel around our wonderful state of Florida, I may ask you, what are you doing to be the best Legionnaire you can be? I look forward to your answer.

New Legion Year and National Convention

Jim Ramos, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



Hello, to All The American Legion members of the Department of Florida. August marks the start of our 2023-2024 year, with our Department Commander Michael Raymond. We need to go back to Basic Training and get our members back in our Posts.

For those of you attending National Convention, in Charlotte, NC, please travel safely. Make sure you have Phone numbers of your Legion family you can call in case you need any assistance along the way. Plan your trip ahead, with safety in mind, for your travels to Charlotte, NC.

Remember, as your National Executive Committee Member for the Department of Florida, I will represent all of our members. I need you to do some homework, as well. Please obtain and read the National protocol and NEC manual:

1. Rule of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion (Revised Oct 14-15, 2020)
2. Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of National Conventions of The American Legion (Revised May 10-11, 2017)
3. Charter of The American Legion National Constitution and By-laws (dated August 27-29, 2019)

These manuals are available online at legion.org, where you can also find other manuals available for download free of charge.

You voted for me because my Integrity, Honesty, and Loyalty are the characteristics I hold true. I will stand with you always to better service our Veterans and their families of our great the Department of Florida. I will continue to work for you and the Department of Florida.

Thank You all. My name is still Jim, and if you have something you would like me to assist or help with, please use your chain of command first.

If you don't get answers, email me at NEC@legionmail.org or 352-226-4370, and I will try to get you a response as quickly as possible. Thank You.



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National Convention Information

Jerry Brandt, ANEC

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Comrades,

First, I want to congratulate all the new officers and those who are there for a 2nd year within your Department, Area, District, and Posts positions. I hope you start out strong on the goals that elected you and finish as a successful officer for this

year. Please remember that the goals of the American Legion and your goals should be the betterment of our fellow Veterans and their families. If you need assistance, reach out to your chain of command, they can assist in getting you the needed training and guidance for whatever problem you encounter. Best wishes for a successful year.

On the "Be the One" campaign, on July 10th, a resolution was passed by the National Executive Committee by a vote of YES - 57; NO - 2; ABSTAIN - 0. The effect of the resolution is that The American Legion will join in a coalition started by USAA to foster veteran suicide prevention awareness. The American Legion will not be obligated to comply with any actions with which The American Legion disagrees. This resolution will initially be implemented by the Marketing Commission and later become the responsibility of the VA&R Commission. Meanwhile, all commissions will cooperate to assist in preventing veteran suicide.

The 104th National Convention is this month in Charlotte, NC, August 25-31. If you are planning to attend, please remember that unless you are on stage during the general assembly, business casual is the uniform of the day. As usual, there are many events you can attend, including Color Guard and Post Band contests. Exhibit Hall and Emblem Sales, Charlotte Exhibit

Hall, will be open. And if you have plenty of time, the 96th American Legion World Series will be in Shelby, N.C., on August 10 - 15.

But the main reason to attend the National Convention is to learn. Classes and lectures will be available once the schedule comes out. Go to these events, reach out and meet other attendees from around the country, and find out what they do; you will be surprised at how far advanced Florida is on our various programs. Go to the meetings, and there will be many, plus you may be assigned meetings to attend; if so, come back with the information they give out and share it with everyone.

To learn more about the National Convention, visit www.legion.org/convention or www.floridalegion.org, News & Events, National Convention, for any updates.

I hope to see you there in Charlotte.

History Lesson

Edward Lewis, Historian

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I was sitting at my counter, drinking a cup of "Chock full O' Nuts" coffee and pondering what I wanted to write for my first "Legion Link" article.

It was very simple.

I wanted to say "thank you." I want to thank those who convinced

me to run again as your Department Historian. First, and most importantly, my wife, Dana. However, I believe she just wanted me out of the house and out of her hair.

As of this writing, the Commander and I have hit the ground running. But this isn't a travelogue; this is supposed to be more instructional than anything. So, let's instruct...

I have already received a few requests for photographs from the most recent Department Convention. I Post all my pictures on the Department's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/floridalegion/photos.

This is the most convenient place to find the photographs that you seek. If you do not see the photo there, chances are very good I did not photograph it. Please, please, please, do not tell me you do not use Social Media. I have preached the benefits of social media for too many years now. And, Of course, there is also that Social Media Chair polo shirt I wear...

From the Historian's side of things. For our new Historians, instructions on creating a history book can be found in the Commander's Guidebook each Post receives at Department Convention. I also have a few PowerPoints that I can email you. Of course, there will be a class at this year's conference; if you haven't already started gathering your material by then, you are already behind the proverbial eight-ball. Start gathering all the information you think is pertinent now, and we can sort it out together. In the beginning, it is better to have too much information than not enough.

In closing, I wanted to thank Phil Crouthamel for a job well done. "Fair winds and following seas" Phillip. You set the bar high.

Challenge for Central Area

Bob Matheson, Central Area Commander

centeral@legionmail.org



I want to express my sincere thanks to all the Central Area for allowing me the opportunity to serve you once again as the Central Area Commander. If you have yet to hear, our Department Commander has set a lofty goal for membership this year. He says that he wants to stop

the slide and turn membership back to an increase! He has challenged us to increase the membership across the State by one thousand members from our numbers last year. So here is my challenge to the Central Area, let us make our goal to get at least one hundred members over our number in each District.

We have the people to do it. Now is the time to work DMS - Post 400. Get them into our Posts. Show the Commander that the 7th, 15th, and 16th Districts always lead the way.

ATTENTION:

The Department of Florida will no longer offer Legion emblem/logo merchandise in its online store. National recently informed us of Resolution 10 from Fall of 2012, which prohibits our store. To remain in compliance we will begin phasing out our online store. Non-emblem/logo items are still available online while supplies last.

We will keep you updated as we continue this process. Thank you for your continued support and patience.



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Basics, Membership and Training

Joe Marcheggiani, Eastern Area Commander

eastern@legionmail.org



Greetings, Eastern Area,

It is a pleasure to serve all of you in District 6 and District 12 this year. I have been traveling to many of our posts over the past fifteen years as a Legion Rider. We know each other. If I can help in any way, reach out. There will be several areas of concentration within the Eastern Area this year.

Firstly training, we have been instructed to get back to Basics, and that we will do. Covid has thrown a monkey wrench into

our procedures. It's time to fix that. Please become familiar with your bylaws and Sops. If you are an officer, have the associated manuals at hand and follow them. All officers in the chain of command should know their job description and perform it. If you have a better idea, run it up the flagpole and see what happens. The Officers Guide, Post Adjutants Manual, and District Commanders Guide have everything you need to know to accomplish legion business accordingly. Review how to conduct a meeting. I have seen many variations in my numerous post-visits during this installation cycle, but there is only one.

Secondly, membership is what drives the Legion and pays the bills. Everyone in the area, please try to recruit one new member a month. It is not as difficult as it may seem. I live by the old Apocalypse Now creed "Never get off the Boat," but

we all do occasionally. I am not asking to talk to strangers; I am asking you to talk to fellow veterans. We do that easily, I know, Be the One.

And finally, Participation. Attend a meeting. Attend a District meeting. Attend an Area training. Attend the Department convention and conferences. If you do, thank you. If you don't give it a try, it is amazing what you will learn and see how this big machine we call The American Legion works. We do fabulous things in communities across this area, state, and nation. And it will be all the better with you taking part also.

I am also looking for Program Chairpersons. If interested, please email me; thanks.

See you soon.

Integrity

Lena Heredia-Perez, Northern Area Commander

northern@legionmail.org



I want to extend my gratitude to the Northern Area Membership for the confidence that you have placed in me to lead the Northern Area in a successful year. It is no secret that the Department of Florida has a plethora of great present/future leaders; however, I also know that the Northern Area

is in good hands with the current leadership: 17th District Commander Jim Bowers, 5th District Commander Miguel Garcia, 4th District Commander Doug Hockenberry, and 3rd

District Commander Stuart Scott.

This year we will be successful in all that we do because we are going to work together as a team and put action behind the words Getting Back to the Basics. We will do this by focusing on Training our members at the Post/District Level, getting more involved in our communities, and working membership, all while having fun!

I am a firm believer that, as an organization, we need to put more emphasis on retention. If we cannot retain our current membership, then we have little to no business recruiting new members. We ALL need to Get Back to the Basics and find out why our members are not renewing their membership and

address the issues head-on, no matter how uncomfortable it may be for the leadership.

In closing, I look forward to working with each and every one of you this coming year, and I know that we will have a successful year if we all stay focused on our mission and lead with integrity.



Legion Family working Together

Rico Thomas, 9th District Commander

district9@legionmail.org



I want to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" to The Mighty 9th District for electing me District Commander. This opportunity to be District Commander is humbling and one I do not take lightly.

I have served my country in the Army, the first military branch, as a Combat Infantryman in Desert Storm. My service to this country has given me the right to be a proud Legionnaire.

I served my first post as Assistant Adjutant. After three months and two training sessions, I became the Post Adjutant and Program Chair. At my new post, I proudly serve as the Service Officer. Being a Service Officer gives me immense pleasure to be a resource just to serve people.

After attending a district meeting, I remember asking the District Commander to be a part of the 9th District. The commander appointed me as the Historian for the district. I had no clue about the job's description, but I was instructed to "use my phone to take some pictures." I went a step further and bought a camera. I started taking pictures and had

them posted to the 9th District Facebook page. I have gladly performed double duty by being the District's Historian and District Vice Commander.

I have noticed during my time on the district's staff that Posts do not reach the Legion's standard because of the lack of training. I needed and wanted to know more about the Legion. Therefore, I took the Basic Training online course and am a graduate of the Florida Legion College and Train the Trainer program. When entering a post, I have seen and felt the difference when the Legion family is not working together. The most amazing things happen when the Post's Officers

9th District Commander continued on page 6 >>



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<< 9th District Commander continued from page 6

are trained properly and the Post's families work together: Membership grows, participation increases, happiness fills the room, and communities benefit!

The Mighty 9th District was not that mighty this past year,

but the new year has just started. We are heading in an upward direction. The Mighty 9th District's family leadership of the Legion, Auxiliary, Sons, and Riders are holding planning meetings and speaking the same language at installations.

Our collective focus for this year is membership, training

post-leadership, and family cohesiveness. My individual focus for this year is to visit every post and train the leaders with a department-level trainer.

"A Family that plans together stands together, and achieves greatness."

District 12 Information

Bruce Thurber, 12th District Commander

district12@legionmail.org



As the incoming Commander of the MIGHTY 12th, I look forward to a great year. Our team is one of the strongest I have seen in years. Although the economy has been a struggle, I truly believe our FAMILY (Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders) will make us proud.

Throughout the district, we need training as the way of doing business changes each year. The

American Legion is a proud organization with many traditions from National to those of the 12th District. I encourage each Post, Unit, Squadron, and Chapter to embrace these traditions. I plan on having several training sessions, and they will be open to the entire family (DMOs love to have you). I want to bring you the information you want. Let my team know what you would like to see. Our first District meeting will be at Post 81, Melbourne, on September 9th, and we will hold a Picnic at Post 189 on October 14th.

We have two social media platforms on Facebook. One is a page, and one is a group. They are for your use. To let

everyone know what is happening in your Post, please use them.

September 7th is our first membership goal of 50%, and the cutoff date to stop getting renewal notices is September 13th. Remember to hit these goals; your transmittal must go in 10 to 12 days earlier to come out on the report. 1st Vice Commander Dan Martin is ready to help with any membership issues. 2nd Vice Commander Jim Burk is your point of contact on programs.

Remember, the **Mighty 12th** is in it to WIN

District Working Parties

Eric Loyd, 13th District Commander

district13@legionmail.org



District 13 has developed district working parties to help the Posts affected by Hurricane Ian.

On Tuesday, June 27th, our first working party was at American Legion Post 123 Sanibel Island. We are working on cleaning the property

and the Tiki Bar so they can open by July 4th.

Department Commander Michael Raymond (and his wife), the Southwestern Area Commander Bud Boyer, I, and numerous volunteers got the job done.

Thank you to all that helped—a special thanks to Mike and Laurene Flower from Post 90 for your assistance.



New Horizons

Randy Holeyfield, 15th District Commander

district15@legionmail.org



We are in full swing into the 2023/2024 year, and our Department Commander (Michael Raymond) has membership at the tip of the spear. With that, every leadership level will be pushing membership and are here for assistance. Even more, your District, Area, and Department

Membership Chair will be directly providing every type of

help, including in person at your post helps. There is a collective of knowledge at every one of these leadership levels; use them and do not hesitate to ask. The only weakness is not reaching out to seek help and assistance, no question is too small, and no issue cannot be resolved. Working on membership from the starting gate makes for momentum, and momentum creates activity. Does your post have a Membership Team? Are they actively working on membership right now? I hope these are both yeses. Some might say, What is a Membership Team? At the post level, it should contain: Your Post Adjutant (administrative level), your 1st Vice Commander (to gain new members), and the other post members committed to having

active and strong membership actions. Sometimes it may contain the Post Commander, but it may not; either way, even a small post should have at least two members perusing new growth and retaining existing members. Every year we are committed to membership, but let's get ahead of the wave and ride it at the base of the wave where the energy is and ride it to success.

I also want to thank my district for re-electing me to serve them for the 2023/2024 year. I will strive to meet your expectations and be available to every post whenever you

15th District Commander continued on page 8 >>



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<< 15th District Commander continued from page 7

need assistance or help in even the smallest way. Your faith in me encourages me deeply, and I will do my utmost to be here for every post. Some posts are behind on updating their CBL (Constitution & By-Laws), and I will be working directly to get them to create a team to review and amend them for timely submission to Department JA for review and approval. Some posts even need several areas to be addressed, but this year I want to help directly so all of the 15th District will be up to date. As well as suggesting some post-move their election earlier in the year and not be so close to the

Department Convention. Did you know that every year (as a corporation), your post must file a corporate report to the Secretary of State? Yes, this is the one filed on www.Sunbiz.org, and it is due by May 1st. So when you have your elections after May 1st, you should have filled already, and now (at least according to the state), file an updated report if any of your officers on that report changes. If your post would have their elections prior to May 1st, your post would only have to file once since you have all the new officers' names. Therefore, moving the election to March or at least April would help file your corporate report and your EOY (End Of Year) Reports that

are due to the Department by June 1st, and these can affect your delegates at the convention.

Let's apply ourselves to the duties we agreed to serve and ensure that Training will be done across the state this year on the basics. Let me ask you this; Has every officer at your post taken a National Basic Training course (online)? It's free, and you can stop whenever you want; it will pick up where you left off. This course provides the "soup to nuts" of The American Legion; please take it.

American Legion Riders Schedule

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders Chair

legionriders@legionmail.org



What a year! I want to thank all that contributed to our record-breaking year. Our In-State route planners and our hotel reservationists. The volunteers at the POW/MIA Ride, Summit, and Rally, we can't do this without your help. Please brace yourself for another challenging and rewarding year.

As info, I received a call the other day, and it's my understanding that one of our areas met with the Council of Clubs. They were invited to give them a "heads up" on some issues they were having between the clubs. Their major concern was our safety and the possibility of our Rockers getting confused with some of theirs at a stop light or in traffic. The grievance seems to be between the Outlaws and Mongols. We recommend that we closely examine our Rockers to ensure they cannot be confused with either club.

The Good Stuff!

Want a free night at the Summit and free shirts? Jump in and design the award-winning Summit and In-State Unity Ride shirts. The competition closes on September 15th; details are on our website, floridalegion.org/riders.

POW/MIA Ride it's all set up on our website. Within the first day, we received sixty (60) reservations for the ride; remember, we are limited to 250 bikes per JSO. It's twenty dollars (\$20) per bike and a twenty-five-hundred-dollars (\$2500) donation going to the POW/MIA facility.

Summit, we have received the Holidays Inn proposal and are using it as a benchmark. It's going to be hard to beat, but we are looking.

In-State Unity Ride, still looking for Posts. They do not have to have Chapters to be included in the ride. If you are interested, let us know how many bikes you can handle; if you are interested in serving snacks or dinners, please forward it to LegionRiders@legionmail.org. I currently have the following Posts listed, 250,15,166,325,116,82,113,219,173 and 238. We need approximately 65 Posts to have three routes.

The Rally is back at OCC, and we will be raffling off another bike.

Please let us know if you would like to get involved with any part of the planning or operation.

Thanks to all that participate, Ride Safe; looking forward to seeing you soon!


Your 2023 – 2024 Schedule

- **POW/MIA Ceremony**, Jacksonville
September 16, 2023
- **"Merry Go Round"**
Month of October 2023
- **Fall Conference**, Orlando
November 17-19, 2023
- **Summit**
 - » **Meet & Greet**
January 31, 2024
 - » **Classes**
February 1-3, 2024.
- **"Round Robin"**
Month of April 2024
- **Children and Youth Picnic**
TBD
- **In-State Unity Ride**
 - » **Meet & Greet**
April 21, 2024
 - » **Ride**
April 22-26, 2024
- **Rally**
April 27, 2024

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"



FLORIDA'S 3RD ANNUAL SEVEN BRIDGES POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE DAY RIDE & CEREMONY

September 16, 2023

LEARN MORE: www.floridalegion.org/riders



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Americanism

Kurt Gies, Americanism Chair

americanism@legionmail.org



Initial planning has started for the Department of Florida's **Walk 4 America!** This event is to be held between February 8th - 11th in 2024.

So I'm sure you are asking, "What is the **Walk 4 America?**" The purpose of this **Walk 4 America** is a celebration of this ideal of Americanism, which is further defined in the opening to the Declaration of Independence that states, **"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."** For some reason, Americanism has taken on a negative connotation to a portion of our communities. We need to turn that around. This event is designed to show how

veterans are leading that charge.

The month of February 2024 is designated as Americanism month. The **"Walk 4 America"** will start in Winter Garden, FL, and travel thru the five Florida Districts (17th, 5th, 3rd, 4th, and 6th Districts), two Florida Areas, and 17 Florida counties. After 12 days, ending on Presidents Day, we will have hoped to have visited 33 American Legion Posts and 3 Villages Squares while covering 675 total miles (including walking over 286 kilometers), averaging 24km/day (14.5miles/day) walking. But our Department Commander, Michael "Gambler" Raymond, is asking that all 272 Florida Posts find a way to celebrate Americanism during this period.

The visits to each Post will last about 1 hour. The goal is to have representatives from your community, including elected officials, your Boys State and Girl State delegates, Boy Scouts, JROTC/Sea Cadets, Legion baseball teams, oratorical contestants, school medal winners, Youth Law cadets, in attendance so that they can be recognized by the local

community and/or press. We also want you to invite any other local organizations (like the Elks, Rotary, VFW, DAV, Marine Corps League, Navy League, etc.) that want to help celebrate America as we can during this 12-day period, which will end on Presidents Day. Finally, Posts should coordinate and organize a Blood Drive with Blood One for that day, conduct flag retirements, and present flag grommets to Dept Chair. Basically, we want your Post to host a HUGE celebration of America and honor her in your own special way.

If your Post is on the proposed route, you should hear from someone shortly to discuss details. If you want to get involved and be part of this Department-level event, please get in touch with the Americanism Chair, Kurt Gies, at americanism@legionmail.org or call him directly at 407-701-9416

Let's do something different this February and show the world that Americans can unify around our love for this amazing country and the freedoms and liberty it represents.

Baseball Season

Terry Phillips, Baseball

baseball@legionmail.org



Happy August To All,

When this hits the airwaves, our Florida State Champion will be playing in the Southeast Regional Tournament in Asheboro, NC. Hopefully, the Florida Team will win Regionals and head to the American Legion World Series in

Shelby, NC.

We have had a great season, new Teams in both the Senior and Junior divisions, new Posts, and new kids and families participating in the Legion Baseball Program.

Thank you to those that believe in the Americanism Program and the service we provide to the community through this important Baseball Program.

You help to touch and change the lives of so many of our youth and communities.

Baseball is more than a game; it is a service.

Many of the players go on to join and serve in our military family, many go on to play baseball in college because of the opportunity to play American Legion Baseball, and many go on to play baseball for a living in the Major Leagues.

We need your support, and we need folks that would want to be a part of our program in a leadership role. Please contact an Area Commissioner or me directly if you want to know how you can get involved.

Save a Life Today

Jamie Grinis, Blood Donor Chair

blooddonor@legionmail.org



One of the most needed items throughout the Legion family is the donation of blood. Every Veteran and maybe your friends may need a pint or two this year. All Posts may participate in this life-saving gift. There are three main organizations that can provide you with a bus at

the post to set up continual donations every eight weeks. Sun Coast, American Red Cross, or One Blood are your best bet to donate. You may easily find the organization in your area by using Google for your local representative to arrange the needs for your Post.

Please e-mail your District Blood Donor Chair the number of pints collected each time the bus is at your post.

District Blood Donor Chairs, please forward a monthly report to

me, which includes the Post and the number of pints donated. As the year progresses, you may be shocked about how many people are willing to donate.

Contact your local newspapers and send them a letter or email of the dates you will have a bus at your location. Also, send the exact dates to your Blood Bank so that they may publish on their calendar the activity for people to find a day and place to donate a pint.



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Preparing for Hurricanes

Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness Chair

disaster@legionmail.org



Greetings to all. I hope this finds all of you in good health. I first want to thank the incoming Commander Michael Raymond for giving me the opportunity to serve as your Department Disaster Preparedness Chairman for 2023-2024.

As you know the hurricane season begins on June 1 and ends on the 30 of November. Since June 1, we have had three tropical storms and one subtropical storm. The peak of hurricane is September 10 with most of the storms

occurring between August and October.

We had a migration of 444,500 people to Florida from 2021-2022, and in 2020 there were 185,000. That's not including undocumented individuals. So how many new people coming to Florida know what a hurricane is and how to prepare for one? I would guess not too many. That's why we as legionnaires need to educate our fellow legionnaires and the public and help them prepare.

I've been in contact with the Department Commander, and we will be setting up a seminar on hurricane preparedness. I would also like to set up a meeting on Facebook for all that are interested. This would be a good time to have one while the

season is still quiet.

I can prep you on what you need to do before, during, and after a storm, but you are the only one that can make the decision and the course you take.

We have no control of the outcome of a storm but if we prepare and listen to the directions given by the authorities we will be that much farther ahead of the game.

In closing, I may be reached at William Hoppner on Facebook. My cell phone number is 305-968-7979, and my email is disaster@legionmail.org. Please don't be shy; I always seek ideas to improve the program.

General and Nursing Scholarship 2023

Shirley Douglas, Scholarships Chair

scholarships@legionmail.org



The Scholarship committee reviewed 49 General Scholarship packages to determine which 7 High School students would receive the Department of Florida's 7 General Scholarships. The students need to be a direct descendent of a veteran, be in their senior year, and attend a Florida High School.

Their parents must be Florida residents.

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

- Riley Garrison - Deland High School
- Kaitlyn Suanne Staddie - Cocoa Beach Jr/Sr High School
- Walter Folse - East River High School
- Olivia Lambert - Pace High School

Eric Colson Dyer from Joe E. Newsome High School was awarded a \$1000 scholarship.

The winner of the \$2,500 scholarship is Christina Cortes. She attended Fernandina Beach High School and was eligible for the scholarship by the Service of her Grandfather, George Deperder, who served in the US Army.

Christina is very active in her school and Community. She was a Girl's State Delegate and tutor for the local Boys

and Girls Club. She was the Model UN Vice President, United States Constitution Scholarship Foundation Student Ambassador, Sunshine State Scholar of Nassau County AP National Small and Rural Town Scholar. Christina held numerous leadership roles in her school's sports teams.

In her local community, she was involved several local nonprofit organizations. She participated in building homes during weekends for Habitat for Humanity; Christina created and facilitated activities, games, and events for residents. Her help during the Urban Plunge Mission Trip provided assistance to the elderly, poor, and people in need of repairing their homes. She accomplished all of her tasks while working year-round at Wicked Bao Restaurant. It is an honor to present this award to Christina Cortes.

The winner of the \$1,500 scholarship that is funded by the County Veterans Services Officer Association of Florida CVSOA is Helen King. Helen attended Leon High School and was eligible for the scholarship by the Service of her Grandfather, William King, who served in the US Navy.

Helen was selected to be a Messenger in the Florida State House of Representatives in 2022. She ran errands, assisted staff with office duties, and delivered messages to House members. Helen is a junior American Legion Auxiliary member and a Girls Scouts of the USA Ambassador Scout who has earned her Girl State Gold award. Helen was selected to exhibit her history research project in the main hall of the Smithsonian Institute Museum of American History. Helen received the Presidential Volunteer Service award for her 700.5 community

service hours.

I want to thank my committee members, Al Ashline, James Henry, and Robert Farrell, for their assistance in reviewing the applications. Thank you for letting me serve as the Department's General Scholarship Chair this year.

The Nursing School Scholarship of \$2,750 is given to a nursing student who is a US Citizen or permanent resident entering their second year of study in an accredited Florida Nursing School.

This year's award goes to Jenna Ferrin, a nursing student at Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Jenna is maintaining a 4.0-grade point average, and according to one of her instructors Jenny Nickless "Jenna truly understands what it means to provide family-centered care and always shows compassion when interacting with hospital staff, families, and patients during her clinical rotations. Jenna attributes her communication skills and passion for working with patients to her experience and multiple volunteer opportunities she has had. She has shown additional commitment and growth through working with several nonprofit charity programs, including Oviedo Optimist Club, Oviedo Medical Center, Florida Fallen Memorial, Snowball Express, Wreaths Across America, Hope's Back to School Bash, and Threads of Hope. She has also spent time packaging food and supplies to send to deployed troops."

This concludes my report.



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New FALC Student Application 2023

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College Chair

falc@legionmail.org



The student application for December 14-17, 2023 Florida Legion College is available on our website, floridalegion.org/falc. It is also included in this newsletter.

I want to Thank Department Commander Michael Raymond for appointing me as your Florida

American Legion (FALC) Chair.

What do you need to do to prepare for FALC?

Complete "Basic Training" online at legion.org/training. Training must be completed within the last two years.

Sample of Topics Covered:

- New 2023 Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
- Legion Protocol
- PowerPoint 101
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Resolutions
- Leadership and Mentor
- Programs Overview
- Team Building and Goals
- Development, Instruction, and Support for your District and Department Level Training

Make sure you provide a valid email, phone number, and address so we are able to communicate with you. Enclose your check for \$300.00* and your completed application. We will notify you of your acceptance by November 10, 2023.

Be prepared to work hard, long hours. Homework and group assignments will be assigned after classes.

Northern Area Commander, Lena Heredia-Perez and District 3 Commander, Stuart Scott will be your lead instructors for this year's session.

Again, classes will be held December 14-17, 2023. The fee is \$300*, and applications will be reviewed before final acceptance. If you haven't received an email or communication from us within two weeks of submitting your application to Department, please call me at 352-226-4370 or email to falc@legionmail.org. You can also contact me with any other questions you might have.

**Fees are as follows: \$100 for no lodging, \$300 for three nights of shared lodging, or \$493 for three nights of individual lodging. Fees include course, course materials, coffee, and lunches.*

Homeless Veterans

Jim Burk, Homeless Veterans Vice Chair

homelessvetsvice@legionmail.org



My name is Jim Burk, and I was recently appointed Homeless Veterans Program Vice Chairman. For the past eight years, I have been involved in a mobile outreach to homeless and disadvantaged veterans. This involves going out into the woods on a weekly basis.

Florida's point-in-time count for this year indicates approximately 3000 homeless veterans in Florida. This number is not accurate. The count does not include day workers, people not in camp at the time the count takes place, or veterans that just won't cooperate. The count, while unknown, is nearer to 4000. Regardless of the total, we have an obligation to help our fellow veterans and attempt to get them the services they deserve.

In the future, I will cover such topics as camp protocol, sources

for donations, community contacts, the HUD VASH voucher program for vets, community partners, and other topics. I can also provide a training program that can be presented at your district meetings.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, I can be reached at homelessvetsvice@legionmail.org or 772-307-7082.

Child Abductions

Daryl Bass, Law & Order Chair

laworder@legionmail.org



Greetings, Legion Family, This Month my Post (Post 80 St. Cloud) was all abuzz about a new Movie that recently appeared in theatres called "Sound of Freedom." Without giving it away, it is a true story about rescuing children who have been abducted for sex trafficking. It brought me back

to my memory of a Police Officer taking a report on missing teenagers who were presumed runaways. We would take the information and photographs, enter it in FCIC/NCIC, and send

it to a State Database of missing children. That is all that local Law Enforcement we're required to do. The thought that they may have been abducted as enslaved people never dawned on us. So, I did some research and thought this would be a good read for our Legion Family, remembering that one of our four Pillars is Children and Youth.

- There are 27.6 million trafficked persons globally today, and almost 20% are children. (U.S. State Department, United Nations)
- Approx 350,000 are reported missing every year in the U.S., and an estimated 100,000 are being trafficked. (NCMEC)
- Child Sex Trafficking has been reported in all 50 States. (NCMEC)

- The 2021 Federal Human Trafficking Report stated that 57% were minors.
- The United States is one of the top destinations for Human Trafficking and is one of the largest consumers of child sex.
- Human Trafficking is a \$150 billion-per-year business. (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)

Legion family watches the children and protects our children from this Evil System that most of us (including me, a retired Law Enforcement Officer). It is our duty.

P.S. Dear District, Area, and Post Law & Order Chairpersons, please feel free to contact me if you should need help with your program. Lets have a good Law & Order year. 407-738-3357



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Plans for JROTC/JSSP Semester 2023/24

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP Chair

jrotc@legionmail.org



I would first like to thank Cmdr. Michael "Gambler" Raymond for the appointment for ROTC/JROTC/JSSP Chairman for 2023/24. By the time the Link goes to print, the National JSSP Competition will have been completed in Colorado Springs at the USA Olympic Training Center held July 20-22, 2023.

There will be 15 competitors each for the Precision and the Sporter Category. Florida is honored to have a National Sporter Competitor, Nathan Krokstrom, from the State Florida Winning Team, Mariner AJROTC Unit. Thanks to Post 90, Cape Coral, for their continued support of the Marksmanship Program in the 13th District. A great job was done by the Post 90 Legionnaire members led by Chairman Dennis Stebbins and Team Coach MAJ Bryan Williams. The National Competition winner in each category will receive a \$5,000 scholarship, and each category Runner Up winner will receive a \$1,000 Scholarship.

There's a short summer semester break, and the schools will mostly be returning in the middle of August. The Department will be sending out the program packets with all the information that is required for you to have a very successful program year. As the year progresses rapidly, it's important to follow the timelines to keep you on track. The first order of business is to make contact with the schools in your area and make an introduction to the instructors so that you will be able to keep in contact with their schedules in order to benefit both the program and your post best. It's a two-way street, so don't sit back and wait for them to contact you. Some of the School Districts are already planning the semester schedule and have a semester briefing for all the instructors. The JROTC Units have Color Guard, Raider, Drill Meets, etc. as well as some programs have Marksmanship Meets. JROTC is an elective subject along with the curriculum within the regular school subjects with one day a week in uniform and after-school and weekend activities and training. There are several Military programs in Florida, such as the Sarasota Military Academy, Entrepreneur Leadership Military Academy in Hollywood Hills, and Boyd Anderson, that have a 5-day week schedule along with after-school and weekend events. Please reach out to me if you have any

questions or concerns with any of the programs. I look forward to hearing from our Legionnaires and always like to have some pictures of events in your area. May you all have a successful year and promote this very valuable program for our youth, who are our future.



Mariner AJROTC Marksmanship Team, Coral Springs State Championship

"Be the One" for Membership

Bruce Carl, Membership Chair

membership@legionmail.org



Another year has come and gone. The Convention is over, and by the time this article comes out, we will have a month of the new year behind us. I will also have just returned from the National Membership workshop in Indianapolis and should have more information to get out to everyone.

Your renewals should already be coming in for processing. I want to take this opportunity to thank Gambler for appointing me as his membership chair for the 2023-2024 year and for the DEC approval. We have great expectations for the coming year and have laid out a plan to attain our goals. I want to thank the six Area Membership Chairmen for accepting the positions and the responsibilities that come with them. Congratulations to the Posts and Districts that hit 100% this past year. Our team and Post Revitalization chair are ready to assist you in any way we can. We are prepared to help you get to 100% this year, and for those that did, help you get there faster!

The goals that I have set for this year include 90% retention, at least 50 % of the Posts at 100% by May 8th, District Commander Race to the Top winners, and a total membership of 100,000 members. Your Area and District Commanders were given all types of information and suggestions to help you get there at the Leadership Retreat. This information should have been filtered down to the Posts by now to implement. Not everything will work for every Post but use what you can to the best of your ability. Find out what your members want in your Post to keep them in your ranks. Most of all, please don't be afraid to ask for help.

Every Post should concentrate on getting the DMS400 members into your Post between now and October before they renew into the 400. Your regular members will be renewing on their own during this time period. There are also opportunities to gain new members using whatever works for you in conjunction with the ideas that have been provided. This past year out of 279 Posts, we had 99 that had zero DMS transfers. That is 35% of the Posts in the Department, and we need to work on that. This is not a one-person mission but a team effort. Get a small group of individuals to help make the phone calls and send emails. Let everyone know what your Post does for the community and the activities you have. Remember, the younger Veterans want to volunteer and do things, so find out

their interests. Don't be afraid of change, as the "way we have always done things" doesn't apply anymore.

Please use all the tools(suggestions) that should have been given to you to work the mission. I will be monitoring the numbers for Posts that may be having issues. If you have a problem, need assistance, have a question, need training, etc., please use your chain of command. District membership chair, Area membership chair, and then myself. I ask that you please do not call Department directly (Bruce Comer or Joann Collins). They have enough on their plate already, and with the team we have, we should be able to take care of anything that comes up.

There are many membership awards available for you to earn, and I want to give away as many as possible. Many of these awards are already available to earn at Fall Conference. I look forward to working with everyone this year. We should "Be the One" to prevent suicide and "Be the One" for membership. Let's work together to get Florida back to the top at National. I have no doubt we will meet or beat our Department Commanders' challenge.

Good luck to everyone!!



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www.ProjectVetRelief.org

Together, We Made History!

We closed the books on our 9th year as an American Legion, Department of Florida program providing support to Florida's veterans and their families. This year, was historical for us, as you can see in our Impact Report below.

Our Emergency Assistance program saw a significant increase in the number of veterans who received financial support and the total dollars provided to keep a roof over their head, lights on or food on the table. Additionally, the Suicide Prevention Initiative established more connections with existing organizations who are focused on mental health. These nonprofits are known as our Strategic Partners. We sponsor veterans through their proven systems to hopefully help prevent veteran suicides.

Our success and growth is largely due to the outstanding support we have received from the Florida Legion Family. You recognized the importance of this program within the veteran community, and you chose to embrace it!

With success, comes more responsibility and emphasis on establishing future funding...

There's no doubt that we are very proud of our record setting year, but it also emphasizes the importance of funding for our programs. You see, PROJECT: VetRelief solely functions on the generosity of others; the Legion Family, corporations, and individuals. Without it, we would not be able to meet the high-demand of our veteran community.

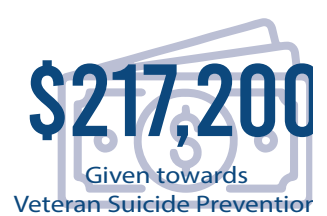
Our support numbers are proof that our veterans need us, so we hope that as we start a new Legion year, you will continue to keep PROJECT: VetRelief in mind as your plan your fundraisers throughout the year. Please keep checking our Legion Link articles for our current support statistics. They will always be listed at the bottom of our articles. *Together, our impact is much larger!*



Congratulations, Michael Raymond!

We would like to congratulate the incoming Commander, Michael Raymond, on becoming our next Department Commander. We wish him the best of luck for a successful and productive year ahead. Safe travels as you make your way around the state!

Our Year in Numbers: July 2022 - June 2023





Nothorn Area Membership

Bob Brewster, Northern Area Membership Chair

mr.bobbrewster@gmail.com



First things first. I want to congratulate all the Posts and their membership teams who made the 100% and the 100% plus goals for 2023. You did a good job, and you worked hard. Now we must all start working to make the 2024 membership year as good and better

than last year. I will be visiting all Districts in the northern area. I have been doing Post membership for 19 years and have been Department Membership Chairman for four different terms going back to when Clarence Hill was National Commander.

Post Membership is a hard job if you don't get started right away. My Post has been 100% Post for 17 out of 19 years at the Post level. I will not ask you to do anything I would not do myself. In every District in this Department, I have spent time with Post membership people helping them to achieve

their 100% goal. This year, instead of the whole state, I will only be doing my Post and all Posts that want my help in the northern area. Do not hesitate to contact me to help you. If your Post succeeds, then I succeed as the Northern Area Chairman.

My home phone number is 904-272-1619, and my cell phone number is 904-635-4492. My current email address is mr.bobbrewster@gmail.com. I only ask one thing – don't wait until it is too late.

Preparations for Families

Rico Thomas, Florida National Cemeteries Chair

cemeteries@legionmail.org



First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Department Commander Michael "Gambler" Raymond for trusting me to be this year's Florida's National Cemeteries chair.

As a post-service officer, I know and have seen firsthand how loved ones frantically try to arrange for the memorial or funeral service. When a loved one has transferred into "post

everlasting," this is the hardest time for the family. I hope you will take the time to have the "end of life" talk and assemble a folder with your important documents, starting with your DD214. Therefore, now is the time to gather the paperwork to help during the inevitable. Below is a link to request your DD214 from the national archives. I recommend filing online because you will receive a reference number, and I have seen that documents have a faster response time.

Request For DD214

Records (Standard Form SF 180) to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Get...letter to the NPRC. Send it to 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63138. Visit <https://www.va.gov/records/get-military-service-records/>

NCA Resources Guide

The National Cemetery Administration provides burial and memorial benefits for Veterans and their eligible family members and maintains national cemeteries as national shrines, sacred to the honor and memory of those interred or memorialized there. The VA provides compassionate, professional services to ease families through the loss of their loved ones. Learn more about VA Memorial Benefits. <https://youtu.be/eHrU-iXl8Zk>

If I may be of any guidance, do not hesitate to contact me at cemeteries@legionmail.org or 954-822-0897.

National Security Programs

Chuck Olsen, National Security Chair

security@legionmail.org



My name is Raymond C. "Chuck" Olsen. I have been selected to serve as your National Security Chair for two years in a row. First, I want to thank Gambler for having the confidence in me to take on this job. National Security is one of the 4 Pillars of the American Legion.

In much of the literature of the Legion, it is the second Pillar, behind Veterans and ahead of Americanism and Children and Youth. There are many programs under the National Security "Banner." The American Legion has taken numerous positions on national defense, homeland security, border and immigration control, and military support with one goal: "The key to peace and world stability is a strong, well-resourced solid defense.

Examples of these Banners are Blood Donor Programs, ROTC Medals and scholarship Programs, Crime Prevention and Law and Order Programs like police officer, firefighter, EMT of the year, the Blue Star Banner, and Gold Star banner programs. There are also programs for Funeral Honors, Honor Guard, and Operation Comfort Warriors. Many of the Legion Family entities also participate in support of active duty military members by means of Adopting Military Units, sending care packages, providing emotional and communication assistance for dependents and families of deployed military members, and fundraisers for the purchase of calling cards for use in front line units. Veteran Service Officers and VA volunteers assist our injured veterans upon their return and the helping of families deal with recovery and rehabilitation efforts and procedures with their veterans who have returned home with injuries.

Lastly, and I mention these items because we live in Florida, Disaster Preparedness is a big part of looking after our Legion family members and the family of everyone deployed from

Florida and supporting our communities. This year Gambler has two charities he is hoping to raise funds for Disaster Relief and Children's Organ Transplant Association. We have been reactionary the past few years with the hurricanes and major storms in Florida and neighboring states. We need to be preemptive and have the funds and supplies on hand to have a better response time for these events. There are still several (5, I think) posts in South Florida that have been closed due to damage or destruction. COTA provides support and expenses for families with Children waiting for Organ Transplants. Parents need to worry about and care for their children without worrying about bills, travel costs, hotels, etc. This is a fantastic program and has been a Commander's Charity several times over the last ten or 15 years.

Here is what I am hoping for from this year. I did not get it completed last year, but I have developed an Award for Security

National Security Chair continued on page 15 >>



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<< National Security Chair continued from page 14

Program of the Year. I am preparing a reporting form with Point totals so that a winner can be selected and recognized in the Department Convention Meetings. There are many programs

that can be undertaken by each Post. You do not have to do them all to make me happy, but the more you do and the better the write-ups for National Security Events and Programs, the better the chance you have of winning recognition for your

post. I will keep you updated.

Strong programs lead to **new members** and member retention. Thank you for your help.

Membership Incentives

Judith Richards, Post Development Chair

revitalization@legionmail.org



Membership Early Bird incentives are an excellent way to revitalize your post and keep your membership! Some ideas include sending a communication to post membership, encouraging them to renew through September 30th. Let them know what the dues go

towards and that they are a part of something big in the community. Offer members who renew prior to July 30th (or any date of the post's choosing) \$5 off membership. Hold a member renewal day at the post. Offer a free lunch or spaghetti dinner for all members that renew that day.

Are you utilizing the online renewal reports and letters? There are even labels that make it easy to send out!

Getting involved in your communities is an excellent way to Revitalize and Develop! Some ideas include getting involved with your Chamber of Commerce, advertising in the local

community papers, social media sites, and community forums. Participating in your schools for School Medals (Elementary, Middle, High, and College); sponsoring JROTC, Oratorical, and Boys State at the high schools; sponsoring Scouting troops. Use the Car tags to staple the post business card over the 800 # or on the bottom of the card. The post can always assist the veteran in finding the closest post to their home. Carry membership applications in your vehicle or on your person. Use the long form as that requests all the information needed.

Work with your local Active Duty, Reserve, and Armories. Southern Area recently participated in Family Day with Quartermaster Unit 356. See the photos!

We are working together with several Districts for Post Revitalization and Development. Are you in a location that needs to develop a new post? What are the criteria for development or revitalization? Please refer to the link below!

<https://www.legion.org/membership/newposts>

Please get in touch with me if you have any questions!



POW/MIA Information and Statics

Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair

povmia@legionmail.org

Let me introduce myself; I am Denton "Denny" Luke from Dewitt B. Tilden Post 316, Atlantic Beach, FL. First, I would like to thank Commander Michael Raymond for giving me the privilege of serving you as your 2023-2024 Department of Florida POW-MIA Chairman. I will strive to keep you updated on the status of any POWs, MIAs, the National POW-MIA Memorial and Museum being built in Jacksonville, and any known POW-MIA events. As of the end of June, over 81,000 DoD personnel are still unaccounted for. For FY 2023, the DPAA has identified 57 personnel from WW II, 28 from the Korea war, and three from the Vietnam War.

I encourage all to visit The American Legion Department of Florida website, <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/povmia-remembrance/about/> to learn more about

the POW-MIA program. Under the resources tab, you will find a link to the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), Library of Congress Vietnam Era POW-MIA Database, National League of POW-MIA Families, National Alliance of Families For the Return of America's Missing Servicemen and the POW-MIA Chairmans Manual. The National American Legion website link is under the Media tab, <https://www.legion.org/honor/povmia>.

I also encourage you to visit the National POW-MIA Memorial and Museum website, <https://povmiamemorial.org/>, to follow the progress being made to complete this wonderful and only National POW-MIA Memorial being built in the state of Florida.

At all official meetings, we pay homage to the plight of POW-MIA's as specified in Resolution 288 adopted at the 67th American Legion National Convention; however, what have you

done to further the cause? As I mentioned, we have a new POW-MIA Memorial and museum being constructed here in Florida. I invite each of you to visit this Memorial and watch it grow. The Department of Florida American Legion Riders have committed to doing more than utter some verbiage during a meeting. They have created what is hoped to be a premier event in the southeast United States for the National POW-MIA Remembrance Day. The actual Remembrance Day is the 3rd Friday of September. However, they have teamed up with the National POW-MIA Memorial to honor the event on the 3rd Saturday of September, allowing more participation from the working community. This is a Department event, and we would encourage and hope to see you there for the Ceremony, and if you are a Rider, we hope to see you on the Ride and the Ceremony. Please follow this link for more info: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1447746536058492>

POW/MIA Chair continued on page 16 >>



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<< POW/MIA Chair continued from page 15

2023 Event summary:

15 September Meet & Greet at Post 283, 9459 Fort Caroline Rd. Jacksonville, FL 32225, from 5:00 pm until ????

16 September staging & registration from 8:30 - 10:15 at Adamec Harley Davidson, 8909 Baymeadows Rd Jacksonville FL 32256, with a KSU @ 10:30 (Food truck will be available) arriving at the National POW-MIA Memorial, 6112 POW-MIA Memorial PKWY, Jacksonville FL 32221 at approximately 12:30. The Ceremony will begin at about 1:00 pm or as soon

as the Riders arrive and park. The museum will be open, and possibly the theater, The Traveling Vietnam Wall, will be on display. Hopefully, all four planes will be on display and more. (Probably a food truck or food tent, the Memorial Committee is working on it)

After the Ceremony, everyone is invited back to Post 283 for an after-event social. (More information to follow)

For those who wish to get a hotel for this event, we have made special arrangements with the Hampton Inn, 1021 Hospitality

Lane, Jacksonville, FL 32225. The rate will be \$102.00 plus tax. The link is:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/jaxrshx-sbr-b653bd29-8bc4-4a88-a807-69508b037a0d/>

If you are calling in your reservation, use code: "7 Bridges Ride" to employ the discount.

If attending the Ride, there will be a \$20.00 per bike charge to cover the Jacksonville Police Officer escort fee.

Resolution Instructions

Clarence Hill, Resolutions Chair

resolutions@legionmail.org



Any Legionnaire can impact the priorities and positions of The American Legion at any level because the organization's focus is primarily directed by resolutions. A resolution is a position-driven initiative written by members and put to a vote. They can be passed at any level, starting at the Post level, and can impact any level of the organization. The optimal time to write a resolution is in the winter and spring, ahead of department conventions in late spring and summer. If you plan to submit a resolution, please start early and stay in contact with me so that we can work to get a good document.

Resolutions are relatively easy to write but require a lot of attention to detail. The resolutions submitted at our last convention lacked attention to detail. There were problems with poor grammar, poor punctuation, misspelled words, and multiple topics in one resolution. The rules are simple, but they must be followed.

When writing a resolution, some general considerations should be kept in mind:

1. A resolution should contain "supporting documents," and its intent should be clearly defined.
2. A resolution should be free of errors of fact and law.
3. A resolution should have material relevance to the purposes and programs of The American Legion.

A resolution should deal with only one topic. Those that address more than one topic make it hard to process, especially if they involve topics that fall under the jurisdiction of more than one committee. They may either be rejected or amended to eliminate all but one topic. Thus topics you may have wanted to be addressed have to wait another year.

Resolutions have two major parts, a **preamble**, and a **resolving section**. Each consists of one or more clauses, and the whole is read in its entirety, beginning with the preamble, as one continuous complex sentence. The preamble sets forth the reasons for the resolution; the resolving section sets forth the intent of the resolution.

I will describe resolution writing in detail in future months, beginning with the resolving section, as it should be written first.

Pride in Watching Award Ceremonies

Scooby Reaves, School Medals Chair

schoolmedals@gmail.com

Hello from your new School Medals Chairman, Deveron "Scooby" Reaves. I would first like to thank Commander Michael Raymond for appointing me as the School Medals Chairman for this 2023/2024 year. It's a program that I take pride in because of the young lives it changes at the Elementary, Middle/Junior High, and High Schools. To see their smiling faces when they receive their awards at their ceremonies light up is priceless. If you have any questions, please contact me at schoolmedals@legionmail.org. If you have been appointed as a District Chairman, please reach out to me with any information up and down the chain so that the Post and Department levels can get any information out to everyone that may need it.

American Legion Scouters

Chris Ragusa, Scouting Chair

scouting@legionmail.org



2023 Department of Florida Eagle Scout of the Year: On behalf of Department Commander Butts, I was honored to recognize the 2023 Department of Florida Eagle Scout of the Year, Brady Kondek of Vero Beach, at the Department Convention on Saturday, June 17, 2023. Brady

earned his Eagle Scout rank with Scouts BSA Troop 171 in Carlisle, PA...chartered by American Legion Post 674 in Mt. Holly Springs, PA...and is a member of Sea Scouts Ship 501 in Sebastian, FL, chartered by American Legion Post 189

in District 12. His Eagle Scout service project was titled "Cumberland County Veteran Story Collection," he interviewed veterans as part of an effort by the Cumberland County Historical Society in Carlisle. Brady received a \$2,500 scholarship which can be used for a state-accredited school above the high school level. His packet has been forwarded to American Legion National Headquarters for consideration at the National level for an additional \$10,000 scholarship. The Second-Place award winner is Griffin Walker of Milton, FL (District 1), who received a \$1,500 scholarship. Third Place was awarded to William Vislocky of Quincy, FL (District 2), who also received a \$1500 scholarship. Many thanks to the Scouting Legionnaires who served on this year's selection committee: Sam Taylor from District 8, Alan May from

Scouting Chair continued on page 17 >>



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<< Scouting Chair continued from page 16

District 4, and Corey Glasner from District 5. Pictured are Eagle Scout Kondek and Department Commander Butts. Also pictured are Eagle Scout Kondek and Post 189 Scouting Chair Wayne Newland.



2023 Outstanding Post Scouting Program

Recognition: Three Department of Florida posts were recognized with the Outstanding Post Scouting Program award

at the Department convention on Saturday, June 17, 2023. This award recognizes the posts most involved in the Scouting Program – those posts chartering Boy Scouts of America (BSA) units, sponsoring BSA units, and otherwise supporting BSA units in their communities. The Selection Committee members included Sam Taylor/D8 Scouting Chair; Ike Heller/D9 Scouting Chair; Angie Walker/D1 Scouting Chair; Alan May/D4 Scouting Chair; Ron Perkins/incoming D4 Scouting Chair; and Kevin McGarry/D12 Scouting Chair.

American Legion Post 90, Cape Coral, District 13
Post Scouting Chair Dennis Stebbins
Post Commander Keith Berres

American Legion Post 138, Port Tampa City, District 15

Post Scouting Chair Chris Ragusa
Post Commander Drew Davis

American Legion Post 189, Sebastian, District 12
Post Scouting Chair Wayne Newland
Post Commander Richard Feldhann



American Legion Training: Getting Back to the Basics

Lena Heredia-Perez, Training

northern@legionmail.org



As you remember, in the past couple of years, our Department of Florida Leadership has traveled the state holding training in the Northern, Eastern, Central, Southwestern, Southern, and Western Areas. While we all enjoyed the training and fellowship, it also meant that our leadership was also concentrated in one small area of our very large Department.

This year, the Department Commander wants to do it a little

differently. We will utilize our graduates from the National & Department of Florida Legion College and Train the Trainer with the assistance of our District/Area Leadership to host District/Post level training. Each District/Area Commander has been given a list of these individuals to start putting together their dynamic training teams as well as all the training materials, including the: Agenda Shell, Sign-in Sheet, PowerPoint Presentation, Notes for the Instructors, and Critique Sheets for those present to take the course and an after action report. Please note that these documents are not to be altered in any way to ensure that we are getting one message resounding throughout the Department of Florida.

Each District is strongly encouraged to hold at least one training within their respective District. Once a training session has

been completed, we are requesting that the leadership submit the sign-in sheet, critique sheets, and an after-action report to Department so we can improve/build on the criteria we train on. This year we will start by focusing on Protocol, How to Run an Effective Meeting, and various Post Officer Roles & Responsibilities.

Then the next goal is to start tackling a list of suggestions that were discussed during a breakout session at the Department of Florida Leadership Retreat, where we brainstormed on How to Increase Membership as well as improve on Training. Please know that your voices are being heard, and our goal is to give you the tools to be successful leaders. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please email me at northern@legionmail.org.

Example of "Be the One"

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlement Chair

benefits@legionmail.org



I want to start by thanking "Gambler" for allowing me to stay as the VA Entitlements Chairman (Benefits Chairman) and Project VetRelief Chairman.

For the next three years, the National Commanders theme is

BE THE ONE

I want to share one example of how

BE THE ONE

Can Make a difference.

I want to share a message that Michele Ladd sent me. She is the CEO of Mothers of Veterans Suicide.

When a group of people come together to help us help a grieving family and to raise awareness, I will try to put into words my gratitude.

To American Legion Chapter 69 Avon Park, FL, and American Legion Post 69 Avon Park for hosting the Mothers of Veterans Suicide event, thank you just isn't enough.

The amount of pure love and support of the riders, members,

and community that was shown to my momma and family was OUTSTANDING! Your efforts to make this event successful still make me speechless. From my heart, we all love you, and thank you.

We had four moms, a Sister, an Aunt, and three grandbabies from our group receiving so much love and support. People kept coming up to them, offering comfort and hope and handing them money for the children.

Some of the moms got to ride motorcycles, and the children received the most adorable stuffed animals with their names on it and a dog tag with their daddy's name on it. Pastor

VA Entitlements Chair continued on page 18 >>



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<< VA Entitlements Chair continued from page 17

Pete offered grief counseling and prayed over every family; they got so much love. I was overwhelmed by the love that this organization gave these mommas and their families.

Honestly, I don't even care how much money was raised. I was just so happy to show the moms how much this group and community cares about the ones here locally and those around the country.

With all my heart, with all my love, with all my thanks, with all my blessings Michele.



I also want to remind all Commanders and Service Officers to please remind their members about the upcoming deadline to file your PACT Act claim by August 9 to be eligible for backdated benefits.

There's no deadline to apply for Pact Act benefits. But if you file your PACT Act claim or quickly submit your intent to file-by August 9, 2023, you may receive benefits backdated to August 10, 2022. So don't wait; apply today.

Please make an appointment with your County Service Officer. They can help you file the claim.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Synopsis of Detachment Convention

Bill Kelly, Sons of the American Legion, NEC

nec@floridasons.org



The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Florida had their Detachment Convention June 15th -18th, 2023, along with The American Legion Department of Florida at the Buena Vista Hilton in Disney Springs, Orlando, Florida.

The Detachment elected for 2023-2024 Gerard Sambets as Commander for a 2nd term along with 6 Detachment Vice Commanders elected by their Area and along with our District Commanders who were elected at their District Constitutional

Conference and all were sworn in on Saturday, June 17th. National Commander Chris Carlton and Past National Commander Jim Roberts conducted the installation. National Executive Committeeman Bill Kelly and Alternate NEC Tom Klinger, elected by the Detachment, will be installed at the Post National Convention National Executive Committee Meeting.

The Detachment of Florida and I would like to thank Commander Eunice, Adjutant Bruce, and Coordinator Marcus, their Staff, and every FL Legionnaire for the hospitality and adaptability shown for and to National Commander Chris Carlton. He only returned from Europe late Thursday night before flying into Florida early Friday morning, requiring a scheduling change from Friday to Saturday before The American Legion. He wanted to express what a warm reception and

wonderful time he had in Florida to all of you.

The Detachment of Florida Convention business was a Constitution and By-laws amending the NEC & ANEC terms from 1 year to 2 years to mirror The American Legion National Constitution and By-laws.

A Resolution presented by the Detachment to The Department/ Detachment of Florida Executive Committees elevating National Assistant Adjutant for 27 years Ed Sheubrooks to PNC status at the time of his retirement from National service was approved.

We wish our entire Florida American Legion Family another outstanding year in 2023-2024, and we hope to see everyone who attends National Convention in Charlotte.

Mission Goals Moving into the Next Year

Johnny Castro, Southern Area Commander

southern@legionmail.org



I would like to take this time to thank everyone who supported me in becoming the Southern Area Commander for another year. I am extremely blessed, honored, and humbled by the many who showed up to make this happen. This has shown me that the leaders of

these Posts want to support its membership by following the

Officer Guide and the Post Constitution & By-Laws. I promise to do my best to represent everyone in the 9th, 11th, and 14th Districts.

Moving forward, the District Leadership is excited about what's to come in the Southern Area. They have moved in the last month on the goals set forth by our Department Commander Michael "Gambler" Raymond in "Membership" and Back-to-Basics Department Training for all Posts in their Districts.

Prior to the end of June, a roster of Post 400 members was sent to every Post in the area (based on their area code)

by Judith Richards, Area Membership Chair (Department Revitalization Chair). The Post Membership Chairs have been instructed to reach out to them and the members from the 2021 and 2022 rosters who still need to renew. They are being tasked to find out why these members didn't renew and what the Post can do to support them in renewing. They will also be reaching out to all the current members to renew no later than December 31st. The Post, District, and Area levels will provide Early Bird Incentives. Posts in the area will be involved in community events to bring in new members.

Southern Area Commander continued on page 19 >>

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<< Southern Area Commander continued from page 18

The Back-to-Basics Department Training must provide the same information across all the Posts. For instance, the opening and closing of a regular meeting should be uniform

for all Posts in the area as well as the Department. Training teams are being formed in the districts to accomplish the training goals set by the Department Training Team. Each team will be provided with an agenda and materials.

The Southern Area is looking forward to being a positive impact on the Department in the next year.

Want to earn extra money for your Post?

You can do it and barely lift a finger with our **NEW Florida Legion 50/50 Raffle.**

What you need to do:

1. Encourage folks to select your Post when submitting tickets
2. Share our raffle link: www.florida5050.org

How your Post benefits:

1. **10%** of revenue generated for your Post's entries.
2. **\$500** Bonus to the winner's selected post.

Really, want to boost your benefits?

Sign up for exclusive promotional materials and information. www.floridalegion.org/5050post



Department of Florida

Post Everlasting



"If they are remembered, they are not gone truly, they simply change duty assignments and are amongst the best."



John "Michael" Speck

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of Past Department Comptroller, John "Michael" Speck, of Winter Springs, Florida, who passed away on Sunday, July 23, 2023, at the age of 74.

Michael is survived by his son, Jason Michael Speck. There are no details regarding services at this time, but any new information will be communicated through email and posted on our website.

Michael was a U.S. Army Vietnam War Era Veteran and an Orlando Memorial Post 19 member, with 34 continuous years of membership. He served as Department Comptroller

from 1988-2022. Michael was awarded for his 34 years of dedication and service as Department Comptroller during the 104th Department Convention (see the photo below).

Condolences may be sent to Jason Michael Speck, C/O The American Legion, Department of Florida, P.O. Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854.



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MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

July 28, 2023 (32.93%)

District 4	Doug Hockenberry	39.72%
District 9	Rico Thomas	37.03%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	34.05%
District 7	Rick Orzechowski	33.66%
District 15	Randy Holeyfield	33.29%
District 11	Toni Sutherland	33.10%
District 14	Thomas Frank	32.43%
District 6	Peter Gregory	31.54%
District 16	Eric Nestler	31.48%
District 1	Shelby Windham	31.33%
District 13	Eric Loyd	30.33%
District 12	Bruce Thurber	30.05%
District 8	John Rauh	29.79%
District 17	Jim Bowers	29.20%
District 3	Stuart Scott	27.50%
District 2	Doyle Combs Jr.	27.36%
Southern	Johnny Castro	34.17%
Northern	Lena Heredia-Perez	33.56%
Central	Bob Matheson	32.27%
Eastern	Joe Marcheggiani	30.88%
Western	Sonny Decker	30.76%
Southwestern	Harold "Bud" Boyer	30.09%
Post 400		40.84%
Post 208		39.74%

NEXT GOAL: September 7, 2023

50%

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Visit usaa.com today.



★ ★ ★ BI-WEEKLY DRAWINGS ★ ★ ★



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 Department of Florida

RAFFLE



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The American Legion official license plate.



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Student Application
December 14-17, 2023
Department Headquarters, Orlando

Section One – Personal Information

Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Cell Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Email Address _____ DOB _____ Gender _____

Section Two - Military and American Legion Service

Branch(es) of Service _____ Dates of Service _____

Year Joined Legion _____ American Legion Post # _____ Membership ID _____

List American Legion Offices previously/currently held and when:

Date Completed The American Legion Extension Institute (Required) Month _____ Year _____

Section Three – Education and Career Information

Educational Background (Check highest level achieved)

_____ High School Diploma _____ Technical/Trade Degree _____ Some College

_____ Associate Degree _____ Bachelor’s Degree _____ Postgraduate Degree

Professional Background (Briefly describe your job and how long you have been in that position)

List other groups you are associated with and offices held: (Circle those you are actively involve in or with)

Section Four – Written or typed essay (required – must be included with this application)

FLALC Selection Committee Letter

The FLALC Selection Committee will review applications and make the final selection by November 10, 2023. In 300 words or less, tell them why you want to attend the Florida American Legion College and how you would apply the knowledge you will acquire and will help your District and the Department of Florida. This is an important part of the selection process and it is an opportunity for you to present yourself in your own words. Your comments must be typewritten (use pages 3 & 4).

Last Name _____ First _____ Member ID _____

Section Five – Lodging and Accommodation Information

Courtyard by Marriott Orlando-Altamonte Springs Maitland is located at 1750 Pembroke Dr, Orlando, FL 32810, located near Department Headquarters. Lodging is provided to the students during the authorized dates. Students are recommended to share a room with another Legion College Student. **If student would like their own room, an additional charge of \$193 will be necessary.** Each student will be responsible for additional charges (such as phone calls, internet service or room service) during the week. All telephone calls, including local or toll-free calls, may have access fees and will be charged to the student’s account.

Check with Department Headquarters for hotel special accommodations, such as handicap accessibility or special dietary needs (please list on a separate page what those restrictions or special needs might be). Any outstanding charges must be cleared at checkout with the hotel. **A \$300 Registration Fee is required for rooms, coffee, and lunches. The Fee MUST accompany the application.** Changes to hotel locations will be communicated by email. For those students that don't require a hotel room, your registration fee will be \$100.

Preferred Hotel Roommate _____

I have read the prerequisite requirements and desire to attend The Department of Florida American Legion College.

Signature _____ Date _____

Section Six – Area Commander Recommendation (at least two signatures required, print name & title)

1. Provide six words that best describe this candidate (i.e. forceful, energetic, dedicated, etc)

(1)	(2)	(3)
(4)	(5)	(6)
2. What are the candidate’s goals for advancement in The American Legion?
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
3. Why do you believe this candidate should attend the Department of Florida American Legion College?
 - (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
4. What might this candidate be doing for the American Legion in:

One year: (a)	(b)	(c)
Five years: (a)	(b)	(c)
5. Within the next five years, might you comfortably elect this candidate as your (Check all that apply):

_____ Department Membership Chair	_____ District/Area Commander	_____ Department Commander
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------

Post Commander / District Commander/ Area Commander or Higher (Sign & Print Name) **Date**

Post Commander / District Commander/ Area Commander or Higher (Sign & Print Name) **Date**

Last Name _____ First _____ Membership ID _____

HOW TO SUBMIT:

Send application, essay, and registration fee to:
American Legion, Department of Florida, Attn: FALC
PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854

No later than October 31, 2023. Registration fee MUST accompany the application and essay.

Last Name _____ First _____ Membership ID _____

HOW TO SUBMIT:

Send application, essay, and registration fee to:
American Legion, Department of Florida, Attn: FALC
PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854

No later than October 31, 2023. Registration fee MUST accompany the application and essay.



50 | 50
RAFFLE
4 VETERANS

RAFFLE

★ ★ ★ **BI-WEEKLY DRAWINGS** ★ ★ ★

florida participants only

Show your support for Florida's veterans and their families through
The American Legion, Department of Florida's 50/50 Raffle!

What a perfect way to show our patriotism and support our nation's heroes while having
the chance to win BIG!

Questions: 1-800-393-3378

The Florida Legion 50/50 Raffle is a fundraising effort where proceeds benefit The American Legion, Department of Florida, Inc, a 501c19 nonprofit organization located at 1912A Lee Rd, Orlando, FL 32810. Cash prizes will be paid to our lucky winner(s) from the net proceeds generated from each raffle. Any additional or special drawing, such as an early bird drawing, will be announced before the start of any bi-weekly drawing. Participating Florida American Legion Posts will receive a part of the proceeds, too! All Winners, early bird and grand prize winners, will be selected at The American Legion, Department of Florida's Headquarters (1912A Lee Rd, Orlando, FL 32810) bi-weekly by an electronic randomizer. Although no purchase is necessary to win, donations received from this raffle will benefit the many programs we offer for Florida Veterans and their families. To request your FREE entry, please email donate@floridalegion.org with your name, address, phone, and email. For a full list of rules, visit: <http://www.florida5050.org>



Department
of Florida



www.florida5050.org



Department of Florida



SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

FLORIDA'S 3RD ANNUAL SEVEN BRIDGES POW/MIA REMEMBRANCE DAY RIDE & CEREMONY

Sponsored by: The American Legion Riders Department of Florida

Police Escorted Ride from Adamec HD Baymeadows, over the Seven Bridges, crossing the St. Johns River, and ending at the National POW/MIA Memorial (6112 POW-MIA Memorial Pkwy, Jacksonville FL 32221) for a POW/MIA Ceremony at 1:00 PM.

All Riders Welcome!

Scan QR for:
Event page
Hotel Info
Registration



limit to 250 motorcycles or trikes (no autocycles)

- Meet & Greet on Friday Night September 15 at American Legion Post 283 (9459 Fort Caroline Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32225) at 5:00 PM
- After Event Social at American Legion Post 283
- Registration 8:30AM-10:15AM at Adamec Harley-Davidson® 8909 Baymeadows Rd Jacksonville, FL 32256
- KSU 10:30AM
- Cost: \$20.00 Per Bike

POC: Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair
904-403-0181

POWMIA@Legionmail.org

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COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2023-2024



Name: _____ Post: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

DELIVERY METHOD

Pick Up at HQ Orlando Pick Up at Dept Fall Conference Delivery*

**Additional shipping fee of \$10 is required for delivery.*

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. You will be notified prior to shipment.

Shipping Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

SHIRT OPTIONS

Style	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	
Men's w/Pocket	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X						
Men's	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X		5X		6X		
Ladies	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X						

TOTAL

Shirts are **\$35 each**, add **\$5 each** for extended sizes 2X-6X, price includes personalization. Please see the next page for personalization options. If tax-exempt, please include a copy of the exemption form, if not already on file.

Delivery is a flat rate of \$10. Pickups at Headquarters and Fall Conference are free, however, please wait until you receive notification your order is ready before picking up.

Subtotal	\$	
Tax (6.5%)	\$	
Shipping	\$	10.00 or Free Pickup
Grand Total	\$	

PAYMENT

Please return form and payment to Department Headquarters: **Email** (emblemsales@floridalegion.org) | **Fax** (407-299-0901)

Mail (The American Legion, Dept of FL; Attn: Emblem Sales, PO Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854)

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Card Holder Name: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

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COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2023-2024

PERSONALIZATION You are allowed up to two lines of personalization, with up to 20 characters on each line, including spaces and special characters. (Line 1 example: First Name Last Name. Line 2 example: Post # Title)

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

Size: _____ Line 1: _____

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Size: _____ Line 1: _____

Qty: _____ Line 2: _____

By signing below, I agree that I have verified the information provided as correct and free of errors. I acknowledge that The American Legion, Department of Florida is NOT responsible for incorrect information provided.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDERS'



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DEC MEETS IN REGULAR SESSION

A regular meeting of the Department Executive Committee (DEC), called by Department Commander Eunice Butts, was held at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista on Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 2:40 PM. Fifty DEC members were present.

The following is a brief meeting summary that highlights the major items discussed and decisions of the DEC, in the order in which they were discussed:

1. Rafflebox

Department Adjutant Bruce E. Comer presented a new online 50/50 Raffle fundraising campaign.

2. Post Charters not at Charter Strength

- Graceville Post 42 - The DEC voted to place the post on probation pending a revitalization.
- Bonifay Post 44 - The DEC voted to give the post until Fall Conference and provide an update.
- Davie Post 223 – The post voluntarily turned in its charter and merged with Posts 321 and 365, which the DEC voted to accept.
- West Hollywood Post 308 - No action was taken as the District Commander will work to revitalize the post (*editor's notes: within one week of the convention, their membership was submitted and was above charter strength*).
- Punta Gorda Post 405 - The DEC voted to allow the District to continue working with the post.

3. Post Charters Discussed

- Branford Post 59 - The DEC voted to cancel Post 59's charter at the DEC meeting held during the 2022 Fall Conference due to being below charter strength. However, since the Post is now above charter strength, at 153%, The DEC motioned to rescind their previous decision to cancel the charter.
- Greenville Post 131 – The DEC voted to table until Fall Conference to conduct a revitalization.

4. Squadron Charters Discussed

- Ft. Myers Squadron 192 – The DEC voted to table until Fall Conference to give the Post and Detachment the ability to elevate their membership to charter strength.
- Wellington Squadron 390 – The DEC voted to cancel their charter due to inactivity and not being at charter strength.

5. SAL Resolution

Detachment Judge Advocate Jim Roberts presented Detachment of Florida's Resolution 23-01, titled Bestow upon James Sheubrooks the title of Past National Commander with all the privileges and rights pertaining to such office. The DEC voted to support this Resolution.

6. Department Finance Committee Report

- A report on the Department's financials as of March 31, 2023, and the Department's investments, was given by Department Finance Officer Ken DeMello. The Department's Profit & Loss statement shows a total income of \$3,084,830 and total expenses of \$2,649,626 for a net income of \$435,204.
- Department Finance Chair Larry White reported on the Department's fundraising and membership income.
- National Investigation - In 2021, three posts submitted resolutions to National, alleging wrongdoing within the Department of Florida. The Posts, when interviewed by National, had little to no knowledge of the issues to which they made the allegations, and one of the posts stated they had knowledge but took issue with other decisions made by Department in the past. All three posts agree that the resolutions were written by someone else and given to them to pass at their post. As a result of the investigation, the Department received a preliminary bill from National for ~\$15,000. The DEC voted to pay the bill when the detailed invoice was sent, and a second motion was made to split the actual cost three ways and send a bill to each of the three posts asking them to reimburse the Department. Both motions were voted on and passed.
- The DEC approved the proposed 2023-2024 Budget with an asterisk until Resolution 23-7, Insurance Marketing Distributions, passes or not, as it would affect the 2023-2024 Budget. The budgeted total income is \$3,511,267, and the total budgeted expenses are \$3,584,200, with a deficit of \$72,933 (*editor's note: Resolution 23-7 did not pass*).

7. Detachment 2023-2024 Budget

The DEC approved the 2023-2024 Detachment Budget presented by Detachment Finance Committee Chair Ed Sheubrooks. The budgeted total income is \$246,000, and the total budgeted expenses are \$246,000.

8. Department ALR 2023-2024 Budget Approval

The DEC approved the 2023-2024 ALR Budget that Department ALR Chair Jim Wineland presented. The budgeted total income is \$215,600, and the total budgeted expenses are \$15,900. The total net income before donations is \$199,700.

9. Florida Motorcycle Safety Program Contract

ALR Chair Jim Wineland presented the Florida Motorcycle Safety Program Contract. The DEC voted to table to review the program and the National American Legion's stance on joining outside organizations.

DEC MEETS IN REGULAR SESSION

A regular Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting was held on Sunday, June 18, 2023, at 9:28 AM at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena as required per Article VII, Section 10 of the Department's Constitution. Department Commander Michael "Gambler" Raymond conducted the meeting. Fifty-one DEC members were present.

The following is a brief meeting summary that highlights the major items discussed and decisions of the DEC, in the order in which they were discussed:

1. Department Commander's Appointments

Commander Raymond announced the following appointments for the ensuing year: Finance Officer Shirley Douglas; Judge Advocate David Pleasanton; Assistant Judge Advocate Gene Smith; Membership Chair Bruce Carl; Finance Committee 5-year appointment Kurt Gies; and Finance Committee Chair Larry White; Time & Place 5-year appointment, Paul Martel; Children & Youth Fund Committee 3-year appointment, Eunice Butts; and Religious Emphasis Committee 3-year appointment, Willie Branch, Jr., which were ratified. The DEC also approved Commander Raymond to make necessary appointments throughout his term.

Jim Carlin was elected 17th District Commander during the 17th District Constitutional Conference but resigned. Per Article IX, Section 3 of the Department Constitution, Commander Raymond appointed Jim Bowers as the 17th District Commander. Since Jim Bowers was elected the 17th District's First Vice commander, this appointment creates a vacancy for that elected position. Therefore, Commander Raymond appointed Bryant Thorpe, who was elected to be the District's Second Vice Commander, to serve as the First Vice Commander. Both appointments were ratified.

2. Department Adjutant's Briefing

Adjutant Bruce E. Comer gave a brief overview of the following topics:

- All Department Officers, Area Commanders, District Commanders, and District Vice Commanders must provide their DD214 to the Department along with a current Distinguished Legionnaire Form.
- Accidental Death Insurance and Dismemberment Insurance are provided by the 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, 2023
 - National Membership Workshop - July 28-29, 2023
 - 104th National Convention - August 25-31, 2023
 - Department Fall Conference – November 17-19, 2023