



MARCH 2023

VOLUME XXXI ISSUE 8

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Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

A Message from the Department Commander

Eunice Butts, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



Greetings Legionnaires & Families.

March is the month we celebrate "Women's History Month." Legionnaires, it would be nice if we showed appreciation to our

Female Veterans for their service to our Country and our Posts. Think out of the box for ideas to put smiles on their faces; Thank You Cards, Programs of Recognition, small gifts, a luncheon or dinner in their honor, etc. These are just a few suggestions. Please send me a picture if any post entertains this suggestion and participates.

We were honored to have Patricia Harris, Southeastern Area National Vice Commander, visit the Western Area American Legion Posts. Patricia was representing our National Commander as he was unable to attend. Thank you to all the visited Posts for your hospitality and kindness. It was AWESOME! A special Thank You to the Riders for escorting us and for allowing our National Vice Commander to ride with you; she enjoyed herself.

I attended the "Riders Summit" and then was able to attend "The Four Chaplains" Ceremony in Winter Garden. It was an Awesome feeling to have all of your

Department Officers present and accounted for at both activities. I have a wonderful team.

Thank you for your dedication and participation in many activities.

To those who have attained 100% or above, I Thank You. As of this writing, we are 2,000 members behind last year. Please use your Buddy Check and let your communities know about the different activities and good deeds you do in your communities. Engage new members in meaningful activities.

District Commanders, you are responsible for installing all Post Officers in your District.

Post Commanders, it is the District Commanders' job to install officers in your Post. During my visitations, it was brought to my attention that some Post Officers have 'NOT' been installed, and Post Officers not knowing about Department Vice Commanders in their section of the State of Florida. Please utilize your Vice Commanders for Post activities, special occasions, dinners, etc.

This is a friendly reminder to fill out all forms when you receive your packets from Department. Start on your CPRs and Narratives on Children and Youth and Americanism. If you have any questions, please get in touch with me.

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<< Commander continued from page 1

By the time you read this article, I would have visited the 9th District and attended the Washington Conference in Washington, D.C.

This is a friendly reminder of the Department Commander's Homecoming. The flyer is attached to the "LINK."

Being Humble means recognizing that we are not on earth to see how important we can become but to see how much difference we can make in the lives of others.

May the Grace of God be upon each of you and your families!

COMMANDER'S CHARITIES
PROJECT: VetRelief and Jackson InAction 83

Commander's Goal: \$50,000 (Current funds raised **\$33,731.00**)

MARCH 2023	
26-1	★ Washington Conference
1-31	Women's History Month
1	🍊 Scholarship Applications Due
1	Mardi Gras
1	★ National Dept Service Officers School
2	Read Across America Day
3	Employee Appreciation Day
3	USN Reserve Birthday
4	Hug a G.I. Day
4	District 14: Meeting
4	Southwestern Area Commander's Picnic
4	Chapter 17: ALR Bike Week Bash
5	Seabee Birthday
8	International Women's Day
8	🍊 Dept Membership 90% Goal
8	ALR Chapter 10: Meeting
12	Daylight Savings Starts
12	District 13: Meeting
12	ALR Chapter 136: 13th Annual Steak Roast
12	ALR Chapter 8: Meeting
12	District 5: Meeting
13	K-9 Veterans Day
13	🍊 Baseball Rulebook Changes Due
15	🍊 FL Boys State Del/Alt Registration Closes
15	★ National Membership 90% Goal
16	Buddy Checks Week
17	St. Patrick's Day
18	District 12: Picnic
18	Post 108: Picnic at the Park
19	Start of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" (2003)
20	First Day of Spring
21	Rosie the Riveter Day
25	Congressional Medal of Honor Day
25	Northern Area Ball
29	Vietnam Veterans Day
31	🍊 Baseball Domicile Deadline

♥ Commander Eunice Butts' Attendance Tentative.
🍊 Department Event
★ National Event
 Events are subject to change. Additional details can be found at www.floridalegion.org. We share the information we are provided.

Making Education Fun

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



With the Riders summit coming to a close, it occurred to me just how much our members want to grow in our organization. I don't have the actual numbers, but from what I saw in my own class and the classes I attended, there is a real thirst for the knowledge that is required to run a Post, District, and Department. Information is only as good as how it is presented. The key is to make it interesting and make it fun! We learned that in kindergarten. Let's face it, sitting in a classroom for hours can be challenging, but

if the presentation is interesting and keeps the students involved, more information will be heard and understood. I believe that happened during this latest Riders Summit, and we had fun doing it!

Now the hard part. Taking this information back to your Post and sharing it. Two very important points I made during my presentation were straightforward. Membership runs your Post. All decisions are discussed and voted on. Also, you are a Legionnaire, Son, or Auxiliary member first and foremost. The final decision always comes down to the vote of these members. Remember, no matter what we do in life, make it fun and gratifying. If not, It's not worth doing.

Elections

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



February was a fast one. Congratulations to our recent Legion College graduates. Also, congrats to our Oratorical winners. Job well done. So many activities are running simultaneously! We're rocking right along! With everything going on at once, this brings me

to the topic of my article this month. ... Post nominations of officers.

This is the beginning of our nominations for elections coming up. Every year recently, it seems to be the trend to form what appears to be "factions" within posts by getting behind this person or that person. I'm not referring to simply supporting a person for Commander or another office. I'm referring to absolute division within posts. This gets way out of hand in some places... creating

an "Us versus Them" attitude. This is troubling to me because we should be here for the right reasons. We should be focusing on the four pillars of The American Legion. We should remember the Preamble of The American Legion and take it to heart. There are ten sentences in our Preamble. We should know them. It's more than

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<< 2nd Vice Commander continued from page 2

merely a ritual at a meeting. It's our mission statement. Let's welcome new points of view! I've seen friendships affected because of elections. I call this time of year "Silly Season" ... tactics such as bringing your opponent up on charges thinking this would make them ineligible to run for office... NOT TRUE. And other types of shenanigans. People, I love our organization. I love each and every one of you. Let's focus on our mission of helping our veterans, children,

families, communities, state, and nation.

I don't want this month's article to seem like a rant. It's not. We have a lot of ground to cover, and for the most part, we're doing well. I'm asking that we keep focused on our mission. Let's work on keeping the Social side of our house separate from our Legion FAMILY side of the house. We all have a vital role to play in our grand scheme of things. Every member is important. Remember also that we're volunteers, and every one

of us are ambassadors for the American Legion. How we conduct ourselves plays an important role in our mission and our growth. I'll close with our last statement in our Preamble:

"To Consecrate and sanctify our Comradeship by our Devotion to Mutual Helpfulness"

I am looking forward to seeing you in my travels. Keep It Real... Peace

Upcoming Officer Nominations

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



This year is just flying by. I'd love to give a shout-out to the Western Area for their hospitality. Districts 1&2 showed the National Vice Commander, the Department

Commander, and all Department Officers that were present at the National Vice Commander's visit had a great time.

This is a friendly reminder!! Are you getting in gear for the area balls? How about all the nominations around the state?

Please don't forget to have training sessions for your incoming officers or any interested

incoming officers. If I can be of assistance, please reach out to me!

Always remember ONE TEAM, ONE DREAM!

National Commander's Present and Future Visitations

Jim Ramos, NEC
nec@legionmail.org



Our National Southeastern Area Vice Commander, Patricia Harris, visited our Western Area February 1-7, 2023 (the 1st and 2nd Districts). Our National Commander, Jim Troiola was unable to attend. Visitation started in the 2nd District in Tallahassee and traveled to the 1st District from Panama City to Pensacola, visiting Posts. The following schedule is where the National Commander will visit next:

And Back to the Western Area in 2028-2029.

So now you know when the National Commander is coming to your Area and District, so you can begin to make it a great visit. Take many pictures and enjoy the National Commander by showing your Post off to see who is the better Post in your Area and your District.

Please be up to date with what is going on at National by going to legion.org for information and at the Department level by going to floridalegion.org for information. Stay informed and keep your members up to date. Please have your members sign up for a mylegion.org account, as there are many things they can do and get to know about just by going to their accounts.

Try to get all your members to do the Basic Training online, which is free. The course take some time to complete, but they will learn a lot and become better informed. Also, it will

help your Post out, support Post programs, and they will more likely to attend Post meetings, which is excellent.

As your NEC, I'm here to assist you with information, planning, and whatever you need to improve your Post to be the best in the Department of Florida.

If you have any questions, please contact us by phone at 352-226-4370 or email: NEC@legionmail.org.



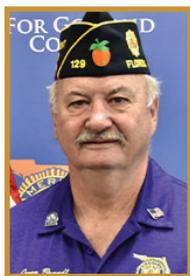
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legionlink@floridalegion.org

National Commander's Visit

Jerry Brandt, ANEC
anec@legionmail.org



Comrades,

February has been quite a month. We started on the 1st of February with the planned visit from the National Commander to our state. Unfortunately,

the National Commander, Jim Troiola, was unable to visit. However, the National Vice Commander for the Southeast Area, Patricia Harris, was able to take his place, as well as the NEC Jim Ramos, me, and Western Area Commander, Sonny Decker, to make up the visiting party.

The visit started on the 2nd of February in the Western Area, 2nd District; we were escorted by 2nd District Commander Roger Hewitt and his staff, to visit the States Capital. Department Legislature Chairman,

Stuart Scott, took us through the Capital, visiting various organizations such as the Florida Veterans Affairs, and others who gave us a breakdown of what is happening for Florida Veterans.

We also visited the National Cemetery and met with the Color Guard from Post 13, who assisted with the funerals there. We also went to the VA Clinic in Tallahassee for a visit and a tour of the facilities.

On February 3rd, we visited Post 13, Post 82, Post 106 Memorial Park, and Post 116 Veterans Park, where the 1st District Riders from Post 392 began the escort. We said goodbye to 2nd District Commander Roger Hewitt and his team. We were escorted to our hotel and then on to Post 392.

For the next few days, we visited the following Posts, 402, 356, 375, 75, 221, 296, 235, 382, 378, 340, 240, 33, 193. We were escorted not only by the 1st District

Commander, Ronnie Grover, and his staff, but also by the ALR from the 1st District. Each and every Post turn out for the meet and greets shined, and you could feel the friendship in the air. However, I would be remiss in not mentioning that we attended several "Four Chaplains Ceremony" during this time, and each one was done extremely well. Thank you all for your Service in remembering those who have fallen.

I indicated that February was a busy month, on February 26th to March 1st is the Washington Conference, in which American Legion Members speak with our representatives in Washington. Pushing for the programs which will assist our fellow veterans. This will accumulate on March 1st, with the National Commander giving the American Legion report to the Joint Session of Congress.

As always, if you need something, please let me know, so I can assist.

OOOPS! I almost missed it.

Phillip Crouthamel, Historian
historian@legionmail.org



Greetings, fellow Historians:

I apologize for not submitting for the past few months.

As we approach the end of the current year, I want to say that it has

been a pleasure to serve as your Department Historian for the past two years. Right now, Post Historians should be gathering their information and compiling it into their preferred format for judging. Remember, there are only two categories this year: History Book (Scrapbook) and Narrative. If you need information or training, I again ask you, especially the Riders, to contact me through Department, and I can email that information to you.

There's not more to say: I monitor the events taking place and will make every effort to include them in the Department's History book for submission to National. You may not be aware, but the Department of Florida was awarded Third Place for Narrative Book For 2021-22.

That's it for now. Hope to see you on the trail.

Community, State, and Nation

Jim Bowers, Northern Area
northernarea@legionmail.org



All members should be examining their goal achievements for this year. See if those goals need to be adjusted. I hope all of the goals were raised or surpassed. Maybe they were set too

high and needed to be lowered. Now is the time to evaluate the goals of each member and post.

I could remind you of the need for goals. Simply, it is a way to measure your progress. We need to look at where we are in assisting veterans and veteran families and our assistance to the Community, State, and Nation.

I want to remind everyone that these goals are not just monetary but your time as well. Post and members with small budgets can still give their time to help others. Don't handcuff yourself by thinking you must only give your time to veterans.

Food Banks always need help. United Way can always give you a list of non-profits needing help in your area. Remember, your

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<< Northern Area continued from page 4

Post needs help. Drive a veteran to receive medical care.

Just do something to help others. Let those that do help others continue to do so. I can assure you that nothing feels better than helping others.

Support your Posts, Districts, Areas, Department, and National as well as Community, State, and Nation.

Summit/Bike Raffle/Future Events

Jim Wineland, American Legion Riders
alr@legionmail.org



Thank You to all who attended the Summit. The feedback from Survey Monkey has been very positive, but we need everyone's feedback. Survey Monkey's results drove many of the changes you experienced this year. Keep your ideas coming!

This year's attendance was consistent with other years, but the big difference was the first-time attendees. They made up for over a third of the total attendance. They were engaged and asked some excellent questions of our instructors. As they were leaving, they promised to return next year to pick up on what they missed.

What's next, you ask? The Round Robin month of October, the Children and Youth Picnic, The In-State Unity Ride, and then the big "Blow Out" at the OCC Rally! At 5:30 that day, someone will have a brand-new Harley Davidson Road Glide.

Just think, if one hundred of our Chapters purchased \$200 each in tickets, that would cover our cost of the bike. That would also allow the Chapters to win and resale the Bike to benefit his/her Post and Chapter. That would be a "win-win" for the winning Chapter and The ALR Department. Please get with your District Chairs and Sell, Sell, and Sell those Rally Tickets!

As you all know, the net dollars raised from the Bike Raffle go to a very worthy cause. From PVR/SPI standpoint, we have made some fantastic strides with our Strategic Partners and record disbursements to the veterans needing assistance. Without our continued commitment to the "Cause," we

could never have met these goals, and for that, We Say THANK YOU!

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

Your 2022 – 2023 Schedule

"Round Robin"
 Month of April 2023

Children & Youth Picnic
 April 15, Post 323 Lehigh Acres

In-State Unity Ride
Meet & Greet, April 16, 2023
Ride, April 17-21, 2023
Rally, April 22, 2023, Orange County Chopper Museum

If you have any ideas, please share!

Thank You for what you do, and we are proud to be part of your Leadership Team of such an excellent group! *"For the Cause, not the applause"*

Children & Youth Activities

Dianne Boland, Children & Youth
cy@legionmail.org



Greetings: This year is going by so fast. Next month is April already, C&Y Month. You should have already started working with the family and planned your activities. We have two major activities planned to raise funds

for C&Y; the Department C&Y Picnic and the Department C&Y Golf Tournament.

Flyers have already been made for the picnic. I will include one at the end of this Legion Link. There have been a few things added, but the menu has changed. Right now, I

guarantee lunch will be served, and the price will stay at \$5.00. There will be a surprise visitor for the kids and games for all. Come check us out. Monies raised for the picnic will be shared with the Auxiliary, the Sons, and the Legion. It is all being raised for C&Y, with the Legion's money going towards Florida's C&Y Fund.

A golf tournament is in the process of being planned. It will take place on April 1st. It is being held at the Indian River Colony Club in Melbourne. We are still negotiating the price for lunch. Once a flyer has been made, I will post it on our Department's calendar. We hope to see you there. Once again, we can't make this a success without our wonderful volunteers. Let me know if you can help on that day. We will also need baskets and

prizes.

This will be in addition to the golf tournament that the Sons at Squadron 347 are putting on to raise money for the Child Welfare Foundation. Look to them for flyers and info.

Here are a couple of dates to keep in mind. Scholarship applications are due March 1st, and the department's Oratorical Contest is March 18th. Continue working on your CPRs.

There are a couple of items I want to mention before I close. First, The National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 7, American Legion Family Day, at its Fall Meeting in October 2022. The resolution

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established an American Legion Family Day to be observed annually on the last Saturday of April. This year it's April 29th, and they hope to bring awareness to the organization's "Be the One" initiative.

Next, I want to mention that under Americanism, the comic book (Our Country's Veterans) educates youth about veterans and is now updated and available for purchase thru National Emblem Sales. Item No. 755.304 is 75 cents a piece or 100 for 59

cents apiece.

Last but not least, I want to inform you that Post 69 is having a Children's Friendship Party on Sunday, April 23rd. Look to them for a flyer and more information.

Too Late to Attend FALC this year/Prepare for Next Year

Jim Ramos, Florida Legion College
falc@legionmail.org



Florida American Legion College has taken place. Prepare for next year.

We will have one next year (2023-2024), and the incoming Department Commander will pick the date.

basic training, now is a suitable time to get it done then add a copy of your certificate and attach it to your application for the next FALC.

The Florida American Legion College (FALC) is intended to teach the principles and techniques necessary for effective leadership at the next levels within the Department of Florida. The successful graduate will possess the education and skills required to program and lead at the District level and higher.

each student. As a student, please have your laptop or Computer for assignments and other work for the group and class assignments.

Be ready to work hard and long hours. Follow the dress code (for men, Legion Polo type shirts and slacks), and (for women, Legion appropriate parallel dress) is business casual.

If you have any questions, please contact me by Phone at 352-226-4370 or email: FALC@legionmail.org.

If you have not done or need to renew

All course materials will be supplied to



Florida American Legion College Class of 2023



Tracking of Bills and Legislation

Stuart Scott, Legislative
legislative@legionmail.org



As we enter March, we look forward to The Legion's Birthday, St. Patrick's Day, and of course, the beginning of the Legislative Session. The session will begin on March 7th, run for 60 days, and be filled with

bills and budget requests.

of March 13th, stay tuned for the weekly update of the bills we are tracking and the stance that we are taking on these bills. It will come as a pdf document with a bill number, title, and a brief synopsis of the bill's purpose. Of course, to find more information about the bill, we encourage you to pull the bill up using either The Florida House of Representatives or The Florida Senate website and place the bill number in the bill search.

Tallahassee and meet with our Legislators about the bills we are tracking. Yes, it is early in the session, and this will aid us by either getting the bill calendared or testifying if it has been read. If you would like to know more about The March on Tallahassee, please go to our Department website, where we will post information as it becomes available.

For now, please know that we are busy looking into the bills being filed and analyzing these bills and how they affect our veterans and families.

What can you do? Beginning the week

The March on Tallahassee will be on March 14th. This event is where we convene in



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JROTC/JPA

Loretta Young, JRTOC / JSSP
lrotc@legionmail.org



This is the time of year when the JROTC Units are in the process of having the JROTC Program Accreditation (JPA) Inspections. These annual/triannual Unit inspections cover all aspects of the JROTC

Unit Compliance curriculum, including uniform, drill, color guard, records, and the formal briefing by the JROTC Inspector from the Division Headquarters for the Service Organizations. The inspection team comes to the program/classrooms and conducts the inspections throughout the day. The cadets demonstrate that they truly have a "cadet-run program" in which they work tirelessly to make sure they get scores that exceed standards and earn Units of Distinction Awards and accolades. The attached photo is for Dillard AFJROTC FL791 for the

presentation of the Top Performer Ribbons for the "Rising Stars Award" by their Senior Instructor, MSgt. (Ret) T. Robinson and the AF Inspector, LtCol (Ret) Buck. Congratulations to all these outstanding cadets and others who will be reviewed during these inspections.

Last month, the Army JROTC State Marksmanship Competition was held at Island Coast High School in Cape Coral. There were 26 Teams and 106 individual competitors in a daylong event that went very smoothly. The 13th District Lee County event precedes it held on the previous day for local teams. The State Marksmanship match is conducted the following day by the Army 6th Brigade to determine the top teams within Florida. There we three separate firing sequences using 34 firing lanes. The host school sold refreshments and food, and many parents and family members were present. There were teams from across the state, with three schools

participating from Cape Coral for the State Meet. Mariner HS took first place in the District and State events. I want to give special thanks to American Legion Post 90, JROTC Chairman Dennis Stebbins, who has given so much time, money, and support to this event which has been a standing tribute to the Marksmanship Program throughout the past years. Attached is a photo of the Marksmanship Meet at Cape Coral for the Award Ceremony, which is in part sponsored by the Department of Florida.

The JSSP Postal Match closed on February 15th to have all fired targets returned for scoring. Please keep watch on the Legion website for the results to show the individuals and teams who will be receiving the distinctive awards. Thanks to all our competitors, and good luck to all for the second-round competition. Support of our Youth is the Support for our future. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.



JRTOC Island Coast Individual Marksmanship



JRTOC Island Coast Marksmanship



Dillard AFJROTC JPA Rising Star Award

Membership Madness

Bruce Thurber, Membership
membership@legionmail.org



As March Madness begins, we also enter the Post-Election season. This many times brings new Legionnaires taking on the task of membership and processing renewals and new members. Anyone

seeking a position should ensure early that they have a myLegion account. **No longer are there post accounts; they are personal accounts.** The first thing you should do before signing up is to get with the current Post adjutant and verify that the on-file EMAIL is correct.

Next, you can go to <https://www.legion.org/training/membership> for self-paced training.

On the last Tuesday of each month, American

Legion National Headquarters staff will present 60 to 90-minute sessions on topics aimed at post commanders and adjutants. Each session will be recorded and made available for later viewing. Many topics can be downloaded at <https://www.legion.org/training/training-tuesdays>, including legislative issues, legal issues regarding The American Legion's Constitution and By-Laws, trials and filing 990s, Media relations, and many more.

Membership continued on page 8 >>



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<< Membership continued from page 7

Time to begin your Post CPR. The Consolidated Post Report (CPR) was established in 1975 to assist departments in documenting the various activities a specific post has done during the twelve-month reporting period, June 1 through May 31.

The CPR can be filed online by the Post Adjutant of record at National on myLegion.org. You can begin filling it out immediately and add information as you receive it. After you transmit it, if you need to edit it, the last transmitted version will be filed. A working copy can be found at <https://www.legion.org/publications/161252/consolidated-post-report-cpr> Posts may also fill this out and

mail it to the department.

Please Join National Vice Commander Patricia Harris and Department Commander Eunice Butts as we finish our membership year by welcoming lost members back. April 21st Post 72 Mulberry FL 10 am till 4 pm. Bring your phone and charger, laptop, and a list of lost members.

Public Relations Award

Kathryn Hockenberry, Public Relations
pr@legionmail.org



It's time to nominate your Post for: **Best Post Public Relations Program Award....well, almost!**

Just a few more months, and before

you know it, it's time for Convention. This is a friendly reminder that the deadline for nominations is no later than May 3, 2023. Each Public Relations Chair was mailed a packet, including a 'Public Relations Toolkit,' an application, the eligibility requirements, and instructions. One critical item missed in last year's submissions was narratives from the Post Commander. Please be sure to follow the instructions to ensure

that the individual(s) being nominated are competing on the same level as other submissions. If you have any questions or need clarification, contact me at pr@legionmail.org.

Women Veterans Want To Be Seen

Deanna Hall, Women Veterans
womenvets@legionmail.org



"To the Women of our Nation's Armed Forces, Thank You!"—America

Since July, we have been meeting with multiple women veterans, exploring connections between women's experiences while serving on active duty and their self-identification as veterans.

Despite the differences in rank, a branch of service, ethnicity, years in service, and age, the military women we spoke to all shared their desire to have their service recognized. They acknowledged that there are approximately 164,000 women veterans in the state of Florida, and they are constantly overlooked by their communities, including by institutions specifically created to support veterans. The gap in access can have tragic effects:

A recent report noted that women veterans' suicide has increased by 10%, and they are the fastest-growing homeless population in the United States. Several women we spoke with had experienced Military Sexual Trauma (MST), suicide attempts, and periods of homelessness after leaving the military.

Despite these mortifying statistics and experiences, most women veterans, including the women we spoke with, are thriving. These women veterans just want to be visible.

While in the military, most of these women were the only females in their units. They felt they were the only ones who had to endure sexual misconduct and retaliation if reported. They felt embarrassed about their service-connected female-related health conditions and did not want to make a big deal about it. But, at the same time, they were enormously proud to have served, taken the oath, and served in the military as soldiers, airmen, sailors, and Marines.

The bottom line is that as a county, as Americans, WE have to do better for our "Sisters in Arms!" They deserve it!

WOMEN VETERANS' MANTRA: "JUST BREATHE"

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

Please repeat your mantra as many times as needed:

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

"Just BREATHE"! Thank you for supporting Women Veterans!



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“Happy Birthday Legionnaires”

Doug Hockenberry, Americanism

americanism@legionmail.org

Let me start by wishing each of you a Happy Birthday. Yes, you heard me correctly. You see, on the 15th of March, 104 years ago, members of the American Expeditionary Force convened in Paris for the first American Legion caucus. Yes, we are part of a time-honored organization of proud Veterans who exist for the betterment of fellow Veterans and to honor their commitment to God and Country. So once again, Happy Birthday, Department of Florida Legionnaires.

I want to thank those Posts throughout the Department who have engaged with the schools in their communities and supported local events. This was most notable during February as many of you held Four Chaplains Tribute Ceremonies, not to mention the pictures and videos posted on social media of your Four Chaplains Ceremonies. As they say in the US Navy, “BRAVO ZULU.” We

also finished with the District and Area Oratorical Competitions in February. I must admit that I am amazed every time I witness Legionnaires conduct ceremonies or when I watch and listen to the high school students as they compete in the Oratorical Constitutional Speech Contest. You see, events such as these truly define who we are and what we stand for, which lends credence to our mission and the Four Pillars.

We have some key items on the calendar that need to be accomplished during March, and they are as follows:

- 1 March - ROTC Cadet of the Year Scholarship and Eagle Scout of the Year Scholarship Applications are due.
- 14 March - Baseball rulebook change requests due.
- 15 March - Boys State Delegate/Alternate Registration closes.

Additionally, make sure that you contact your local High Schools and Colleges for ROTC and School Medal Program participation. You know many schools host their award ceremonies in May. This will allow you sufficient time to prepare the certificates and the medals for presentation. Also, this month, you will start receiving End of Year Packets, which means we begin collecting data from our members and committees relative to programs you do at your Posts. Get a head start now on collecting that data, don't wait until the last minute.

In closing, I want to wish each of you a Happy Birthday. Continue to do wonderful things at your Posts' and for The Department of Florida. If there is anything I can do to assist, please feel free to contact me via email or phone. **“BE THE ONE”**

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA PROGRAMS

2022 Scholarship Recipient - Update

Dear Florida American Legion Scholarship Committee,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Maxwell, one of the 2022 Florida American Legion General Scholarship Winners, and I wanted to reach out to update you on my experiences since enrolling at the University of Florida!

Since starting my undergraduate education, I've jumped into a variety of classes: From a class centered around the enculturated human understanding of time, to a graduate level architectural course about design technology and Building Information Technology (BIM). In pursuit of my bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, I've become involved in several organizations and design teams: I've become a fabricator and CAD designer for the UF Eckhoff Steel Bridge Design Team where I learned to weld, and was selected as the Community Service

Chair for UF's American Society of Civil Engineers Chapter. I've also chosen to pursue a minor in cello performance and currently rehearse and perform in three ensembles: The UF Symphony Orchestra, The UF Honors Ensemble, and The UF Cello/rodo! Ensemble. Outside of classes, design meetings, and rehearsals, I've made connections with peers and mentors through the UF Honors Program and UF Hillel and made friendships that I know will last long after my years in college come to an end. None of this would have been possible without your support and scholarship, and I am so grateful for the opportunities I have had so far in my college career that is only just beginning.

Again, thank you so much for awarding me a scholarship!

Kind regards,
Maxwell Fletcher
B.S. Civil Engineering | Cello Performance Minor
University of Florida | Class of 2026

2022 Cadet of the Year - Update



Grace Wilson, 2022 Cadet of the Year, has officially graduated from Lake Howell High School.



PLEASE SUPPORT
PROJECT: VETRELIEF

GOD ♥ FAMILY ♥ COURAGE

www.floridalegion.org
legionlink@floridalegion.org



DEPT COMMANDER NEEDS YOU - HELP HER FINISH STRONG

PROJECT: VetRelief continues to be in high demand, which means we are helping more and more of Florida's veterans each year.

When Hurricane Ian hit in September 2022, PROJECT: VetRelief was able to take action and provide necessary assistance to our service members in the form of Publix food cards. This support allowed veterans to keep the food on the table as they dealt with long power outages or even major damage to their homes.

However, the program has seen inflated support cases largely due to significant increases in shelter expenses to veterans who rent their home. At the present time, landlords can raise the monthly rent by any dollar amount. So far, we have seen jumps ranging anywhere between \$200-\$900 per month, of which Florida's veterans can't afford.

For these two reasons, **our financial burden has doubled this year.** The total number of approved cases in the first

6-months is already more than the entire number of veterans we supported all last year!

Thankfully, the Department Commander, Eunice Butts, has recognized the true impact of the emergency assistance program and chose to support these efforts as one of her charities of choice!

As she makes her rounds throughout the state, we hope that you will accept her challenge to the Legion Family to raise \$50,000 by the end of June. Help her finish her year strong, as she only needs \$16,270 more to reach her goal!

Donations can be made online (www.projectvetrelief.org/donate), mailed into Headquarters, given to the Commander during her visits, or at the Department Convention in June.

Our veterans are counting on us working together to be there for them. - *So, let's show them we are here!*



WE HAVE NEW BROCHURES!!

We finally have NEW program brochures for PROJECT: VetRelief!! After 9 years, we felt it was time for an upgraded design and we needed to update our information as the program has grown significantly.

The emergency assistance section outlines the eligibility requirements for financial support. Additionally, we've added our Suicide Prevention Initiative, which is now in our 5th year. See how we are teaming up with other veteran service organizations to end veteran suicide.

Brochures will be available at the Department Convention in June, but if you'd like to get copies for an upcoming event or for your Post, please contact Jennifer Cooper at jcooper@floridalegion.org

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE
STATS: YEAR 9
JULY '22-JAN '23

219 VETERANS ASSISTED

\$232,701
FINANCIAL AID AWARDED

February 23, 2023 Membership Target Report (85%)		
16	Eric Nestler	89.50%
4	John Bennett	89.32%
3	Stuart Scott	89.29%
8	John Rauh	87.71%
17	Bruce Howe	87.36%
1	Ronnie Grover	87.13%
7	Burl Thomas	86.13%
5	Lena Heredia-Perez	85.83%
13	Harold "Bud" Boyer	85.07%
6	Joe Marcheggiani	84.10%
11	Harry Malecki	84.06%
15	Randy Holeyfield	82.47%
12	Wayne Mulligan	82.23%
2	Roger Hewitt	80.97%
9	George "Geo" Bograkos	80.42%
14	Angela Glover	78.94%
Northern	Jim Bowers	87.20%
Central	Bob Matheson	87.06%
Southwestern	Skip Felicita	86.24%
Western	Sonny Decker	86.22%
Eastern	Dennis Mallon	83.27%
Southern	Johnny Castro	81.59%
Post 400		74.90%
Post 208		75.21%



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST

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



**DEPARTMENT TRUSTED.
LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.**

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

From Your American Legion Department

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



Emergency and Accident

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



Insurance Coverage

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



No Cost Protection

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



Cancer Care Insurance Plan

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

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

Next Membership Goal 2022-2023:
March 8, 2023

90%

www.thelit.com



2023 STATE ORATORICAL WINNERS

25 February 2023

Congratulations to all of our State Oratorical Contestants!

1st Place - \$2,500

Represents Florida at National Oratorical Contest

Nurfat Ishaque

Southern Area, Post 222

\$500 Winners:

Zoya Baty

Northern Area, Post 284

2nd Place - \$1,500

Talmadge Kanistras

Eastern Area, Post 243

Celina Sanchez

Western Area, Post 296

3rd Place - \$1,000

Emily Peake

Central Area, Post 5

Special Thank You To:

All the Posts, Districts,
and Area Chairs that
helped support these
students with their
journey to the State
Contest.

Department
Oratorical Chair Meri
West for her
dedication and
support for the
Oratorical Program.

The Judges,
Tabulators, Time
Keepers and staff for
your help and
support at the State
Contest.

DEPT OF FLORIDA
COMMANDER

Eunice Butts

HOME COMING



ENTERTAINMENT BY:
Tony Knight and Friends

BENEFITTING:
PROJECT: VetRelief &
Jackson In Action 83

TICKETS
\$50

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2023

6:00 PM SOCIAL
7:00 PM DINNER



JOIN US

For dinner, entertainment and
lots of fun! Space is limited.
Dress casual, or in your best
50s/60s sockhop style.

AMERICAN
LEGION

Post 8
Winter Haven, FL

300 AVE M NW | WINTER HAVEN, FL 33881



APPETIZERS

Stuffed Mushrooms

Shrimp Cocktail

DINNER



Half Baked Chicken
or
Prime Rib

Baked Potato
Green Beans Almondine
or
Broccoli, Cauliflower, & Carrot Mix
and Small Salad

DESERT

Cake or Sundae Made to Order

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:

Hampton Inn Winter Haven | 202 Cypress Gardens, Blvd; Winter Haven, FL 33880
(863) 299-9251 | Book Code: "ALB" | Rate: \$119 | Cut-off: April 3, 2023

PRE-ORDER YOUR TICKETS TODAY

Join us April 22, 2023 at American Legion Post 8, Winter Haven.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND THE COMMANDER'S HOMECOMING!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

of Tickets _____ X \$50 each = Total Due \$ _____

of Half Baked Chicken _____ # of Prime Rib _____ *Sides can be chosen at dinner.*

Check's payable to: **American Legion Post 8**

Mail Payment to: **American Legion Post 8**

*Only 150 spaces available. Tickets will not be mailed, your name will be added to the list at the door. **RSVP: APRIL 12, 2023***

Attn: JoAnn O'Callaghan
300 Ave M NW
Winter Haven, FL 33881-2406



DEPARTMENT Children & Youth Picnic Fund Raiser

April 15, 2023

11 am - 5 pm

American Legion Post 323

1124 Ashlar Ave, Lehigh Acres FL

(239) 369-3178



Games, Food, Baskets, 50/50, (Military
Child's Program - by our Juniors)

Quality Inn - 1320 Business Way, Lehigh Acres FL

(239) 369-2121

Price - \$127.25. Ask for American Legion -

Dianne Boland

Wear purple in honor of the Military Child



Questions or Concerns: Dianne Boland (561) 315-0679



Commander Jim Bowers

invites you to attend the

Northern Area Ball

MARCH Saturday
25
at 6 pm

American Legion **Post 57**

2602 SW Main Boulevard

Lake City, FL 32025

(386) 752-7776

Dress in your 1920's best!

Tickets

\$40 per person

\$70 per couple

Program Ads

\$30 half page

\$50 full page

Dinner

Choice of Roast Beef *or* Chicken Cordon Bleu; served with salad, mashed potatoes & gravy, roasted green beans, dinner roll, and cake.

Please indicate beef or chicken on all ticket requests/payments.

Accommodations

Hampton Inn & Suites

450 SW Florida Gateway Drive

Lake City, FL 32024

(386) 487-0580

Holiday Inn & Suites

213 SW Commerce Drive

Lake City, FL 32025

(386) 754-1411

For reservations, call the hotel directly and mention the American Legion to receive the group rate.

Checks, for tickets and ads, should be made payable and mailed to:

Jim Bowers

6 Oak Brook Drive

Ormond Beach, FL 32174

Email program ads (in jpeg or word format) to **jbowers500@cfl.rr.com**, no later than **February 25, 2023**.

Call **(407) 484-6020** with any questions.

DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA

AMERICAN



LEGION RIDERS

STATE RALLY

SATURDAY, APRIL 22ND

**RAFFLE TICKET SUGGESTED PRICE: \$20 DONATION
OR 6 TICKETS FOR \$100 DONATION**

*THE WINNING TICKET WILL BE PULLED ON 4/22/23 AT 5:30PM
AT OCC ROAD HOUSE & MUSEUM IN CLEARWATER, FL.
WINNER NEED NOT BE PRESENT!*

*NET PROCEEDS TO PROJECT VET RELIEF/
SUICIDE PREVENTION INITIATIVE.*

BERT'S

RIDING TO END VETERAN SUICIDE

**ENTER TO WIN A
NEW 2023
H-D® STREET GLIDE®!**

LIVE MUSIC BY

RUSTY WRIGHT AT 1PM

BRIGETTE KELLY AT 2:30PM

ALEX LOPEZ XPRESS AT 4PM





Central Area Ride-In

April 1st, 2023

11:30 PM - 3:30 PM



American Legion Post 8
300 AVE M NW
Winter Haven Florida 33881



Add this event to your
Round Robin Ride



Food, Music
50/50 Raffle

Basket of Cheer Raffle Competition

The Chapter's basket that raises the most money will take home the traveling trophy

All proceeds go to
Project Vet Relief's Suicide Prevention
Initiative (PVR/SPI)



PROJECT: VETRELIEF

They Fought for Us. We Fight for Them.

Certificate Number 85-8015127021C-4, effective from 07/31/2019 to 07/31/2024 certifies that Frierson Nichols Post 8, The American Legion inc, a Veterans Organization, is exempt for paymemnt of Florida sales and use tax. Issued pursuant to Chapter 212, Florida Statutes





Eastern Area Commander's

Back to the '50s

Sock Hop



*Shake, Rattle
& Roll*



Saturday, April 8th, 2023

6PM Post 40 810 & US Highway 1 Ft Pierce

*\$25 includes Diner Menu and an Adult Root
Beer Float*

DI for your entertainment

Raffles and 50/50's

Wear your best 50's Attire



Tickets and Donations: Dennis Mallon

1502 North Lawnwood Cir, Ft Pierce FL 34950

772-342-6415

Benefits



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



Dennis's Diner

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD DINER

Entrees

All served with fries, cole slaw & a pickle spear

CLASSIC BURGER

100% JUICY BEEF PATTY WITH FRESH LETTICE, TOMATO, & ONION

CHEESEBURGER

LIKE THE CLASSIC, BUT WITH T MELT-IN-YOUR-MOUTH CHEESE

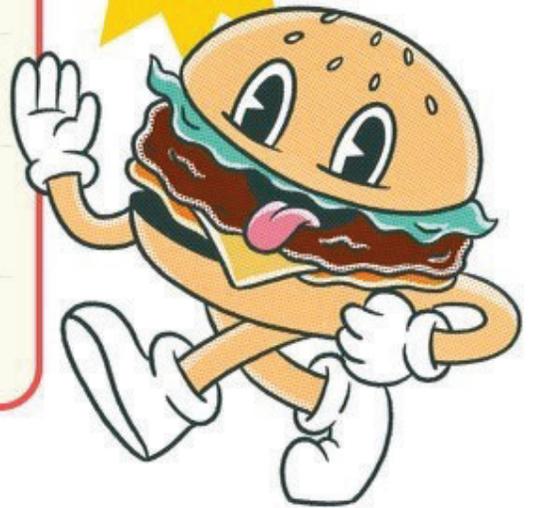
CHICKEN TENDERS

BREADED CHICKEN BREAST FRIED GOLDEN BROWN PERFECTION

GRILLED CHEESE & TOMATO SOUP

OOEY GOOEY AMERICAN CHEESE BETWEEN TWO PIECES OF TEXAS TOAST WITH SOUP FOR DIPPING

Made Fresh



I scream you scream we all scream for ice cream

Sundaes

VANILLA ICE CREAM SUNDAES

CLASSIC VANILLA ICE CREAM WITH YOUR CHOICE OF SAUCE TOPPED WITH WHIPPED CREAM AND A CHERRY

- CHOCOLATE
- STRAWBERRY
- BUTTERSCOTCH

