



A Message from the Department Commander

Jessica Moore, Commander

commander@floridalegion.org



As the crisp air of November settles in, we pause to reflect on a month that holds deep meaning for our community—Veterans Month. This

is a time to honor the brave men and women who have worn the uniform of our nation, standing in defense of freedom, democracy, and peace.

But this month is not only about those who served. It's also about the families who stood beside them—who endured long deployments, celebrated homecomings, and carried the weight of worry with quiet strength. Their sacrifices are woven into the fabric of our military legacy.

Veterans Day reminds us to recognize all who have served, past and present. Across the country, communities will gather for parades, ceremonies, and moments of silence. We encourage you to participate,

share your stories, and thank another veteran.

As members of the American Legion Family, we understand that service comes in many forms. Whether through active duty, reserve service, or supporting loved ones from home, each role is vital—and each deserves recognition.

This month, let us:

- Attend local Veterans Day events
- Reach out to military families in our community
- Share our own stories of service and support

Together, we carry forward a legacy of honor, courage, and commitment. Thank you for being part of this Family—and for continuing to serve in your own way.

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IN THIS EDITION

Department Officers

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 1 Commander | 4 NEC |
| 2 1st Vice | 5 Finance Officer |
| 3 2nd Vice | |

Areas & Districts

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 6 Northern Area | 8 Southwestern Area |
| 7 Southern Area | |

Membership

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 12 Membership | 23 Membership Report |
| 14 Post Development | 21 Membership Drive |

Programs

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 9 American Legion Riders | 13 Oratorical |
| 10 Civil Air Patrol | 15 POW/MIA |
| 10 JROTC/JSSP | 16 Resolutions |
| 11 Law & Order | 17 PROJECT: VetRelief |
| 11 Legislative | 19 SAL |
| 12 Membership | 18 VA&R |

Other

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 18 Child Well-Being Fdn | 28 Southern Area Training |
| 22 Post Everlasting | 22 4 Chaplains Ceremony |
| 24 Chair Interests Form | 29 Veterans Boat Parade |
| 25 Vices' Event | 30 Charity Golf Event |
| 26 Central Area Ball | 31 USA250 |
| 27 Southern Area Ball | |

Submit Articles at

floridalegion.org/submit or legionlink@floridalegion.org

Questions? legionlink@floridalegion.org

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2025-2026 COMMANDER JESSICA MOORE

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2025

- 1-30 Veterans & Military Family Month
- 1-30 Warrior Care Month
- 1-30 Family Caregivers Month
- 1 District 13: ALR Winter Passport Tour
- 1 Be The One Day
- 1 Department Wide Membership Drive ★
- 1 Vietnam Wall (Clearwater)
- 1 Chapter 316: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 1 Benefits and Be The One Training
- 1 District 2: Meeting
- 1 District 11: Meeting
- 1 FL Women Veterans Benefits Fair ★
- 1-2 District 9: Commander's Tour ★
- 2 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 3-7 National Veterans Small Business Week
- 4 Election Day
- 5 Dept Membership Goal 65% ★
- 5 Chapter 136: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 8 Post 43: Annual Luminary Walk
- 8 Post 273: Veterans Boat Parade ★
- 8 Hernando County Vet Fest
- 8 Post 266: Veterans Benefits Fair
- 8 District 15: Meeting
- 8 District 2: Legislative Training
- 8 District 17: Meeting
- 8 District 1: Meeting
- 8 District 9: Ball and Luau
- 8-11 District 16: Commander's Tour ★
- 9 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 9 District 5: Meeting
- 9-15 Buddy Check Week
- 11 World War I Ends (1918)
- 11 Veterans Day
- 11 Headquarters Closed ★
- 11 Post 168: Veterans Day Ceremony/Parade
- 12 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 13-16 District 6: Commander's Tour ★
- 15 Legion Link Articles Due ★
- 15 Post 63: Challenge 22 ★
- 15 District 5: Training



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COMMANDER'S CHARITY: *Special Olympics*

\$7,286.50 RAISED

20K	30K	40K	50K	60K	70K	80K	90K	100K	110K	120K	130K	140K	150K
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Go to www.floridalegion.org/donate and choose support Commander's Charity: Special Olympics **\$150,000 GOAL**

The Importance of a Post Constitution and Bylaws (CBL's)

Bob Matheson, 1st Vice Commander

1stvice@legionmail.org



Why does a Post need a Constitution and Bylaws (CBL's)?

Running a Post, the right way keeps things fair, organized, and true to what the Legion stands for, and gives every Post in Florida a common way to operate — from meetings and membership to money and community work.

Why does it matter?

- We stay consistent. Every Post follows the same rules under National and the Florida Department, so things run smoothly.
- We stay legal. Following the guide helps avoid problems with finances, taxes, or our charter.
- We earn trust. When we're organized and transparent, members and the community see the Legion at its best.
- We help new leaders. Officers can step in knowing exactly what to do — no guessing or confusion.

What's in the CBL's?

1. Who We Answer To

Posts must follow the National

and Department Constitutions and Bylaws. Our own bylaws can't go against them.

2. Membership

Covers who can join, dues, transfers, and keeping membership records up to date.

3. Officers and Committees

Lists officer duties, elections, and what committees oversee (like finance, membership, and programs).

4. Meetings

Explains how often we meet, what counts as a quorum, and how to run meetings using Robert's Rules.

5. Money and Records

How to manage funds, sign checks, make reports, and do audits — keeping everything honest and open.

6. Property and House Rules

Basic rules for using Post buildings or lounges, conduct, safety, and guest policies.

7. Programs and Community Work

Encourages involvement in Legion programs and local projects that support veterans and families.

8. Discipline and Updates

Fair ways to handle member issues and how to update Post bylaws when needed.

continued on page 3 >>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2025 (Continued)

- 15 District 12 Meeting
- 15 District 15 Picnic
- 17-21 American Education Week
- 21-23 Dept Fall Conference ☀️ ⚡️
- 23 Dept Commander Moore's Birthday ⚡️
- 24-28 National Family Week
- 27 Thanksgiving Day
- 27-28 Headquarters Closed ☀️
- 28-31 Holiday Blood Drive ★

⚡️ Commander attendance tentative.

☀️ Department of Florida event.

★ National event.

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

Our First Pillar

Bruce Carl, 2nd Vice Commander

2ndvice@legionmail.org



Happy November! We are preparing for Fall Conference and hope to see many of you in attendance. There are some new classes that

have been added to the schedule this year. Please try to attend if you can! We know many of you can't afford to stay overnight, but another suggestion would be to carpool for the day and divide the classes up among your attending members. You can then take the information back to your Posts and disseminate it to your members. The agenda is on the website, so look it over and

<< 1st Vice Commander continued from page 2

The Bottom Line

CBL's keep every Florida Post running legally, organized, and respected. But this only works when Commanders, the Post Executive

see what you would like to attend.

Over the next few months, my articles will focus on the programs of the Four Pillars. The Department of Florida has 27 programs, with each of them falling under one or more of our Pillars. This month's Pillar is Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R).

The American Legion works with Congress to make sure Veterans receive all they are entitled to, and in a timely manner. These include access to VA care, improved claims processing, support for Veterans with special needs, etc. We also seek to provide civilian opportunities, education benefits, employment/business opportunities, eradication of homelessness, and proper Veteran cemeteries.

It is important to have 100% CPR-accurate reporting so when our National Commander speaks to Congress, our voices are heard loud and clear. Follow the grassroots program to stay in touch with all that is happening in Congress, and be

Committee, and the members of the Post all work together to follow the CBL's. When we all follow it, we protect our charters, strengthen our communities, and honor every veteran who served.

sure to contact your legislators to let them know where you stand on important issues that will affect our Veterans.

Become a Service Officer or volunteer at a Veterans hospital or facility if you have availability. Other programs you can volunteer for or make donations to include Homeless Veterans Outreach, TAPS (Transitional Assistance Program), Heroes to Hometowns, Project Vet Relief, and TFA (Temporary Financial Assistance).

These are just a few of the programs under our First Pillar. If you would like more information about these programs, please contact me and I will be happy to assist. You can also reach out to our VA&R Chair, Alan Cohen, or our Homeless Veterans Chair, Al (Gunner) Dudley. There are also brochures available on both the Department and National websites.

I hope everyone has a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!

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NEWS, FORMS, VETERAN RESOURCES,
UPCOMING EVENTS, AND MORE



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The Importance of Training and Upcoming Opportunities

Jim Ramos, NEC

nec@legionmail.org



Why Are Training Classes Important?

We offer a wide variety of training classes for everyone, from new members to seasoned Legionnaires. No matter how long you've been involved, there's always something new to learn or refresh regarding your Post position and responsibilities. Training helps us stay sharp and up to date at every level: Post, District, Area, and Department.

If you're unsure whether you need training, that's usually a sign that you do! I hope you'll attend one of the training sessions at the Department Fall Conference or take advantage of the online training opportunities.

Training Classes Include:

1. Service Officer School II (Pre-Registration Required)
2. Homeless Veterans and Outreach Training
3. Post Adjutant Training
4. Program Fair (a must-attend!)
5. Post Historian and Social Media Training
6. Membership: Basic and Advanced Training
7. Post Judge Advocate Training
8. Boys State and Oratorical Training
9. Women Veterans Outreach Training

10. Legislative Training

These are just a few of the 24 training classes available. Over two full days, you'll find even more sessions packed with valuable information—each designed to help you gain experience, expand your knowledge, and sharpen the skills you need to excel in your role at every level of The American Legion.

National Updates

- **New National Constitution and Bylaws**
- **USA 250 Challenge (Celebrate America)** – Visit legion.org/usa250/challenge to register and watch the video to see how your Post can get involved!
- **National Veterans Creative Arts Festival** (Presented by the VA)
 - Jan. 31, 2026 – Indianapolis, IN
 - Feb. 7, 2026 – Atlanta, GA
- **Compassionate Contact Corps** – A telephone-friendly visitor program.
- **National Regional Information Conference** (Registration Required)
 - Jan. 31, 2026 – Indianapolis, IN
 - Feb. 7, 2026 – Atlanta, GA

Topics Covered:

1. Legal Topics
2. Be the One Initiative
3. American Legion Programs
4. Running Effective Meetings
5. Post Operations
6. Membership Retention

Training teaches us how to do things the right way—because when mistakes happen, people notice! In the military, a mistake can have serious consequences; in The American Legion, proper training ensures our Posts operate smoothly, efficiently, and with pride.

For more information, email ia@legion.org or call 317-630-1287.

I'm Jim Ramos, your NEC from Florida, and I'm here to help my fellow Florida Legionnaires. If you have any questions, please email me at NEC@legionmail.org or call 352-226-4370.

Be sure to leave a message. I don't have everyone's phone number.



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Florida Revenue Refund Scam and Sunbiz Annual Report Information

Shirley Douglas, Finance Officer
finance@legionmail.org



I was looking at the Florida Department of Revenue website and noticed this Refund Scam Alert, so I thought I would pass it on to you.

(Note: This scam information was copied from the <https://floridarevenue.com> website.)

Florida Refund Scam Alert

Floridians have reported receiving scam text and email messages claiming to be from the Florida Department of Revenue. These messages indicate the recipient is due a tax refund and ask them to click a link to confirm their banking information to receive the refund. The Department of Revenue does not send text messages about tax refunds.

If you are contacted by someone who claims to be from the Department of Revenue but is unfamiliar with your specific tax account information, contact Taxpayer Services to check if the message is valid at (850) 488-6800 or fdortaxpayerservices@floridarevenue.com.

On a different topic, do you know who is listed as your Post's Officer/Registered Agent on your Post's Annual Filing on Sunbiz.org? If you

don't, you can go to the following website to find out: <https://services.sunbiz.org/Filings/AnnualReport/FilingStart>

If you don't know your Florida Filing Document Number, just click on "Forgot Number." This will allow you to search by either Entity Name, FEI/EIN, Zip Code, and several other options. When you click on the blue corporate name for your Post, you will be able to see the Document Number, FEI/EIN, Principal Address, Registered Agent Name & Address, Officer/Director Detail, and all of the annual reports that have been filed. You can also access a PDF copy of the filed annual report for any of the years the report was filed.

It is important to keep the information on the Florida Corporation Annual Report accurate. An amendment to the Post's annual filing can be submitted online through the above website. The cost to file an amendment is \$61.25. This is also the cost of filing the Annual Report.

To prevent having to pay to submit an amended Annual Report, I recommend you add two items to the Post's Constitution/Bylaws:

1. The outgoing Post Commander becomes a member of the Executive Committee. (I assume that most Posts have the Post Commander listed as the first person under the Officer/Director

section of the Annual Report.)

2. The outgoing Officer/Registered Agent, per the Post's most recent Florida Corporation Annual Report, becomes a member of the Post Executive Committee.

By having these two outgoing individuals as members of the Executive Committee, changes to the Post's Annual Report can be made during the normal Annual Report filing period, **January 1st to May 1st**. To limit the required changes in the Annual Report to just two individuals, the person who is designated as the Officer/Registered Agent can also be listed as the second Officer/Director.

During the National Convention, I was asked a question about the requirement to register with the Florida Department of Revenue if your Post was soliciting donations during fundraising events. I thought I would pass on the information I provided explaining why American Legion Posts are exempt.

Florida Statute Chapter 496 – Solicitation of Funds 496.406 Exemption from registration

1(c) Any division, department, post, or chapter of a veterans' service organization granted a federal charter under Title 36, United States Code.



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A Month for Celebration, Education, and Giving Thanks

Doug Hockenberry, Northern Area Cmdr
northern@legionmail.org



Hello, Department of Florida American Legion Family, and Happy Veterans Day. More on that later. I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the 3rd District Team, led by Commander Enrique Cabrera, for their outstanding efforts in hosting our Department Commander during her tour of the 3rd District from September 25th to 27th. I had the privilege of joining Commander Cabrera and the 3rd District Family as Commander Moore visited several Posts, including 49, 57, 83, 96, 107, 224, 291, 383, 422, and the newest addition, Post 423. Special recognition goes to the 3rd District Legion Riders, who provided an escort throughout the entire tour and did a wonderful job. Each Post was a gracious host, offering excellent briefings on membership status, programs, and community involvement. The hospitality extended to delicious meals along the way, making the tour an exceptional experience and a testament to the superb performance of the 3rd District Team.

To my fellow Veterans in the Northern Area and across the Department of Florida, Happy Veterans Day. Allow me to share a brief history: Veterans Day, originally known as Armistice Day, is a federal holiday in the United States observed annually on November 11th to honor military

veterans of the United States Armed Forces. This holiday coincides with Armistice Day and Remembrance Day in several countries, all commemorating the end of World War I. The major hostilities of World War I formally ceased at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918, with the Armistice with Germany taking effect. In 1954, at the urging of major U.S. veteran organizations, Armistice Day was renamed Veterans Day.

This month will be filled with pageantry, events, parades, and festivities—occasions we will either attend or host. Regardless of the size of these events, they all carry the same weight of gratitude and appreciation for your service to our great nation. We represent a small cross-section of society who have raised our right hands to support and defend the United States, and we continue this commitment through our service in and for The American Legion. Thank you for all that you do, and Happy Veterans Day.

November also marks a time when many of us will gather for the 2025 Department of Florida American Legion Fall Conference in Orlando, from November 21st to 23rd. This is an excellent opportunity to attend outstanding classes designed to educate and inform you about our organization. Topics include Post Finance, Homeless Veterans Outreach, Post Historian/Social Media, Conflict Resolution,

Membership (Basic & Advanced), Fundraising, Women Veterans Outreach Training, Sergeant-at-Arms Training, and the Programs Fair. Even if you can only participate for one day, the training and camaraderie are well worth it. I hope to see you there. For the full class schedule, visit floridalegion.org, click on **Events**, and scroll down to **Fall Conference**.

In closing, please accept my sincere thanks for your support, and I wish you, your families, loved ones, and friends a Happy Thanksgiving. I stand ready to assist, so feel free to email me at northern@legionmail.org or call 727-514-3742. Thank you again, and have a wonderful November. "Hang Tough."

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Importance of Legion Training

Geo Bograkos, Southern Area Cmdr
southern@legionmail.org



This month, I'd like to discuss a very important subject: Legion Training.

Teaching our Legion members how to effectively execute the programs and functions of The American Legion is critical to our success. We must mentor new members, whether they are veterans of WWII, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, the Gulf War, or fresh from combat operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

continued on page 7 >>



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<< Southern Area Cmdr continued from page 6

They must know how and why the nation's largest wartime veterans' organization functions to be able to lead us into the future.

Training should be one of the top priorities at all levels of our great organization.

From the top down and inside out, even the smallest pebbles of knowledge can create a ripple effect of energy and excitement throughout our ranks. There are countless Legionnaires ready to carry on our mission—waiting only to be taught how. Remember how uplifted you felt right after you finished a training session?

It is everyone's responsibility to carry on this vital mission of training our own, not just the "top leadership." Every Legion family member with the skills and knowledge to share should do so at every opportunity. Be a mentor.

Remember the significant amount of time we dedicated to training in the military? From basic training—where we learned how to march, shoot, wear the uniform properly, and work as a real team—to advanced training, where we honed our specialty skills, learning was integral to our personal and professional development. Training, in a nutshell, made us all better at what we did.

Training will also make Legionnaires even better at what we do today.

Training ensures that The American Legion will be able to better serve our communities. It helps members develop the expertise that will empower them to become the future leaders of The American Legion.

The Benefits of Training

Establishing and implementing a well-organized training program at your Legion Post will reap dividends that go far beyond the immediate satisfaction of quenching the thirst for knowledge. A well-planned curriculum will likely:

- Enhance the quality of your Post programs and operations
- Offer incentives for new members to learn and increase their skills
- Provide new "refresher" skill sets for long-time members
- Increase social activities at the Post centered around training events
- Establish an effective mentoring mechanism for future Post leadership
- Standardize the execution of your Post programs
- Motivate members to increase their Legion knowledge

An active Post training program can actually increase membership, raise retention, and provide new opportunities for member participation in Post activities.

That said, the best place to get top-level Legion training for us here in Florida is from the convention

trainers at the Department of Florida Convention held in June and the Fall Conference held in November.

We at the Area and District levels realize not everyone has the chance to go to Convention or Conference but still has a thirst for knowledge, so we are endeavoring to bring this same training to you here in your home District.

In the Southern Area this year, we have organized four separate training sessions with many of the same Legion Department-level instructors you find at Convention. One training session each will be held in Districts 9 and 11 and two in District 14—one on the mainland and one in the Florida Keys.

By the time you read this, the October 18th District 14 (Mainland) training will be in the books, but three more trainings are set for District 14 (Florida Keys) on January 10th, District 9 on January 24th, and District 11 on February 14th. All sessions focus on: MyLegion.org, Conflict Resolution, and How to Conduct a Post Meeting.

Department Convention Trainers traveling to the Southern Area to deliver this training will include, but are not limited to:

- Department of Florida 1st Vice Commander: Bob Matheson
- Department of Florida 2nd Vice Commander: Bruce Carl

continued on page 8 >>



<< Southern Area Cmdr continued from page 7

- Department of Florida Southern Area Commander: Geo Bograkos
- Department of Florida Membership Chair: Lena Heredia-Perez
- Department of Florida Membership Vice Chair: Isaac White... and other guest trainers.

See the Southern Area Training flyer on page 28.

Noteworthy Events Coming Up in the Southern Area

The "Fonzie-approved" 2026 Sock Hop Themed Southern Area Ball will be held on **Saturday, January 31st, 2026**, at Post 321, 9081 SW 51st St., Cooper City, FL 33328.

Tickets: \$40

Cocktails (cash bar): 18:00 hrs

Dinner: 19:00 hrs — Choice of Chicken Cordon Bleu or Shrimp Scampi with Penne Pasta

Music: Happy Daze Rock Band

Dress: 50's & 60's casual

Contact Geo for tickets: southern@legionmail.org

See flyer on page 27.

The award-winning **District 9 Four Chaplains Commemoration Ceremony** will be held the very next day, **February 1st, 2026**, at 14:00 hrs, at the I.T. Parker Center, 901 NE 3rd St., Dania Beach, FL 33004.

Immediately following the Four Chaplains Ceremony, **American Legion Post 304 Commander Kevin "Gunny" Savage** cordially invites you to join him at the **Official Four Chaplains After Party and Dinner**, hosted by American Legion Post 304, 41 NE 1st Ct., Dania Beach, FL

33004.

If you have not already done so, please visit and "follow" the first-ever **Southern Area Facebook Page**, where you may share all your Facebook posts of your events with everyone in Districts 9, 11, 14, and beyond: <https://www.facebook.com/SouthernAreaFL>

Or just use the QR code to take you right to the page.



Remember, if you have any Post or District functions or events that you wish me to attend, or if I may be of any assistance to you or your Post in any way, please reach out to me.

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Post Constitution and By-Laws

Eric Loyd, Southwestern Area Cmdr
southwestern@legionmail.org



Has your Post looked at your Constitution and By-Laws lately? Is your Post's Constitution and By-Laws current? Every three years, your Constitution and By-Laws should be reviewed. If no changes need to be made, then submit a letter to the Department stating that the membership voted for no changes. If changes do need to be made, then submit a new copy to the Department for approval.

Your Post's Constitution and By-Laws should be posted in your Post for members to have access to them. Remember, transparency is the key to success. Membership owns the Post, and your members should be able to see anything they want to see. If officers are not transparent, in the eyes of your membership, it appears as though you are hiding something. Officers should encourage their members to be involved—it builds a better Post. Just remember, just because it's always been done that

way doesn't make it right.

Keep pushing membership. Get those renewals and recruit new members.



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Florida Motorcycle Safety Program 2025 Kickoff and Upcoming Events

Jim Wineland, ALR Chair

alr@legionmail.org



I hope everyone had a SAFE and productive "Merry Go Round" month and accumulated plenty of miles and hours for the month. Please make sure you turn in all your miles, hours, and donations to Beverly.

The Florida Safety Program for 2025 "Kickoff" starts at Daytona, Biketoberfest!

Throughout the weekend, FMSP volunteers from their partner organizations — ABATE of Florida, Inc. (ABATE), American Legion Riders — Department of Florida (FL-ALR), and the Latin American Motorcycle Association (L.A.M.A.) — shared educational safety tools aimed at increasing motorcycle safety awareness across the state. Florida is home to over 660,000 registered motorcycles and more than one million endorsed riders, and with that comes a higher risk. In 2024, there were more than 621 motorcyclist fatalities, and over 9,500 were injured in motorcycle-related crashes. These numbers underscore the importance of ongoing safety education and action.

Our objective is to establish a dynamic, year-round partnership with the Florida Motorcycle Safety Program (FMSP) that maximizes the visibility and effectiveness of motorcycle safety initiatives. Through

a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes digital outreach, on-site engagement, and innovative promotional assets, we aim to connect FMSP with the motorcycle community in meaningful ways. This partnership will amplify awareness of safe riding practices, provide impactful touchpoints for riders and visitors throughout the year, and enhance FMSP's role as a leader in promoting motorcycle safety. By integrating FMSP's messaging into Bike Week & Biketoberfest® 2025 and beyond, we seek to cultivate a safer riding culture while delivering measurable results for your sponsorship investment.

This year-round sponsorship, with emphasis around Daytona Beach's motorcycle rallies and safety events, positions the Florida Motorcycle Safety Program as a leading advocate for motorcycle safety, ensuring continuous engagement and visibility across multiple platforms and events, including Bike Week & Biketoberfest® 2025. With an expanded package of promotional assets and strategic touchpoints, this partnership will amplify FMSP's mission to promote safe riding practices while maintaining a strong presence throughout the year.

We are confident this enhanced sponsorship will elevate FMSP's impact within the motorcycle community and contribute to a safer, more memorable experience for all riders and attendees.

We are available to support your upcoming events and promote motorcycle safety throughout the year.

To schedule participation or request safety materials and brochures, please contact us so we can add your event to the calendar and ensure all resources are prepared in advance.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, please share them!

Your 2025–2026 Schedule

- **Fall Conference**
November 21–23, 2025
- **Summit, Meet & Greet**
February 18, 2026
- **Summit Classes**
February 19–21, 2026
- **Round Robin**
April 2026
- **Children & Youth Picnic**
April 5, 2026
- **State Unity Ride**
April 20–24, 2026*
- **Rally**
April 25, 2026*

**Dates may change*

Thank you for all that you do. Bev and I are proud to be part of such an outstanding leadership team!

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2025-2026 COMMANDER JESSICA MOORE

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Civil Air Patrol Guidance During Federal Government Shutdown

Rico Thomas, Civil Air Patrol Chair
civilairpatrol@legionmail.org



We are reaching out to you following the activation of a federal government shutdown, effective as of 12:01 AM October 1st. The following information is offered to help provide clarity on what this means for Civil Air Patrol (CAP), our mission, and our daily operations, while offering reassurance and support as we navigate this situation together.

Government Shutdown Overview

As of this email, Congress has not passed the budget or a continuing resolution to extend federal funding, which has resulted in a government shutdown. While these events can create uncertainty, our commitment to transparency and communication is unwavering.

CAP Funding and Operations

CAP is a national nonprofit organization, but our operations are primarily funded through federal

appropriations. Without a continuing resolution from Congress, CAP will not receive federal funding. While we do have a small number of reserves, we are closely monitoring developments and are hopeful a continuing resolution will be passed quickly so CAP receives the resources necessary to sustain our programs and support our members.

Financial Stewardship: Guidance on Expenditures

To ensure responsible stewardship during this period, expenditures planned for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26), beginning yesterday, October 1, are paused and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for approval. This includes equipment, supplies, flying hours, aircraft maintenance, travel, etc.

Training missions, cadet orientation flights, proficiency flying, A9 flights to maintenance facilities, and category "B" missions funded by other agencies are all examples of missions CAP will unfortunately be unable to perform until Congress

resolves the budget crisis or approves a continuing resolution to fund the government. This flying restriction encompasses all categories of flight, including most corporate missions.

This conservative approach will help us maintain business continuity should the shutdown continue for an extended period of time. We appreciate your support in helping to stretch the dollars we do have in hand.

Adopt and Support a Local Squadron

Thank you! Our collective support and commitment to serving these units make CAP resilient while facing challenges.

Find your local squadron here:
<https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/members/cap-unit-web-sites>.

As always, reach out to me with your questions or concerns.
Visitation made: District 9
#plantogetherstandtogether
#OneTeamOneDream

JROTC 16th District and JSSP Postal 1st Round Registration

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP Chair
jrotc@legionmail.org



The JROTC Program is rapidly moving forward with many event competitions, including Area events in many of the schools. Kudos to the 16th District Chairman for having a complete schedule for all events

in the JROTC Units in the district. In addition, they will be participating in a Veterans Boat Parade featuring five JROTC Units on Nov. 8th.

I encourage the other District Chairmen or individual Posts to advise me of your events, with a picture if available, so that I may share your stories.

Another reminder for JSSP Postal Match registration to be made online for your teams. We are already two months into registration, and the response is very slow.

Thanks always for your time and dedication to our Youth Programs.





The Silence After the Badge

Daryl Bass, Law & Order Chair

laworder@legionmail.org

Article submitted by Sergeant Sean Furstenberg (Police One Internet Magazine)

"What really happens when the radio goes quiet and the job moves on without you? I'm in my 28th year on the job—17 of those years as a Sergeant. I'm staring down retirement, and I'm not expecting a parade. I'll likely get the cake and coffee send-off, and then it's done. And that's OK. Cake and coffee is how it should be because every department or municipality can't give extravagant goodbyes due to ever-tightening budgets. What I am expecting, because I've seen it over

and over again, is to be forgotten. Quickly.

I've watched it happen to good people—respected people—officers who gave everything, who bled for their agency, who mentored generations of cops. Not one of them got the long memory they expected. Six months later, their names rarely come up. A year later, it's like they were never there. That's the truth that no one tells you when you're gearing up to walk away. The silence is real, and no one is immune to it.

There's a common saying that gets passed around: "Forty-five minutes out the door and you don't matter anymore." I don't know who created

that quote, but whoever it was really nailed it."

Sergeant Furstenberg's written article goes on with the seven rules of retirement and can be found in the Internet Police One Magazine. For brevity, I am finishing up with this final thought. After reading his article, I (and others before me who retired) have come to the realization that the job must go on—and we were the surviving ones. We did the job and took with us the good and the bad of what society dished out. This goes for every first responder—Police, Fire, Paramedic, etc.

Keep them in your prayers. Honor them.

Legislative Update – Advocating for Our Veterans

Stuart Scott, Legislative Chair

legislative@legionmail.org



As we move through the fall legislative season, our advocacy mission remains steadfast: to protect and advance the interests of our veterans

at every level of government. Both Washington, D.C., and Tallahassee are active with policy discussions that directly impact our Legion family.

Here's a concise update on current federal issues and developments from the first two interim committee weeks in the Florida Legislature.

Federal Legislation: Key Issues in Congress

Congress continues to deliberate several critical pieces of legislation affecting veterans' health care, benefits, and quality of life. Among the top priorities:

- **VA Health Care Modernization:** Lawmakers are discussing enhancements to streamline scheduling, reduce wait times, and improve mental health services, particularly for rural veterans. Oversight of PACT Act implementation continues, ensuring toxic exposure benefits remain fully funded and accessible.
- **Veterans Disability Claims Backlog:** The claims backlog remains a serious concern.

Congress is weighing additional funding and staffing initiatives for the VA to expedite pending claims and appeals, especially for Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan-era veterans.

- **Housing & Homelessness Initiatives:** Bipartisan efforts are underway to bolster the HUD-VASH program and expand transitional housing. Legislative proposals aim to ensure no veteran is left without shelter due to bureaucratic delays or limited community resources.
- **Caregiver Program Review:** Congressional committees are conducting oversight on the

continued on page 12 >>



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<< Legislative Chair continued from page 11

VA Caregiver Program after reports of inconsistent eligibility determinations. The Legion continues to advocate for consistency, transparency, and expanded support for veteran caregivers.

As always, your voice matters. Continued outreach to Florida's congressional delegation strengthens our efforts to secure lasting legislative gains.

State Update: Florida Legislative Interim Committee Weeks

The Florida Legislature has completed two interim committee weeks, laying the groundwork for the 2026 Session. These early meetings provide insight into priorities that may shape policy affecting our veteran and military communities.

- **Veterans Affairs Committees:** Lawmakers reviewed current utilization of state veterans' homes, discussed waitlists, and explored future facilities, particularly in underserved regions of the state. Funding for maintenance and staffing remains a key topic.

homes, discussed waitlists, and explored future facilities, particularly in underserved regions of the state. Funding for maintenance and staffing remains a key topic.

- **Gaming and Regulatory Issues:** Committees revisited charitable gaming regulations, including the use of electronic gaming machines by veteran organizations. The Department of Florida American Legion continues working with stakeholders to clarify statutory language and protect legal fundraising activities essential for post operations.
- **Mental Health & Suicide Prevention:** Discussions centered on statewide behavioral health strategies. Several members of the Legislature voiced support for enhanced partnerships with veteran groups to address suicide prevention and expand access to peer support programs.
- **Budget Forecasts:** Early budget projections suggest a cautious

approach for FY 2025. While the state remains fiscally strong, legislators have indicated the need to prioritize critical services, which may open opportunities for increased funding in veteran outreach, employment, and transition services.

Our Mission in Action

As your Legislative Chair, I will continue to monitor, engage, and advocate on your behalf. Whether at the U.S. Capitol or the Florida Capitol, our message is the same: *"Care for those who have borne the battle."*

I urge all Legionnaires to remain informed, participate in district and post legislative activities, and support advocacy efforts through direct engagement with lawmakers. When veterans speak with one voice, we are heard.

Strong advocacy today ensures a stronger future for our veterans and their families.

Florida Membership Milestone – 55% and Climbing!

Lena Heredia-Perez, Membership Chair
membership@legionmail.org



- 10 Posts have exceeded their 2026 membership goal and continue to grow!
- 139 Posts exceeded the October 55% Membership Goal.
- 49 Posts have already surpassed the November Membership Goal of 65%.

Way to go, Team Florida—You Did It!

Thanks to your incredible dedication and hard work, we've officially reached 55% membership—a fantastic achievement worth celebrating! Your passion for The American Legion's mission and your commitment to one another are what make this Department truly outstanding.

But we're just getting started.

Our next goal is 65% membership by November, and I have no doubt we can reach it—together. One of the most effective ways to get there is by hosting a Membership Drive. If your Post hasn't scheduled one for November 1, there's still time! Rally your team, make those calls, and reconnect with members who haven't

continued on page 13 >>



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<< Membership Chair continued from page 12
yet renewed for 2026.

And remember—the holidays are quickly approaching, which can be a very difficult time for many veterans. By reaching out and inviting members to your Post for upcoming activities, you're not just boosting

membership—you're offering connection, support, and a sense of belonging that can help ease holiday stress.

This Department-wide initiative is more than a numbers push—it's a chance to reignite engagement, welcome new members, and show

our communities the heart and strength of The American Legion.

Let's keep the momentum alive. Let's keep growing. And let's continue honoring our veterans by building a united, thriving Legion—one member at a time. **Florida, we've got this!**

Competitions Starting Soon – More Students Interested

Doug Hockenberry, Oratorical Chair
oratorical@legionmail.org



October was a busy month with more students hearing about the Oratorical Program. Why do I say that? Well, I received

11 inquiries from National from students looking for information about the program. In turn, I forwarded those notices to the respective District Commanders, who then forwarded those inquiries to the Posts servicing those high schools. Based on the number of inquiries received, I venture to say we have students who are hearing about the opportunity through their schools and social media.

Let's ensure we provide them with all the information they need for success. As a side note, these inquiries were from students in the Southern, Central, Southwestern, Western, and Northern Areas—with the majority from the Southern Area. So, let's get out there and make every effort to support these students.

NEWS FLASH!!! I will be hosting an information brief on the Oratorical Program at the upcoming Fall Conference, and this year we are teaming up with Sonny Decker, the Boys State Chair. Why, you ask? Boys State and the Oratorical Scholarship Program are the two premier programs that we have for high school students. By joining forces, we can concentrate on the key items for each of these amazing programs while providing you with more time to attend other valuable training during the Fall Conference. Both Sonny and I look forward to having you join us—hope to see you there.

By November, many of the students preparing for this program will have refined their prepared orations, as many Post competitions will start taking place over the next 45 days or so. As such, let's make sure that we have our judges secured, along with all the staff you need to successfully conduct a professional competition. If you run into a roadblock or have questions, please reach out to your District or Area Chair for assistance. Last month, I addressed

ENGAGEMENT and the importance of keeping open lines of communication with your students, parents, caregivers, and school officials. Remember, both engagement and communication are essential components of the equation for the successful implementation of this program. Once again, I want to make sure that everyone has the assigned topics for the 2025–2026 Oratorical Contest. As such, I am providing them once again.

Amendment 4

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Article 3, Section 3

Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to

continued on page 14 >>



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<< Oratorical Chair continued from page 13

their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court. The Congress shall have the power to declare the punishment of treason, but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood or forfeiture except during the life of the person attainted.

Article 4, Section 4

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a

republican form of government and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or of the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence.

Article 6, Clause 3

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall

ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.

Let me close by thanking all those who called or sent me emails inquiring about the Oratorical Scholarship Program. Again, I look forward to having you join me at the upcoming Fall Conference. As always, if you have any questions, please email me at oratorical@legionmail.org or call me at 727-514-3742. Thank you for your support. "Hang Tough."

#OneTeamOneDream

Revitalization Made Simple

Judith Richards, Post Development Chair

revitalization@legionmail.org



What is Revitalization in simple terms? The act or process of giving new life or fresh vitality to someone or something.

What are some synonyms for Revitalization? Reactivation, Restoration, Renewal, Awakening, Invigoration, Freshening.

Perhaps all of us are thinking about the huge word **Revitalization** and the huge process tied to it. What if we looked at the simple terms and some of those synonyms and relaxed into some of the simpler tasks? Rather than feeling that there are numerous process steps, official meetings, setting official dates and times, reaching out to media, community partners, etc., why not awaken our Post membership—both renewed and non-renewed members!

Invite the Legion Family members to have a phone call day. Come to the Post, and each individual can make 5–10 phone calls. Have breakfast, lunch, or refreshments for your callers.

Before making the calls, perhaps schedule a Coffee Klatch, a breakfast—something that you can have when you invite them to come in. You will know there will be a great welcome! Have all the Legion Family Groups participate.

Invigorate them with a phone call.

"Hi, my name is... I'm calling from... I noticed we haven't seen you in a while. What can Post... do for you? Is there any assistance you need? Why not stop in and see your comrades, friends, and changes at the Post? Thank you for being a veteran, and thank you

for your support of the Post and The American Legion."

Run the Post 400 reports for your zip codes. Do you need assistance? Please reach out to me, and I am glad to be of service.

The phone call with them would be something like:

"Hello, my name is... I'm calling from Post... I noticed that you are assigned to Post 400, which is Florida's transitional Post. Typically, a member is assigned there until they choose a Post in their neighborhood. Are you aware there is a Post in your community? Some of the things we do are... We look forward to seeing you at the Post and introducing you to many new friends! Thank you for being a veteran and for your support of

continued on page 15 >>



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<< Post Development Chair continued from page 14
The American Legion."

Please reach out, and I will walk you through the steps that we

will do together. I will facilitate planning meetings, take notes, offer suggestions, and much, much more! As always, I am here to be of service to those Posts that are considering

a revitalization. Please call, and we can share ideas, run reports, and make calls together.

Riding to Remember

Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair

powmia@legionmail.org



5th Annual Seven Bridges POW/MIA Remembrance Ride and Ceremony

The 5th Annual Seven Bridges POW/MIA Remembrance Ride and Ceremony has come and gone—and what an incredible event it was!

We had over 268 motorcycles, 2 chase vehicles, and more than 325 participants attending the ride and ceremony. Please visit The American Legion Department of Florida's Flickr album for event photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/floridalegion/albums/72177720329195742/>

I want to thank the Legion Family leadership who supported and attended again this year, and a special thank-you to all the volunteers who made the event run so smoothly.

The ride generated a \$6,145.00 donation to the National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum construction project, with additional pledges still coming in.

A well-deserved shout-out to Vicky Dean of Chapter 103 and the

riders of District 13, who held their own POW/MIA Recognition Day Ride with over 40 motorcycles, raising more than \$1,200.00 for the construction of the POW/MIA Memorial. Outstanding work!

I also want to thank Lance Maiden for helping to keep our POW/MIA Facebook page updated. If you have not logged on lately, you should, because he has posted some great content. Also, if you have an event, please send the pictures, story, and/or video to us so we can publish it.

National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum

Have you contacted your Representative in support of H.R. 3057?

Passage of this bill is vital to securing the National designation for the Memorial—ensuring a permanent site to remember, honor, and educate future generations about the stories and sacrifices of our nation's POW/MIA.

Not sure what to say? Visit the Memorial's website and click the yellow "View Our Email Writing Guide" tab for ready-to-use templates to help you contact your Member of Congress.

Stay Connected

- Florida POW/MIA Facebook Page: facebook.com/falpowmia
- Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA): dpaa.mil
- National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum: powmiamemorial.org

DPAA Missing Personnel Identified in FY 2025

- World War II: 171
- Korean War: 58
- Cold War: 0
- Vietnam War: 8

DPAA Missing Personnel Identified in FY 2026

- World War II: 1
- Korean War: 0
- Cold War: 0
- Vietnam War: 0

Accounted For – September 2025

September 2

- WWII – Mullaney, J.

September 3

- Korean War – Kibbey, E.
- Korean War – Patton, M.
- Korean War – Birmingham, D.

September 5

continued on page 16 >>



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<< POW/MIA Chair continued from page 15

- Vietnam – Gervais, D.
- WWII – Garelick, S.
- WWII – Beard, L.

September 9

- Korean War – Johnson, R.
- Korean War – Dage, D.
- WWII – Burns, W.

September 10

- Korean War – Gibson, C.
- WWII – Arnao, C.
- WWII – Garcia, R.
- WWII – Webb, M.
- WWII – Keeney, C.
- WWII – Melofchik, G.

- WWII – Langevin, A.
- WWII – Shelton, J.
- Korean War – Vega, V.

September 15

- WWII – Saunders Jr., W.
- WWII – Younge, H.
- WWII – Sweet, B.
- WWII – Winters, C.

Korean War – Farrell, W.

- WWII – Mandeberg, E.

September 16

- WWII – Wilcox, B.
- WWII – Nevois, E.
- WWII – Lynch, C.

- WWII – Wallace, C.

September 19

- WWII – Bianchi, W.

September 22

- WWII – Fatur, S.

September 23

- Korean War – Duquesne, R.

September 30

- WWII – Bowden, E.

"You Are Not Forgotten."

Together, we continue our mission to ensure every missing American is remembered, every family is supported, and every hero is brought home.

Understanding the Importance of Resolutions

Clarence Hill, Resolutions Chair

resolutions@legionmail.org



Resolutions are vital to the Legion's mission and are serious business, as we are a resolution-based organization. Without the resolution process, the

Legion would have no guidance in developing programs, allocating funds to help veterans, or targeting Congress concerning issues that affect you, me, our families, and the rest of this great country of ours.

Resolutions tell those in leadership roles what the members want. As adopted by your membership, a resolution represents a formal expression of the official opinion of your Post, District, Area, Department, or the National organization. When approved by

the local membership, resolutions can proceed to the next step—either District, Area, or Department level. At the Department level, resolutions are dealt with at a Department Executive Committee (DEC) Meeting or a Department Convention.

With formal authorization at the Department level, the resolution may be sent to National Headquarters, where it is registered for either the Resolutions Subcommittee for the National Executive Committee (NEC) or the Resolutions Assignment Committee of the National Convention. The resolution is then forwarded by the National Adjutant to the appropriate national-level commission or committee for study. Finally, either the National Executive Committee members or the National Convention delegates vote upon the

recommended action.

Upon adoption at the national level by either the NEC or the National Convention, the resolution becomes the position of The American Legion.

The September 2024 monthly training session of the Internal Affairs and Membership Division was a discussion on how to write a resolution. The training session was recorded and is available at legion.org/training. The American Legion's *Resolutions and Reports Booklet* can also be downloaded from the National website. The Legion's Digital Archives on the National website contain resolutions dating back to 1919, making it easy to see if any resolutions on your topic are included. Existing resolutions may be modified, updated, or replaced as necessary and as conditions change.



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FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

NOVEMBER 2025 EDITION

CURRENT YEAR FIGURES : 2025-2026



37
VETS
RECEIVED
FUNDS



\$65,624
PROVIDED AS
EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE



14
SPI PARTNERS



\$101,500
GIVEN TOWARDS
SUICIDE PREVENTION

FALL CONFERENCE ON THE HORIZON

We're excited to see everyone at the Annual Fall Conference in Orlando, happening November 21–23 at the Caribe Royale!

This year, PROJECT: VetRelief (PVR) will offer multiple opportunities to learn about our impactful initiatives, celebrate program successes, and explore how you can get more involved in supporting veterans.

Enhanced PROJECT: VetRelief Training Returns

Back by popular demand, our enhanced PROJECT: VetRelief training is returning this year after an incredible response last fall!

Our team has updated the training materials to provide a comprehensive course covering:

- » Importance of continued program support
- » Eligibility requirements for financial assistance
- » Suicide Prevention Strategic Partners' role
- » Ways to become a resource in your community

This session is **open to all members of the Legion Family**. Everyone is encouraged to participate and strengthen their impact.

Post Service Officer (PSO) Training Collaboration

Post Service Officers are also in for a treat! We've been invited to speak during the PSO training session, where we'll provide a more in-depth overview of the eligibility requirements for our Emergency Assistance Program.

In previous years, we only had time for brief remarks, but this time, we'll take a deeper dive. **Pro tip:** Attendees should pay close attention. This valuable information will come in handy later!

Networking & Suicide Prevention Roundtable

A special networking event will also take place, designed to connect attendees with Board Members and Suicide Prevention Strategic Partners.

This session will include a guided discussion on how we can work together to better serve veterans, and will have a "Unity Event" highlighting the importance of collaboration and community.

Programs Fair & PVR Resources

The conference will also feature a Programs Fair, where you'll have the opportunity to meet program chairmen, collect valuable resources, and discover new ways to engage at your Post.

Our PVR Chairman and Committee will be available to answer questions and provide marketing materials for you to take home and share.

Don't miss this chance to connect, learn, and strengthen your support for veterans.

We look forward to seeing you all in Orlando for an inspiring and impactful weekend!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:



Programs Fair

FRI - Nov 21 @ 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM



Service Officer Chat

FRI - Nov 21 @ AM SESSION



Networking Event

FRI - Nov 21 @ 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM



Training

SAT - Nov 22 @ 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM



November Updates and Exciting Events Ahead

Alan Cohen, VA&R Chair

var@legionmail.org



...and all of a sudden, it's the beginning of November! As you're reading this, a wonderful event is taking place at

Post 142 in Pompano Beach. We've been hard at work marshalling resources and putting all the moving parts in place, and kudos to Joan Suelter, our Women Veterans Chair, and the rest of the planning committee. This is a first-of-its-kind event in the Southern Area, and we're anticipating it to not only be successful but also to serve as a model for the state.

In just a couple of weeks, we'll be gathering once again to participate in the Department's Fall Conference. Along with the wonderful camaraderie we look forward to and enjoy, there will be many classes where Legionnaires will have the opportunity to learn about the many aspects of what makes the Legion work. One such class will be the 2-day Post Service Officer class, where individuals will receive training to be effective in this highly valued position. Pre-registration is required, and I'm including a link to the Department website's registration form. Posts can send up to three Legionnaires to this class.

<https://www.floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/PSO-2025-Registration-Form-Conference.pdf>

In closing this month's article, I'm proud to announce that I've once again been appointed as Vice Chair, National VA&R Commission. I'm excited and, at the same time, humbled to be in the position to have an effect on the lives of our brother and sister veterans and their families. Looking VERY much forward to seeing you all at the Fall Conference in just a couple of weeks.

A Spectacular Year for American Legion Programs – 2024

Dennis Boland, Child Well Being Fdn Pres

pdcboland@legionmail.org



American Legion Baseball

- For the 2024 season, 54,918 youth from 3,051 teams played

American Legion Baseball (1,798 senior teams and 1,523 junior teams), representing 50 American Legion Departments and Canada.

- 1,152 players participated in the eight national regional tournaments, of which 144 went on to play in the American Legion World Series.
- There are 70,586 subscribers to the American Legion Baseball e-newsletter, The Dugout.
- There are 87 American Legion

Baseball program alumni enshrined in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Junior Shooting Sports

- 701 individual athletes entered the postal round competition.
- 111 shooting clubs entered the national postal round competition.

Boys State

- 13,385 participants in 50 Boys State programs.

Boys Nation

- 100 participants from 50 Boys State programs.

Scouting and The American Legion

- A total of 1,855 scouting units were chartered by the Legion Family across the nation, involving

34,768 young people and 18,043 adult leaders.

- The American Legion recognized 940 youth with certificates issued from the national level for achievements in Scouting programs (855 Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout Awards; 18 Boy Scouts of America Venturing Summit Awards; 24 Boy Scouts of America Sea Scouts Quartermaster Awards; 13 Girl Scouts USA Gold Awards).

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement

- 22 American Legion Departments have an established American Legion Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.

Oratorical

continued on page 19 >>



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<< Child Well Being Fdn Pres continued from page 18

- The 2023–2024 Consolidated Post Report indicates 941 oratorical contests conducted nationwide, involving 6,435 youth contestants from 50 departments.

Flag

- The 2023–2024 CPR indicates there were 4,715 Flag Day activities in local communities.
- There are 45,650 subscribers to the American Legion Flag Half-

Staff Notification Alert Service.

Get Out the Vote

- The 2023–2024 CPR reflects 1,538 Get Out the Vote activities conducted in communities throughout the nation.

Greetings from the Detachment Commander

Michael Nigbor, Detachment Commander
commander@floridasons.org



Hello to all the team. Wow, this year is flying by. I know everyone is doing their best to promote our organization and work on renewals.

On September 21st, I was invited to Largo Post 119 by Squadron Commander Michael “Doc” Bowen. Many of our Department and Detachment leaders attended. He and his team planned a wonderful night of camaraderie, dining, fantastic entertainment, and, most importantly, all to benefit our Detachment Charity, C.O.T.A.—the Children’s Organ Transplant Association. The C.O.T.A. representative, Ryan Gallagher, was in attendance. Several donations from the guests and squadrons were presented. Ryan gave us information on how to adopt a child in need in our own area. Go to <https://cota.org/find-a-family/>, enter your zip code, and see the families near you.

On September 27th, I was invited to District 12 for their annual Memorial Run, including stops at Posts 117, 163, 81, and 189. Squadron 163 Adjutant Steve Vilgats gave me a tour of his Post and introduced me to the Post Commander and her daughter, the

Auxiliary President. A great team. October 2nd through October 5th, I had the honor of attending the NEC Fall Conference in Indianapolis with NEC William Kelly and NECA Gerard Sambets. There were some very informative sessions on Member Training and Development, Child Well-Being Foundation Committee reports, the 100th Anniversary Committee, Membership and Squadron Activities, the Americanism Commission, MyLegion training, and information on some new resolutions.

October 11th was the Gold Star Mothers Monument Unveiling in Tampa—an absolutely beautiful event with some inspiring keynote speakers. Events like these remind us of why we became members of The American Legion and support our veterans and their families. As usual, many of our Department and Detachment leaders were there to show their support.

After this event, I headed to Post 7 in Clearwater for the annual S.A.L. family picnic. A very nice venue with lots of activities for the children. October 13th was a well-attended celebration at Post 303 for the Navy Birthday, where Squadron 303 served their famous pizzas.

October 17th through 19th, I will be visiting District 11 and attending installations on the 17th at Post 268, Riviera Beach. Department Southern Area Commander Geo Bograkos, Southern Area Detachment Vice Commander Michael Mathias, and Department District 11 Commander Stan Brown will also attend.

October 25th is the Children and Youth Picnic at Post 103 in Punta Gorda. The day will start with American Legion Family members in their Halloween costumes having a poker run—leaving Post 303 in Bonita Springs, then to Post 274 in Fort Myers Beach, Post 136 in St. James City, and ending at Post 103 in Punta Gorda to spend time with the children and participate in activities. Lots of donations have already been coming in to support this District 13 event.

November 1st, I will have the pleasure of attending the 3rd District Sons 1st Annual Picnic, hosted by Commander Brian Wolfe and his team.

November 11th is Veterans Day. Your Post Family will undoubtedly be having a ceremony to honor our

continued on page 20 >>



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<< Detachment Commander continued from page 19

military service men and women for their service and sacrifice. What a great day to have an open house for your community and share with them the great things The American Legion does for our veterans, their families, our communities, and our children and youth. Have your local newspaper and social media outlets start promoting this event. Get your members involved. Get them engaged in helping and volunteering.

Do your "Buddy Checks." Print the roster, get a couple of people to help you, and call your members. Let them hear your voice. Let them know you appreciate them renewing in a timely manner. Invite them to your events and meetings. Make them know that they are more than just a number—that you truly C.A.R.E. Renewals are the strength of our foundation. Work on renewals constantly. Have a weekly membership night at your Post—it works! People are happy to know they have a special day and people they can count on to be there for them. Ask them if they have any other family members who are eligible to join. So many don't realize their grandchildren can be members.

Our Detachment Adjutant, Christian Rapp, was provided a list of Squadron 9999 members from National. These are members who get moved when a squadron closes and there is no indication of where they should be placed. Accordingly, there are 53 members currently in limbo. Area Vice and District Commanders should go through the list and reach

out to those members in your area to see if they have a home Post yet. If not, invite them to join their nearest squadron. As an idea to promote this, the squadron could offer to pay the expired member's dues for the year (\$11.00) to encourage them to join a local squadron and have a new place to call home. You can reach Adjutant Rapp at adjutant@floridasons.org.

Congratulations to District 12 and their new squadron, Suntree #0420, All American Veterans of Brevard County. Our next goal is 35% on November 6th. How is your squadron doing? Are you meeting your goals so far? Have you had any events to support your Post and community? Area Vice and District Commanders, are you making your visitations? Do you see that all your squadrons have turned in current SIR reports?

Gentlemen, we have a goal to reach for the 2025–2026 service year: 30,000 members for the Detachment of Florida. This is attainable with everyone on board doing their part to promote the world's largest and greatest veterans organization—The American Legion. Make it fun. Make the phone calls, send the texts and emails. Use social media in a positive, respectful manner and boost your membership. Renew, Recruit, Rejoin, and Retention equals Results. Go after your past members and offer them a deal. Be creative and have fun with it. Have your "Early Bird" dinners. Get them to come back. Strength in numbers equals influence. Renewals receive public recognition that boosts morale and pride. Reaching membership goals ensures we are

ready to support our veterans, their families, and our communities.

Our new goals are just around the corner. I'm sure it will mean moving beyond the 400,000-member mark for the benefit of all our nation's veterans.

"You are never too old to set a new goal or to dream a new dream!" – C.S. Lewis

We are a Team, because we **C.A.R.E.**

As always, thank you for all you do and for your support. Invite me to your events at commander@floridasons.org.

October 14th was a very sad day for our American Legion Family. We were informed of the passing of Past 4th District Commander John "Jack" T. Bennett. Please keep the family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Arrangements will be forthcoming.



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www.floridalegion.org
legionlink@floridalegion.org



The 7th Annual Pearl Harbor / Doris "Dorie" Miller Remembrance Day Ceremony

Submitted by: George McZeal Jr, Post 331

Greetings to Orlando and Orange County, Florida! Please see the flyer on page 30 and support Doris "Dorie" Miller Memorial Post 331, American Legion, Orlando, Florida. We invite you to join us for the **Miller/Memorial Charity Golf Tournament and Luncheon**, launching the **7th Annual Pearl Harbor / Doris "Dorie" Miller Remembrance Day Ceremony**.

Event Details:

- **When:** 3:00 PM, Sunday, December 7, 2025 (Pearl Harbor Day)
- **Where:** Doris "Dorie" Miller

Memorial Post 331, 4325 Fairmont St., Orlando, Florida

The Commander and Veterans of Post 331 warmly welcome all to attend this meaningful tribute. Now in its seventh year, the ceremony honors **Doris "Dorie" Miller**, a true American hero whose courage continues to inspire our nation and community.

Miller, a Messman Third Class in the U.S. Navy, displayed extraordinary bravery during the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941—manning anti-aircraft guns and aiding the wounded despite no formal training. His heroism earned

him the **Navy Cross**, making him the first African American to receive this distinguished honor.

Miller's story became a symbol of valor and equality during World War II. He later gave his life in service when the USS Liscome Bay was sunk in 1943. In recognition of his legacy, the **U.S. Navy is naming an aircraft carrier** in his honor—the first ever named for an African American and an enlisted sailor.

Join us in remembrance, gratitude, and celebration as we honor the enduring spirit of Doris "Dorie" Miller.

One Team, One Mission: Ready for Nov 1 Membership Push?

Submitted by: Membership Team

Department-Wide Membership Drive Starts November 1, 2025

Our new membership year begins with the Department-Wide Membership Drive on November 1, 2025—a key moment to reconnect with members and strengthen every Post across Florida.

Why It Matters

Every renewal keeps your Post strong. Local dues fund local impact—honor guards, service officers, youth scholarships, and community outreach. Each member renewal ensures we can continue serving veterans, families, and hometowns.

Quick Kickoff Plan (60 Minutes or Less)

1. **Gather your team** – Invite Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and Sons for a one-hour "call & connect" session.
2. **Print your roster** – Divide non-renewed and 0400/0400AD members into small call lists.
3. **Reach out warmly** – Call, text, or email with appreciation and a reminder of why membership matters.
4. **Share success stories** – Point to your Post's programs and wins.

Keep It Personal

Lead with connection, not pressure.

#OneTeamOneDream

Share a story, photo, or invite members to your next event. Small gestures build lasting engagement.

Let's Do This—Together

Circle **November 1, 2025** and **March 1, 2026** on your calendar. Even a few calls from each volunteer make a big difference.

Small steps. Big impact.

Thank you for all you do for our veterans, families, and communities.

Find helpful resources at:

- [Department](#)
- [National](#)





Post Everlasting

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

In Memoriam: Past District 4 Commander John T. "Jack" Bennett, Jr.

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Past 4th District Commander John T. "Jack" Bennett, Jr. of Ocklawaha, Florida. Jack passed away peacefully on Monday, October 13, 2025, at the age of 63. He was a proud and dedicated member of Belleview Post 284.

Jack is survived by his beloved wife, Lynn Bennett; two sons, Daniel and Travis; and three cherished grandchildren, Mason, Morgan, and Molly.

A U.S. Air Force veteran, Jack honorably served from 1981 to

2001, spanning the Lebanon & Grenada, Persian Gulf, Panama, and Global War on Terrorism eras. His dedication to service continued through his involvement with The American Legion and The Sons of The American Legion, where he was a 25-year Legion member and a 15-year SAL member. Jack's many leadership roles, including Post and District Commander, reflected his unwavering commitment to the Legion Family.

A service to honor Past 4th District Commander Jack "Gator" Bennett will be held at 1:00 PM on Saturday,

November 8, at 13837 SE 80th Ave, Summerfield, Florida, with a celebration of life immediately following. The family invites all to join in remembrance and fellowship until 4:00 PM and encourages guests to bring a dish to share and their beverage of choice.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Wreaths Across America in Jack's memory. Please keep his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

[read more >>](#)



4TH DISTRICT CHAPLAINS

NATIONALLY
RECOGNIZED
COMMEMORATION
CEREMONY

FEBRUARY 1 2026
2:00 PM

I.T. PARKER CENTER
901 NE 3RD ST.

DANIA BEACH, FL 33004
(BEHIND HARBOUR TOWN MARINA)

DINNER & AFTER PARTY
4:00 PM

AMERICAN LEGION POST 304
41 NE 1ST CT.
DANIA BEACH, FL 33004



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MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

October 30, 2025 (65% Target)

District 2	Roxann Dressel	68.11%
District 4	Darcy Bockman-Wright	68.01%
District 9	Jim Tewes	64.58%
District 3	Rick Cabrera	64.22%
District 11	Stanley Brown, Jr.	63.94%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	61.51%
District 1	Robert Osmon	61.08%
District 15	Drew Davis	60.29%
District 13	Laurene Allen-Flower	60.11%
District 12	Daniel Martin	59.28%
District 6	David Musser	58.72%
District 7	Kalvin Thompson	56.63%
District 16	Michael Harley	56.35%
District 17	Jim Bowers	56.33%
District 8	Charlie Magnus	54.83%
District 14	Angela Glover	53.45%
Northern	Doug Hockenberry	62.13%
Western	Shelby Windham	62.06%
Southern	Geo Bograkovs	61.27%
Eastern	Joan Suelter	58.97%
Southwestern	Eric Loyd	57.76%
Central	Rick Orzechowski	57.49%
Post 400		61.43%

DEPARTMENT TRUSTED. LEGIONNAIRE APPROVED.

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust has been protecting Legionnaires and their families for over 50 years.



LEGIONNAIRE
INSURANCE TRUST

www.thelit.com



**"JUST BECAUSE I LIVE DANGEROUSLY
DOESN'T MEAN SHE HAS TO."**

Service often takes you away from family. USAA is always there for them when you can't be. We deliver the financial peace of mind and support you deserve. Checking. Savings. Credit cards. Loans. Auto & life insurance. Mutual funds. Even free financial advice. Get all you've earned. [Visit usaa.com](http://usaa.com) today.

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50/50 RAFFLE 4 VETERANS

www.florida5050.org

WIN CASH **WIN MORE CASH** **WIN LOTS OF CASH**

More Chances. More Winners. More Cash!

Questions: 1-800-393-3378. Florida participants only.

AMERICAN LEGION Department of Florida

ONE OF DEPARTMENT'S LARGEST FUNDRAISERS!

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SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

The American Legion official license plate.



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DO YOU
HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES?

BECOME A
DEPARTMENT
CHAIR!

MAKE AN

2026



IMPACT

2027

YEARS IN LEGION



Department
of Florida

DISTRICT

POST

AREA

NAME

POSITION INTERESTED IN

EXPLAIN YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIR

LEGION SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

☐ ALEI

☐ Florida Legion College

☐ National Legion College

☐ Sgt-at-Arms

☐ Chaplain

☐ National LEAD Classes

☐ _____

☐ _____

POSITIONS HELD	YEARS AT POST LEVEL	YEARS AT DISTRICT LEVEL	YEARS AT AREA LEVEL	YEARS AT DEPT LEVEL
Commander				
Vice Commander				
Adjutant				
Sgt-at-Arms				
Historian				
Chaplain				
Membership				
Americanism				
Baseball				
Blood Donor				
Boy Scouts				

POSITIONS HELD	YEARS AT POST LEVEL	YEARS AT DISTRICT LEVEL	YEARS AT AREA LEVEL	YEARS AT DEPT LEVEL
Boys State				
Children & Youth				
JROTC				
Shooting Sports				
Law & Order				
Oratorical				
POW/MIA				
School Medals				
Women Veterans Advocate				
Youth Law Cadet				
Other				

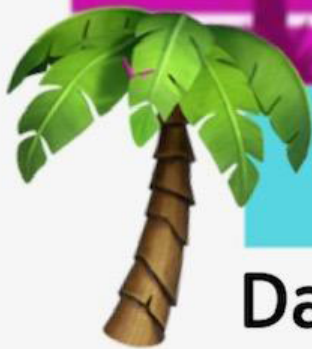
PLEASE RETURN TO: The American Legion, Dept of Florida, Attention: Bob Matheson, P.O. Box 547859, Orlando, FL 32854

**MIAMI
VICE**

Themed Party

American Legion and Auxiliary

VICE'S Event



Date - Jan 17th, 2026

Time - 1-5 pm

Location - Post 8

300 Ave M NW

Winter Haven, FL

Food, Raffle Baskets, Auction Items

Donation - \$20.00 per person

pay at the door

To RSVP contact

Bruce Carl at brucel1955@yahoo.com

Proceeds to benefit the Department Commander
and Department President charities

AMERICAN
LEGION
AUXILIARY

AMERICAN
LEGION

SONS OF THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

THE CENTRAL AREA LEADERSHIP PRESENTS:

2026 CENTRAL AREA Mangunitaville Casino Party!

MARCH 7, 2026

AT CLEARWATER AMERICAN LEGION POST 7

5 PM - COCKTAILS/GAMES

6 PM - JIMMY BUFFETT INSPIRED BUFFET

LIVE DJ - CASINO GAMES - RAFFLES - BASKETS

**PUT ON YOUR BEST JIMMY BUFFETT OUTFIT
AND ENJOY A FUN NIGHT IN PARADISE!**

PROCEEDS BENEFIT: SPECIAL OLYMPICS,
C.O.T.A., & ALA DISASTER RELIEF

**\$45 PER PERSON
\$80 PER COUPLE**

RSVP/MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MICHAEL SHERMAN
(813) 541-3452 | VCCENTRAL@FLORIDASONS.ORG
MAIL TO: 7519 WINGING WAY DR, TAMPA, FL 33615

2026 SOUTHERN AREA BALL



BACK TO THE 50'S & 60'S



SOCK HOP



LIVE MUSIC BY



HAPPY DAZE ROCK BAND



SAT. JAN 31, 2026 - 6:00PM TILL ???

AMERICAN LEGION POST 321

9081 SW 51ST ST - COOPER CITY. FL 33328

Silent Auctions - 50/50 - Door Prizes

\$40. per person - Pickup Wristbands At Will Call

Cash Bar ~ Roving Hors DeOuvres

Choice of Chicken Cordon Bleu' or

Shrimp Scampi with Penne Pasta



Please Make Checks Out To: American Legion Post 304

With Southern Area Ball In Memo

Please Mail Checks To: American Legion Post 304

41 NE 1st Ct., Dania Beach, FL 33004

More Information: southern@legionmail.org or (954) 868-2990

Proceeds To Benefit Special Olympics

American Legion Department Of Florida

Presents

SOUTHERN AREA TRAINING

TOPICS TO INCLUDE:

**MYLEGION.ORG ~ CONFLICT RESOLUTION
HOW TO CONDUCT A POST MEETING**



**ALL LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS WELCOME!
ATTEND ONE OR ALL SESSIONS! ~ BRING LAPTOPS & NOTEPADS**

WHO SHOULD ATTEND? ALL POST, UNIT & SQUADRON OFFICERS

Meet Your Dept. of Florida Convention Training Team:

Dept. of Florida 1st Vice Commander: Bob Matheson

Dept. of Florida 2nd Vice Commander: Bruce Carl

Dept. of Florida Southern Area Commander: Geo Bograkos

Dept. of Florida Membership Chair: Lena Heredia-Perez

Dept. of Florida Membership Vice Chair: Isaac White

And Other Guest Trainers

DISTRICT 14 ~ (MAINLAND)

SATURDAY OCT. 18, 2025 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 31

7710 SW 59TH AVE., S. MIAMI, FL 33143

DISTRICT 14 ~ (FLORIDA KEYS)

SATURDAY JAN. 10, 2026 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 154

4115 OVERSEAS HWY., MARATHON, FL 33050

DISTRICT 9

SATURDAY JAN. 24, 2026 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 304

41 NE 1ST CT., DANIA BEACH, FL 33004

DISTRICT 11

SATURDAY FEB. 14, 2026 - 13:00 HOURS

AMERICAN LEGION POST 268

1690 AVENUE H W, RIVIERA BEACH, FL 33404

Kindly RSVP Via Email: southern@legionmail.org



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

**POST 273
MADEIRA BEACH**

**Annual Veterans Boat Parade
November 8th at 9:00am**

VETERANS!

**TO JOIN US AND CRUISE
THE INTRACOASTAL!**



**THANKS TO THESE SPONSORS
WE SHOULD HAVE SPACES
AVAILABLE FOR UP TO
40 VETERANS!**

***SIGN UP THAT MORNING
WITH YOUR PHONE!***



FRIDAY DECEMBER 5, 2025
7:30 AM REGISTRATION CHECK IN
9:00 AM SHOT GUN START
2:00 PM LUNCHEON AND AWARDS

AT THE WALT DISNEY WORLD
MAGNOLIA GOLF COURSE
AN ARNOLD PALMER CO.
MANAGED COURSE

FOR TOURNAMENT INFORMATION,
SPONSORSHIPS, DONATIONS
& REGISTRATIONS
SCAN THE 'QR CODE'



OR LOG ONTO THE WEBSITE @
themillermemorialcharitygolftournament.com
SEE YOU ON THE TEE!!!!

Celebrate America with the **USA250 CHALLENGE!**



What: The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge is a yearlong celebration of the nation's 250th birthday. It offers participants three challenge categories — community service, physical activities and mental health awareness — to pursue goals such as 250 hours, miles, Buddy Checks or other measurables.

When: Through July 4, 2026.

Who: American Legion Family members and anyone else. Participants may pursue their goals individually or as part of a team.

Why: In addition to celebrating America, proceeds from the \$30 registration fee and all donations go to the Legion's Veterans & Children Foundation, which supports disabled veterans and military families in need.

How: Scan the QR code to learn more and register. Or visit legion.org/usa250/challenge

**Scan to
register**

