



## A Message from the Department Commander

### Jessica Moore, Commander

[commander@floridalegion.org](mailto:commander@floridalegion.org)



Brothers and Sisters — welcome, October!

As we move into this new month, let's stay united, stay safe, and keep serving our communities with pride. This month, we celebrate our membership win, continue the Commanders Tour, and remain vigilant through hurricane season. Forward updates, needs, or wins to your district leadership.

We did it. We've hit our first membership goal. Thank you to every member, leader, and volunteer whose effort, outreach, and enthusiasm made this possible. This milestone proves what we can accomplish together.

Our mission took an energizing step forward as the Commanders' Tour began in the 7th District. The event drew an engaged crowd, with many Legion Family members in attendance. The spirit of camaraderie and fellowship was inspirational and uplifting, creating positive momentum that we will carry into the coming weeks. Thank you to everyone who participated and supported this successful start.

**Stay vigilant:** review your post and district emergency plans, confirm nearest shelter locations, and assemble or refresh emergency kits with water, medications, flashlights, chargers, and important documents. Check on members and pair them with a buddy volunteer for welfare checks, secure loose

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[floridalegion.org/submit](http://floridalegion.org/submit) or [legionlink@floridalegion.org](mailto:legionlink@floridalegion.org)

Questions? [legionlink@floridalegion.org](mailto:legionlink@floridalegion.org)

**#oneteamonedream**

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**\$150,000 GOAL**



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER 2025

- 1-31 Disability/Employment Month
- 1-31 Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- 1-31 ALR Merry-Go-Round
- 1 Be The One Day
- 1 Boys State Registration Fee Open ✨
- 1 Membership 55% Target ✨
- 1-2 Kippur
- 1 Chapter 136: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 2 Membership Department Zoom Meeting ✨
- 4 Chapter 316: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 4 District 3: Meeting
- 4 District 9: Meeting
- 4 Post 148: Paint Party
- 6-9 National Fall Meetings ★✨
- 7 Child Health Day
- 7 Start of Operation Enduring Freedom (2001)
- 8 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 9-12 District 15: Commander's Tour ✨
- 11 Dedication of Gold Star Monument ✨
- 12 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 12 District 5: Meeting
- 13 Navy Birthday (1775)
- 13 Columbus Day
- 15 Legion Link Articles Due ✨
- 15 Halloween Safety Book Orders Due ✨
- 16 Boss's Day
- 16-19 District 1: Commander's Tour ✨
- 18 Southern Area Training: District 14
- 18 Post 127: Fall Harvest
- 20 Notification of Child Well-being Foundation Grants ★
- 21 National Department Service Officer School ★
- 23 Beirut Bombing (1983)
- 23-26 District 11: Commander's Tour ✨
- 25 Grenada Invasion (1983)
- 26 District 4: Leadership Training
- 26 Day of the Deployed
- 27 Navy Day
- 28 Emergency Responders Day
- 30-31 District 9: Commander's Tour ✨
- 31 Halloween

- ✨ Commander attendance tentative.
- ✨ Department of Florida event.
- ★ National event.

Events are subject to change. More details at [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org).



<< Commander continued from page 1

outdoor items, and keep vehicles fueled. Report urgent needs to your district leadership and follow official evacuation orders and safety guidance.

By remaining vigilant, united, and

committed to our One Team One Dream, we'll weather any storm and uplift our communities with unwavering strength and spirit. Here's to an October filled with purpose, progress, and pride—together, we move forward!

### Chain of Command: Why It Matters

**Bob Matheson, 1st Vice Commander**

[1stvice@legionmail.org](mailto:1stvice@legionmail.org)



The American Legion has been around for over a century, and one of the main reasons it has stayed strong is because of its structure.

In Florida, like in every other state, the Legion runs on a clear chain of command. At first, it might sound like just another set of rules or titles, but in reality, that chain of command is what helps local posts thrive. It keeps things organized, makes sure everyone is connected, and gives posts the tools they need to focus on what matters most: serving veterans, their families, and their communities.

At the very top is the National American Legion. That's where big-picture decisions are made, programs are created, and the overall mission is set. Their job is to make sure the values of the Legion—like supporting veterans, promoting patriotism, and looking after our communities—stay strong nationwide. But National can't reach into every town on its own, so that's where the Departments, like the Department of Florida, come in.

The Department of Florida is the "middle link" in the chain. It takes the national mission and adapts it to fit the needs of veterans right here in Florida. The Department Commander, Vice Commanders, Adjutant, and other officers function as leaders and guides for the whole state. They aren't just figureheads; they work to keep posts supported, connected, and ready to carry out programs. In other words, the Department makes sure no post has to go it alone.

That matters because local posts are where the real work happens. Posts organize events like memorial ceremonies, barbecues, and parades. They help veterans file for benefits, run scholarships, and support families in need. But even the strongest post sometimes runs into challenges. Maybe membership numbers are slipping, or maybe officers are unsure how to manage paperwork. This is where the Department steps in. They offer training, advice, resources, and sometimes even a helping hand. That support keeps posts active and strong.

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The chain of command also works in the other direction. Posts can bring up issues, ideas, or concerns through their District, Area, and Department leaders, who then carry those voices up to the National level. That means veterans in small towns across Florida still have a way to influence big decisions made in Indianapolis. It's a two-way street: guidance flows down, and

feedback flows up.

In the end, this system benefits everyone. Posts get the backing they need to stay healthy and involved in their communities. The Department and National levels get to keep the Legion unified and focused on its mission. And most importantly, veterans and their families get the full strength of a nationwide organization working for them, while still keeping

that local, hometown touch.

So, the chain of command isn't just about titles or who reports to whom. It's about teamwork. It makes sure The American Legion in Florida—and across the country—can keep doing what it does best: serving those who served.

## Work Smarter, Not Harder

**Bruce Carl, 2nd Vice Commander**

[2ndvice@legionmail.org](mailto:2ndvice@legionmail.org)



This month's training tip is on **"tracking your CPR information."** We all know that we are required to do CPR at the end of the year, and

there should be no reason not to have 100% reporting. Every Post in the Department has functions that occur throughout the year, and many of them work with numerous programs. The CPR report should not take multiple hours to complete! There is an easier solution!

With the new year just getting underway, now is the time to start implementing your plan. Here are a few tips to assist you:

1. Every time you have an event

or work on a program, have volunteer sheets on hand for your volunteers to fill out. Each sheet should have three columns on it: one for hours, one for mileage, and one for donations collected (if applicable).

2. Have one person in charge of getting the above information from each person and reporting it to the Adjutant or the program chair to record. This should be done weekly or at least monthly.
3. Create a spreadsheet for each program and enter the amounts as soon as possible. Excel will automatically fill in the totals for you, and all you need to do is put them on the CPR. How easy is that? If every Chair follows these simple guidelines, you can be done with your CPR in 30

minutes and have more accurate reporting! There is an example spreadsheet at the end of this article.

Our duties can be varied and tasking at times, so why not take advantage of every shortcut we can, while still getting accurate results? These are a few of the tips to assist you with making the CPR report easier to fill out. You might have some of your own that you implement. Whatever method you choose, it will save you valuable time and frustration at the end of the year when you are trying to figure out what you have done for the past 12 months.

As always, if you need any type of training at your Post or District, please feel free to contact me, and I will make every effort to attend!

### Children and Youth

example

Date of Event	Miles	Hours	Donations Received
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## October NEC Meeting — Department of Florida Update

**Jim Ramos, NEC**

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First, I want to say thank you to all the Legionnaires of the Department of Florida.

As you are reading this, please visit [legion.org](https://legion.org)

to watch the event live and see firsthand what is happening with our organization, The American Legion. The meeting will convene October 6–9, 2025, in Indianapolis for the organization's annual fall session.

### What Does the National Executive Committee Do?

To better understand the NEC, it's important to review the following three key references:

1. Charter of The American Legion: National Constitution and By-Laws
2. Rules of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion
3. Uniform Code of Procedure for the Organization of the National Conventions of The American Legion

Our NEC meeting will begin on **October 8, 2025**. The first day will cover all the resolutions from Committees and Commissions, along with their reports. It is usually a long day, while the second day tends to be somewhat shorter—hopefully. I

will provide an update in my next Legion Link.

Please make sure you have the most current editions of the above references.

### Your NEC's Responsibility

Now you should have a better idea of what the NEC does and how we work for you, the Legionnaires of the Department of Florida. I always put the Department of Florida first. Why? Because I am one of you. As your NEC, my responsibility is to represent the Department of Florida, provide assistance as needed, and keep the Department informed about national issues, changes, and updates.

### How Members Make Change: Resolutions

So, how do we, as members, make changes? Through resolutions. It begins at the Post level, with members writing strong, well-prepared resolutions to address organizational needs.

We have a resolution book that outlines the proper format. An example looks like this:

"WHEREAS, ...(etc.) ...; and  
"WHEREAS, ...(etc.) ...; and  
"RESOLVED, By .... (etc.) ..., That ....  
(etc.) ..."

As you can see, it is not always easy. To help guide you, please consult the following resources:

1. 2025 Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies
2. The American Legion Resolution and Reports
3. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised
4. Your Post Constitution and By-Laws

You can download these references for free at [floridalegion.org](https://floridalegion.org) or [legion.org/publications](https://legion.org/publications).

### A Personal Note

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your NEC for Florida. I will continue working to help you and to move the Department of Florida forward.

If you would like to correspond with me, please include your full name, Post number, and the purpose of your email, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

I am Jim Ramos, your NEC from Florida. I am here to serve you, Florida Legionnaires. If you have any questions, please email me at [NEC@legionmail.org](mailto:NEC@legionmail.org) or call 352-226-4370 and leave a message. (I do not have everyone's phone number.) Thank you.



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## Understanding the ANEC Role in the American Legion

**Michael Raymond, ANEC**

[anec@legionmail.org](mailto:anec@legionmail.org)



One of the questions that I'm asked a lot is what exactly my job is in the American Legion.

Well, basically, I am a backup to your National

Executive Committeeman member, who is currently Jim Ramos. If, for any reason, he is unable to accomplish his duties—say he falls or is pushed down some stairs—I would take his place as your representative to the

National organization. I attend all meetings of the NEC but have neither a voice nor a vote unless the NEC is not available. So, it is imperative that I stay updated on all activities and information presented at the NEC.

The NEC is a very important branch of our organization, as it is responsible for advancing the policies and programs of the American Legion. We are elected by you every other year and have full voting power during the Legion's

Fall and Spring meetings and during the National Convention. We are responsible for drafting the annual budget, approving contracts, and signing off on Legion spending. We basically serve as the Legion's Board of Directors, ensuring our programs and policies are effectively implemented and maintained.

It's basically pretty simple, but if you have questions, don't hesitate to contact me or Jim.

## Filing IRS Form 990 and Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) Form 990-T

**Shirley Douglas, Finance Officer**

[finance@legionmail.org](mailto:finance@legionmail.org)



During the Florida Department's June Convention and even the August National Convention, I was approached by several

Legion members (both in-state and out-of-state) about financial questions they had about their posts. This month's article is to provide post members and Audit/Budget Committee members with information on how to identify potential red flags that could signal possible accounting malpractice happening in their post.

If you notice any of the warning signs below, check your Post Constitution and By-Laws to see what officer responsibilities/procedures exist, and ask questions to find out the processes that are being used in your post.

### Financial Statement Irregularities

- Inconsistent or unexplained discrepancies between internal records, bank statements, and reported figures.
- Sudden, unexplained fluctuations in revenue, expenses, or profit margins.
- Overly complex reports that are difficult to understand or an accountant who avoids explaining them clearly.
- Exaggerated or false revenue figures.

### Weak or Circumvented Internal Controls

- One person having solo access and control over multiple financial functions without checks and balances.
- Inadequate review/approval

processes for transactions.

- Excessive or unnecessary adjusting entries that could be used to manipulate results.

### Recordkeeping & Documentation Issues

- Missing, altered, or destroyed financial documents (receipts, invoices, and ledgers).
- Suspicious bookkeeping entries, such as excessive voided transactions.
- Poorly maintained or incomplete financial records.

### Compliance & Professional Standards Breaches

- Late or missing tax filings without a valid explanation.
- Providing outdated or incorrect tax advice under current laws.

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2025-2026 COMMANDER JESSICA MOORE

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- Conflicts of interest not disclosed.

### How to Respond

If you spot one or more of these red flags:

- Audit and reconcile records promptly.
- Strengthen internal controls (segregation of duties, access logs, and approval workflows),

update Post By-Laws, and establish Standing Rules for the Post's financial procedures.

- Seek independent review from another qualified accountant or auditor.
- Consider legal consultation if you suspect intentional misconduct. Do not accuse anyone of misconduct without first getting legal advice.

Document your findings to be able to address them during the post's monthly meetings. The best way to protect the financial well-being of the post is to stay involved and informed of the post's financial status.

### For God and Country

## Legal Guidelines for Running a Queen of Hearts Fundraiser in Florida

**Curtis McNeil, Asst. Judge Advocate**

[assistantja@legionmail.org](mailto:assistantja@legionmail.org)



Many Florida veterans' groups currently operate Queen of Hearts fundraisers. It is important to understand and publish the rules

for legality, transparency, and accountability.

A veteran's service organization in Florida can legally play Queen of Hearts as long as the game is run as a "drawing by chance" (raffle) and follows the regulations for nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations under Florida law. Here are the key legal requirements:

- **Organization Must Be Qualified:** Only organizations that are recognized as 501(c) nonprofits or veterans' groups may conduct charity raffles, which include the Queen of Hearts game. Eligible groups include IRS-recognized 501(c)(3), (4), (7), (8), (10), or (19) organizations. American Legion Posts are usually

501(c)(19) organizations.

- **No Gambling Devices:** The game cannot use electronic gaming machines, slot machines, or devices resembling casino gambling, as these are illegal for nonprofit use in Florida.  
<https://www.myfloridalegal.com/ag-opinions/gambling-veterans-organizations>  
While there is some debate about electronic instant bingo machines due to subsequent litigation, this has not been tested for Queen of Hearts.
- **Drawings by Chance Statute:** The event must follow Florida Statute 849.0935, which governs charitable drawings and raffles. No special permits are needed, but strict rules apply to conduct and advertising.
  - ◆ Under Florida Statute § 849.0935, the organization must:
    - Allow free entry (no purchase required), though optional donations are permitted—

any purchase requirement is prohibited.

- ~ There must always be a no-purchase-necessary free entry option—usually limited to one per person and in-person only.
- Prominently disclose on every ticket, flyer, or advertisement:
  - ~ Full name and address of the nonprofit
  - ~ The rules of the drawing
  - ~ That entry is free (donations allowed, but not required)
  - ~ When and where the drawing will occur
  - ~ The source of prize funds
- ◆ In addition to the statute, a good summary is available at <https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/florida-raffle-laws>
- **Registration for Solicitation:** If your organization is accepting donations (even via ticket sales), you must register with the Florida

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<< Asst. Judge Advocate continued from page 6

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for charitable solicitation.

- **Prizes and Taxes:** Winners receiving over \$600 must receive IRS Form W2-G, and prizes over \$5,000 may require IRS withholding and state tax compliance.
- **Eligibility to Play:** Must be at least 18 years old in most Florida

raffles, regardless of whether alcohol is served.

- **Members-Only Participation:** Participation should be restricted to paid, active members only, and tickets should include the participant's name and membership details.

#### To remain compliant:

- Do not use slot machine-like devices or electronic gaming

equipment

- Run the Queen of Hearts as a true raffle, using physical tickets, sealed cards, and weekly drawings, where selection is by chance and not skill.
- Use ticket sales only for fundraising and support of recognized veteran charities.
- Report required tax information for large prizes and follow all relevant charitable gaming rules.

### A Heartfelt Thank You from the Central Area

**Rick Orzechowski, Central Area Cmdr**  
[central@legionmail.org](mailto:central@legionmail.org)



Hello to my brothers and sisters in the American Legion Families.

I do not normally talk about myself because it is more important to talk about the great things the posts in the Central Area are doing for the veterans and communities in their respective cities, but this topic is worth it.

I would like to thank you all for the massive amounts of well-wishes and prayers I received. I was overwhelmed by this and love you all for it!

I had two very serious issues caused by an unknown virus that attacked my heart and my lungs. With the help of God, the doctors, and all my wonderful Legion and blood family, I am on the road to recovery. I have been told it will take time and rest to heal.

I have six bosses who have threatened me with bodily harm if I don't do as I am supposed to and rest! I could take them one at a time, but not all six at once!

Again, I will be eternally grateful for all the well-wishes and prayers from all of you, and love you all.

God Bless the American Legion, and God Bless America.

### Shared Values

**Doug Hockenberry, Northern Area Cmdr**  
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Hello, Department of Florida American Legion Family. I want to extend my sincere thanks to the Department of Florida National Convention Planning Committee, headed up by our very own PNC Clarence Hill. Talk about teamwork! That group of folks worked many hours over the

past year-plus to ensure a successful 106th National Convention, and I'm sure you would agree (other than the liquid sunshine) that the convention was filled with excitement and provided a wonderful opportunity to learn more about The American Legion and our many programs. I, for one, found the committee briefings very informative, and I enjoyed hearing from Tulsi Gabbard, the Director of National Intelligence,

and Doug Collins, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Again, fantastic job by the Department National Convention Planning Committee.

Since our Department Convention, I've visited many Posts, attended several Installations, a couple of District Meetings, a few events, and had the pleasure of talking with many of you from throughout the Northern

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<< Northern Area Cmdr continued from page 7

Area. From all the conversations I had, it is evident that the dedication and positive spirit within our membership remain strong. Each Post I visited demonstrated a commitment to service and camaraderie, showing that our shared values continue to unite us. The enthusiasm for upcoming projects and willingness to support one another truly embody what it means to be part of the American Legion Family. Once again, this lends credence to our Department Commander's motto of "One Team One Dream."

Unfortunately, from time to time, differences of opinion or viewpoints enter the equation among members. And sometimes these differences become distractions from those shared values we all have. We Veterans tend to be Type A personalities, and once we get something in our minds, we are determined to move forward at all costs. Ask yourself—is it worth it?

It's important to recognize that our

achievements are the result of open dialogue and mutual respect among members. By actively listening to each other's ideas and concerns, we continue to foster an environment where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute. This collaborative spirit is what drives us forward and ensures our ongoing success as a united organization.

Our shared values not only guide our actions but also help us navigate challenges together. By maintaining transparency and encouraging honest conversations, we create a space where every voice matters and solutions can be found collectively. This openness strengthens our unity and keeps our mission at the forefront of all we do.

In addition to these experiences, I have been inspired by the stories of perseverance and community involvement shared by our members. Whether volunteering at local events or supporting fellow veterans, it's clear that our organization thrives because of individuals who go above

and beyond.

The Department of Florida American Legion Family continues to set a standard for engagement and service, and I am proud to be a part of and represent such a dedicated group. Let us keep the momentum going as we move forward together, strengthening our bonds and working toward our common goals and shared values.

As we continue to build on our successes, I encourage every member to stay engaged and participate actively in upcoming initiatives. Your involvement, whether big or small, makes a difference and contributes to the strength of our Legion Family. Let's celebrate our accomplishments and look forward to new opportunities where we can serve our veterans, their families, our communities, and each other with pride and dedication.

"Hang Tough"  
**#OneTeamOneDream**

## Communication and the Power of Active Listening

**Geo Bograkov, Southern Area Cmdr**  
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This month I'd like to discuss a skill that's often overlooked but incredibly powerful: active listening.

If you are talking, you are not listening. We live in a society where everyone's talking, but how many

of us are really listening? Think about the last conversation you had. Were you fully present, or were you just waiting for your turn to speak?

Active listening goes beyond just hearing words. It's about grasping the message behind them. It's about giving someone your full attention, showing them that their thoughts and feelings are important.

When you actively listen, you're not just nodding along. You're engaging with the speaker, asking questions, and providing feedback. You're displaying empathy and respect.

But active listening isn't just about being polite. It's a powerful tool that can enhance your Legion Family

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relationships. When people feel heard, they're more likely to trust you, to open up to you, and to work with you toward shared goals.

So, how can you become a better active listener? Start by putting away distractions. Make eye contact. Pay attention to body language—both yours and theirs. Never interrupt. Instead, ask thoughtful questions that show you're both engaged and interested.

And here's the real secret: listening isn't passive. It's an active choice you make in every conversation. It's a skill you can practice and improve every day.

So, the next time someone's talking to you, challenge yourself to truly listen. Don't just hear their words—understand their message. Show them that their voice matters. Because when we listen—really listen—we open the door to deeper connections, better understanding, and more effective communication.

Keep in mind, communication isn't just about being heard. It's about hearing others too.

***Remember... good leaders listen!***

## **The Future of Communication in a Digital Society**

Digital technology has transformed the way we connect, share information, and express ourselves.

But what do Facebook, TikTok, X, and other social media apps mean for the future of communication?

Let's start with the obvious: speed and reach. Today, a social media post can circle the globe literally in seconds. We can connect with people across continents as easily as we chat with our next-door neighbors. This unprecedented connectivity creates incredible new opportunities for collaboration, learning, and understanding.

But with this speed come new challenges. In a society of instant communication, how do we ensure that our messages are thoughtful and accurate? How do we cut through the noise and make sure our voice is heard?

One key trend is the rise of visual communication. From emojis to infographics to live video calls like FaceTime, we're increasingly relying on visual elements to convey complex ideas quickly and effectively. As communicators, we need to adapt to this visual language, learning how to craft messages that are not just heard, but seen and felt.

Artificial intelligence is another game-changer. AI-powered tools can help us analyze communication patterns, translate languages in real time, and even generate content.

Virtual and augmented reality technologies are blurring the lines between digital and physical

communication. As these technologies advance, we may find ourselves having conversations in shared virtual spaces, adding new dimensions to how we interact and express ourselves.

But as we embrace these new technologies for our Legion Family communications, we must not lose sight of the human element. Empathy, emotional intelligence, and the ability to build genuine connections will become even more important in a digital society.

Privacy and security will be ongoing concerns. As our communication becomes increasingly digital, protecting our personal information and ensuring the integrity of our messages will be paramount, particularly with AI.

Despite these known challenges, the future of communication is incredibly exciting. We have the opportunity to connect, collaborate, and create in ways that were unimaginable just a few decades ago.

As we move forward, let's embrace these new tools and technologies on behalf of our Legion Families. But let's also keep in mind the fundamental principles of good communication: clarity, empathy, and authenticity. By combining the best of both worlds—the power of digital technology and the essence of human connection—we can shape a future of communication

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that is truly remarkable.

The digital revolution in communication is not just changing how we talk to each other. It's changing how we think, how we work, how we live. It's up to us to guide this transformation, to harness its potential for good, and to ensure that in this new era of digital communication, the human voice—your voice—still rings clear and true.

Keep in mind, becoming a great communicator is an ongoing process, not a destination. Keep practicing, keep learning, and keep pushing yourself to communicate more effectively.  
Your words have power—use them wisely.

### Three Noteworthy Events Coming Up in the Southern Area:

- SOUTHERN AREA TRAINING for [MyLegion.org](https://www.mylegion.org) with Dept. Vice Commander Bruce Carl:  
October 18, 2025  
1300 hrs – 1600 hrs  
District 14 (Mainland)

Post 31 – 7710 SW 59th Ave,  
South Miami, FL 33143  
(Bring your laptop)

- **The 2026 "Sock Hop Themed" SOUTHERN AREA BALL**  
1800 hrs (Cocktails - Cash bar)  
1900 hrs (Dinner)  
Saturday, January 31, 2026  
Post 321, 9081 SW 51st St.,  
Cooper City, FL 33328  
Tickets are \$40.  
Choice of Chicken Cordon Bleu or Shrimp Scampi with Pasta. Music by Happy Daze Rock Band.  
Dress is '50s & '60s casual.  
Contact Geo for tickets: [southern@legionmail.org](mailto:southern@legionmail.org)
- **The Award-Winning District 9 FOUR CHAPLAINS Ceremony**  
1400 hrs  
February 1, 2026  
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 invites you to join him at the **OFFICIAL FOUR CHAPLAINS After Party and Dinner** hosted at American Legion Post 304,

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

If you have not already done so, please visit and LIKE or FOLLOW the 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 this QR code to take you right to the page:



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

Remember, WE are here to support YOU.

*For God & Country*

**#OneTeamOneDream**

## Membership is the Key to Success

**Eric Loyd, Southwestern Area Cmdr**  
[southwestern@legionmail.org](mailto:southwestern@legionmail.org)



As we are now in September, we are pushing membership goals. We need to really be focusing on our renewals, but also recruiting new members.

Congratulations to Post 405 Legionnaires and Sons for being the first post in the state to exceed 100%.

Our Area Membership Chair is Isaac White, who is always pushing membership and is always willing to come to your post to help train and recruit.

I am always available for post revitalizations and willing to help you reach or exceed your goals.

Our northern family and friends are starting to return to our areas, and we look forward to a busy season.

*continued on page 11 >>*



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<< Southwestern Area Cmdr continued from page 10  
District meetings and picnics are

starting. Make sure your Post is active in the district as well.

If I can assist you in any way, please reach out to me.

## Times Are Changing

Robert Osmon, District 1 Cmdr

[district1@legionmail.org](mailto:district1@legionmail.org)



As I reflect on what's going on in the USA and the world, I am saddened. We have given blood, sweat, tears, and for some, the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I feel when we were active duty, it was about brotherhood/sisterhood, and no matter what, we had each other's six through thick and thin. There was drama, but very little, and we worked through it.

What happened after we got out? I see more expecting entitlement, drama, not having your six, titles vs. caring, and why The American Legion exists. Our spouses supported us and the cause; now it's about individuals, cliques, and personalities. They supported those in charge out of respect for the position, even if they didn't agree. Now, if they don't like someone or agree, it's "let's do all we can to get rid of them, because they hurt my

feelings."

Yes, times are changing, and we must change with them, but for the right reasons—not out of self-glory or "that's the way we have done it for the past 20 years." We are labeled as the good old boys' club, smokers, drinkers, foul-mouthed veterans who do nothing more than sit around and tell war stories. Most of the newer generation is not into the drinking, smoking, or clubbing scene. The public doesn't understand comradeship, what we've been through, and that our Post is our sanctuary. Yes, with times changing, we need to be respectful to everyone and watch our language and actions.

Volunteers are the backbone of each Post, and without them, you will not succeed. Then there is the saying, "Same Three People (STP)." You hear this wherever you go, and not just in The American Legion. It is our job to motivate and attract them by providing clear communication, showing appreciation, and

demonstrating the impact of their work. Why did you volunteer? Was it for a title? Was it for our veterans? Was it for our community? Was it for self-glory? I hope it was for our veterans, community, and The American Legion! I volunteered for our veterans, community, and The American Legion, and came in knowing about the STP syndrome.

Commanders do not have it easy trying to operate with all the volunteers, personalities, and separate entities. Past Commanders/Officers should be mentors and not be impeding or fighting new Commanders/Officers because they weren't re-elected or they have different ways of doing things.

As our Department Commander's slogan says:  
**#OneTeamOneDream**

*"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way." – Warren Bennis*

## American Legion Department Commander Visits Third District, September 25–28

Rick Cabrera, District 3 Cmdr

[district3@legionmail.org](mailto:district3@legionmail.org)



The American Legion Department Commander visited the Third District from September 25 through September 28. This special visit provided

an opportunity for Legionnaires, families, and community members to meet with the Commander, share local successes, and discuss priorities for the coming year.

A key focus during the visit was membership retention and growth,

as strong and active membership ensures that The American Legion can continue its mission of serving veterans, their families, and communities. Posts are encouraged to engage their members, reach out to those who have not been active

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<< District 3 Cmdr continued from page 11

recently, and welcome new members into the organization.

The Third District Commander also extends sincere gratitude to all Posts

within the Third District that held 9/11 ceremonies this year. These heartfelt events honored the memory of those we lost on September 11, 2001, and reminded us of the importance of service, unity, and remembrance.

Posts throughout the district are encouraged to attend scheduled events during the Commander's visit and continue building on the proud traditions of service that make the Third District strong.

## Welcome to Legion Year 2025–2026!

**Jim Wineland, ALR Chair**

[alr@legionmail.org](mailto:alr@legionmail.org)



Congratulations to all those stepping into new leadership roles. Your dedication to "The Cause, Not the Applause" continues to move the American Legion Riders forward with strength and unity.

We are excited to share some big news — based directly on your feedback from the recent surveys, we have made some changes this year that we believe you will enjoy.

First up — yes, it's true — the Summit is going **BACK TO THE BEACH!** Our 2026 February Summit will be held at the Hilton Daytona Beach Oceanfront Resort, February 18–21. Located just three blocks from the legendary Main Street, this takes place during both of the Daytona Bike Week rallies.

We have secured a special block of rooms just for the ALR. This includes rooms 301–310 — a cluster of rooms and suites connected by a large, shared balcony overlooking the ocean. Here is what is special about this block:

- Four rooms are set aside for the

ALR Appreciation Room and our Chapter of the Year winners.

- There is one large hospitality room.
- Two Tower Suites are reserved for the top two Chapter of the Year winners.
- We will designate one additional premium room for the third Chapter of the Year winner.

These rooms normally go for \$319 per night, but we have negotiated a special ALR rate of \$169 per night.

Reservations opened on July 1, and by July 16, 80% of the original 553 room nights were already booked. Due to this overwhelming response, we have expanded our block to 773 room nights — but they are going fast!

Yes, this move does come with a modest increase in cost, but after careful consideration — and listening to your feedback — it was clear that we had outgrown our previous location at the Holiday Inn in Orlando.

Let us break it down:

- Room rates have gone from \$149 to \$169 per night, totaling an \$80

increase over the four-day stay.

- To help cover rising food and beverage costs, we have also adjusted the registration fee from \$20 to \$50 per person.
- Parking at the Hilton is \$10 per night for motorcycles (covered indoor parking) and \$20 per night for cars.
- There is a lower-cost option for car parking just half a block away at the city garage, which is \$10 per night and conveniently connected to the Hilton via a skywalk.

While the total cost may increase slightly — approximately \$110 more for the hotel stay, plus parking — what you get in return is a first-class location, upgraded facilities, and direct access to the Daytona Beach experience.

To help offset the increase in hotel and parking expenses, we are strategically utilizing our \$20,000 food and beverage commitment with the Hilton. Our goal is to negotiate and provide meal options at a lower cost to you, making sure you are getting the best value for your money while still enjoying a

*continued on page 13 >>*



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<< ALR Chair continued from page 12

top-tier venue and experience.

We are committed to making this Summit both affordable and unforgettable, and every decision — from parking to plates — is made with you, the Rider, in mind. We are confident this change will make the 2025 Summit more memorable and meaningful for all who attend.

And we have one more big change on the horizon —

We will be sharing full details at the Fall Conference, but here is a sneak peek:

The Rally is moving to a new home — Destination Daytona Harley-Davidson, located at the junction of US-1 and I-95 on Florida's east coast. This move places us right in the heart of the action, with more space, more visibility, and more

opportunities to showcase who we are and what we do.

Julie Hughes has already secured blocks of rooms at three nearby hotels to accommodate attendees, ensuring that everything you need will be just minutes away. Stay tuned in — we will roll out all the specifics at the Fall Conference, and we think you are going to enjoy what is coming next.

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

## Your 2025–2026 Schedule

- Department Convention  
June 12–15, 2025
- National Convention  
August 22–28, 2025
- POW/MIA Ceremony:  
Jacksonville  
September 20, 2025

- “Merry Go Round”  
October 2025
- 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 (this may change)
- Rally  
April 25, 2026 (this may change)

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

**“For the Cause,  
not the applause.”**

## October: A Month of Service, Reflection, and Patriotism

**Joe Marcheggiani, Americanism Chair**  
[americanism@legionmail.org](mailto:americanism@legionmail.org)



It's not just about pumpkin pie coffee.

October is a month that calls the American Legion to reflect upon the strength of our military heritage, the sacrifices of those serving abroad, and the enduring importance of community engagement. Through the observance of the United States Navy's Birthday, the National Day of the Deployed, and local community

activities, Legionnaires reaffirm our devotion to country and the Four Pillars that guide our mission.

Since October 13, 1775, the United States Navy has served as a steadfast guardian of liberty upon the world's oceans. On this day, the American Legion proudly honors the sailors—past and present—whose vigilance and sacrifice have preserved America's security. Posts are encouraged to recognize Navy veterans in their ranks and communities, host ceremonies of

remembrance, and share the Navy's distinguished history with younger generations. By involving ROTC units, Sea Cadets, and local students, we ensure that the Navy's proud traditions of service and honor continue to inspire.



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<< Americanism Chair continued from page 13

The National Day of the Deployed stands as a solemn reminder that freedom is defended not only at home but on distant shores. On October 26, the American Legion pays tribute to all service members who are currently deployed, as well as to the families who endure the hardship of separation. In keeping with our pillars of National Security and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Posts are urged to demonstrate visible support—whether through care package initiatives, letter-writing campaigns, or moments of public recognition. In uniting our communities behind our deployed service members, we reaffirm that they are never forgotten and never alone.

October also offers an opportunity for Legion Posts to engage their local communities through seasonal gatherings, youth-centered activities, and outreach programs. Whether by sponsoring a fall festival, organizing a safe Halloween event, or conducting patriotic youth contests, Posts demonstrate their commitment to Americanism and Children & Youth. These efforts not only strengthen community bonds but also remind all citizens of the values the American Legion stands to uphold.

The observances of October exemplify the enduring spirit of the American Legion: honoring military service, supporting those who continue to serve, and fostering unity within our communities. As we mark

the Navy's proud heritage, recognize our deployed forces, and extend the hand of fellowship to our neighbors, we renew our pledge "For God and Country." October is not simply another month—it is a time of solemn remembrance, steadfast service, and patriotic commitment.

Posts are encouraged to share their October observances and community initiatives within their demographics. By telling our story, we inspire others, strengthen our ranks, and demonstrate to the nation that the American Legion continues to lead in service, remembrance, and patriotism.

## Building the Future Through Boys State

**Darcy Bockman-Wright, Boys State**  
[boysstate@legionmail.org](mailto:boysstate@legionmail.org)



This is the time of year when the packets are delivered, and the applications are dispersed. Your Boys State delegates from the 81st session should be returning to express the once-in-a-lifetime experience your Post provided for them. Boys State is a program that begins in late September and concludes in mid-June. While we understand this program is very time-consuming, it is also very rewarding. The impact on the young men and women of Boys and Girls State is expanding throughout Florida. From future congressmen

and women to public servants, including pastors, the impact is spreading like wildfire.

For those of you at the Post and District level, please be aware that, for the first time ever, we will be holding a Zoom meeting for all interested Legion Family members to attend on October 5, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. If you are interested in attending, please reach out to Bekki Boarman or [boysstate@legionmail.org](mailto:boysstate@legionmail.org) to be added to the email roster. This event has been established to promote and communicate the benefits and changes that will be affecting our program this year. Knowledge is power, so if you

promote this program in any capacity and are interested, please reach out. If you're unable to attend the Zoom meeting, know that training will also be available at the Fall Convention. In the coming months, you will see Sonny and me at your District meeting using a boots-on-the-ground approach to support the Posts that are interested and actively participating in this program.

This year, the Boys State 82nd session dates have changed from June 14–20 to June 21–27. This change allows Legionnaires to volunteer at the session since our Department Convention will be

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<< Boys State continued from page 14

concluded on the 20th. We will be opening applications for Boys State counselors or support in Tallahassee in mid-December. Stay connected with our program on our various social media platforms, including Facebook at Florida American

Legion Boys State or on Instagram at [floridaboysstate](#).

Lastly, we will be holding our 3rd annual Boys State dinner at the Department in Orlando on May 9 at 5:00 p.m. This dinner is to help support the Boys State program

with enhancements, scholarships, and delegate fees. All your efforts and support for this program are appreciated and recognized. Continue to make a life change in your community by supporting your Boys and Girls State programs.

## Civil Air Patrol: A Legacy of Service and Vigilance

**Rico Thomas, Civil Air Patrol Chair**  
[civilairpatrol@legionmail.org](mailto:civilairpatrol@legionmail.org)



### Civil Air Patrol's Origins (1936–1941)

The origins of Civil Air Patrol date to 1936, when Gill Robb Wilson,

World War I aviator and New Jersey director of aeronautics, returned from Germany convinced of impending war. Wilson envisioned mobilizing America's civilian aviators for national defense, an idea shared by others.

In Ohio, Milton Knight, a pilot and businessman, organized and incorporated the Civilian Air Reserve (CAR) in 1938. Other military-styled civilian aviation units emerged nationwide, training for homeland defense.

In 1941, Wilson launched his perfect program: the Civil Air Defense Services (CADS). That summer, tasked by Fiorello H. LaGuardia (New York mayor, director of the federal Office of Civilian Defense, and a World War I aviator), Wilson, publisher Thomas H. Beck, and newspaperman Guy P. Gannett

proposed Wilson's CADS program as a model for organizing the nation's civilian aviation resources.

Their proposal for a Civil Air Patrol was approved by the Commerce, Navy, and War Departments in November, and CAP national headquarters opened its doors on Dec. 1, under the direction of national commander Maj. Gen. John F. Curry. Existing CADS, CAR, and other flying units soon merged under the CAP banner. Public announcement of CAP and national recruiting commenced on Dec. 8.

### World War II and Postwar (1941–1948)

In January 1942, German submarines began attacking merchant vessels along the East Coast. With the military unable to respond in force, CAP established coastal patrol flights to deter, report, and prevent enemy operations.

From March 1942 through August 1943, armed CAP aircraft at 21 coastal patrol bases extending from Maine to the Mexican border patrolled the waters off the Atlantic

and Gulf coasts. Their success in thwarting submarine attacks and safeguarding shipping lanes led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 9339 on April 29, 1943, transferring CAP from the Office of Civilian Defense to the Department of War.

At its establishment, CAP made no provision for the participation of youth. On Oct. 1, 1942, CAP leaders issued a memorandum creating the CAP Cadet Program for boys and girls ages 15 to 18. The cadet program proved to be a powerful force for imparting practical skills and preparing teenagers for the military and other wartime service agencies.

CAP's male and female volunteers engaged in an array of wartime missions. These included aircraft warning, southern liaison patrol duty along the Mexican border, courier service, missing aircraft searches, disaster relief, tow target and tracking operations, forest patrols, and many others.

CAP's wartime record ensured its postwar future. On July 1, 1946,

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<< Civil Air Patrol Chair continued from page 15

President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 79-476, incorporating the organization. Following the creation of the U.S. Air Force as a separate branch of the armed services, Truman signed Public Law 80-557, establishing CAP as the Air Force's civilian auxiliary on May 26, 1948.

## Evolving Missions (1976–2000)

The latter half of the Cold War witnessed the further expansion of CAP roles and capabilities. In 1979, CAP began flying Military Training Route surveys for the Strategic Air Command and the Tactical Air Command. A 1985 agreement with the U.S. Customs Service saw CAP conducting counterdrug reconnaissance missions for law enforcement.

CAP once again began delivering parts for the Air Force and flew human tissue and organ transplant

missions with the American Red Cross. The Federal Emergency Management Agency worked with CAP during and after a slew of disasters: the Exxon Valdez oil spill; hurricanes Hugo, Andrew, and Floyd; and the Oklahoma City bombing.

Modernized equipment, including GPS navigation, internet-based communications, and handheld two-way radios, improved coordination with federal authorities and search-and-rescue performance. The final decades of the 20th century brought key changes to CAP.

## New Millennium (2001–Now)

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, ushered CAP into a new era of homeland defense. The following day, a CAP Cessna 172, the only nonmilitary aircraft allowed in the nation's airspace, provided emergency management officials with the first high-resolution

images of the World Trade Center site. Nationwide, CAP volunteers transported blood and medical supplies, provided communication and transportation support, and assisted state and federal officials.

## Endnotes: Civil Air Patrol's History – Florida Wing

The more we, as a Department, understand CAP history, the more equipped we are to continue or start a new CAP Cadet Program at your Post. You can reach out to your local squadron and adopt and support these young leaders. To find a squadron in your area: <https://flwg.cap.gov/join/unit-locator>

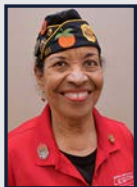
As always, feel free to contact me with questions. Invite me to visit your Post for assistance or to experience your squadron in action.

**CAP motto:** *Semper Vigilans ... Always Vigilant*

## JROTC Color Guard National Competition and JSSP Postal Competition Registration

Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP Chair

[jrotc@legionmail.org](mailto:jrotc@legionmail.org)



The JROTC Color Guard National Convention Competition held in Tampa was an outstanding success, with the most registered teams so far for a National Convention. There were a total of 23 JROTC teams entered in the competition from across the country. The majority of the teams attending

were from Florida, and teams from the 15th and 16th Districts were coordinated by the newly appointed 16th District Chairman, LTC (Ret.) William Brockman. This was a monumental task in coordinating the teams participating, not just for the competition, but also for the fundraising and events leading up to the Convention to ensure a successful competition.

Teams participating from Florida

were: Coral Glades, Coral Springs; Wildcat Battalion, Davie; Clearwater Marines, Royal Battalion, Dixie Hollis #1 & 2; Northeast Vikings #1, 2 & 3, St. Petersburg; Mariner Tritons, Cape Coral; Pirate Battalion #1, 2 & 3, Boca Ciega, Gulfport; St. Petersburg HS; Pinellas Park Coast Guard, Largo; Hudson HS and Fivay HS, Hudson; Adm. Falcon Navy, Dunedin; Admiral Farragut

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<< JROTC/JSSP Chair continued from page 16

Academy, St. Petersburg; and Charger Battalion, Strawberry Crest HS, Dover, FL.

Other JROTC teams included Bradley Central Post 81, Cleveland, TN; Bulldog Bad Batch, Smithdale, MS; Robertsdale HS, TN; and West Caldwell HS, Lenoir, NC.

The JROTC units began competition at approximately 4:00 p.m., and the Award Ceremony was held at approximately 8:00 p.m. Trophies, plaques, and medal awards were presented for various categories

### Overall finish for JROTC:

- 1st Place: \$800
- 2nd Place: \$500
- 3rd Place: \$300
- Participation Donation: \$200

The JSSP Postal Competition Registration 2025 opened on September 1, and the rules remain the same as last year. All individuals, including coaches and volunteers, must complete the background check upon registration for the Risk Management Guidebook, covered by "Protect Youth Sports," at a cost of \$25. There are no exceptions, even if the coach has already taken another course within the school

system or outside facility.

The registration for the First Round Postal is submitted online on the [legion.org](http://legion.org) website, and the teams must still be sponsored by an American Legion Post. There must still be a minimum of four competitors for a team, and all details are listed on the website. The deadline is December 14, and getting an early start is key to completion because there are no extensions given if the deadline is missed due to incomplete registration.

Please get back to me with any

questions or concerns. The JSSP Competition Marksmanship Program is one that leads to scholarship awards for the National 1st Place Winner of \$5,000 and Runner-Up of \$1,000 for the Precision and Sporter Category. It is also a competition that continues to the college and university level. Let's see if this year the Department of Florida will again have a winner in one of the categories.

Thanks so much to all the Posts that support our Legion Youth Programs, and much success for the upcoming year.



JROTC National Color Guard Competition 2025

## National Law Enforcement Memorial & Firefighters Memorial

**Daryl Bass, Law & Order Chair**

[laworder@legionmail.org](mailto:laworder@legionmail.org)

The Law Enforcement Memorial is located in Washington, D.C., behind

the Supreme Court in what is said to be the worst crime-ridden area. When a Law Enforcement Officer is killed in the line of duty, their

name is inscribed, similar to that of the Vietnam War Memorial. As the national statistics show so far for

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<< Law & Order Chair continued from page 17

2025, 229 officers were shot by a firearm, with 31 of those fatal. This is down, however, from the same time in 2024. Those names will be placed on the wall. The Memorial, therefore, is growing. I have been to the Memorial, where I have gotten rubbings of officers I have known and worked with. It is a humbling place. I would highly suggest that when visiting Washington, D.C., you make a side trip to the Memorial. Ask any D.C. Police Officer, and he will direct you to the site. He will tell you to be sure to leave before nightfall.

The Firefighters Memorial is located in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The National Emergency Training Center is located in Emmitsburg, MD, the home of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial, and is open to public visitors. This is also a worthy trip.

September 11, 2025, marks the 24th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center, wherein 2,977 lives were lost and the most Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Personnel in our history perished in a single day. The National September 11 Memorial & Museum is located

at 180 Greenwich Street in New York City and is open to the public; however, it costs \$36.00 to tour.

These memorials represent the heroes that we have lost through the years—not only Police and Firefighters in the line of duty, but also the sacrifice of our ordinary citizens together keeping us a free country. Consider the survivors and relatives of these heroes and keep them in your prayers. When you're traveling and happen to be near these memorials, take time to visit and remember to support your Law Enforcement and Fire Service Professionals.

## Recent Developments: ABT Agents, DBPR & the Florida Gaming Control Commission

**Stuart Scott, Legislative Chair**

[legislative@legionmail.org](mailto:legislative@legionmail.org)



I write to inform you about some important developments in Florida's regulation and enforcement of gambling, alcohol, beverages, and tobacco — in particular, how ABT agents under the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), and the Florida Gaming Control Commission (FGCC), are coordinating and evolving in their roles. These changes have implications for public safety, crime prevention, regulatory oversight, and fairness. The American Legion seeks compliance through transparency.

### Who are the Players

- DBPR — Division of Alcoholic

Beverages & Tobacco (ABT): ABT is part of DBPR and has a Bureau of Law Enforcement (sworn agents) that regulates and enforces laws concerning the sale, distribution, licensing, and compliance of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and related products in Florida. Their responsibilities include licensing and inspections, enforcement against underage sales, taxes/audits, and, in some cases, enforcement of illegal gambling machines where those are tied to establishments holding ABT licenses.

- Florida Gaming Control Commission (FGCC): As of July 1, 2022, many functions previously under DBPR related to gaming — including pari-mutuel wagering, slot machine oversight, cardrooms, and regulation of

compacts — were transferred by law to the FGCC. The FGCC now has a Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE), which is a criminal justice agency empowered to investigate and enforce violations of Florida's gaming statutes. Agents in the DGE are sworn law enforcement officers with arrest powers, and they work statewide.

### What's New / Recent Changes

1. **Enhanced Enforcement of Illegal Gambling/Slot Machines:** The DGE at FGCC is actively pursuing illegal gambling operations. Recent enforcement actions include shutting down unlicensed casinos and seizing illegal slot machines in convenience stores and other businesses.

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<< Legislative Chair continued from page 18

## 2. Joint Messaging with DBPR/

**ABT and FGCC:** The Division of Alcoholic Beverages & Tobacco has, in partnership with the FGCC, issued warnings to premises licensed for alcohol (e.g., bars, convenience stores) that they must ensure any gaming machines or gambling activities on their premises comply with state law.

## 3. Statutory Construct / Transfer

**of Duties:** Under Florida law, the regulation of gaming (pari-mutuel wagering, cardrooms, slot machines, etc.) has been transferred out of DBPR and placed under the FGCC, which now sits in the Office of the Attorney General / Department of Legal Affairs.

## 4. Role of ABT Agents Going

**Forward:** While ABT no longer oversees many of the gaming regulation/licensing duties, its agents still play a crucial role in detecting violations, particularly where gaming intersects with

alcohol and retail businesses.

## The Legion's Role: Looking Ahead

The Department of Florida of The American Legion is actively working with stakeholders to propose statutory language that would clearly outline what constitutes a legal machine under Florida law. By doing so, we hope to create clarity for veterans' organizations — ensuring they can operate within the law while protecting against predatory and illegal gambling devices.

This initiative reflects our commitment to fairness, transparency, and safeguarding the integrity of our Posts and communities.

## Why This Matters to The American Legion & Our Communities

- **Public Safety & Crime Prevention:** Illegal gambling operations often accompany other illicit activities.
- **Fairness & Economic Integrity:** Veterans and our Posts deserve a

level playing field.

- **Youth Protection:** ABT's continuing role in preventing underage sales of alcohol or tobacco, and now with gaming warnings, helps protect young people from exposure to illegal gambling.

## What to Watch & What We, The Legion, Can Do

- **Legislation & Oversight:** Monitor proposed bills — especially those affecting the definition of legal versus illegal machines.

If you have questions or want to organize a town meeting or information session in your Post about this issue, please let me know. It's in our interest — and our values — to ensure laws are enforced, communities are protected, and veterans are not harmed by illicit activity.



## Membership Congratulations and Future Goals Membership Year!

**Lena Heredia-Perez, Membership Chair**  
[membership@legionmail.org](mailto:membership@legionmail.org)



Let me begin this month's message by extending heartfelt congratulations to each of you. When the call came, you answered — and because of

your dedication, we didn't just meet National's 50% membership goal, we exceeded it. We were just 40 cards shy when I emailed

Jennifer Cooper at 8:08 a.m. that Wednesday for a membership report. What followed was a full-force mobilization: your Department Commander and I reached out to Posts, Districts, and Area Leadership through calls, emails, and texts with a clear call to action.

Thanks to your perseverance, we didn't just close the gap — we surged ahead with 459 additional

memberships. That's extraordinary.

The Department and I are deeply grateful for your commitment and teamwork.

Now, let's turn to a few key updates:

## Department-Wide Membership Drive – November 1, 2025

If you haven't started planning yet,

*continued on page 20 >>*



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<< Membership Chair continued from page 19

now's the time to connect with your Post and District Membership Teams. This drive is a powerful opportunity to energize your community and grow our ranks.

**Reminder:** Five Posts will receive a \$150 reward — don't miss out!

## Department Retention Goal: 90%+

Let's continue welcoming our brothers and sisters back home. As 5th District Commander Miguel Garcia reminds us: "Let's bring them home."

## 55% Target Dates

- **Department Goal:** Today – October 1, 2025
- **National Goal:** October 5, 2025

Let's stay ahead by engaging members early. Starting in November, our goals increase by 10%, and we all know that the longer the year goes on, the tougher it gets. Proactive efforts now will make all the difference.

As 4th District Commander Darcy Bockman-Wright shared during our monthly Zoom, her strategy is to aim for the next goal now — staying ahead all year long.

## Post 208 Closure

The Department Executive Board has officially closed Post 208. All members have been transferred to Post 400 and are now eligible to join local Posts.

## Reminders:

- Dues for 0400 members are now \$55.00
- Transferring to a local Post keeps funds within the member's community
- National is crediting both 0400AD and 0400 members toward our current membership totals

## Outreach Strategy

If phone calls aren't working, try texting — it's proven highly effective. Need sample messages? Check

pages 27–28 of the Membership Manual for last year's winning templates.

## Transfer Process

Once a member agrees to transfer:

- Fill out the Membership Data Transfer Form with updated contact info
- Submit the transmittal with their approval attached (email or text confirmation works)

In closing, I couldn't ask for a more incredible team than the one we have in the Department of Florida this year. Stay true to the mission of The American Legion, and together, we will continue to thrive. If you need help with your Membership Drive, processing memberships, or just have a quick question, your Department Membership Team is standing by — ready and eager to assist.

Keep up the phenomenal work!

## Oratorical Program Updates and Engagement Reminder

**Doug Hockenberry, Oratorical Chair**  
[oratorical@legionmail.org](mailto:oratorical@legionmail.org)



I want to start by saying thank you to the 7th and 11th Districts for the warm reception I received while attending your respective District Meetings, as I was able to share valuable information about the Oratorical Program.

I also want to say how excited I am about the Oratorical Program this year. Why? Because this past month I received 4 phone calls and 6 emails asking about the Oratorical Program from Posts and/or Districts that have not taken part in this program in the past. That tells me that many of you are actively promoting a new program within your Posts and potentially your high schools.

Okay, let's get started for this month, and let me stress the importance of ENGAGEMENT. Engagement between the high schools, students, and the parents and/or caregivers. Most schools have been in session for approximately 6+ weeks. As such, I suspect many of the Post Oratorical Chairs have already established a rapport with your

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<< Oratorical Chair continued from page 20

local high schools and educated them about The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program and its rewards. If not, please schedule a date and time with your high schools so that you can share the news about a fantastic scholarship program.

October is typically the month when students really think about what their topic will be for the prepared speech. With that in mind, please ensure you are engaging with those students on a recurring basis. Ensure you encourage those students and make sure they know you are there to provide support, guidance, and assistance as they develop their speeches. Next, don't forget to keep the parents/caregivers up to date on the program. Having the support of the parents/caregivers is essential for program success. Remember, your engagement with the schools and the students can and will make a difference as you grow this program within your Post and community.

Next, I want to ensure everyone has the Assigned Topics for the 2025-2026 Oratorical Contest, and they are as follows:

#### **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 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 attained.

#### **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 once again thanking those who called me or sent emails inquiring about the Oratorical Scholarship Program. I am really looking forward to hearing from six great candidates on 14 March 2026 at the Department of Florida Oratorical Contest in Orlando.

If you have any questions, please email me at [oratorical@legionmail.org](mailto:oratorical@legionmail.org) or call me at 727-514-3742. Again, thank you for your support.

**Hang Tough!**  
**#OneTeamOneDream**



The Children & Youth Fund received several thank-you letters along with a handmade knitted caterpillar.



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## Update on POW/MIA Memorial & Museum and Other Updates on Missing Personnel

Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair

[powmia@legionmail.org](mailto:powmia@legionmail.org)



By the time of this writing, the 5th Annual Seven Bridges POW/MIA Remembrance Ride and Ceremony has come and gone. Since it occurred after the October newsletter deadline, a full recap will appear in the November Link.

### National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum

Have you contacted your Representative in support of H.R. 3057? Passage of this bill is critical to secure the "National" designation for the Memorial, ensuring a permanent site to remember, honor, and educate future generations about POW/MIA stories.

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.

I am pleased to report that **Resolution No. 5 – Endorsement of the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum** passed unanimously at the 106th Department of Florida

Convention. On August 5, 2025, Commander Jessica Moore signed and sent the endorsement letter — the first major Florida VSO to do so. [View the endorsement here.](#)

On August 20, the American Legion Legacy Run concluded its day at the Memorial. National Commander James LaCoursiere, National Auxiliary President Trish Ward, National ALR Chairman Mark Clark, and Road Captain Ken Nadeau honored POW/MIA with a wreath-laying ceremony. [Read the news article here.](#)

### Stay Connected

- Florida POW/MIA Facebook Page: [facebook.com/falpovmia](https://facebook.com/falpovmia)
- Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA): [dpaa.mil](https://dpaa.mil)

### DPAA Updates (as of September 9, 2025)

Missing Personnel Identified in FY 2025:

- World War II: 154
- Korean War: 54
- Cold War: 0
- Vietnam War: 8

### Recently Accounted For – August 2025

#### August 4

- Soldier, WWII – Lingo, A.

#### August 5

- Airman, WWII – Secunda, G.

#### August 6

- Soldier, WWII – Langevin, A.
- Airman, WWII – Owen, W.

#### August 8

- Marine, WWII – Norcross, E.

#### August 11

- Airman, Vietnam War – Calfee, J.
- Soldier, WWII – Ross, E.

#### August 15

- Soldier, WWII – Miller, L.
- Soldier, WWII – Walko, J.
- Soldier, Korean War – Pytak, W.
- Airman, WWII – Pirtle, J.
- Soldier, Korean War – Fields, R.
- Airman, WWII – Burke, J.
- Soldier, Korean War – Baker, J.

### Public Relations Toolkit

Kathy Hockenberry, Public Relations Chair  
[pr@legionmail.org](mailto:pr@legionmail.org)

Commanders and Public Relations Chairs, we're well on our way to another great Legion year. If you were appointed as the Public

Relations Chair for your Post, the PR packets were to be mailed last month (September), so you should be receiving them soon — be on the lookout. The information hasn't changed much, so there's no need to

wait for them to arrive through the postal system. You can get ahead of the game by going online to [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org), clicking on the label *Programs and Services*, and

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<< *Public Relations Chair* continued from page 22  
scrolling down to *Public Relations*.  
On the left side of the page, you  
will see Resource Links. Click on that

link, and it takes you to the *Public  
Relations Toolkit*. It's that easy. You  
can then download, save to your  
computer, or print to get started.

**The deadline for this year's  
nomination for the Best Public  
Relations Award is May 4, 2025.**  
It's never too early to get started.

## Writing the Preamble of a Resolution

Clarence Hill, Resolutions Chair

[resolutions@legionmail.org](mailto:resolutions@legionmail.org)



Last month's article  
addressed in detail  
the Resolved section.  
Once the intent of the  
resolution has been  
clearly stated in the

Resolved section, it is much easier  
to decide what statements need to  
be in the Preamble section to make  
clear the reasons for the resolution.  
The Preamble should be a clear  
description of the situation or  
problem being addressed.

The Preamble section is made up of  
one or more clauses, each of which  
begins with "WHEREAS." Two or  
more of these clauses are joined  
together by a semicolon followed by  
"and." Example:

"WHEREAS, The American Legion is  
an organization of wartime veterans  
who have dedicated themselves to  
the service of community, state and  
nation; and

"WHEREAS, This service is performed  
through The American Legion's basic  
programs; and (etc.)"

Each clause in the Preamble should  
contain a **statement of fact** that is  
logically related to the intent of the  
resolution and explains and justifies  
the need for the resolution. Accuracy  
of each statement in the Preamble  
is critical because the intent must be  
based on fact, not misinformation.  
Sources should be clearly identified,  
such as "WHEREAS, Public Law 101-  
22 prohibits..." or "WHEREAS, Title  
38 United States Code authorizes..."  
or "WHEREAS, in *Texas v. Johnson*,  
1989, the United States Supreme  
Court ruled..."

Double-check facts and attempt  
to document the source as much  
as possible. Providing supporting  
materials along with the resolution  
would be helpful to respective  
reviewing commissions or  
committees.

The final clause of the Preamble is  
joined to the resolving section of the  
resolution by a semicolon, followed  
by the phrase "now, therefore be it..."  
leading to the Resolved section.

There is no formula for deciding  
how many "WHEREAS" clauses a  
resolution should have. In general,  
the fewer the better, provided the  
reason(s) for the resolution is/are  
adequately stated. It is not necessary  
to refer in the Preamble to every fact  
or circumstance that has a bearing  
on the intent of a resolution.

Study the Resolved section and get  
the exact purpose of the resolution  
firmly in mind. Then start writing down  
the statements of fact which relate  
to this purpose. Organize them in a  
logical sequence (throwing out the  
weak or unnecessary ones).

**Remember: *do not use a period in  
the Preamble.***

## Free Money!

Michael Raymond, Scholarships Chair

[scholarships@legionmail.org](mailto:scholarships@legionmail.org)



One of the best-kept  
secrets in the American  
Legion is the availability  
of scholarships. Free  
money! There are many

scholarships available to Veterans,  
spouses, and children of Veterans.  
Over the years, I have personally  
awarded many nursing scholarships  
through the 40&8, which opened the  
door to awesome careers. They really  
do change lives.

The Department of Florida offers  
many [scholarships](#) that will not only  
start the process but also continue  
growth in the medical field. They  
include **general scholarships,**  
**nursing scholarships, and medical**

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<< Scholarships Chair continued from page 23

**scholarships.** I can also assist in obtaining information for the Legacy Scholarship, where eligible post-

9/11 Veterans' kids can receive a fully funded college education. Not a bad deal!

If you have any questions or would like me to visit your Post or event, please don't hesitate to contact me.

## School Medals and Beyond Awards

**Randy Holeyfield, School Medals Chair**  
[schoolmedals@legionmail.org](mailto:schoolmedals@legionmail.org)



Greetings, this month I am concluding summaries on all of the medals and/or awards which are tailored to commend both our youth, but as you will see in the article, also provide awards within your communities, as well as to volunteers who help your Post yet are not members of the Family. Let's identify them in a special way for their impact or contribution.

### Marksmanship Medal (717.307)

There used to be two different versions of marksmanship medals; currently, only one is utilized for marksmanship. Your JROTC and ROTC, or another shooting competition or club, can be awarded this medal. It comes in Gold, Silver, and Bronze, thus a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place or category.

### Grateful Appreciation Medal (717.300)

This medal can be given throughout the year; it is for a returning service member who stands out amongst their peers. They must have served overseas, and this award can also be for Department of Defense or military contractors who worked overseas in a hostile area. This is a great way to show that The American Legion commends them for their service to the Nation.

### Heroism Medal (717.319)

Where one or more individuals in your Post's area/community placed themselves in a situation, without thought of self (selfless acts), and did something that stands out. Thus, a heroic act or action, where their life, along with those around them, may be at stake, and they save or bring them into safety. This is not restricted to saving lives, but rather performing a heroic act. This award can be issued in Gold, Silver, and/or Bronze. Therefore, if more than one acted in a heroic manner, you could deliver it to everyone who acted in this manner. From there, it is forwarded to National, where they will also vet the individual and either approve or deny the medal, or National could upgrade it to the Valor Medal at their discretion.

### Valor Medal (717.303)

Has someone in your Post's area/community placed themselves in a situation, without thought of self (selfless acts), and did something that stands out? Like saving a family in a burning building/house, all the while the structure could implode and they themselves could perish. This medal is to identify those who have acted gallantly while death or injury is imminent; this is The American Legion's version of the Medal of Honor. The Post needs to investigate for verification. From there, it is forwarded

to National, where they will also vet the individual (investigate) and either approve or deny the medal. National could downgrade it to the Heroism Medal (Bronze, Silver, Gold).

### Medal of Merit (717.304)

This one comes in Gold, Silver, and Bronze for meritorious service, duty, or actions. Some Posts are utilizing this for Sea Cadets or Civil Air Patrol, much like the JROTC medals, where their leadership identifies them and commends them for outstanding service/duties. Again, this is not restricted to these youth programs, but also for meritorious acts or actions in their communities.

### Custom Wreath Medal (717.330)

Great news for Posts wanting to present an award to youth or anyone at their Post. This custom medal has two areas for printing on the front, both above the Legion emblem and below, plus an inscription in black (up to 40 characters) on the reverse. It comes in Gold only and is attached to a neck ribbon (36"), with an 18" drop. This one is a game changer for members of your Post, or those who help and are not members, but are in the trenches volunteering wherever needed.

Thank you, I am always available by email, phone, or text (813) 716-0318.



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# FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

OCTOBER 2025 EDITION

## CURRENT YEAR FIGURES : 2025-2026

 **24** VETS RECEIVED FUNDS

 **\$45,584** PROVIDED AS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

 **14** SPI PARTNERS

 **\$101,500** GIVEN TOWARDS SUICIDE PREVENTION

## TEE IT UP FOR VETERANS

The 12th Annual Golf Tournament teed off on Monday, September 22nd at a brand-new venue, the stunning Golden Bear Club in Windermere, FL. At 9:00 a.m., golfers gathered at the flag for the Pledge of Allegiance and the national anthem, led by Eric Anderson of Spirit Equine Therapy (SET) on horseback. His presence set a patriotic and inspiring tone for the day.

PVR Board President, Bob James, hosted the tournament and brought together his corporate partners, vendors, and friends for a fun-filled day of golf. Players enjoyed the popular Patriotic Costume Contest, which inspired a few creative outfits, and had the chance to win \$10,000 cash in a hole-in-one contest.

While the contests and camaraderie made for a fun event, the true highlight was the shared commitment to a common purpose: supporting Florida's veterans and their families.

During the awards banquet, the RL James Team presented a record-setting "Big Check" of **\$96,932** to PROJECT: VetRelief (PVR). Best of all, this was



100% net proceeds, where every dollar directly benefits our mission to assist veterans in need.

This milestone is especially meaningful, as Bob and his wife, Rita, have been unwavering champions of Florida's veterans. Their very first golf tournament, 12 years ago, was the inaugural fundraiser for PVR, and since then, this annual event alone has funded more than a third of our total emergency assistance cases. Their leadership has been a lifeline for our organization from day one.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the sponsors and players who carved time from their busy schedules to attend, as well as the dedicated volunteers and the Golden Bear Club staff who helped make the day such a success.

This year's tournament was truly one for the books; blending fun, community spirit, and an incredible show of generosity that will have a lasting impact on Florida's veterans and their families.

## NEXT TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The Fall Conference will be filled with several opportunities to learn more about our program and connect with others. Plan to take a deeper look into financial assistance eligibility, SPI Strategic Partners, the application process, and ways to become a valuable resource in your community. **The entire Legion Family is invited to attend.** We look forward to seeing you there!

## STEP UP FOR PROJECT: VETRELIEF!

We are still looking for folks who want to make an even greater impact with PROJECT: VetRelief. If interested, Contact PVR Chairman Stan Brown at [projectvetrelief@legionmail.org](mailto:projectvetrelief@legionmail.org) to let him know. A special gathering will be held at Fall Conference to learn how you can help advance program!



## Troop 632B Conquers 80-Mile Philmont Trek

Chris Ragusa, Scouting Chair

[scouting@legionmail.org](mailto:scouting@legionmail.org)



American Legion Post 33 in Pensacola is proud to share that this summer, seven Scouts and five adults from Troop 632 returned from an unforgettable high-adventure expedition at Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico.

The crew flew into New Mexico on July 6, spending four days acclimating at the NRA Whittington Center before reporting to Philmont Base Camp on July 10. Over the next 12 days, they hiked approximately 80 miles of rugged mountain terrain, led by Crew Leader and Eagle Scout

Andrew Moles.

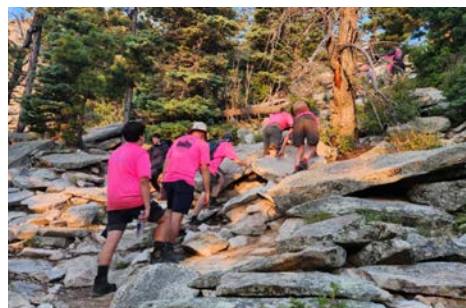
Trek highlights included summiting Mount Phillips (11,742 ft), climbing Comanche Peak (11,320 ft), and standing atop the iconic Tooth of Time (9,003 ft). Along the way, Scouts honed valuable backcountry skills — such as bear-bag “smellable” protocols — and witnessed unforgettable moments, including seeing a mother deer just minutes after giving birth to twin fawns.

The adventure brought its share of challenges. Adults, ages 35 to 55, admitted that hiking 80 miles was “no joke,” but — like the Scouts — they persevered, pushed through

tough sections, and emerged stronger. The trek fostered deep bonds, strengthened teamwork, and left everyone with a lasting sense of accomplishment.

Among the adult leaders who completed the trek was Post Finance Officer Patricia Goolsby, who also served as Trek Adult Advisor. She is the Scoutmaster of the girl Troop and Assistant Scoutmaster of the boy Troop. “We’re all proud of our crew and the expedition,” said Pat Moles, Troop committee member and fellow trek participant. “We kicked butt.”

Submitted by Pat Moles, Scouter & Angie Walker, Department Scouting Committee.



## Sea Cadet Program Sees Continued Growth — But Needs Support for Winter Training

Jeff Hawk, Sea Cadets Chair

[seacadets@legionmail.org](mailto:seacadets@legionmail.org)

Across Florida and the nation, the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) is growing faster than it has in years. Young Americans are stepping forward, eager to learn discipline, teamwork, and service.

This is a success story worth celebrating — but it also comes

with serious challenges. More cadets means more training, more uniforms, and more resources. And as enrollment grows, so do the costs.

### Rising Enrollment, Rising Costs

A decade ago, most winter training cost around \$150. Today, winter training tuition has risen to \$350+ per cadet. That number reflects the

increasing quality and scope of training, but it has also become a major financial barrier for many families.

On top of that, uniform expenses are climbing sharply. Outfitting a new cadet with full dress and utility uniforms, boots, and accessories can cost several hundred dollars

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before they even attend their first training.

For many families, these costs can quickly become overwhelming. Local units work tirelessly to fundraise, but their budgets are being stretched thinner every year as enrollment increases.

### **The Impact of Lost Funding**

Compounding the challenge is the loss of traditional funding sources of \$4.3 million. In previous years, national-level funding helped offset training expenses. That support has been reduced or eliminated — and the effects are being felt across the program.

Without sponsorships, local units are losing the ability to send cadets to advanced training.

This isn't just about missing an experience — advanced trainings are required for cadets to advance in rank. Without them, cadets stall in their advancement, lose motivation, and risk leaving the program altogether.

What's at stake is not only individual growth, but the future leadership of entire divisions.

### **A Program That Shapes Leaders**

Sea Cadet trainings aren't camps — they are intensive, Navy-supported experiences that build real-world

skills and strong character.

Cadets learn seamanship, navigation, cybersecurity, medical response, firefighting, aviation, and more — while also mastering teamwork, accountability, and leadership. They stand watch, keep schedules, write reports, and follow military discipline from reveille to taps.

By the end of training, many cadets stand taller — not just in posture, but in confidence. They return home more mature, more motivated, and more prepared to lead.

### **A Success Story Shared by Many**

One Florida cadet recently completed an advanced leadership academy after months of preparation. At the start, they were shy, unsure, and hesitant to speak up. After ten days of leadership challenges, drill evaluations, and public speaking, they returned as a confident Petty Officer, ready to mentor younger cadets.

Their transformation wasn't an exception — it's what the program does every day. But they could only attend because a local sponsor stepped up to cover the cost of their training and uniforms. Without that support, the opportunity would have been out of reach.

This is what sponsorship makes possible.

### **The Growing Need for Volunteers**

The program also depends on adult volunteers — officers, instructors, and support staff — to make training possible. Every drill weekend, class, and ceremony happens because dedicated adults give their time to mentor the next generation.

But with enrollment rising, many units are struggling to keep up. Without new volunteers, some trainings may have to cap enrollment or turn cadets away.

This is where community members, veterans, and Legionnaires can make a real difference.

### **Why the American Legion Matters**

The American Legion has long been a cornerstone supporter of the Sea Cadet Corps. Posts across Florida sponsor units, donate funds, host events, and connect cadets with veterans who can share their experience and wisdom.

These connections benefit both sides: cadets gain living examples of service and sacrifice, and Legionnaires see the future of service standing before them.

But as costs rise and funding drops, Legion support is more vital than ever. Without it, many cadets will simply not be able to attend the training they need to advance.

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<< Sea Cadets Chair continued from page 27

## A Call to Post Leaders

If you are a Post Commander or Chairman, consider sponsoring a cadet this winter. Even one sponsorship can be life-changing.

And if you want to truly understand the impact your Post is making, consider joining the Sea Cadets as an Auxiliary Member. This lets you observe drills and trainings firsthand, meet the cadets, and see where your support is most needed.

## How You Can Help

Here are a few simple ways to support your local Sea Cadets:

- Sponsor a Cadet — \$350+ covers winter training tuition.
- Provide Uniform Support — Donate funds or gently used gear to help new cadets start strong.
- Volunteer Your Time — Help at drills, teach a skill, or mentor cadets in leadership.

- Advocate — Share the Sea Cadet mission with your community, local businesses, and civic leaders.

Even partial sponsorships matter — \$100 or \$150 can close the gap for a cadet who has already raised part of their cost.

## Final Word

The growth of the Sea Cadet program is something to celebrate. These young people are standing tall, learning to lead, and preparing to serve.

But growth brings responsibility. If we want this program to keep changing lives, we must stand behind it.

**Without sponsorships, advanced trainings will continue to disappear — and**

**without advanced trainings, cadets will not be able to promote.**

Let's make sure cost doesn't stand in the way of opportunity. Let's ensure every cadet who has earned a place at winter training gets the chance to go.

To sponsor a cadet or learn more about supporting winter trainings, contact Sea Cadets American Legion Chairman and Sea Cadets volunteer Jeff Hawk at: [seacadet@legionmail.org](mailto:seacadet@legionmail.org)



## Homeless and Suicide Awareness Training Updates and Upcoming Events

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements Chair

[benefits@legionmail.org](mailto:benefits@legionmail.org)



Over the past few months, I have been exceedingly busy, starting with an invitation from Post 25 to provide Homeless and Suicide Awareness Prevention Training, which proved to be highly successful.

I am hopeful that other Posts will

invite me to similar events in the future.

The National Convention was satisfactory, and I attended the Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA&R) Committee meetings, where we voted on several resolutions, including the placement of dog kennels with veterinarians at all VA hospitals, allowing veterans to check in their service dogs while receiving

treatment. Another resolution established the Red Star program for families who have lost a veteran to suicide.

On Sunday, September 7, I had the privilege of being a guest speaker at Vet-A-Bration, a Suicide Prevention Awareness Event in Lake Placid, which drew approximately 300 attendees.

continued on page 29 >>



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<< VA Entitlements Chair continued from page 28

Saturday, September 13, I — along with The American Legion Department of Florida Auxiliary VA&R Chair Lisa Hoyland and Unit 266 VA&R Chair Tiffany Thenn — set up an information booth at Congressman Franklin's Vet Fest event in Lakeland at Detroit Tiger Stadium. Providing information on VA, state, Project Vet Relief, and local benefits, approximately 500 people attended the event.

On Saturday, September 20, I was a guest speaker and was able to set up an information booth at the Bay Pines Healthcare System Veterans Resource Fair.

On September 27 at 10:00 a.m., I will be at American Legion Post

113 in Rotonda West, conducting a class on navigating VA, state, Project Vet Relief, and local benefits. The FDVA will be on-site to provide an opportunity for veterans to start a disability claim.

The following day, September 28 at 10:00 a.m., I will again be at American Legion Post 113, providing a class on Homeless and Suicide Prevention Awareness Training.

On October 24, I was invited by Post 155 in Crystal River to be a guest speaker and set up an information booth at their Stand Down event.

On November 1, I will be at Post 90 in Cape Coral, providing a class on VA, state, Project Vet Relief, and local benefits, followed by lunch and

a Homeless and Suicide Prevention Awareness Training.

On November 8 at 9:00 a.m., I will be emceeing a Veterans Benefits Fair at American Legion Post 266, with 25 to 30 vendors currently scheduled to attend, including the FDVA, which will be processing disability claims on-site. I kindly ask that the Districts and Posts support this event by attending and donating to the cause. All proceeds of this event will go to Project Vet Relief.

Before I finish my report, I want everyone to know:  
I see you. I hear you. Let's work it out together.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (850) 718-7773.

## Updates from National Convention and VA&R Activities

### Alan Cohen, VA&R Chair

[var@legionmail.org](mailto:var@legionmail.org)



Once again, another eventful month has come and gone. Along with everything was our opportunity to host the American Legion's National Convention. A first for us was setting up a Claims Clinic. Accredited Service Officers from the VA and Florida Department of Veterans Affairs served the needs of over 300 of our brother and sister veterans, including one who heard about it and traveled from Germany to be there! I've been led to believe that this model will be carried forward to future conventions.

During the convention, I had the honor of chairing the meeting of the National VA&R Convention Committee, where 12 Resolutions were included in the report I delivered at the General Session. Just as great an honor was that I could represent the Department of Florida in accepting the William F. Lenker Award. This symbolizes the Department that demonstrates the highest level of service to the veteran community. Just as proud as this was, it was the third time that we received that award!



In addition to the above, for four days leading up to the convention, I once again took part in the VA's SimLearn Center in Orlando. I, along with doctors and nurses from all over the country, participated in simulated patient-related scenarios with the goal of delivering healthcare more effectively to the

*continued on page 30 >>*



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<< VA&R Chair continued from page 29

veteran community nationwide.

On another but related subject, I'm happy to say that plans for the Women Veterans Benefits Fair/Expo are moving along wonderfully. Along with many exhibitors who offer services to women veterans will be women Service Officers to assist with claims and information. This event will take place on November 1, 2025, at Legion Post 142, Pompano Beach. Please share this information with ALL women veterans and encourage them to attend.

The VA has announced what will be a new Outpatient Clinic located in Indian River with a scheduled opening of March 2026. With this,

veterans will not necessarily have to travel great distances to receive healthcare.

A few bits and pieces of information to share: As you're probably aware, the VA has migrated to using an ID.me sign-in format. It's quite user-friendly and continues to give veterans access to their personal information. More valuable information: there's been a proliferation of scams connected to the veteran community. Be aware that the VA will never contact you by text message, and only in the rarest of rare circumstances will contact by phone happen. Don't fall victim to these. In addition, I will once again caution everyone to steer clear of anyone or any group who makes guarantees of outcome

to claims. NOBODY can do that, and ultimately it will result in money coming out of your pocket.

Moving along and looking forward a bit: Registration is open for the next Post Service Officer class at the Fall Conference. Go to [www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org) and click on the class registration link. We continue to encourage folks to step into this valuable position.

Lastly, I'll share some valuable life info: One of the signs that we're getting older is that although we may not participate in social media, we'll stop strangers on the street and tell them stuff they don't care about.

Follow me for more life lessons. Out here.

## Women Veterans Event – November 1, 2025

**Joan Suelter, Women Veterans Chair**  
[womenvets@legionmail.org](mailto:womenvets@legionmail.org)

My fellow Legionnaires, as mentioned last month, I wrote that I would share the final flyer (pXX) highlighting our first-ever, one-of-a-

kind event celebrating our "Women Veterans" on November 1, 2025.

Please post this information at the Post level. Also, I am looking for monetary donations to offset the cost

of T-shirts and baskets for door prizes that will occur during the day.

The flyer has contact information for me and Alan Cohen. Please help us make this a huge success.

## Florida Shines at the 106th National Legion Convention

**Clarence Hill, 2025 Ntnl Con Corp Pres**  
[pnchill@legionmail.org](mailto:pnchill@legionmail.org)



The 106th National Legion Convention in Tampa is in the books, and what a fantastic convention it was. The culmination of a 5-year

effort came to fruition in the last two weeks of August. Across the

board, it was a resounding success. Congratulations and thank you to all who volunteered, who attended, who donated, or in any other way contributed to this success. It was a great showing for Florida, and I heard nothing but positive comments.

The staff-run booth at the Exhibit Hall was a huge hit. The orange

T-shirts rapidly disappeared, the raffle was great, and the animals were awesome. Great job, staff. Our Badges and Packets Committee earned high praise from the National Staff when the comment was made at the Convention Commission meeting

*continued on page 31 >>*



<< 2025 Ntl Con Corp Pres continued from page 30

that this was the first time in her 18 years of National Conventions that there was not one complaint about the delivery process — high praise indeed. The Information and Registration Committee also received praise for their friendliness and professionalism.

The Distinguished Guest registration and room availability were also noted, as was the Memorial Service Committee's performance at the Service. When Rick "O" suffered his medical emergency, Kevin O'Donnell stepped up and performed driver duties for both the National Commander and National Adjutant. Florida Legion also won a number of national awards that I'm

sure will be mentioned by someone else.

And it wasn't just the Legion delegation.

The 104th National Auxiliary Convention was also a huge success, and the Florida Auxiliary Convention Committee was superb. Florida's Auxiliary won a number of national awards as well, including in Child Welfare and Membership achievement. The ladies manning the doors in their Pirate attire were outstanding.

The 53rd National Sons of The American Legion Convention, held in the JW Marriott, was also awesome. The Sons topped 400,000

in membership for the first time, and the Florida delegation took home many national awards, including the hard-to-achieve Triple Nickel Award, which they have now won twice. This requires 105% membership, 85+% renewal rate, and 5 or more new Squadrons. The Florida Sons Convention Committee outdid themselves, and the Florida Buccaneer Pirates were a huge hit. Congratulations to Ed Sheubrooks, who was designated National Adjutant Emeritus of the Sons for his many years of outstanding service.

The American Legion Family of Florida did us proud with this team effort in hosting the 2025 National Conventions.

## American Legion Accomplishments for 2023/2024 Year

**Dennis Boland, Child Well Being Fdn Pres**

[pdcboland@legionmail.org](mailto:pdcboland@legionmail.org)



The 2023/2024 year programs have ended with some spectacular numbers for our Children & Youth nationwide.

Although we are still in 2025, it will be reported next year as the 2024/2025 year.

**YOUTH EDUCATION:** 700 students were awarded a total of \$2,163,808 in academic scholarships at the National Level.

The 2023/2024 Consolidated Post Report states that 2,546 students from throughout the nation were presented an American Legion School Award Medal.

The 2023/2024 Consolidated Post Report states that 641 American Legion Posts participated in the annual American Legion Education Week.

**CITIZENSHIP:** The 2023/2024 Consolidated Post Report reflects that 461 citizenship and naturalization activities were conducted in local communities throughout the nation.

**GOD AND COUNTRY:** The Consolidated Post Report reflects 1,105 Posts participating in the annual National Day of Prayer.

**FOUR CHAPLAINS SUNDAY:** The Consolidated Post Report reflects

that 1,614 activities were conducted in observance of Four Chaplains Sunday.

### **YOUTH WELFARE AND SAFETY:**

The Consolidated Post Report reflects that 818 activities promoting health and safety took place, while 1,723 activities were conducted for Halloween safety by Legion Posts nationwide.

### **AMERICAN LEGION CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION (CWF):**

\$679,827 was received in total CWF donations; of that, the Sons of The American Legion contributed \$458,693.

*continued on page 32 >>*



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<< Child Well Being Fdn Pres continued from page 31

In 2024, the CWF Board of Directors awarded \$852,593 in grants to 13 non-profit organizations that contribute to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of children and youth.

## AMERICAN LEGION VETERANS & CHILDREN FOUNDATION (VCF): \$1,564,969 was received

in donations to the American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

**TEMPORARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (TFA):** 69 minor children of 23 veterans throughout 17 states received \$33,783 in non-repayable cash grant assistance from the National Temporary Financial Assistance program to help support those children's basic needs of

shelter, utilities, food, and clothing.

We continue to serve because that is what veterans and their families do! I encourage Posts to consider signing up for The Greatest American Cleanup, hosted by the non-profit Keep America Beautiful organization on July 4, 2026.

## Florida Sons of The American Legion: September Activities and Updates

Michael Nigbor, Detachment Commander  
[commander@floridasons.org](mailto:commander@floridasons.org)



I have been busy visiting squadrons and am feeling blessed to have such a great team of dedicated Sons that are taking C.A.R.E. of business and teaching our members all about the good work we do. I attended the District 6 meeting in Winter Garden. Detachment District Commander Louis "Sonny" Perchitti ran a very informative meeting and had the MT&D staff present to participate. Chairman Peter Puzzo, PDC George Aichele, Past District Commander David Campbell, and District 9 Vice Commander Sam Aloï conducted a very informative session. Thank you to District Commander Perchitti and Area Vice Commander Danny Roe for inviting us. A special thank you to Commander Perchitti for his personal check to our charity, C.O.T.A., and the presentation of another check from the Sons of The American Legion Squadron of the South Lake Memorial Post 55 for

C.O.T.A.

On September 11, there were many Patriot Memorial Ceremonies. On the weekend of the 12th, I spent a few days in District 5 for several events, including a fantastic 80th birthday celebration on the pier of the USS Orleck. NEC Bill Kelly represented his Post 137 in the Color Guard, and Squadron 137 Commander Jim Steele played taps. Detachment District Commander Darien Smith and his Squadron 9, along with Squadrons 197 and 129, presented the Aisle of Flags for the USS Orleck event. I then traveled to Post 137 for their Annual First Responders Dinner. There were more than 200 dinners served and delivered for the event. The last stop was Commander Smith inviting me to his Post's annual steak fry and flag retirement ceremony. Several Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, along with their Officers, conducted the ceremony. It was a great job by all, and it was a very special presentation.

Sunday, September 14, was the District 5 meeting at Post 88. The S.A.L. was first to present. Commander Smith did a wonderful job talking about our Detachment programs, stressing the importance of getting our younger people more involved with The American Legion. I gave a brief synopsis of our goals and expectations and thanked everyone for their support.

Commander Smith and I stayed for the Department meeting. Commander Miguel Garcia gave me an opportunity to speak. I gave thanks from the entire Detachment of Florida to the veterans for their service and told them how much we honor those dual members who have joined us. Commander Garcia discussed the growing concern about the issue of conflict resolution and how people respond negatively to it on social media. Though we are all entitled to freedom of speech, it is important that as members of The American Legion, we have a moral duty to "act" in a way that

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<< Detachment Commander continued from page 32

is considered right or just. Note the word "Act" from our mission, C.A.R.E. Act nicely. If you are having a conflict at your Post, have a civil conversation. If you can't solve the issue, agree to disagree and walk away. As a member of The American Legion, do not post your issue or insult the person on social media. There are possible charges in the Constitution and Bylaws that you may face from your Legion Post.

One last item of business is membership. It is the mortar to our foundation and the key to our future. At this point, there should be no zero percentages. We need to work harder to help these zero squadrons. Let's figure out the problem with these squadrons and find solutions to help them. Reach out to your Post Commanders, Area Vice Commanders, and District Officers. This is their job. See how many of their veterans can be dual members. Help these squadrons survive. C.A.R.E. Teach them how to

recruit, renew, rejoin, and retain.

I am sharing this from an email I received: "Every great movement starts with a single step." The Sons of The American Legion was founded in 1932, created to honor the service and sacrifice of American Legionnaires by welcoming male descendants of veterans into an organization rooted in patriotism, duty, and community spirit.

"Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together." Our mission is more than numbers. It is about supporting veterans, teaching citizenship and patriotism, and helping those in need. C.A.R.E. We had a fantastic year last year; let's keep the momentum moving forward.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication. I am proud to call us a team. Florida Strong, Sons of The American Legion Strong.

**#SALCares**



## As American Legion Post 13 celebrates 100-year past, members also look to the future

Submitted by: **Steve Shaffer, Post 13**

Ana Goñi-Lessan - USA TODAY NETWORK - American Legion Post 13 in Tallahassee, known locally as "the Legion" by Lake Ella, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. With more than 550 members, the Post welcomes anyone who has served active duty since December 7, 1941, and remains a hub for both veterans and the community, hosting events from dances to weekly free

legal clinics.

As the Post looks to its next century, leaders face challenges of rising costs, aging membership, and the need to recruit younger veterans. Despite these hurdles, Commander Dennis Hall emphasizes the mission remains unchanged: "We turn no veteran away."

Visit [www.tallahassee.com](http://www.tallahassee.com) for full

article.



Post 13, photo credit Tori Schneider/Tallahassee Democrat



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## Teamwork, Unity, and Collaboration

**Submitted by: Lance Maiden, Post 15**

When Lance Maiden, the Captain of the new Dade City Post 15 Honor Guard, heard that the area was having a 9/11 event but was short-staffed, he stepped up and filled in for the day with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 8154 Honor Guard Zephyrhills and the Zephyrhills Marine Corps League Detachment

Honor Guard. The combined "hybrid" Honor Guard Team was certainly unified and a true success for the ceremony. We even did a 21-gun salute using the Garand rifles all together. Mayor Melanie Monson and numerous local families, town employees, and the Civil Air Patrol attended. A local Chaplain led the prayer, and the Marine Corps League Detachment led the event.



## 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 6 Commander Peter J. Gregory

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Past 6th District Commander Peter J. Gregory of Winter Park, Florida, on September 8, 2025, at age 77. A proud Vietnam War Navy veteran, Peter served 24 years in uniform and was a devoted 22-year member of The American Legion, holding leadership roles at both Post

and District levels.

He is survived by his wife, Mary, son Andrew, and daughter Eliza. Services include interment at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery on Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., and a Celebration of Life on Saturday, October 11, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to

2:00 p.m. at Oviedo Memorial Post 243.

Please keep Peter's family in your prayers. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Shriners Children's or American Legion Oviedo Memorial Post 243. [read more >>](#)

### In Memoriam: Past Department Finance Chair Arnold F. Makovsky

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Past Department Finance Chair Arnold F. Makovsky of Port Charlotte, Florida, on September 16, 2025, at age 85. A U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War era, Arnold was a proud 34-year member of The American Legion and a dedicated

leader at the Post, District, Department, and National levels, including service as Post 103 Commander, 13th District Commander, Southwestern Area Commander, and Department Finance Chair.

He is survived by his wife, Noel, and

daughters Ann and Mona, and was preceded in death by his son, Arnold J. Makovsky. A Celebration of Life will be held Monday, September 29, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. at American Legion Post 103 in Punta Gorda. Please keep his family and friends in your prayers during this difficult time. [read more >>](#)

### In Memoriam: Past Department Assistant Judge Advocate Robert "Bob" B. Sussan

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Past Department Assistant Judge Advocate Robert "Bob" B. Sussan of Saint Johns, Florida, on September 25, 2025, at age 74. A

proud U.S. Army veteran and member of Jacksonville Post 372, Bob served The American Legion with 22 years of dedicated membership at the Post, Department, and National levels.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn. Service details will be shared on the Department's website when available. Please keep the Sussan family in your thoughts and prayers. [read more >>](#)



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## MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

September 25, 2025 (55% Target)

District 4	Darcy Bockman-Wright	61.38%
District 2	Roxann Dressel	61.05%
District 9	Jim Tewes	55.01%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	54.77%
District 11	Stanley Brown Jr.	54.74%
District 3	Rick Cabrera	54.40%
District 1	Robert Osmon	54.13%
District 15	Drew Davis	52.84%
District 6	David Musser	52.47%
District 12	Daniel Martin	51.65%
District 13	Laurene Allen-Flower	50.94%
District 17	Jim Bowers	50.18%
District 7	Kalvin Thompson	50.02%
District 14	Angela Glover	49.16%
District 16	Michael Harley	49.01%
District 8	Charlie Magnus	18.30%
Northern	Doug Hockenberry	55.17%
Western	Shelby Windham	55.10%
Southern	Geo Bograkovs	53.30%
Eastern	Joan Suelter	52.10%
Central	Rick Orzechowski	50.23%
Southwestern	Eric Loyd	49.77%
Post 400		55.38%

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# POST SERVICE OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL

## Dept. Fall Conference Registration Form 2025

This course is filled based off first come, first served interest. REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: FL Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (required): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Post number: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Member ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this document, you are stating that you have been appointed as the Post Service Officer by the Post Commander to attend this course as stated in the Department Constitution and By-Laws Article X, Section

**\*\* A Post can only send THREE PEOPLE to attend the course  
due to the limited seating! \*\***

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE 07 November 2025**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Service Officer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commander Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Return this form to:**

Florida American Legion, ATTN: Programs, PO BOX 547859, Orlando, FL, 32854-7859

**OR**

**Email:** [bboarman@floridalegion.org](mailto:bboarman@floridalegion.org)

This form **MUST** be submitted and received by Department to reserve a place in the class. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address provided once you have been added to the class roster.

**\*\*Registration by phone will NOT be accepted\*\***



**Class Name:** FL American Legion **Post Service Officer Course**, Dept. Fall Conference 2025

**Dates (Must Attend Both Days):** Friday, 21 November; 8AM – 4PM  
Saturday, 22 November; 8AM – 1PM

**Note:** Training by The American Legion is **valid for one year**

**Room Name:** Grand Sierra B

**Hotel Reservations:** Caribe Royale Orlando – (800) 823-8300  
8101 World Center Dr. Orlando, FL 32821

**\*\*Be sure to tell them you are with The American Legion to receive our special rate\*\***

**SAVE THE DATE!**





# COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM

## 2025-2026

**ORDER BY 10/10/2025 TO  
PICKUP AT FALL CONFERENCE**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Post: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### DELIVERY METHOD

☐ Pick Up at HQ Orlando ☐ Pick Up at Dept Convention ☐ Delivery\*

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

*Please allow **4-6 weeks** for delivery. You will be notified before shipment.*

Shipping Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### SHIRT OPTIONS Enter Quantity for each style/size.

Style	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Size	Qty	Cost
Men's	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X		\$
Ladies	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		4X		\$

### TOTAL

Shirts are **\$38 each\*** with two lines of personalization\*\* included. See next page for options.  
If tax-exempt, provide an exemption form if not already on file.

**\*Extended sizes:** 2XL +\$2.00 ea., 3XL +\$5.00 ea., 4XL +6.00 ea.

**\*\*Up to 20 characters per line, including spaces and special characters.**

Subtotal \$

Tax (6.5%) \$

Shipping \$

Grand Total \$

### PAYMENT

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

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

☐ Cash ☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Credit Card

Card Type: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Card Holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM

## 2025-2026

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

Style: \_\_\_\_\_ Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Qty: \_\_\_\_\_ Size: \_\_\_\_\_ Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Halloween SAFETY

DEADLINE 10/15/2025



## HALLOWEEN SAFETY COLORING BOOKS FOR POSTS

These coloring books are great for kids of all ages.

The book offers essential Halloween safety tips for parents and children to consider during the season. It also features an informative message about The American Legion, highlighting our mission, values, and activities. On the back cover, you'll find a Legion membership application, along with a designated space for your post number and address. **Please make sure to fill in your post information so that parents know which post is prioritizing their children's safety.**

We highly encourage your post to reach out to local schools and daycare centers to get them involved. To ensure timely delivery, please submit your order to the Department Headquarters by **October 15th**. Orders will be shipped upon receipt, but please remember that payment must accompany your order. We also warmly invite your Auxiliary and Detachment to take part in this important program



**\$25**  
100 PACK

*\*plus shipping*

POST # \_\_\_\_\_ ATTENTION TO \_\_\_\_\_

SHIPPING ADDRESS (NO P.O. BOXES) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT ☐ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Credit Card ☐ Tax exempt (Attach form if not on file with Dept)

CARD TYPE ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express



CARD HOLDER NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRATION \_\_\_\_\_

SECURITY CODE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SHIPPING FEES (Qty 1-2) \$10 (Qty 3-4) \$15 (Qty 5-6) \$20 (Qty 7-8) \$25 (Qty 9-10) \$30 (Qty 11-15) \$35 (Qty 16-20) \$40 (Qty 20+) \$45

*If you are tax exempt, please ensure we have tax exempt form on file.*



Mail to: Florida Legion; Attn: Emblem Sales; P.O. Box 547859; Orlando, FL 32854-7859

You may also fax completed form with credit card information to 407-299-0901.



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](mailto: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](mailto:VCCENTRAL@FLORIDASONS.ORG)  
MAIL TO: 7519 WINGING WAY DR, TAMPA, FL 33615





# 4<sup>9TH</sup> DISTRICT CHAPLAINS

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED  
COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

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FEB. 1, 2026 ~ 2:00PM

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**I.T. PARKER CENTER**

901 NE 3RD ST. DANIA BEACH, FL 33004  
(BEHIND HARBOURTOWN MARINA)

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**DINNER & AFTER PARTY @ 4:00PM**

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



# District 13 Benefits and Be the One Training

For the whole  
Legion Family



AMERICAN  
LEGION

# BE =THE= ONE

TO ASK  
TO LISTEN  
TO REACH OUT

 **Veterans  
Crisis Line**  
DIAL 988 then **PRESS 1**

**SATURDAY**  
November 1st  
9am to 1pm

**At American  
Legion Post  
90**

## Benefits

Why there is a need to help Vets  
Basic eligibility for VA benefits  
Enrollment to VA Healthcare  
Important Documents for VA  
benefits  
Tips to maneuver the VA  
Military and Veteran Discounts  
and much more

## What do you do?

What protocols do you follow  
when a Veteran visits your Post  
seeking benefits assistance?  
How do you respond to a  
homeless Veteran seeking aid?  
What steps do you take when a  
Vet, 1st Responder or child  
exhibits suicidal tendencies?

For more info, contact Larry Roberts, American Legion  
Department of Florida, VA Entitlements Chair, (850)718-7773  
[VeteransBenefits@legionmail.org](mailto:VeteransBenefits@legionmail.org)



American Legion Post 127  
& Auxiliary Unit 127  
109 Cassadaga Rd.  
Lake Helen, FL 32744



# *Fall Harvest* Veterans' Dinner

Public Welcome

October 18, 2025  
6:00 to 10:00 PM

Enjoy Bar-B-Que Ribs or Chicken  
with Baked Beans and Potato Salad  
(or Green Beans and Boiled Potatoes)  
a Salad, Drink and Desert

Adults: \$15.00    Children under 12: \$10.00

The evening includes Band Music,  
50/50 Raffle, Silent Auction,  
Cake Walk

Annual Donors: Collins Built Pools;  
DTS Tree Service; Hopton Roofing, Inc;





# FLORIDA WOMAN VETERANS BENEFITS AND RESOURCE FAIR A Day of Opportunities, Resources and Commeraderie



Guest Speaker's featuring  
Phyllis Wilson  
Military Women's Memorial  
President  
Saturday, November 1, 2025  
American Legion Post 142  
171 SW 2nd Street  
Pompano Beach Fl,  
10:00 am- 4:00 PM



FOR HOTEL INFORMATION CONTACT JACKIE HIGGINS  
352-537-1054  
EVENT INFO:

JOAN SUELTZER 713-998-7526 \* ALAN COHEN 954-562-2547

Door Prizes

Accredited  
Service Officers

Good Food

More  
Resources