



## IN THIS EDITION

### Department Officers

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

### Area & District

- 5 Central Area
- 5 Eastern Area
- 6 Northern Area
- 7 District 3
- 7 District 4
- 7 District 9
- 8 District 12
- 8 District 13
- 9 District 15

### Membership

- 12 Membership
- 12 Post Revitalization
- 24 Membership Reports

### Programs

- 9 Blood Donor
- 10 Disaster Preparedness
- 10 Employment
- 11 JSSP/JROTC
- 11 Law & Order
- 12 Membership
- 12 National Cemeteries
- 13 POW/MIA
- 15 Resolutions
- 15 School Medals
- 15 VA Entitlements
- 16 VA&R
- 17 Youth Law Cadet
- 19 PROJECT: VetRelief

### Other

- 17 National Convention 2025
- 18 Youth Program Stats
- 20 Eagle Scout of the Year
- 20 SAL NEC Report
- 23 Post Everlasting
- 25 Dept Commander's Polo

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

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



## A Message from the Department Commander

### Michael "Gambler" Raymond, Commander

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



Since this is my last Legion Link article as your Commander, I'd like to review some of the accomplishments we have achieved this year. I'll start by saying that I do not know if we achieved our national goal of 100% membership on time. I will know very soon, and I am optimistic. But if by chance we do not make it, it wasn't for lack of effort. Our membership team, led by Mr. Bruce Carl, has done amazing things this year, and I am so proud of them. Yes, I hope we make it, but it won't be disastrous if we don't. We won the "Big 12" competition for our division and we've made every goal except for the very first. We have surpassed last year's numbers, and we still are adding members. This is the first time in 11 years we've actually grown membership, and you all should be very proud of that!

Thanks to you, donations to my charities have more than doubled my goal. We all know that I and people close to me were severely affected by Hurricane Ian. These funds will go directly to

the disaster relief fund right here in Florida for immediate disbursement when needed. Rather than having to wait to raise funds, they are readily available. Also, funds were raised for a very important charity, also right here in Florida, COTA. There are so many children who are desperate for organ transplants, and COTA is there for them. Thank you so much for your generosity.

Another goal I had was to initiate a Boys State Alumni Association. With the help of Randy Holeyfield, this is becoming a reality. We are holding a dinner and inviting all Boys State Alumni to attend and offer them an invitation to join this very exclusive fraternity. Several other states have accomplished this, and it has become very successful.

We are also doing our best to kick start the Law Cadet program. Everything was in place to send 32 students to Tallahassee this summer, but because of a timing issue, it did not come to fruition. I'm sure we can fix this issue and have a full class next summer. My hats off to Bud Boyer for his hard work and effort to see this through.

All in all, folks, I believe we have had a banner year. After visiting more than 240 posts and traveling over

*Commander continued on page 2 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

## INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



<< Commander continued from page 1

36,000 miles, I believe we have accomplished great things this year. But like our National Commander, Dan Seehafer, once said, "Our growth this year is

not a fluke!" We must continue this trend by just continuing to do the things we are doing. Our efforts will be rewarded! Thank you all for a great year! God Bless!



## Year End and Future Opportunities

**Chris Hamrick, 1st Vice Commander**

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



Fellow Legionnaires,

Good afternoon. At the time of this writing, it is May 15th. ... which is our deadline for our National Goal of 100%

membership, and presently, we have people from all over our state scrambling to gather the last couple of hundred members to get them processed before midnight. When this Link article comes out, this day will be long gone. So.... I'm in the hopes of saying Congratulations Team Florida!!!! But either way, I want to say to you... " Job Well Done". We will take this and learn good information from it, and either way, it goes, we will apply it to our membership plan for the upcoming year. Once again, " THANK YOU" for all of your hard work. Now, let's set our sights on 103% by June 30th.

We've had a very good year in programs and events, and it seems to have literally flown by. It's hard to believe that we're a couple of weeks away from the Department Convention, and here we go again. Take these next couple of weeks

to decompress and re-energize before we hit the ground running after the Convention. Spend time with your loved ones like I am. Reflect on this past year and try to have no regrets. Please apply what you've possibly learned from this past year and build upon it for the upcoming year. We are strong. But we'll get stronger together.... And have FUN doing so.

As you know, I am currently the lead candidate for your next Department Commander position for the 2024 / 2025 Year. My words are MENTORSHIP, TRAINING, and CONTINUITY. These three things... separately or combined, are what I truly believe will aid us in moving forward. I'm looking forward to a very good year with you folks. We, as always, have work to do, but let's have fun doing it. We don't need to "reinvent the wheel"... but rather "grease" it a little. We'll build from this year and make it better for the next year. ... Continuity...

I look forward to seeing you all at the Convention. Keep it Real, my friends. Peace... Out.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JUNE

- 1-30 PTSD Awareness Month
- 1 Baseball Team Rosters Due \*
- 1 Post Officer Reports Due \*
- 1 Certification of Officers Due \*
- 1 Boys State Alumni Dinner \*
- 1 DCC: District 16
- 1 DCC: District 3
- 2 Senior Baseball Kick-Off \*
- 3 Jefferson Davis's Birthday
- 3 History Books Due to HQ \*
- 5 Chapter 136: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 6 D-Day (1944)
- 9-15 Flag Week
- 9 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 12 Women Veterans Day
- 12-17 Department Headquarters Closed (FLCON) \*
- 12 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 13 History Books Due at Convention \*
- 13 Department Convention \* 🇺🇸
- 16 Father's Day
- 16-22 80th Boys State Session \*
- 16 Post 108: Patriotic Family Fun Day
- 19 Juneteenth
- 20 American Eagle Day
- 20 First Day of Summer
- 22 Baseball Team Rosters Frozen \*
- 22 District 16: Installation (7, 119, 238)
- 23 U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Birthday
- 23 District 16: Installation (79, 335, 173)
- 25 Start of the Korean War (1950)
- 27 PTSD Awareness Day
- 28-30 Leadership Retreat \* 🇺🇸
- 29 Chapter 10: ALR Bike Night

### JULY

- 1 District 16: Installation (273)
- 3 Chapter 136: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 4 Independence Day
- 4 Department Headquarters Closed \*
- 6 District 16: Installation (305, 252)
- 6 Chapter 316: ALR Monthly Meeting
- 7 District 16: Installation (158, 125)
- 10 Chapter 10: ALR Meeting
- 13 District 16: Installation (104, 14)
- 14 District 16: Installation (46, 275)
- 14 Chapter 8: ALR Meeting
- 27 Chapter 10: ALR Bike Night

🇺🇸 Commander attendance anticipated.  
\* Department of Florida event.  
★ National event.  
Events are subject to change. More details at [floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org).



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

2023-2024 COMMANDER MICHAEL "GAMBLER" RAYMOND

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



## End of Year and PTSD Awareness

Jessica Moore, 2nd Vice Commander

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



There is No Time Like Now! June is always a busy month. We are trying to close the books on membership, attend our DCCs, prepare for the Department Convention, and, most importantly, continue to Be the One.

I want everyone to remember that June is PTSD awareness month. We need to help spread the word that there are effective PTSD treatments available. Unfortunately, most people with PTSD don't get the help they need. Whether you are a Veteran or a civilian survivor of any traumatic event, people need to know there is help. Treatments really do work and can lead to a better quality of life. Whatever the signs are, it's important for Veterans to keep an eye

on fellow Veterans. This is part of what Being the One is all about.

In closing, I thank you all for a wonderful year as your Second Vice Commander. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Convention. Until then, be safe and continue to follow our mission of One Team, One Dream.

## The Volunteer and Post Officer: What do they do?

Jim Ramos, NEC

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



The Value of the Volunteer: Without individual men, women, and youth members of the post who have a sincere interest and the time to serve others, and for which no monetary payment is expected, there would be no post in the American Legion or program going on.

The volunteer worker brings a unique interpersonal contribution to the American Legion (post) and program, which the other members of the post cannot provide. He/she brings enthusiasm and sympathetic understanding. Most significantly, the volunteer reflects the atmosphere of the world outside of the post. They represent post interest and happenings and surround the members with a normal environment at the post. The volunteer possesses certain special assets in addition to enthusiasm for the post involvement. The volunteers are flexible and adapt to special situations so they can do the job correctly.

### Need for volunteers:

In the past few years, there has been a drop in volunteers at the post and everywhere else! Why do we need to generate interest to increase the

number of volunteers at the post level?

We also need to recruit members to help our organization. And keep them interested.

### Post Officers are volunteers:

- But they take an oath of office to do a job under the Constitution and By-Laws of the Department and National Organization.

One of the most important functions of a Legion group is choosing officers. It means choosing leaders upon whose faithful service the success of the organization largely depends. Among the qualifications necessary for efficient official leadership is an understanding of the purpose of The American Legion, knowledge of the work and enthusiasm for it, a high sense of justice, fairness and courtesy, open-mindedness, moral courage, and the ability to get along with other people.

Officers should be chosen for their ability to perform the work of the office to which they are elected and not because of their social prestige or because they want the office. Willingness to serve is not enough; fitness to serve must stand above every other consideration.

A nominating committee reports to the assembly

only nominees approved by a majority vote of the committee.

No action is taken on the report of the nominating committee. Nominations from the floor are always in order after the nominating committee has reported.

A nomination is only a statement of preference and does not control the election in any way. When voting by ballot, one may be elected without having been nominated, subject to getting the required number of votes at the election.

The elective ballot alone elects. Mistakes made in nominating do not invalidate elections, as you may vote for whom you please, regardless of nominations.

Members of a nominating committee may be nominated for office without resigning from the committee. When printed ballots are used, names presented from the floor and those presented by the nominating committee must be printed on the official elective ballot so there will be no discrimination among the candidates.

Make sure your officers choose the right ones, and they are volunteers, but they choose to take an

*NEC continued on page 4 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



<< NEC continued from page 3

oath of office.

You can always go to the Officer's Guide and check out all the information.

Thank you All for doing the job as a Post Officer and as a volunteer in our community, state, and nation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to

contact me at 352-226-4370 or email at [nec@legionmail.org](mailto:nec@legionmail.org)

## Updates on various Bills

**Jerry Brandt, ANEC**

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



Comrades,

While last month was a slow month, May is flying by. Spring meetings were quick, with the NEC discussing and voting on 18 resolutions. While most are the normal updating of current resolutions, some are important, too:

1. Resolution 3, Increasing Military Tuition Assistance
2. Resolution 4, Appropriation of Funding for Credentialing Assistance Programs
3. Resolution 8, Defining the Definition of the Gold Star Family
4. Resolution 10, Improve Security at Department of Veterans Affairs Health-Care Facilities

The list of Resolutions was not posted on the Legion

website when I forwarded the information, but please check it out at [Legion.org](http://Legion.org) spring meetings.

We also have a new Adjutant for the American Legion. A Marine Veteran, Rodney Rolland, has replaced Adjutant Daniel Wheeler to help guide the American Legion forward into the future.

BE THE ONE was a big push during the Spring Meetings. Information and a tool kit are available at [www.legion.org/betheone/resources](http://www.legion.org/betheone/resources). This includes a 90-minute suicide prevention training.

Speaking of the American Legion, Be the One, the American Legion Indy Car has been seen and hosted a number of times in the last few months, so much so that the estimates on the viewing time and audience response indicate that the race car gave the American Legion \$85,000,000.00 in exposure on TV news outlets.

## The Grass Roots Initiative. The House approves Legion – supported Bills:

- House Bill 3722, Improving Service member Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act
- House Bill 5914, Veterans Education Transparency and Training Act
- House Bill 1767 would amend Title 38 of the United States Code to restore the GI Bill for Veterans who were defrauded.
- House Bill 3738 would amend Title 38 of the United States Code to compel the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration to administer economic opportunity assistance programs for Veterans and their dependents and survivors.

These bills are up to the Senate for consideration. As always, let me know if I can assist.

## Post Annual Budget and Annual Audit

**Shirley Douglas, Finance Officer**

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



All American Legion Posts have two very important financial duties that can easily slip through the cracks. These two important duties are the Annual Post Budget, which should be completed during the fourth quarter, and the Annual Post Audit for the prior year, which should be completed during the first quarter of the New

Year.

### The Annual Post-Budget

The purpose of a nonprofit budget is to provide your post with a road map that will help you plan, make decisions, and adjust the plan when things don't go exactly as expected so that you can stay on track as the year unfolds.

During the budgeting process, the Budget Committee can set clear revenue goals and expense controls to

ensure program goals are accomplished. Simply put, budgeting is about maximizing every dollar to ensure the post's future success and stability.

However, because nonprofits have many types of revenue, it's important that their budget focuses equally on both revenue and expenses. Therefore, your nonprofit's expected revenue and expenses are the two main components of your organization's budget. The Budget lists Revenue and Expenses

*Finance Officer continued on page 5 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

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





<< Finance Officer continued from page 4

in the same order as the post's Chart of Accounts. This arrangement makes it easier for the Budget Committee to compare listed items with the Profit and Loss Statement to determine the proposed budget amount for each item.

### The Annual Post-Audit

An Annual Post-Audit must be completed to ensure that the accounting procedures and methods of

internal control are being maintained to conserve the post's financial interest at every level.

Check your Post's Constitution and By-Laws to see how the Post Audit is to be completed. It is important that the Auditing Committee Chair is knowledgeable about accounting procedures. The Post Finance Officer should serve as an advisor and consultant to this committee since this officer handles the financial records of the Post. For

medium to large posts, it is recommended that a "Qualified Public Accountant" who has experience with Non-Profit (fraternal) organizations be hired to perform the audit.

The Post's Annual Budget and Annual Audit provide a picture of the post's financial past and a guide to ensure the success of the post during the next fiscal year.

### Thank You, Central Area

**Bob Matheson, Central Area Commander**

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



It is hard to believe that the legion year has come to an end. I look back over the last two years as the Central Area Commander and am amazed at what the Central Area has done. I want to thank every Post and each and every member for their support and assistance during my time as Commander. I have been proud to have District Commanders who

have stepped up and done the job! Thank you, Rick Orzechowski, Randy Holeyfield, and Eric Nestler, for a job well done. As I have visited every post, I have had the chance to work closely with Post Commanders and Officers who truly understand what the Legion's mission is all about. That's not to say that there haven't been problems. In every District and area, we have our challenges, but with the work of the officers in the District, and at the post, we have worked through and overcome those issues.

One of the greatest losses this year in the Central Area and District 16 was two exceptional Legionnaires, John Bell and Ray Perez. Both men exemplified what a true Legionnaire is all about. They were dedicated to their families and to the American Legion. They will both be deeply missed.

As I leave as Central Area Commander, I say from the bottom of my heart, Thank You! It has been an honor and privilege to have served you.

### Flag Day and the U.S. Army's Birthday

**Joe Marcheggiani, Eastern Area Commander**

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



This will be my last Legion Link article for the year. I want to thank all the officers of District 6 and District 12, which comprise the Eastern Area, the largest area in the Department of Florida, by membership and the number of posts, for their dedication to our American Legion Family and our mission. Being guided by The Four Pillars and working with the American Legion Programs gives us our purpose of getting out into the communities we live in and serving our Veterans and their families. And none of those could be accomplished without the hard working 22,000 plus Legionnaires

in the Eastern Area. Thank you, each and every one of you.

June is the month we celebrate Flag Day and the U.S. Army's birthday on June 14th. Flag Day commemorates the adoption of the United States flag, which occurred on June 14, 1777. On this day, the Second Continental Congress passed the Flag Resolution, establishing the design of the flag consisting of thirteen alternating red and white stripes and thirteen white stars on a blue field, representing the thirteen original colonies. The fact that Flag Day and the U.S. Army's birthday both fall on June 14th is not merely a coincidence; it's a significant alignment of historical events.

The U.S. Army's birthday marks the day when the Continental Army was established in 1775. The Continental Congress authorized the recruitment of soldiers to form the Continental Army under the command of General George Washington, marking the beginning of the military branch that would later become the United States Army.

The coincidence of these two momentous events occurring on the same day highlights the intertwined history and symbolism of the American flag and the U.S. Army in the nation's founding and history. It underscores the shared values of patriotism, sacrifice, and dedication to the principles of freedom and democracy that both institutions

*Eastern Area continued on page 6 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

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



<<Eastern Area continued from page 5

represent.

So, there is something to think about during the many flag retirement ceremonies that take place at Legion posts across the country on Flag Day.

Hoooah. See you all at the convention.

## Northern Area and Training

**Lena Heredia-Perez, Northern Area Commander**

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



It is hard to believe that this year is ending in just a few short weeks. During the last 11 months as your Northern Area Commander, I have built lasting relationships throughout the entire Northern

Area, and I am not going to lie; I am going to miss this position! However, mark my words: I am not going anywhere and will always be here to help you.

As your leader, my job was to aid when needed, listen to your frustrations and concerns, brainstorm, problem solve, and be there to pick you up when things got a little problematic. I can honestly say that WE have overcome many obstacles this year. Many of them were completely out of our control, but we still ended up coming out on top. I am beyond proud to say that we have remained #1 in Membership at the Department level for over ten consecutive weeks as of 5-15-24, and we are still steadily climbing. We were also the first Area to reach our 100% goal by the target date. We had 2 of our Districts make Race to the Top, which is a National Competition! We were at or above 78% reporting for the National CPR and Department Addendum by the Department's 1st deadline on May 8, 2024. Like I have said many times before, and I will continue to say it over and over, the membership at the post level within the Northern Area and the District staff did all the hard work, not me! Thank you for your unwavering dedication to The American Legion!

Please stay focused on our next two goals:

100% End of the Year Reports (National CPR,

Department Addendum, Post Officer Report, and Certification of Officers) by June 1, 2024. If you have not turned all these forms in, please do so today! Make sure your Sons of The American Legion squadron completes their forms; if not, assist them in getting them completed and submitting them to the Department.

103% Membership Goal by June 30, 2024

By working together as a team, we can and will accomplish these goals!

It has truly been an honor to serve as The Northern Area Commander. A very special thank you to our amazing District Commanders: 3rd District Commander Stuart Scott, 4th District Commander Doug Hockenberry, 5th District Commander Miguel Garcia, and 17th District Commander Jim Bowers for your outstanding leadership.

### Training Opportunities

Suppose you are an incoming officer and your District/Area has not held its annual training this year, or you could not attend last year's training. In that case, I strongly encourage you to please go to the Department's website, the resources drop-down menu, training tab, and then click on the various 2023 -2024 Department Training Resources. While it may seem a bit overwhelming at first, take your time and focus on whatever will make you a better-educated leader! Remember that training stands as a cornerstone for any organization's success. The importance of training cannot be overstated, as it serves multiple critical functions that directly impact the efficiency and integrity of our organization:

Builds a Knowledgeable Leadership — At the heart of any successful nonprofit lies a well-informed

leadership team. This knowledge is vital for making informed decisions that align with the organization's mission and requirements.

Enhances Strategic Decision-Making—Officers are tasked with steering the organization towards goals. Training sharpens one's ability to make strategic decisions. It can also help ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and that the organization's activities have the desired impact.

Fosters a Cohesive Board Culture — Effective training programs also serve as a platform for board members to strengthen their working relationships. By learning together, officers can develop a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities, leading to a more cohesive and collaborative board culture.

Adapting to Change —Agility is crucial for sustaining the organization's relevance and effectiveness.

Ensuring Accountability and Transparency—As stewards of public trust and funds, nonprofit officers must uphold the highest standards of accountability and transparency. Training helps maintain the organization's integrity, fostering trust among members and the community at large.

Lastly, if you have plans to attend our 2024 Convention, I hope you take the time to attend as many classes as possible to increase your understanding and knowledge of The American Legion and its many facets. Please make sure to fill out the surveys so we can better serve you in the future!



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

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



## District and Convention Information

### Stuart Scott, District 3 Commander

[District3@legionmail.org](mailto:District3@legionmail.org)



The Department of Florida will hold its 105th statewide convention June 13-16, 2024, at the Hilton Orlando in Lake Buena Vista.

During this annual meeting, various topics will be discussed, including Constitutional and By-law amendments.

With many of those decisions being reviewed by each of your Post Leadership, be sure that if you are attending, you have reviewed them yourself. Your post will send a Delegate (Black Ribbon) who will be your representative at The Internal Affairs meeting. Between resolutions and amendments, these decisions that get adopted by The Department become standard policy thereafter. If you want to know more, please do not hesitate to ask your Post,

District, or Area Leadership.

Congratulations to all the District Leadership and Chair positions that will be working hard for each of its members in this coming year. A list will be provided at the August 2024 District meeting. The Third District installation schedule is filling up, and if you have not already scheduled your date, please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

## Teamwork - Thank You

### Doug Hockenberry, District 4 Commander

[District4@legionmail.org](mailto:District4@legionmail.org)



Greetings Department of Florida. It's hard to believe that this year is ending soon. It seems like it was just yesterday when the Department Commander relayed his priorities to each of

us in our first Department Executive Committee (DEC) Meeting last June. He charged us with the awesome responsibility of ensuring we uphold the standards, keeping the Four Pillars at the forefront while promoting our programs and having fun doing so.

I can honestly say that this past year, Darcy and

I were extremely fortunate to be surrounded by an amazing team from throughout the District. The support we received from each post and their membership throughout this past year has been outstanding. Yes, we experienced obstacles, had challenges, and enjoyed many successes. But collectively, we worked through those problems and became stronger. We learned from our shortfalls, thereby increasing our effectiveness and visibility throughout our communities, allowing us to better carry out our mission of caring for Veterans and their families. Together, we have made significant improvements...

To the senior leadership within the Department, on behalf of the entire District, we thank you for your

assistance and guidance throughout the year. Our success is a direct reflection of your support.

Once again, I want everyone to know just how appreciative your District Officers are for all your support this past year. There is no doubt in my mind that we have had a successful year in the 4th District, and that is because of you.

In closing, we look forward to working with each of you in the coming year as we take the 4th District to new heights. Thank you everyone. "Proud to be Legion."

"For God and Country"

## There is a Calm After the Storm

### Rico Thomas, District 9 Commander

[District9@legionmail.org](mailto:District9@legionmail.org)



"There is a Calm After the Storm" The "Mighty Ninth District" started the new year with a very high membership percentage. We had our storms from posts not reaching out to their memberships. District

leadership continues to reach out to each post and ask them to contact their membership. They did, and we are at 100% plus, and we are confident that we

will reach the 103% District goal. The District had a post to close, but Post 287 welcomed a new SAL charter.

The National Commander Daniel Seehafer visited the 9th District along with the Department and NEC Officers. We provided them with police and Rider's escort to the various posts in the District. He was awarded "Keys to the City" by local city leaders. He visited Alexander "Sandy" Niningger State Veterans Home and enjoyed fellowship and ice cream with the

Veterans in the home. Commander Seehafer enjoyed speaking to elementary school students during their field trip to a post for their regularly scheduled "Pen Pal" activity. He also enjoyed a quick moment on a fishing trip and went to a restaurant to eat the catch.

District Chaplain Steve Newman will be stepping down after serving many years as the "Mighty Ninth District" Chaplain. Chaplain Steve, Chairperson of our

*District 9 continued on page 8 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



<<District 9 continued from page 7

Four Chaplains ceremony, invited a key leader from the Four Chaplains Foundation to be the speaker, and National Commander Seehafer spoke like a true clergyman at the ceremony. Best of health to you, Steve.

Many arrows were targeted at the District and me personally, but we stayed focused on our mission to grow the District as a family unit. The District's family is meeting the membership goal bountifully.

We are completing our District's event with great success and are doing well as a District.

Thanks to those who stepped up and supported me. Your support made all the difference and contributed to this District's success. I can't say "Thank You" enough. Thank you to District leaders Jamie G., Jim T., Dede D., Susan B., Teddy P., Alan C., TJ, and Raquel B. Thank you to Post Commanders who went above and beyond: Post 36, 162, 222, 287, 304, 310, 321, 365.

Notable mentions: Commander Gambler; my mentor, post commander, and personal Advisor Loretta Young; Judith Richards; and Southern Area Commander Castro.

Best wishes to the new District Leaders for 2024 - 2025!

***I Love My District, "The Mighty Ninth District."***

## Addressing Problems

**Bruce Thurber, District 12 Commander**

[District12@legionmail.org](mailto:District12@legionmail.org)



It is essential that as we prepare for another year, we eliminate the problems that have occurred this year. One of our worst problems was folks who needed to be correctly registered in MyLegion when they assumed a role with access to the post membership. The most common issues are:

1. Members sign up for Legion.org and not mylegion.org; these are completely different areas of the system.
2. Members not registering for MyLegion with the on-file email address; make sure they are the same.
3. Members using post emails to register these links that post email to this person's membership number and cannot be transferred to the incoming officer. Each year, the Department links the newly elected officers to the account with personal emails.
4. Incoming officer paperwork not sent to the Department.
5. Members go online to renew, click on the wrong renewal link, and end up transferring to post 400.

Another program we need to address is RENEW FOR THREE YEARS. This should be done before the first of July, saving you the dues increase. The Post will receive their portion of the money the same way they do for life members.

## Coming to the End of 2023-2024 Year

**Eric Loyd, District 13 Commander**

[District13@legionmail.org](mailto:District13@legionmail.org)



Greetings, fellow Veterans. 2023-2024 has been a busy year. Now, as it comes to an end, there is so much going on with CPRs, Addendums, and DCCs.

American Legion. Make sure your Posts are filing their taxes (990s) and submitting the change of officer forms to the Department. As we end the year and elect the new Department, Area, District, and Post Officers to lead The American Legion into 2024-2025, it's exciting to see the new leadership and where it takes us.

for even more. My goal for District 13 was to rebuild and reopen the posts destroyed by Hurricane Ian. They are all on their way to completion and reopening. I also wanted UNITY in the District between the families, and WE accomplished that. No Post should make any of the programs or families feel unwanted.

We must also continue pushing membership and BE THE ONE!!! We emphasize more on membership and not enough on Suicide Prevention. Our Veterans need us, and we should all stand ready to aid and support.

As District 13 Commander, I want to thank Department Commander Michael Raymond, Southwestern Area Commander Bud Boyer, Punta Gorda Post 103 Commander John Dollinger, and Department Adjutant Bruce Comer for their support and knowledge. I have learned a lot this year and LOVE the American Legion and what it stands

As the Department Commander said, "PROUD TO BE LEGION."

As the year comes to an end, it's tax season for the



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

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





## Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Are Going

**Randy Holeyfield, District 15 Commander**

[District15@legionmail.org](mailto:District15@legionmail.org)



Last year, we got off to a slow start; in November, I took over the remainder of the year as District Commander. And though we finished well this year, we are excelling and hitting new benchmarks in every category. I want to thank everyone for believing in me to serve as your District Commander for another year; we are the greatest District. Last year's membership finished at 95%, whereas this year, we are over 103%; wow, everyone has been doing such a great job. And though a couple of posts have struggled, some posts hit the moon. Our District finished at over 103 %, and though we did not hit it by the deadline for Race to the Top, I am very proud of each and every one.

The Auxiliary is at an all-time high of over 100% and has been #1 in the nation. The Sons of the American Legion have done well likewise, finishing Nationally at **105%**. They are 5th in the nation, sitting at over 98% nationwide. What can I say except **"Great job to all."** The Department of Florida has been setting records, as well as the entire American Legion as a whole. Between Florida and Pennsylvania, these two Departments make up 20% of The American Legion. Our success in membership cascades across all Departments, making for a robust and beneficial influx raising the whole nation. But it is each post and every member who has pulled up our numbers. Let's keep this going into the future and get Florida back to its 145,000 members we had 20 years ago. We have set the pace; now, let us continue in the years to come. It is just one member at a time; the Veterans are out there, and with Florida becoming "The State To Live

In," it will propel us back to our 145,000 members.

I look forward to serving my fellow Veterans and community again this year, just like those who read this magazine. If you are reading this article, you are amongst those who serve and serve with all hope of making a difference to those around us. About 10% of Legionnaires are volunteers who strive to serve and keep their posts moving forward, and there are the 3% who pull an even heavier load. Thank you to every volunteer, and a special thank you to those pulling the bulk and wearing several hats at their post; all of you are what keeps The American Legion moving forward, ensuring our Veterans are represented and getting their well-deserved benefits for themselves and their family members. That is what The American Legion is all about, and that is what drives us, both individually and as a whole.

## End of Year Statistics

**Jamie Grinis, Blood Donor Chair**

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



Wow, what a great job from the Districts of Florida. This year, all of the reporting Posts have succeeded in surpassing last year's level of pints of blood collected. Many great events were held throughout the state that raised blood for those in need. The job is still not finished as we prepare for Hurricanes and Natural disasters that are soon to knock at our doors again.

This year, I had a hard decision to make when selecting the top winners for the most contributions to this valuable program. Everyone deserves a pat on the back for a mission well done.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication. Statewide, we had 375 blood drives, which resulted in just shy of 3,500 pints collected from 77 Posts. That works out to 25% of our Posts participating in our Blood Donor Program. I know in the coming year, more posts will get involved as we work on the program that saves countless lives.

A special thanks to everyone who volunteered behind the scenes to work this program. I am forever grateful for all your hard work and dedication.

I look forward to seeing you at the Convention this month as awards are presented on stage. This was truly a family affair, as we all worked with one goal in mind: giving the gift of life. See you soon. Be safe in your travels to the Convention.

COMMANDER'S AND PRESIDENT'S BANQUET

# goodwill gowns Glam

DETAILS ON PAGE 27

JUNE

FRI 14 2024



## Hurricane Season is Upon Us

**Bill Hoppner, Disaster Preparedness**

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



Greetings to all. We have reached that time of the year when we are in hurricane season. Hurricane season is from June 1 to November 30 of each year. Most of the cyclones develop between mid-

August to late October, with September 10 being the peak of the season. This year's predictions are above normal, with 23 named storms. Of those, 11 could become hurricanes, and at least five could become major hurricanes with winds of 111mph (Category 3). Based on a 30-year climate period from 1991 to 2020, an average Atlantic hurricane season has 14 named storms, 7 being hurricanes, with 3 being major cyclones with a wind of 111mph (category 3).

The number one concern is the safety of our families, friends, and, of course, our fur babies. In 2023, Florida had an influx of over 300,000 people, and in 2024, so far, we have had 225,000-

275,000, and that's not including undocumented individuals. The question is how many of the individuals who are making Florida their new home are familiar with hurricanes. I would estimate maybe 10% to 15%. I say that because I have attended many seminars to educate and help those unfamiliar. The number one question is "What do I?" Or "I'm not worried it won't hit me". Famous last words, or if I knew it was going to be that bad, I would have evacuated. We can educate the masses on how to prepare for a storm but they are the ones to decide their actions.

In 2017, the Department of Florida started a Disaster Relief Fund, which aids those who have been affected by disasters in Florida. The department has helped hundreds in need. All the donations the department receives, 100%, are used to help needy individuals. If individuals want to make a donation, send your checks to The Department of Florida, and in the memo line, put Disaster Relief, or you can go on the website and donate. There are two funds that

National has: the National Emergency Fund (NEF) and the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA).

The state of Florida has two hurricane tax-free weeks each year. The first is from June 1 to 14, and the second is from August 24 to September 6.

If questions arise, how do I go about getting prepared and being prepared? Check with your local Emergency Management to see if they sponsor hurricane seminars in your city or town. Also, the website [floridadisaster.org](http://floridadisaster.org) has good information, maps of evacuation areas, and a checklist. There is a lot to take in. The more you familiarize yourself with the procedures, the easier it will be for you.

I may be reached by Telephone at 305-968-7979, by Facebook at William Hoppner, and by email at [disaster@legionmail.org](mailto:disaster@legionmail.org). If you have any questions or concerns I may be able to help answer, please don't hesitate to reach out to me by one of the above.

## Florida Apprenticeship Program

**James Douglas, Employment Chair**

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



Are you or someone you know looking for a job or a career change? As you are looking for a new career, don't forget to check out the opportunities available on the [careersourceflorida.com](http://careersourceflorida.com)

website for the Apprenticeship Program. The information can be found by selecting Career Services from the menu at the top right of the website. The apprenticeship selection tab can be found under the TRAIN FOR YOUR NEXT JOB section. Or you can go directly to the partner's website [apprenticeflorida.com](http://apprenticeflorida.com) website. From the Menu at the top right of the website, select

Apprentices.

Per the website, "An apprenticeship is a proven way to avoid or overcome college debt, get a foot in the door at the right company, or even change careers. Some of the benefits of an apprenticeship program are:

- Receive on-the-job training.
  - Earn a nationally recognized credential.
  - Learn from an experienced mentor.
  - Earn a wage that increases with your experience.
- The average starting salary after completion of the program is \$60,000.
- Gain a real-world understanding of the job.
  - Apply what you learn and improve your skills.
  - Fast-track your success in a time-tested way.

Some of the careers that are offered under the Florida apprenticeship programs are Plumbing, Electrical, Lighting Protection, Nursery & Landscape, Carpentry, A/C Contractors, Mechanical, Iron workers, Masonry, Sheet Metal, Fire & Security, Aviation Maintenance Technician, Bus Maintenance, Groundsman to Lineman, Cybersecurity, Painting, Paramedic, Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Home Health Aide, Nursing Assistant, Law, Public Safety & Security, Manufacturing, Transportation, Information Technology, Hospitality and Tourism and Finance.

With all of the above career options, almost anyone who visits the website will find a career that fits their interests.



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

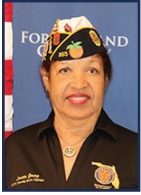
[www.floridalegion.org](http://www.floridalegion.org)  
[legionlink@floridalegion.org](mailto:legionlink@floridalegion.org)



## Year End Wrap-up

**Loretta Young, JROTC/JSSP Chair**

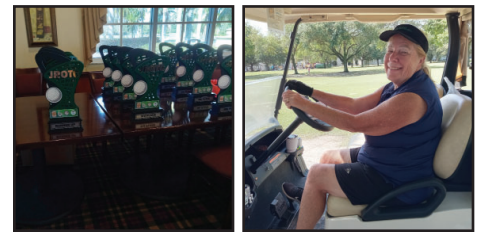
[jrotc@legionmail.org](mailto:jrotc@legionmail.org)



We're almost to the end of the school semester and most year end award programs, military balls and events are already completed. The programs have been very enlightening, rewarding and beneficial to those cadets performing and our volunteers who have been fortunate to attend. I was invited to the JP Taravella NJROTC Award Ceremony which included introduction of the new incoming cadet command for the fall semester and the "Seniors Leaving Ceremony". The "Bell" tolls for each senior that is departing "the Ship" and is always a moving ceremony.

The Annual JROTC Support Association Golf Tournament Fundraiser was held for the scholarships that will be awarded to the top 7 cadets in Broward County that are selected by the Cadet of the Year Committee. I would like to thank all the posts that contributed to the donations and the "All Female Team" that participated from Post/Unit 304, Dania Beach. It was an exciting day on the golf course as well as the luncheon and trophy award ceremony that followed. There was a 2-level interview process held last month at the Broward District JROTC and the main office with officials and volunteers to choose the top cadets for the scholarships. This is a full day's practice and event that is held at the Pompano Beach HS in the gym with all 29 JROTC Units and 2 Entrepreneur Leadership Military

Academies. Please let me know if there's any other activities that I could feature in our last Link issue. Thanks so much for your contributions and I'll be looking forward to next year's events and activities.



## Correctional Officers

**Daryl Bass, Law & Order Chair**

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



In the world of law enforcement, there is no more dangerous occupation than that of the corrections officer. They must attend an academy of their own. Many of their academy courses are similar to those of Law Enforcement. It takes a special person willing to do their shift in an enclosed and secure correctional facility with dangerous inmates (up close and personal). Inside, they are the first responders. They are the first paramedics to respond when an inmate or officer is injured. They are the firefighter should a fire occur.

They are the law enforcement officers who restore order.

life expectancy: On average, after living the life of a correctional officer and making it to retirement, statistics show that they die twelve (12) years earlier than the general population. Stress, bad diet, 0 to 60 emergency mode, heart, and mental stress are all factors. Other factors include overcrowding, inmates with mental health and drug abuse issues, staff shortages, isolation, inmate manipulation, and ethical dilemmas.

Ethical dilemmas: "The Stockholm Syndrome," as defined by psychiatrists, describes when victims of a kidnapping become personally involved with their captors and sympathize with their cause. (remember Patty Hearst) The correctional officer becomes too friendly with the inmate. This then leads to the officers dropping their guard, which can lead to inmates attempting to escape, harming, or killing correctional staff.

Although not considered the COPS on the street, these folks are the COPS of the City/County, State, and Federal Correctional facilities. Inside, they are our first responders.

Legionnaires, please keep these and all of our first responders in your prayers. They're the ones keeping the evil off the streets.



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[floridalegion.org](http://floridalegion.org)

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



PLEASE SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



## Thank You For A Great Year

### Bruce Carl, Membership Chair

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



Welcome to Summer Team Florida! The train is almost at the station, and what a ride it has been. This will be my last article for this year, and I would like to thank our Department Commander for

allowing me the opportunity to be in this position this year. I look forward to having another great and better year as your Membership Chair in 2024-2025 with Chris Hamrick. When the year started, I had four main goals: get back to 100,000 members, 90% retention, at least half of the Posts at 100% by May 8th, and District Commanders making Race to the Top. They seemed quite high, but I had faith in everyone that we could do this. We had a plan in place that even the National Commander thought would work. We accomplished all three goals, thanks to everyone's hard work from the Department

down to the Post level. This shows what working together as a team can accomplish. You all have made the Department Commander and myself look great because of what you have done. I am really looking forward to announcing all the award winners at the Convention in a couple of weeks, and there are many.

As of the writing of this article, we were in 5th place Nationally, at 99.10%. Our retention rate was 92.88%. There were 6 Districts over 100% and 2 Areas over 100%. 158 Posts were at or above 100%, and out of those, 87 were over 103%. 143 Posts were at 100% plus 1. We had 158 Posts that earned 100% pins and coins by reaching the goal by May 8th. Thank you everyone for an outstanding job! I want to send out a special thank you to all my Area Membership Chairs for all their dedication and hard work. Next year, we will try to do even better, and it can be done. We need to focus on

our renewals, getting DMS members early, and new members, but we need to start the work a little earlier than we did this year. I will be there for any assistance you need; all you need to do is ask!

I will be holding a membership class at the Convention, so please check the schedule and try to attend. Bring any membership questions you have so we can cover them. Much of this training is based on what you all need, not what I think you need. I will go over the plan for this coming year and how to achieve our goals, as well as some of the issues encountered this year. After that, there will be an open discussion for your questions.

Again, thank you, everyone, for the outstanding job this year, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Department Convention!

## Until We Meet Again

### Rico Thomas, Florida National Cemeteries

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



Thank you, Commander Gambler, for allowing me to hold this vital Chair position and be one of your wingmen.

It has been a great honor and privilege that I was given to share knowledge

with the Legion Family.

Please don't allow your family to suffer more than needed. Prepare a closed envelope with your DD214, insurance, VA Pre-Need Eligibility burial approval letter for Veterans cemeteries' burial, and other important papers. Mark it as Death or Burial, and tell someone where it is.

*Hebrew 9:27 "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Post Everlasting is inevitable.*

National Cemetery Administration <https://www.cem.va.gov/index.asp>

Apply for your DD214 <https://www.archives.gov/>

## Planning Ahead

### Judith Richards, Post Revitalization

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



What a great year for membership! Several posts had revitalizations that engaged the communities where they are located. One post connected with the local JROTC,

which they are very excited to partner with the American Legion. It was wonderful working with the Membership Teams and the Posts' leadership teams.

Rather than wait until 2025 to schedule revitalizations, let's get them on the calendar for August, September, October, and November!

Coordinate with a Back-to-School Event, Labor Day, Halloween, and Veterans Day.

Let's discuss this at the Convention in June! See you there!



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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





## Information on POW/MIA Remains

### Denny Luke, POW/MIA Chair

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



Has anyone ever heard of the Japanese “Hellships” of WW II? The Imperial Japanese Navy employed these vessels to transport prisoners of war (POWs). Over 20,000 Allied POWs were transported by these Japanese “Hellships” under horrendous conditions, including overcrowding, starvation, poor sanitation, and mistreatment by Japanese soldiers. As many as 1000 Service Members are still unaccounted for from the transportation by the Japanese aboard these ships. Many faced death as they were abandoned at sea or ordered to swim towards land under the threat of Japanese gunfire.

Tragically, the Enoura Maru was one such ship. It was not marked as a POW transport and was sunk by US aircraft, which resulted in the loss of more than 300 POWs. The DPAA has embarked on a multi-year mission to identify the commingled remains of 431 Unknowns from the sinking of the Enoura Maru. The Allies who survived were taken aboard the Brazil Maru, enduring additional illness, malnutrition, mistreatment, and adversities until the end of the war.

The DPAA project Genesis involves collecting DNA family reference samples (FRS), a prerequisite for proposing disinterment. (If you know any descendants of a POW, please have them contact a Service Casualty Officer at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) at [www.dpaa.mil](http://www.dpaa.mil)) Upon accumulating sufficient FRS and obtaining DoD approval, DPAA commenced the Disinterment process. This task has been complicated by the wartime circumstances where many casualties were either buried at sea, cremated, or commingled with other remains. (Remember I wrote of the difficulties the DPAA faces with the commingling of remains in last

month’s newsletter) Despite its complexity, DPAA is steadfast in its mission to provide long-sought answers to the Enoura Maru families as well as all MIA families whose loved ones remain unaccounted for.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) <https://www.dpaa.mil/> has currently identified the following number of MIA personnel for FY 2024:

**WW II - 47, Korean War – 13, Cold War – 0, and Vietnam War - 2.**

The DPAA also released the following 14 News Releases for April 2024

PRESS RELEASE | April 3, 2024

#### **Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Yde, E.)**

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3729020/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-yde-e/>

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Capt. Erik F. Yde, 32, of San Francisco, California, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for on June 22, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 3, 2024

#### **Airman Accounted for from WWII (Seiferheld, F.)**

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3718595/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-seiferheld-f/>

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. Frank J. Seiferheld, 25, of New York, New York, killed during World War II, was accounted for Feb. 12, 2024.

PRESS RELEASE | April 4, 2024

#### **Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Lopa, A.)**

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/2602587/uss-west-virginia-sailor-accounted-for-from-world-war-ii-brown-c/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Navy Electrician’s Mate 3rd Class (EM3c) Charles D. Brown, 22, of Arcola, Illinois, killed during World War II, was accounted for on March 22, 2021.

PRESS RELEASE | April 5, 2024

#### **Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Lopa, A.)**

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3732394/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-lopa-a/>

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Pvt. 1st Class (Pfc.) Anthony J. Lopa, 17, of North Arlington, New Jersey, who was killed during the Korean War, was accounted for on July 21, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 5, 2024

#### **USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted for from WWII (George, G.)**

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3732534/uss-oklahoma-sailor-accounted-for-from-wwii-george-g/>

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Navy Seaman 2nd Class (S2c) George T. George, 26, of St. Louis, Missouri, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Jan. 26, 2017.

PRESS RELEASE | April 16, 2024

#### **Airman Accounted for from WWII (McKeeman, K.)**

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3742523/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-mckeeman-k/>

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)

*POW/MIA Chair continued on page 14 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



<<POW/MIA Chair continued from page 13

announced today that U.S. Army Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kenneth J. McKeeman, 23, of Brooklyn, New York, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 18, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 16, 2024

### USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted for from WWII (Holzhauer, J.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3743059/uss-oklahoma-sailor-accounted-for-from-wwii-holzhauer-j/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Seaman First Class (S1c) James W. Holzhauer, 23, of Abingdon, Virginia, killed during World War II, was accounted for on May 18, 2018.

PRESS RELEASE | April 17, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Wilder, H.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3734293/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-wilder-h/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Private 1st Class Harold D. Wilder, 19, of Pennington Gap, Virginia, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for Feb. 17, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 18, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Jerele, H.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3745426/soldier-accounted-for-from-wwii-jerele-h/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)

announced today that U.S. Army Private 1st Class Harry Jerele, 26, of Berkeley, Illinois, who was captured and died as a prisoner of war during World War II, was accounted for December 20, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 18, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Schafer, H.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3745850/soldier-accounted-for-from-wwii-schafer-h/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Harold A. Schafer, 28, of Denver, Colorado, killed during World War II, was accounted for Sept. 26, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 18, 2024

### Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Williams, L.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3747156/soldier-accounted-for-from-korean-war-williams-l/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Army Private 1st Class Lawrence H. Williams, 22, of Norton, Kansas, killed during the Korean War, was accounted for Nov. 7, 2023.

PRESS RELEASE | April 22, 2024

### Pilot Accounted for from WWII (McLaughlen, J.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3750137/pilot-accounted-for-from-wwii-mclaughlen-j/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. John E. McLaughlen Jr., 25, of Detroit, Michigan, killed

during World War II, was accounted for on Jan. 25, 2024.

PRESS RELEASE | Dec. 20, 2022

### USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From WWII (Gusie, W.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3251776/uss-oklahoma-sailor-accounted-for-from-wwii-gusie-w/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that Navy Fire Controlman 3rd Class William F. Gusie, 19, killed during World War II, was accounted for on Sept. 23, 2021.

PRESS RELEASE | April 29, 2024

### Pilot Accounted For From Vietnam War (Kerr, J.)

<https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Press-Releases/PressReleaseArticleView/Article/3758897/pilot-accounted-for-from-vietnam-war-kerr-j/> The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced today that U.S. Air Force Maj. John C.G. Kerr, 35, reported missing during the Vietnam War, was accounted for April 24, 2024.

I hope to see all at the Department Convention, and I am looking forward to hearing from the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum Board Chairman on the progress of the facility, the 2024 Remembrance Ceremony, and H.R. Bill 3670 during the General Assembly on Friday morning. Please visit the POW/MIA Memorial & Museum website for more information: <https://powmiamemorial.org/>.

Sign up for TEXT ALERTS.



TEXT

FLCON to 41372

SUBSCRIBE FOR DEPT CONVENTION NEWS & UPDATES



PLEASE SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



## Resolution Voting Information

Clarence Hill, Resolutions Chair

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



The Internal Affairs Committee will meet on Thursday afternoon, June 13 at 12:30 PM in the International Ballroom. During the Resolutions report portion of the meeting, only the **RESOLVED clauses** of each resolution will be read prior to a motion being made to accept or reject the resolution followed, by a discussion and a vote on the motion being taken.

It is important that the entire resolution be reviewed prior to the meeting. Each Post can have **one** delegate at this meeting to vote on all matters to be decided. All **voting members must have the black ribbon** received by the delegation chairman with the convention registration package. We ask that voting members please sit in the center section. **Attendees without the black ribbon have no voice and no vote.** We ask that non-voting members please do not sit in the center section. The results of any vote taken at this meeting becomes a recommendation to

the General Assembly when the Resolutions portion of the Internal Affairs Committee report is presented. At the General Assembly, only the **RESOLVED clauses** of each resolution will be read, the recommendation of the Resolutions Committee will be announced and a motion will be made citing that recommendation. **Every delegate to the Convention** has a vote on the convention floor for the final disposition of these resolutions.

## Year End Summary

Deavron Reaves, School Medals Chair

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



Here it is, the end of the Legion year. Where has the time gone? As you all should know, your end-of-year reports and narratives should have

been submitted to the Department of Florida for review for Post and Chair awards. These will be handed out on stage at the upcoming annual Department Convention at the Hilton Orlando, Lake Buena Vista, 13-16 June 2024. I would love to see all of your bright and smiling faces there to see who tops the Department of Florida in the

best School Medals Program and is the best School Medals Chairman, as well as a runner-up in each category. I want to thank everyone who has helped the program run as smoothly as it has. Let's keep it going for next year and beyond!

## National Commanders Visitation and Fundraisers

Larry Roberts, VA Entitlements

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



I'd like to give a huge shout-out to Tony Williams and Veterans Counseling Veterans. They are a prime example of BE THE ONE, demonstrated by their Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Conference.

I was able to meet and hear stories of both male and female Veterans with MST. Eight organizations attended, providing free counseling, therapy, and resources for MST.

If you know a Veteran who is dealing with MST, please call Tony Williams at (407) 516-8398. More information can be found at [VAMentalHealth.va.gov](http://VAMentalHealth.va.gov) for MST support for Veterans. A 2018 meta-analysis of 69 studies found that 15.7% of military personnel and Veterans report experiencing MST, 3.9% of

men and 38.4% of women. The VA defines MST as harassment or sexual assault that occurs during military service. According to DAV, 1 in 3 female Veterans and 1 in 100 male Veterans experience MST.

If you need help, here are some points of contact for you:

- Veterans Counseling Veterans: Tony Williams (407)516-8398
- American Legion Department of Florida VA Entitlements Chair: Larry Roberts (850)718-7773
- Women Veterans Call Center 1-855-VA-Women

To the Legion Riders and Jim Wineland, I can't thank you enough. This year's Unity Ride and State Rally raised over \$331,366 for PROJECT: VetRelief's Suicide Prevention Initiative.

If you know a Veteran dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or Military Sexual Trauma (MST), and would be interested in a Spirit Equine Therapy Retreat, please contact Erick Anderson (352) 455-0803.

I'd also like to thank Jessica for spending a couple of hours with the Mothers of Veterans Suicide.



Only at OCC Road House can you see true horsepower.

VA Entitlements Chair continued on page 16 >>



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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





<<VA Entitlements Chair continued from page 15



Jessica Moore is trying to BE THE ONE back-up driver, but she has to be ARMY STRONG!

## Service Officers and VA Information

Alan Cohen, VA&R

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



Greetings, fellow Legionnaires! This is a bit of a departure, but I'm beginning this month's article with a quote from President Harry S. Truman. "It's amazing how much can be

accomplished if you don't care who gets or takes the credit." What brings me to mention this is that it's been my observation for many years that every day, literally hundreds of members of the American Legion family, as well as others, have it in their hearts to go above and beyond to help our brother and sister Veterans and all they ask in return is the satisfaction of work well done. I'm sometimes in awe because we often don't hear about their contributions except in the results. A warm thank you to many unsung heroes who embody "in it for the cause, not the applause."

By the time you read this, preparations will have been made for the Department's annual convention. This is not just a gathering but a crucial opportunity to come together, share our experiences, and learn from each other. It's a chance to meet and greet fellow Legionnaires from all over Florida, strengthening our bonds and collective mission. Just as important, there will be several vital classes offered, including the

two-day class for Post Service Officers. This is an information-packed class conducted together with our partners at the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, we have guest speakers from within and outside the Legion who will be sharing even more information that will aid us in helping Florida's Veteran population. Your presence and participation are not just encouraged but essential. I can't stress enough how much we need all posts to send as many as three members to this class. A link to the registration page is at the end of this article. Please bear in mind that pre-registration is required.

<https://www.floridalegion.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PSO-2024-Registration-Form-Convention.pdf>

As I've spoken about 'claims sharks' in the past, unfortunately, I must do so again. These are not just individuals or companies who are not accredited by the VA to represent and file claims for the Veteran family. They are a threat, a danger to our community. They talk a great game and, in many cases, infer that they can guarantee quick processing times and positive results. But let me be clear: NOBODY can guarantee winning a claim. In exchange, the Veteran is charged (in a variety of ways) fees or 'donations' in the thousands of dollars. This practice is not just unethical; it's illegal. It's a direct violation of not only VA policy but also that of reputable VSOs. Veterans and

their families or survivors should always beware and avoid these folks. Anyone who wants to charge for their services should be viewed as a suspect. As of this writing, there are several lawsuits against these groups. There has also been legislation introduced in Congress to make these actions punishable by law. These so-called claims sharks are in it for your money. Never sign a contract to pay an unauthorized individual or company for services that you can receive for free. Don't be deceived by anyone asking for 'donations.' Educate yourselves and remember that, like any other predator, they won't exist if they don't get fed.

Great news on the healthcare front! We're making strides in improving access to care for our Veterans. Another new Outpatient Clinic has just opened in South Tampa. This Sabal Park clinic is not just a building; it's a beacon of hope. It offers services like primary care, social work, mental health, and more, with the capacity to serve over 3500 of our brother and sister Veterans and their families living in metro Tampa and Hillsborough County. This is a testament to our commitment to providing the best possible care for our Veterans, and it's a step forward in our ongoing mission to ensure that no Veteran is left behind.

VA&R Chair continued on page 17 >>



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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





<<VA&R Chair continued from page 16

I recently had the pleasure and honor of participating in the annual Stand Down at the Bay Pines VA Hospital, where many vendors provided badly needed services to over 350 homeless Veterans. I also met with Mr. Russo,

the hospital's chief administrator, who invited me to tour the soon-to-be-open 2nd Fisher House. This hospital is an example of why overall Veteran trust in VA outpatient care is at a record 91.8%.

Once again, I look forward to seeing everyone

in a couple of weeks at our Department Convention.

Another truism about life: ever notice that the older we get, the better we used to be? Out here.

### Cancellation

#### Bud Boyer, Youth Law Cadet Chair

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



I apologize for not having an article for the May Legion Link. I really did not know what to say. I want to thank Bekki for covering for me. Thank you, Bekki.

I am only writing this so everyone has an idea of what went on and maybe be able to explain to the young adults who were so interested in participating in the program.

Commander Raymond asked me to chair the Youth Law

Cadet Program. As a retired law enforcement officer, I was honored to work with young adults and the Florida Highway Patrol. We started in July 2023. We made contact with supervisors at the Academy and were off and running. We and the FHP were enthusiastic and optimistic.

We exchanged emails. In March, FHP's attitude changed. I contacted the commander and advised him of this, and he, in return, asked someone with a contact at FHP to look into what the feeling was. I was advised that FHP told that person they were in contact with my email, which was true.

On April 22 at 8:54 AM, I received an email from the Lieutenant I had been working with since July. The email stated that after speaking with upper management, he was sorry to inform me that they were not going to be able to host the Youth Academy this year. FHP thanked us for our interest and hopes to one day host our organization.

I believe we did everything that we could. If given the chance, I would like to try again to get this program up and running. I believe our younger generation will be the ones who take up the cause, whether it be in the military or law enforcement, so we should do what we can to mentor these young men and women now.

### 2025 Tampa Convention

#### Clarence Hill, PNC

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



Our first deadline for the Tampa Convention is to provide National a list of the National Committee Chairpersons and their contact information after this month's Department Convention. We'd also

like to start compiling a list of those who would like to volunteer to serve on each committee. A lot will rely on the Legionnaires, Auxiliary, SAL, and Riders members who volunteer to make the Convention a success, and we need members of each organization to contribute. I would like to have a member of the Legion as the chairperson of each committee and a member of the Auxiliary, Sons and Riders as Vice Chairpersons to coordinate the volunteers from their organizations. Events will start moving faster after

the Department Convention. Again, the Committees are: Badges and Packets, Distinguished Guests, Memorial Service, Information/Registration and Special Events. I would also like to consider volunteers for the Tampa Liaison position, which can be more than one person; and for the National Commander's and National Adjutant's drivers. There will be a sign-up sheet at the Legion Department HQ Office for those interested.

I expect the Convention to cost \$400,000 or more, with the largest cost being the bus transportation. This year, Legislative Chairman Stu Scott worked hard to get budget money from the Legislature to help offset the transportation cost, but was unsuccessful. We will try again next year, and will need a lot of lobbying help from the grassroots making contact and supporting the effort. More will come later.

There are 5 National Convention committees (Badges and Packets, Distinguished Guests, Information/Registration, Memorial Service and Special Events) that are required by National, plus a Tampa Liaison and National Commander/National Adjutant drivers.

The Liaison is someone with political connections locally and perhaps statewide. They may be asked to assist with agencies such as police, fire, public works, parks & recreation, mayor's office and airport officials. The individual should also be familiar with local businesses such as retail stores, restaurants, recreational facilities, transportation companies and other businesses that could impact convention activities.

The Badges and Packets Committee is responsible for

PNC Hill continued on page 18 >>



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

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



<<PNC Hill continued from page 17

setting up the Office located in the Convention Center. Badges and Packets for The American Legion, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion are shipped from National Headquarters to this office. The bags must be assembled for each delegate for each Department, then delivered to the Departments as they arrive. The estimated number of assistants needed is 28-30.

The Distinguished Guests Committee has a Chairperson and two Vice Chairpersons. The Vice Chairpersons are the Distinguished Guests Registration Chairperson and the Distinguished Guests Holding Area Chairperson. The Committee will also need two full time drivers for the National Commander and for the National Adjutant. The estimated number of assistants needed is 2-6 for each committee.

The Information/Registration Committee mans

the desks set up in the convention center to answer questions from the attendees and to register attendees and guests not registered with their Departments. National will provide binders with lots of information in them. The estimated number of assistants needed is 8-10.

The Memorial Service Committee coordinates with the National Chaplain to set up the service, provide rooming arrangements that may be required and provide volunteers to assist with seating attendees. We also need to identify a well-known local group that is willing to perform at this event. We need to provide National with a number of options for this group and National will pursue booking them. If you have any suggestions, submit them to Bruce or I. The estimated number of assistants needed is 3-5.

The Special Events Committee coordinates meeting

the requirements for all special events scheduled, whether it be obtaining permits, coordinating with city agencies (police, fire, sanitation, emergency management, etc.) and members must be residents of the city. The estimated number of assistants is 30 or more.

This overview gives you an idea of the immensity of the project Florida has taken on, and how important your support and volunteering will be to its success. Hosting a National Convention is not an easy task, and every member of all the other Departments is a critic. If you can help in any way or have any ideas, please provide them. If you can volunteer in any way, we need you.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you interested in volunteering to help with the **2025 National Convention** in Tampa? **SIGN UP AT** [floridalegion.org/volunteer2025](http://floridalegion.org/volunteer2025)

### Youth Programs Statistics

**Dennis Boland, Child Welfare Foundation**

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



American Legion youth programs instill values, develop responsible citizens, and inspire future U.S. leaders.

Youth mentorship is one prominent way former members of the U.S. Armed Forces in The American Legion live up to this motto: "Veterans Strengthening America." Around the world, they passionately provide structure, guidance, education, and opportunities for young people to understand their nation better, contribute to it, and achieve their dreams.

Today, more than ever, donation-funded American Legion youth programs brighten the future by showing young men and women what it means to live, compete, serve, and lead in a free nation.

Your charitable gift will help The American Legion continue its mission, one community at a time, through youth programs that have made life-changing differences for nearly a century. No other organization has the same kind of impact on so many young Americans.

- ORATORICAL: 2,500 participants each year:
- BOYS STATE AND BOYS NATION: Over 16,000 attend per year.

- SCHOLARSHIPS: \$6.43 million presented to 2,962 recipients
- SCHOOL AWARD MEDALS: 18,547 presented.
- JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS: 11,811 participated.
- YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT: 7,583 participated.
- BASEBALL: 50,000 athletes play on 3,000 teams each year.
- EAGLE SCOUTS: \$622,500 in scholarships.
- SCOUTING: \$2,014.236 donated to scouting troops by American Legion Posts.

**THE AMERICAN LEGION IS THE MOST AWESOME ORGANIZATION IN AMERICA.**



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

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



## SUCCESS EQUALS NEED FOR MORE FUNDING

The end of this month marks the close of another chapter for PROJECT: VetRelief, as we officially end our 10th year as a program. Over the last few years, we've reached significant milestones: reaching record-highs for veterans served through our emergency assistance program and having the most Strategic Partnerships for our suicide prevention initiative.

Our support statistics are always listed at the bottom of our Legion Link articles, but we are tracking to have another successful year in both areas!

Although setting record-highs in our statistics stats are impressive and something we are very proud of, it also emphasizes the importance of funding for our programs.

You see, PROJECT: VetRelief solely functions on the generosity of others, largely from The Florida Legion Family. Without it, we would not be able to support the high-demand of our veteran community.

Our support numbers are proof that our veterans need us, so we hope that you will continue to provide

PROJECT: VetRelief with the necessary funding to give us the ability to be there for them.

Together, our impact is much larger!

**-THANK YOU-**

### THE DATE IS SET PVR ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



**WHEN:** Monday, September 16th

**WHERE:** Bella Collina Golf Course

**TIME:** Registration 7:30AM  
Shotgun at 8:30AM

We always look forward to this annual event hosted by our Board President, Bob James, and his company, RL James General Contractor! Each year, participants can expect a lot of FUN, but the reason they always return is the difference they make on Florida's veterans. As this is a highly coveted event, we are anticipating another quick sell out of golfers again this year!

### Current Year: July 2023 - April 2024

**266**  
Veterans Received  
Financial Support

**\$361,585**  
Provided as  
Emergency Assistance

**14**  
Suicide Prevention  
Strategic Partners

**\$153,000**  
Given towards  
Veteran Suicide Prevention



## Word of Thanks from Our Eagle Scout of the Year

### Tre Peterson, Eagle Scout of the Year



Hello American Legion Family and welcome to your American Legion, Department of Florida Convention. My name is Tre Peterson and I was selected as your 2024 Eagle Scout of the Year. Thank you so much.

I received this wonderful news on April 12 with an email from Ms. Bekki Boarman. I was thrilled!

Growing up in a military family I enjoyed wearing a uniform like my Dad and have spent most of my

life as a scout, I joined in first grade as a Tiger Cub and I just kept going. I earned my Arrow of Light in 5th grade and became an Eagle scout just before I started 8th grade. I didn't stop there as I kept on earning merit badges. My claim to fame is I am one of very few scouts in the entire country that have earned all 138 merit badges. I believe spending my high school career earning all of these badges from archery and animal science to welding, whitewater and wilderness survival have helped me grow as a person and give me a great foundation for life.

I would love to be with you today, however my

summer is already flying by. I graduated from Ponte Vedra High School on May 17th. Two weeks later I was at Freshman Orientation at Stetson University in Deland, Florida. And today, while you are in Orlando, I am studying abroad in Rijeka, Croatia. I return to the States at the end of the month, vacationing with family in July, and then starting school at Stetson on August 17th. I intend to major in Finance.

Again, thank you for this wonderful honor and scholarship. I will check in with Ms. Boarman and Mr. Comer from time to time as I intend to make all of you very proud. Thank You!

## National Executive Committee Source Report

### William D. Kelly, SAL NEC

The Sons of the American Legion convened their Spring National Executive Committee Meetings on May 1st through 5th 2024 at the Sheraton City Center in Indianapolis, IN.

The Internal Affairs Commission, Member Training & Development Committee completed the last National Management Institute and rolled out The New Sons of The American Legion University. The NMI 3 was the completion of the former SAL training classes and introduced new training for the future of our organization The Sons of The American Legion University (SAL U).

The Century Committee (Cent Com), Chaired by PNC Joe Gladen, met over several days along with the 100 Anniversary sub-committee. They will continue to meet as we near the 100 Anniversary in 2032 and prepare to move into the next century of the SAL.

The Florida delegation, CDR Sambets, and I traveled in on Friday morning. National Assistant

Adjutant Ed Sheubrooks was required to travel in on Wednesday May 1st for setup. Friday May 3rd at 6 to 10 PM starts the majority of the Commission and Committee Meetings. At 6 PM CDR Sambets attended the Membership & Squadron Activities and then at 8 PM being a member of the Convention Committee attended his meeting. Since returning from the spring meetings the Detachment of Florida has qualified for the second time to receive The Sons of the American Legion **Triple Nickel**. This requires a detachment to achieve One Hundred and Five percent (105%) of Membership, Five (5) New Squadrons, and Eighty Five percent (85%). Due to the absence of the Convention Committee Chairman CDR Sambets chaired this meeting. Meantime at 6PM being the NEC Liaison to the Finance Commission, I attended that meeting and then at 8 PM I attended the Internal Affairs Commission. At National the IA subcommittees are Convention, Member Training & Development (MT&D), and Membership and Squadron Activities (M&SA).

Saturday morning started with MYLEGION.ORG which is much needed to carry back to their home

Detachment. Unfortunately, planners failed to provide enough seating for the turnout. Our National Staff said they would provide a larger venue for the next training session. The committee on resolutions met at 10 AM and it was explained that SAL Outline of Authorization (OoA) had been amended concerning the resolutions. There are many questions concerning the OoA which will outline this new resolution process. Unfortunately, the new OoA has not been completely approved by The American Legion IA & NEC, so no written copy yet exists for distribution. The SAL Resolutions will now be reviewed by the SAL Advisory Committee & subcommittees, The American Legion Internal Affairs, and TAL Finance Commission, before the SAL Resolutions Committee and the SAL NEC vote on them. This appears that this will be the new process, but we will have to wait for the amended written version of The Sons of The American Legion Outline of Authorization.

At 1 PM on Saturday, SAL National CDR JR Hall called the Spring National Executive Committee

*SAL NEC continued on page 21 >>*



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

www.floridalegion.org  
legionlink@floridalegion.org





<<SAL NEC continued from page 20

Meetings to order. The reports started with:

**The Americanism Commission** discussing Flag Awareness & Education, Boys State, Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program, and their two subcommittees Children & Youth and Child Welfare Foundation.

CWF reported they were \$120,000 short of the 10 Million Dollar mark donated by the SAL and there were about \$94,000 collected donations off the NEC floor. C&Y discussed the College Park Md, Georgia Youths Easter Egg Hunt and Pizza Parties. There was also a lively discussion on Children's Organ Transplant Association.

**The Finance Commission** reported that the final 2023 has been reconciled. The 2024 reconciliation has been submitted to The American Legion Finance Commission. The 2025 Draft Budget has been submitted to The Sons of The American Legion Advisory Committee for review before submission to The American Legion Finance Commission, Internal Affairs Commission, and The American Legion National Executive Committee. All Sons of The American Legion Resolutions will be reviewed by The American Legion Finance Commission for financial intent as part of the new SAL resolution process.

**Internal Affairs Commission** first report was sent to the **Convention Committee** and due to circumstances our CDR Sambets was thrown into chair this meeting and did an outstanding job. La. Adjutant/NEC Camelle LaJeune reported on the upcoming National Convention in New Orleans LA. Herb Petit Jr is the President of the Convention Corp. Allen Dunn will be in charge of registration and Byron Comeau will be in charge of badges packets and delivery to Departments. There are 9,000 hotel rooms available and the WWII Museum is one of the points of interest.

### Member Training & Development Committee

was the big winner with the completion of National Management Institute III and the kickoff of SAL U. pilot training classes. **Membership & Squadron Activities Committee** reported that every membership goal has been met this year. Now we approach the 100% goals we need to make the push to put us over the top. With our return we received the information that our Southeast Region surpassed 100% Membership. GREAT JOB. Make sure everyone who is eligible for an Individual Membership Award gets put in for an award, Arizona has devised a membership brief case to be used by the Squadrons for membership. More information will be available at National Convention.

**The Legislative Commission** reported the Washington Conference bus trip was a huge success and if you're not on TAL Voters Voice join now.

### Public Media & Communications Commission

The commission is requesting more submissions for snap shots and video of service and increased Facebook presences.

**Subcommittee on Resolutions**, Here are the 2024 Spring 20 NEC Resolutions, SAL Resolutions Spring 2024 # 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, were all candidate endorsements, which are all received and filed.

**SAL Resolution 1** Spring 2024 V.E.E. M.P. Nay Award Refers to the Open Dollar amount of the award - Approved

**SAL Resolution 3** Spring 2024 MD&T SAL U Creation Finances - Held for Study

**SAL Resolution 4** Spring 2024 M&SA Restructure M&SA Committee - Approved

**SAL Resolution 7** I.A. Appointment Brian Waters Nat. Sgt of Arms Emeritus - Approved

**SAL Resolution 11** PUFL Ad Hoc Creation SAL Paid Up For Life Membership -Held for Study

**SAL Resolution 12** M&SA 105% in July New Membership Award - Held for Study

**SAL Resolution 13** P&MC Stipend for Newsletter Editor - Held for Study

**SAL Resolution 14** M&SA Membership Award for Detachments with less than 200 members - Approved

**SAL Resolution 15** M&SA Membership Regional Award for Detachments with less than 200 members - Approved

**SAL Resolution 16** CWF Highest Donation by a Squadron - Rejected by TAL

**SAL Resolution 17** VA&R Donation \$5,000 OCW - Held for Financial Study

**SAL Resolution 18** VA&R Charles Rigsby Award Update - Approved

**SAL Resolution 19** VA&R \$5,000 Donation National Veteran Creative Art Festival - Held for Financial Study

**SAL Resolution 20** MS&A Revise Houghton Membership Award - Approved

These resolutions were presented on Saturday, May 4, 2024 to the NEC but due to the unavailability of printed or electronically submitted copies, the process had to be delayed until Sunday, May 5th for a printed copy of the resolutions and an electronic copy to the Commission and Committee Reports.

Saturday night the leading candidate Joseph Naverati and Bill Clancy had their candidates reception at The World War I. It was an outstanding venue for this event. New Mexico and New York need to be commended for their outstanding job.

On Sunday Morning we were greeted by The American Legion National Commander Dan and The American Legion Auxiliary President Lisa and the CWF President followed by an update from SAL CDR Hall.

SAL NEC continued on page 22 >>



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

www.floridalegion.org  
legionlink@floridalegion.org



<<SAL NEC continued from page 21

Before adjourning the NEC requested that the Chairman of The Advisory Committee PNC Joe Mayne address the NEC gathering with an update. He spoke to the changes at the top. The American Legion Oversight Committee was disbanded and

now The Sons of The American Legion Advisory Committee reports directly to The American Legion Internal Affairs Commission who reports directly to The American Legion National Executive Committee. Chairman PNC Mayne explained briefly that the SAL Advisory Committee has new subcommittees, Committee on National Appointments (CONA)

previously (SONA) National, Vice Commander Selection Committee, (NVSC) NEC Resolutions Screening Committee. These new resolutions committees will be responsible for the new resolution process.



## The American Legion, Department of Florida is proud to announce the 2024 Scholarship Winners

**The Nursing School Scholarship:** 1st Place, receiving a \$2,750.00 scholarship is Andrea Garcia of Winter Springs. Andrea Garcia will be invited to The Department Convention in June to receive her scholarships.

*Many thanks go out to all who applied for The Nursing School Scholarship. The Scholarship Committee had a very hard time judging the entries as they were all excellent. We wish each of you tremendous success in your future endeavors.*



[www.floridalegion.org/enter](http://www.floridalegion.org/enter)



PLEASE SUPPORT  
DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE

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



## Post Everlasting



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

### **Verna Y. Joyce**

With deep sorrow, we inform you of the passing of Past Western Area Commander Verna Y. Joyce of Navarre, Florida. Verna passed away on Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at the age of 79. Verna was preceded in death by her husband of 57 years, Jesse Edwin Joyce. She is survived by her daughter, Lisa Roberts, son James Joyce; two grandchildren, Stephanie Swisher and Samuel Joyce; and three great-grandchildren, Jessamyn, Jackson, and June Swisher.

Verna will be laid to rest alongside Jesse at Arlington National Cemetery on a date to be announced. Any updates regarding arrangements will be communicated via email and posted on the Department's website.

Verna, a Vietnam War Era Veteran, proudly served in the U.S. Army for 14 years. She also served as a dedicated member of the American Legion for 18 continuous years and was a member of Milton Post 78. She held various leadership positions throughout her membership, including Post Commander from 2009-2011, District Commander from 2012-2013, and Western Area Commander from 2013-2015. On a National level, Verna served on the Conventional Armed Forces Committee from 2013-2019.

If you wish to extend your condolences, you may do so through her daughter, Lisa Roberts, at 517 SW South Carolina Drive, Stuart, FL 34994.

Please keep Verna's family and loved ones in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.







# MEMBERSHIP TARGET REPORT

May 23, 2024 (100.52%)

District 3	Stuart Scott	111.65%
District 17	Jim Bowers	105.28%
District 15	Randy Holeyfield	104.19%
District 1	Shelby Windham	102.82%
District 7	Rick Orzechowski	102.74%
District 8	John Rauh	101.84%
District 5	Miguel Garcia	101.44%
District 12	Bruce Thurber	101.00%
District 9	Rico Thomas	100.97%
District 2	Doyle Combs Jr	100.66%
District 13	Eric Loyd	99.63%
District 6	Peter Gregory	99.36%
District 11	Toni Sutherland	99.35%
District 4	Doug Hockenberry	98.60%
District 14	Thomas Frank	98.08%
District 16	Eric Nestler	97.13%
Northern	Lena Heredia-Perez	102.76%
Western	Sonny Decker	102.51%
Southwestern	Harold "Bud" Boyer	100.62%
Eastern	Joe Marcheggiani	100.09%
Central	Bob Matheson	99.83%
Southern	Johnny Castro	99.53%
Post 400		98.22%
Post 208		102.53%

**NEXT GOAL:** May 31, 2024

**100%+1**



## TRAVEL WITH CONFIDENCE

Learn How the Legionnaire Emergency Assistance Plus (EA+<sup>®</sup>) Helps You Handle Travel Emergencies.



LEGIONNAIRE INSURANCE TRUST PROGRAM

Any time you have an accident or sudden illness while traveling away from home, Emergency Assistance Plus provides a crucial safety net that helps coordinate and provide for emergency medical transportation your health or travel insurance generally will NOT cover. EA+ steps in to provide Medical Evacuation, Transportation Home, Medical Assistance, Travel Assistance, and Assistance for Companions.

**Secure your EA+ protection today!**



1-888-293-4008



[www.TheLIT.com/Emergency-Assistance-Plus](http://www.TheLIT.com/Emergency-Assistance-Plus)

Emergency Assistance Plus<sup>®</sup> (EA+<sup>®</sup>) is not insurance, it is a membership plan. This is only an outline of the plan's features. Hospitalization (admitted as an inpatient) is a requirement to be eligible for some services. All services must be arranged and provided by EA+. Please read the EA+ Member Guide carefully to understand all the services available to you, as well as any rules and regulations. Visit [www.TheLIT.com/Emergency-Assistance-Plus](http://www.TheLIT.com/Emergency-Assistance-Plus) to view a sample of the EA+ Plan details.

★ ★ ★ FREQUENT WINNERS ★ ★ ★

**50/50 RAFFLE** VETERANS

WIN BIG & SUPPORT VETS

ENTER ONLINE [florida5050.org](http://florida5050.org)

AMERICAN LEGION Department of Florida

FLORIDA SAMPLER

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

The American Legion official license plate.



PLEASE SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF & C.O.T.A.

**INTEGRITY ★ LOYALTY ★ PURPOSE**

[www.floridal legion.org](http://www.floridal legion.org)  
[legionlink@floridal legion.org](mailto:legionlink@floridal legion.org)





# COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2024-2025



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

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

## DELIVERY METHOD

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

*\*An additional shipping flat 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 Pocket	XS	0	S	0	M	0	L	0	XL	0	2X	0	3X	0	4X	0	\$ 0.00
Men's No Pocket	XS	0	S	0	M	0	L	0	XL	0	2X	0	3X	0	4X	0	\$ 0.00
Ladies	XS	0	S	0	M	0	L	0	XL	0	2X	0	3X	0	4X	0	\$ 0.00

## TOTAL

Shirts are **\$40 each**, add **\$2 each for Men's w/Pocket**, price includes personalization. Please see the next page for personalization options. If tax-exempt, please include a copy of the exemption form, if not already on file.

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

Subtotal \$ 0.00

Tax (6.5%) \$ 0.00

Shipping \$ 0.00

Grand Total \$ 0.00

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_