

NATIONAL SECURITY

The 16 Districts of the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Florida carried out National President, Sharon Conatser's theme of "Keeping the Promise" for are active military and those who served in the past. Along with Department of Florida President Pearl McIntyre's theme "From the Service of One Comes the Support of Many", the Units in the Districts supported the many aspics of the National Security Program.

Units of the Department of Florida reported volunteering 45,360 hours that touched the lives of 7,201 veterans and active duty military during the 2015-1016 Auxiliary year. The Units spent \$48,348 and another \$48,632 in kind donations supporting the many National Security programs.

Many Units recognized Blue and Gold Star mothers, some held luncheons to honor their sacrifice, others donated to the Gold Star Memorial. A total of 36 Blue Star banners and 3 Gold Star banners where presented.

Coupon clipping is a big part of socialization and interaction of members in our state. It gives elderly members an opportunity to help the Unit and provides members a time to socialize with other Auxiliary Members. This year 36,373 hours were spent clipping coupons with a dollar value of \$10,800,578.55. An article on how to sort the coupons and where to send them was published in the Department of Florida August Newsletter.

Units reported participating in the Yellow Ribbon program serving 475 veterans, spending \$145 and \$210 in kind dollars for a total of 40 hours.

Special ceremonies were held on POW/MIA National Recognition Day to rededicate the POW/MIA table, explain the meaning of the table and what everything on the table stands for. This Chairman held a POW/MIA children's table ceremony at the Department of Florida Fall Conference. This very moving ceremony was well received. Many Units were not aware of this ceremony and asked for a copy. The ceremony and a picture of the table was published the following month in the Department of Florida Newsletter. The empty chair is on display at many Unit meetings in compliance with the Legion's POW/MIA Empty Chair Resolution 288.

Disaster preparedness and CERT training was reported by several Units. Six members were trained and 28 volunteers are certified.

Unfortunately no Unit reported recognizing MIA families following notification of remains, nor did any Unit report on connecting military families to other Units when the family moved. This may have been due to lack of notification or awareness.

Many Units in the Districts support the Honor Flight program by volunteering as escorts, going to the airport to see them off, and again to welcome them home. Units also support the Honor Flight program with monetary donations. They reported serving 1278 veterans with welcome home ceremonies, plus those on the Honor flights.

Book of reports

ROTC and JROTC cadets are annually recognized with medals and the cadets in turn have helped serve dinners, took part in flag ceremonies and volunteered at Unit events.

A Bloodmobile is provided throughout the state at Units that hold a blood drive.

The Department of Florida continues to support the military and their families. All Districts in the Department encourage members to wear red shirts on Friday "until they all come home".

For God and Country,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diann Dircz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Diann Dircz, Chairman
479 Nicklaus Blvd
North Fort Myers, FL 33903
(239) 229-2570
diann12345@gmail.com