

The Liberty Bell

XIII Issue 06

JANUARY 2024



Department President Dee Bell

#ringyourbell

This Month's Edition



3 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *Dee Bell*

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MISSION STATEMENT

In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad.

For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of The American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion while becoming the premier service organization and foundation of every community providing support for our veterans, our military, and their families by shaping a positive future in an atmosphere of fellowship, patriotism, peace and security.

Upcoming Events JANUARY 2024

- 01 Dept Headquarters Closed
- 01 New Year's Day
- 13 Northern Area Ball
- 15 Liberty Bell Articles Due
- 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 15 Dept Headquarters Closed
- 21-30 National Legion Commander Visits Florida
- 27 Southern Area Ball
- 31-2 ALR Summit & Expo



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Want to submit an article
and/or photos to *The Liberty Bell* ? alaf1.org/submit
alaf1news@alaf1.org

President's Message

Dee Bell



Happy New Year Florida Members,

Thank You for renewing your dues for 2024. Congratulations to Department Membership Chairman Lisa and the Units in Florida, YOU DID IT!!! We made the national membership goal of 75% goal. Ringing out the old

and ringing in the new is a great time to renew your passion, reenergize your dedication, and continue to work the mission of the Auxiliary in your Unit.

Thank You to Christine Massey 16th President and the

16th District for bringing me home for Christmas for my district visit. It was wonderful to see old friends and meet many new members. Beginning with a relaxing luncheon boat cruise, delicious meals hosted by Units, a wonderful kids Christmas party with Santa, casino night for COTA and Final Salute, and concluding with a wonderful Legion Family dinner. 5th District President Julie Kay planned a fabulous visit traveling throughout the District. Due to unforeseen health issues (Covid, Pneumonia, and Bronchitis) after two days, I had to cut my visit short and was hospitalized. I will make every effort to get back to the 5th District.

Happy New Year to Department Officers, District Presidents, Department Chairmen and the entire Department of Florida. Let's make it the best year ever.

Secretary

MARY KELLY-PERKINS



Welcome 2024! I hope that everyone had a Joyous Holiday.

If you are interested in becoming a Department Chairman or be on a committee you now have an opportunity to submit your application online.

Just go to our Department website www.alafl.org and on the home page, to the left, you will see the headlines. All you need to do is click on that and a form will come up for you to complete. Please read the form carefully.

Please start thinking about what needs to be done over the next few months at your general meetings. One of the topics is does the Unit need to increase the yearly dues. Please go to www.alafl.org CLICK on QUICKLINKS then scroll down to UNIT FORMS and then to UNIT DUES INFORMATION 2025. This is a PDF Fillable Form. This form MUST BE completed even if the Unit is not raising the yearly dues. Please be sure you email the form back to membership@alafl.org If you are increasing dues, you must change your

Standing Rules.

As much as our Department Staff wants to help each member, there are things that we cannot help you with. If there is an issue in the Unit then the members need to resolve it, we cannot. If an officer wrote a check and did not have two signatures and the check was not approved, then the Unit must resolve that issue. We can only advise/recommend or tell you to check the Unit Constitution and Bylaws.

As a reminder you must have your Auxiliary dues paid in order to keep your membership as a American Legion Rider.

If you are submitting an article for the Department Newsletter please be sure the article is print ready and then you email the article as an attachment to the following email address: alaflnews@alafl.org

Do not email it to secretary as that only holds up the process and could possible mean the article will not make the deadline.

You can always email me to ask a question and I will do my best to answer.

Americanism

TAMMY ZELL



Respect our Flag

As an American, as well as a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, each and every one of us should always show the highest level of respect to the most recognized emblem of our country - the United States flag. Those stars and stripes have endured through wars, terrorist attacks,

and natural disasters for well over 200 years. After the dust settles from tumultuous times, we look to those "broad stripes and bright stars" to give us a renewed sense of security and faith not only in our country, but also in ourselves. It should be obvious, then, that we always treat the flag with the utmost of respect. As written in the American Legion's "Ceremony for Disposal of Unserviceable Flags":

"A Flag may be a flimsy bit of printed gauze, or a beautiful banner of finest silk. Its intrinsic value may be trifling or great; but its real value is beyond price, for it is a precious symbol of all that we and our comrades have worked for and lived for, and died for a free Nation of free men, true to the faith of the past, devoted to the ideals and practice of Justice, Freedom and Democracy."

As our preamble states, "to participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion", it is through our contribution that we must adhere to the Flag Code and ensuing resolutions to ensure that we continue to set the positive example of being a patriotic American. As written in Title 4, Chapter 1, Section 8(k), United States Code states:

"The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning"

This means that an unserviceable flag should never be reused or recycled in any way. Other organizations profess to using the stars from an unserviceable flag as a way to honor veterans. Yet this misguided notion is completely against everything that the Flag Code and the American Legion family have stood for in regards to proper flag etiquette. The blue canton is a representation of a living country and the flag, itself, a living thing, so it is only justified that it only be destroyed in a dignified way, such as in a ceremony honoring its service. As stated in a Facebook message put out by the ALA National Headquarters in September 2015, "The flag began as a whole; therefore, it is to be disposed of as a whole".

If someone comes to you and offers you a star in a little baggie, please do not accept it, but use the moment to kindly educate the person about Old Glory and how to show it proper respect. And if they say they are only trying to honor veterans, invite them into your Post home and show them the multitude of projects and programs that we do each and everyday that are a more fitting example of honoring our veterans.





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CHILDREN & YOUTH PICNIC

SATURDAY APRIL 6, 2024

12pm - 5pm

**Music by
Doc Holiday**



**Raffle Baskets
50/50
Carnival Games
+ More!**

Location:

**American Legion Post 117
189 Veterans Drive
Palm Bay, FL 32909**

1/3 Pound Burger or, 1/4 Hot Dog \$10

Kids Under 12 1/4 Burger or Hot Dog \$5

PICNIC MEAL = 63 GROUND SLIGHTLY OLD MEAT

All Meals Served with Sides

Poker Run

Registration 9:30am KSU 10:30 am

Questions: Contact

**AL Dept C&Y Chaiman Rick Johnson 954-242-4496
MaryAnn Spellman 917-834-5763**

All Proceeds go to COTA

Community Service

BRIDGETTE GREENE



Chairman's Message:

Greetings ALAFL Bells in Service: I hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday. Although the holidays can be stressful, the mission of community service continues. I am amazed by the dedication of our members to include our

Veterans, Active-Duty Military, and the community in their planning during the holidays. Members throughout the state of Florida volunteered to open the doors of their Post to host delicious meals for the veterans as well as the community. The generosity was well received and the veterans and community look forward to it annually. And, for that I say "THANK YOU"! Continue to ring your bell while working the mission. I see all that the auxiliary does in the community and I am blown away.

What's Happening Around Town:

Several Units sponsored Halloween parties in their communities; During Veterans Day units distributed poppies across the state of Florida; I hope everyone sent in their quotas; Unit 194 St. Augustine volunteered for Post 194's annual "Feed the Vets" Pre-Thanksgiving Meal serving over 200 veterans and spouses; Unit 65 Delray Beach donated Thanksgiving baskets to the Delray Beach Police Dept to distribute to families in need (great way to network within the community, and who better to know the needs of the residents in the community than the Police; prayer for Gods continuing to cover them); Unit 14 St. Petersburg, delivered over 500 toys to the Salvation Army of St. Peterburg/South Pinellas County for Christmas; Unit 401 Hillard supported the Town of Hillard Florida Parade of Trees, by donating a decorated tree; Unit 197 distributed flyers inviting the community to a Town Hall Insurance Education event (this was not a sales pitch event); Town & Country Memorial Unit 152 had a fundraiser for their Christmas Community Food Baskets giveaway; Unit 283 along with the SAL packed 33 Christmas bags of food for those in need; AL Family Post 351, Ft. Myers decorated and donated trees for those in need in their community; Unit 129, Jacksonville Beach participated in The Jacksonville Beach Deck the Chairs

annual event; several units sponsored Christmas parties for the kids in their community.Dept of Florida keep up the good work!

Fall Conference Recap:

Dept of Florida Fall Conference was held in November. It was good to see everyone and especially those who attended the Community Service Break-out Session. It was very informative and received good feedback. Thank you! Community Service committee member Liz Close, spoke about "How to Partner with Organizations" and how community service has been a major activity of the American Legion Auxiliary since 1926. You can find the article of reference at www.alafl.org, under programs go to Community Service and click on the link 2023-2024 Resources Page for Community Service. We stand by our motto: Service not Self. While a person may not be eligible for Legion Family membership this does not them negate them from volunteering. She also spoke about networking with other community organizations who have the same mission of serving our veterans and the community. Invite them to a project/event you are planning. You might be surprised by the response of support outside of your post home. After Liz provided such good information, I had a hard act to follow and spoke about **American Legion Family Day (ALFD)**.

The National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 7 in a regular meeting on October 12-13, 2022. It establishes that a special day known as "American Legion Family Day" be established and observed annually on the last Saturday of April. All American Legion posts throughout the nation should open their doors celebrating the great deeds and works of the American Legion Family. Start planning now! American Legion Family Day is fast approaching - - April 27, 2024. Our Rider family has a saying "for the cause not the applause," well this is a time to shine in the community. Each family is encouraged to participate and give a history of what their respective family has done over the years. Yes. brag! You deserve it. Picture poster boards are great for displaying all your Legion family achievements.. This day is also to educate the community on the **"Be the One"**

Continued on Page 7 >>

initiative.

There is a great cheat sheet on **How to Plan a Successful American Legion Family Day**. You can find it on the Departments site alafl.org (under community service) as well as Nationals website www.legion.org. National is looking for a huge participation from all Posts across the nation. Let us do our part Florida! And.....#ringourbell

Be The One

The American Legion has a mission from the National level to the Post level to end veteran suicide and destigmatize the need to ask for mental help. That mission is **Be the One**. The program will destigmatize veterans asking for mental health support, provide peer to peer support and resources, and educate on how they can **Be the One**. Today, the No # 1 issue facing the veteran community is suicide (of course we know there are other issues our veterans deal with also) ... this statistic comes from the National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. It is estimated that between 17 and 22 veterans or servicemembers take their lives each day. Think about that and the veterans in your own community. Our Veterans will continue to deal with post-traumatic stress disorder due to the Global War on Terrorism.

As auxiliary members our mission is to advocate for our veterans:

- Ask veterans in your life how they are doing...be it at home or our Post home
- Listen when a veteran needs to talk
- Reach out when a veteran is struggling

This and this alone is what Be the One is about; not being the one to pay your dues, or support a poker run it's about checking on our veterans and speaking up for them.

The power of Be the One

AL Posts have the power to foster unity and camaraderie and get support quickly to veterans in crisis.....and we all know a well-run auxiliary is the heartbeat of any AL Post. Work with your Post commander, SAL and Riders to plan a community veteran suicide prevention/ mental

health/PTSD outreach event to educate members and the community about the "Be the One" campaign and what resources are available. Display resources at your post or in your community.

Information and new announcements on the campaign can be found at: legion.org/betheone you can also sign-up to receive new announcements.

Resources at alafl.org:

- Program Engagement Plan (PEP)
- Do not forget to reference the Community Service PEP to track where your unit is in carrying out programs. The PEP can be found at alafl.org under Community Service
- How to Partner with Organizations for Community Outreach
- How to Plan a Successful American Legion Family Day

Mark Your Calendars aka Start Planning:

Jan 15, 2024 – Martin Luther King Jr Day of Service Check the PEP for ideas

Feb 8th 7pm est Next Southern Div Community Service zoom meeting

(hosted by Dr. Deborah Blanch)

Apr 27th American Legion Family Day

YEAR END REPORTS and NARRATIVES:

Units to Districts April 1, 2024 (if your unit is partnering with your Legion family to host ALFD April 27, 2024, please provide the program specifics as being planned) Districts to Department April 15, 2024

Thank you for all you do in your communities.....you guys rock!

"Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop". ~ Dorothy Heigt

Juniors

TARA HARRIS



Greetings from Neverland! Happy New Year! I hope each of you had a wonderful holiday!

Let me start by thanking President Dee for selecting me for the honor of working with our Juniors this year.

Tinkerbells across the state of Florida have been busy working the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary! From visiting Veterans in nursing homes delivering hand-made cards to helping Senior members with Unit and District events.

At Fall Conference, Juniors from all over the state came together to hold the first Department Juniors Meeting for the year. After their meeting, along with young SAL members, they worked on making beaded friendship bracelets. These bracelets were for a fundraiser to benefit the Department of Florida Juniors program. Thank you to all who donated the items needed to make the bracelets, as well as those who gave donations for a bracelet.

Lunchtime came and the Juniors had a special guest at their Pizza Party. National President Lisa Williamson came to join them to eat and participate in a special activity after lunch in honor of the Be The One initiative. Losing a loved one to suicide is heartbreaking, and sometimes difficult to understand, even more so when you are a child. That is why we took a unique approach to Be The One while discussing this sensitive topic with Juniors and Young SAL. "You can't be the one if you're not being the one for yourself." We kicked off the activity by explaining what affirmations are and providing examples. The Juniors were then given colorful index cards, crayons, colored pencils, markers, and pages of affirmations written for children. They were encouraged to write an affirmation that they thought applied to them on their index card. (many of them found more than one affirmation and made multiple cards!) The next step was to ask the Juniors to keep their cards, take them home and place them somewhere they could see them every day. They were told to read their card every morning when they woke up. While we didn't discuss being the one for a Veteran, we did talk about self-care and positive thinking, which is the first step in being able to Be The One.

Next month is the National Juniors Meeting for the Southern Division. It is being held February 3rd, 2024 in Nashville, TN. This meeting is being held in conjunction with Mission Training for Senior Auxiliary members.

Registration for the meeting will close on January 28th, 2024. I hope to see lots of Juniors representing the Department of Florida! Junior members who attend a National Juniors Meeting and are over the age of 14 are eligible to run for Honorary National Southern Division Junior Vice President for the next year.

Remember, it only takes one Junior to have an active Juniors program. And they can help with so many tasks. How are Juniors being included in plans for activities and events with your Unit and District? How are they helping work the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary? The Juniors Committee would love to see what Juniors are up to! Please be sure to tag the Department of Florida Juniors Facebook Page and use the hashtag #believeinourfuture when posting our Juniors in action.

You can also send information via Facebook Messenger to the Department of Florida Juniors page or by e-mailing Juniors@alafl.org.

Thank you all for believing in our future.



Leadership

EILEEN WILSON



2024, Well Happy New Year. As we say good bye to 2023, let's remember all the great things we have accomplished as an Auxiliary and all the new opportunities that are yet to come. First thing, the New Year means we must have renewed our membership to continue to have the benefits as an Auxiliary member.

Leadership, like Public Relations, is a program that doesn't have program boundaries. What does that mean? You can use your leadership skills to mentor someone working the Children and Youth program or National Security, Girls State or any other program. Use your knowledge to help your officers learn and grow. The availability of training is literally at your finger tips. Check out the abundance of on-line training available on the ALA National web site (ALAforVeterans.org).

Have you missed the opportunity to attend your District ABC class? Don't worry there are more coming, see the list below:

January 6, 2024

District 7

Unit 8, 300 Ave M NW, Winter Haven, FL
Sign in 9 am Start 9:30 am
Instructors: Charlotte Bass and Mary Kelly-Perkins

January 20, 2024

District 6

Unit 219, 194 W Fountain St, Fruitland Park, FL
Sign in 8:30 am Start 9 am
Instructors: Mary Kelly-Perkins and Dianne Rousseau

District 12

Unit 318, 1000 Savanna Club Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL
Sign in 9 am Start 10 am
Instructors: Robin Burk and TK Wildrick

District 13

Unit 192, 3130 Dr. MLK Blvd., Fort Myers, FL

Sign in 9:30 am Start 10 am
Instructors: Jane Hardarce and Michele DeGennaro

District 16

Unit 252, 11433 Park Blvd, Seminole, FL
Sign in 9 am Start 10 am
Instructors: Linda Knoblach-Harness and Robin Burk

February 10, 2024

District 4

Unit 230, 20370 SE Hawthorne Rd., Hawthorne, FL
Sign in 9 am Start 9:30 am
Instructor: Mary Kelly-Perkins

February 24, 2024

District 5

Unit 283, 9459 Fort Caroline Rd, Jacksonville, FL
Sign in 9 am Start 9:30 am
Instructors: Jane Hardarce and Michele DeGennaro

March 9, 2024

District 4

Unit 155, 6585 W. Gulf to Lake Hwy, Crystal River, FL
Sign in 9 am Start 9:30 am
Instructors: Eileen Wilson and Diane Rosseau

I hope everyone takes advantage of all the training available.

And finally, have you found that Unit member who exemplifies Unit Member of the Year? They are the one that carries a particle passion for a program or project within your unit. Check out the on-line Program Engagement Plan

Membership

LISA HOYLAND



Happy New Year to all our Clappers aka members. I was so excited when I received the email from National that said only two departments made the 75% goal by the December 7th deadline – Hawaii and Florida! Thank you, Unit membership chairmen for all you do, you're doing an awesome

job. Thank you to all District Presidents and District membership chairmen for encouraging the Units in your District. It is with all your hard work that we were successful in reaching the National goal of 75% by the deadline. Congratulations and let's celebrate good times – come on – Let's Celebrate Membership!

Our next Department of Florida goal is February 1st at 85%. We already have 59 units that are at 85% or above! I know that this month we will add more.

Thank you to the staff at Department headquarters who have been processing membership and posting the Friday reports. Let them know how much we appreciate their hard work. I also would like to thank the wonderful ladies on the membership team for all their work with membership. Southern – Gail DuPuis; Western- Tracy Bragg; Northern Irma Wehrli; Central Sandy Allen; Eastern Diane Rousseau; Southwestern- Theresa Walls. If your Unit is having problems with renewals-these ladies will be glad to help.

One suggestion that might help, would be to send out a letter from the Unit to those who have not paid explaining how their dues help fund the programs that the Unit does. You can give an example of a couple of programs that the money from dues is used for. From time to time, we hear our members say, "I don't go to

meetings, so why should I pay my dues this year?" Look at them and respond "With your membership, we can continue to serve our veterans and support our troops and their families, our community and children and youth. By simply renewing your dues, it makes you a very valuable member."

Let's make sure that we contact every member that has not renewed. A personal call can make all the difference.

Reminder – National Awards

Recruit 10 Presented to: Members who recruit 10 NEW Senior and/or Junior members.

Deadline: Members must be entered and paid in ALAMIS member database by June 1, 2024.

Form can be printed from the ALA national Membership Committee page of the national website (www.ALAforVeterans.org). One entry per recruiter.

Unit Award: 100% Unit Award

Award: 100% Unit Flag Ribbon

Presented to: Units that reach 100% of their 2024 membership goal by January 31, 2024.

Keep Ringing those membership bells.

Remember to Just ask and Every member reach out to one new potential member. We can do this!



Public Relations

VIRNA LUKE



Happy New Year Bells in Service. If you have not been recording and preparing your end of year reports, now is the time to start, review the end of year program engagement plan on alafl.org.

For ALA Florida awards, make sure to include the name of the award(s) that your unit is submitting for in your narrative. The reports will be submitted in PDF format. Send pictures separately in their original format. From the said (district/unit) reports, EOY reports that meet the criteria, I will forward them to National. I would love to continue to see Florida shine brightly at the National Convention! As always, Patricia Grayshaw and I are here to help you with any questions or concerns related to PR. Send an email to publicrelations@alafl.org

With January here, reminder there is Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day (National Day of Service) Letter to the Editor and News Release Template at <https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Resources/Media-Templates>. When sharing your flyers in the community, wear your branded apparel and a beautiful smile. Take photos of service in action, when you're volunteering in your community and share on social media, tag @alaforveterans and @alauxflorida, use #RingYourBell. Also, share to ALAFL Community Service Facebook page.

Did you check out the December Newsletter from

Charlotte Purdy (Southern Division) PR Chairman, you can read it, under the files tab on our Facebook page ALAFL Public Relations. Here is a snippet:

How do I get the local paper to cover my unit's activities?

- Make sure to introduce yourself as the public relations chair, of your unit, district, or department.
- Make sure your contact information is included in your press release.
- Invite the editor or a reporter to lunch or coffee, let them know who the ALA is and why we do what we do.
- Always send complete information.
- Invite the editor and /or reporter to your event.
- Always be polite. Remember editors and reporters have deadlines so remember to thank them for their time.

Units build a relationship with your local hometown newspaper(s), they are always looking for positive community stories. Join/like/or follow community social media accounts (government, police, rotary club, neighborhood, chamber of commerce etc.). Make sure you like, comment, and engage with these community accounts. Be positive, and share who we are, what we do, and why we matter.

There are great resources on alaforveterans.org, use your member ID and log in, from ALA Academy, Public Relations Toolkit, Social Media Policy, Blogs, Media Release Templates, Brand Guide, designed posters, coloring books, poppy cans, and much more. Order branded apparel at <https://emblem.legion.org/>

VAR

ROBIN BURK



Happy New Year! I hope your holiday festivities were fun and you were able to connect with friends and family! My heartfelt thanks go out to all members who provided and/or signed holiday cards for the hospital / nursing home residents.

The start of the new year is always a great time to

pause, think about your accomplishments of the past year and plan for new and exciting goals in the new year. This is very important with our Auxiliary committees as we need to develop fresh ideas for fund-raising and continue and improve programs that keep us relevant with our members and the public.

Did you visit a VA hospital or nursing home over the holidays? Anytime is a good time to do so.

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The patients and residents are happy to have visitors and a new, fresh face to talk with.

Speak with your District President about what events and visits are planned for your local VA facilities. You could carpool and plan a lunch out after your visit. Make a day of it!

A message to our representatives and deputies:

Please notify me with any requirements that you may have not yet provided or renewed for your position at

the facilities. If you are awaiting reports, etc., from your volunteer coordinator, please let me know and I will try to expedite your needs.

The **Veteran's Retreat** is coming up on January 5th and 6th at Post #69 Avon Park. There will be booths, programs, service dogs, assistance for PTSD and more information about the "Be the One" program. The retreat goes until 5 PM on Saturday, Jan 6th. Hope to see you there!

Volunteer! It'll make you feel good!

Districts and Units

DISTRICT 5

District 5 - District 5 participated in Wreaths Across America, a national event that honors veterans by placing wreaths on their graves. Unit 137 was represented at Jacksonville National Cemetery by District Americanism Chairman Connie Koonce and Unit Secretary Amy Cascadden. Unit 233 was represented at St Augustine National Cemetery by 5th District President Julie Kay and Honorary Department Junior President Mea Kay. The 5th District is proud to have participated in Wreaths Across America. It was an honor to be able to pay tribute to the veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country. *Submitted by: Julie Kay*



Districts and Units

DISTRICT 5

District 5 - Madam President Dee Bell's visit to District 5 sailed into full swing seeing the Nights of Lights in St Augustine by boat. We rang our ship's bells while enjoying camaraderie, laughter and fellowship with multiple members from various units! Her Unit visits began at Unit 233 where Holiday cards were signed for our veterans. The next day was busy but fulfilling. President Bell started at Unit 137 where toiletry kits were packed for Love Cleans, a local church that provides mobile showers for the homeless. The day continued to Unit 250 and was joined by Unit 373. The units had the opportunity to discuss the impact they have been making to their local veterans and community over a delicious lunch. Travels then took Madam President to Unit 202 where members shared about the Family togetherness and how they all work in conjunction for the betterment of the Veteran community. President Bell ended her visit at Unit 194 where she was able to interact with the kids at Kids Safe Zone. An after school program offered to the community 5 days a week year around that mentors and supports their local children and youth.

Submitted by: Julie Kay





ABC SCHOOL

**6th District but ALL
are Welcome!**



Saturday, January 20

Registration 9 AM

Class 9:30 AM

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE

John Gella Memorial Unit 219

194 West Fountain Street

Fruitland Park, FL 34731

Lunch will be Served Please RSVP for lunch

(flfrogs@aol.com), call or text to

352-430-4714 - Diane

Join us to celebrate

Bells in **SERVICE**

♥ Sat. February 17, 2024 ♥

honoring President Dee Bell

American Legion Paradise Post 79 5329 Legion Place New Port Richey
Cocktails 6 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. Entertainment 7:30 p.m

Menu

*Chicken Marsala served with salad, baked potato,,
green beans almondine, rolls & dessert*

Musical entertainment by Larry Grier

Name _____ \$35 p.p. # tickets _____

R.S.V.P. by Feb. 3, 2024 American Legion Auxiliary Unit 79
P.O. Box 1184 New Port Richey, Fl 34652
Questions Sue Craft 609-923-1468

Hotel Accomdations Comfort Inn 727-261-9700
6206 U.S. Hwy. 19 New Port Richey
Bell ALA ZD69J5 Queen \$125 \$119 King
before 1/31/2024

Districts and Units

UNIT 1

Unit 1 - American legion auxillary unit 1 had the honor of representing this week at a veterans day ceremony at South lake elementary. It was a great program and a honor to be included. The students and teachers did an amazing job. There was a great participation of veterans past, present and future. *Submitted by: Mary Pistel*



UNIT 10

Unit 10 - Participated in Wreaths Across America.
Submitted by: Penny Kanbara



UNIT 19

Unit 19 - Breakfast with Santa.
Submitted by: Penny Kanbara



UNIT 35

Unit 35 - Made hand painted jars to give to nursing home residents for Christmas
Submitted by: Penny Kanbara



UNIT 219

Unit 219 - Annual Peanut Butter Drive
Submitted by: Penny Kanbara



Districts and Units

UNIT 183

Unit 183 - Hosted a Purse Auction Fundraiser with special guest models with Department of Florida Commander Michael Gambler Raymond, Eastern Area Commander Joseph M., 6th District Commander, Peter Gregory, Past Eastern Area Commander Darryl Bass, Post 183 Finance Officer Scott Kanbara, Post 183 Sgt at Arms Matthew Blanton, also Pictured 1st Vice President - Charlotte Bass.

Submitted by: Penny Kanbara



UNIT 78

Unit 78 -Newest Unit in District 1 is rocking it for our Veterans. Unit 78 in Milton delivered bags to our Veterans for Christmas. Here is just a couple pictures from two of the places they delivered to. Way to go everyone.

Submitted by: Pamela Pannasch



UNIT 270

Unit 270 -Unit 270 prepared Thanksgiving Baskets for military families brought to us through Operation Homefront

Submitted by: Eleanor Amato



Districts and Units

UNIT 62

Unit 62- Dist 11 Unit 62 Auxiliary Committee Member Donna McMahan organized a blood drive in her local community to help the blood banks stay stocked this holiday season. She has organized another donation for February. *Submitted by: Jamie Schoonover*



Unit 62- Dist 11 Unit 62 Committee members Rebecca Baruffi and Donna McMahan organized a Tricky Tray raffle and Silent Auction to raise funds to purchase wreaths from Wreaths Across America. Their goal was 100 wreaths. Thanks to members of the legion post and local residents in the Pinelake community enough funds were raised to purchase 168 Wreaths! President Shirley Rearick Presented a Wreaths Challenge Coin to Rebecca for going Above and Beyond to ensure that we have enough Wreaths for our placement ceremony on Dec 16. *Submitted by: Jamie Schoonover*



Unit 62- Veterans Day was recognized by Dist 11 Unit 62 by handing out poppies at local Publix and Winn Dixie. We also had Auxiliary members and Legionnaires along with our Little Miss Poppy in the Stuart City Parade to show our support for our troops. *Submitted by: Jamie Schoonover*



Districts and Units

UNIT 120

Unit 120 - Emory Bennett Nursing Home Shopping Party was attended by Unit 120 Holly Hill Submitted by: Eleanor Amato



UNIT 138

Unit 138 - Unit 138 held its first Turkey Shoot on Friday, November 24th. Due to the Post home being located within the city limits, shotguns were not authorized, so air-rifles were used, instead. This change allowed for all skill levels of shooting enthusiasts to participate in the event. There was a total of eighteen participants, many of whom participated in both rounds of a two-round competition. Each shooter was provided a turkey target and a 10-shot magazine, with the goal to get as many points as possible from the multiple targets on the turkey. With both senior and junior member in attendance, the event was enthusiastically received with more shooting activities requested for future dates during the cooler months of the year. Submitted by: Tammy Zell



Districts and Units

UNIT 138

Unit 138 - On Thursday, November 23rd, Unit 138 along with support from the Post 138 family, manned the kitchen to serve up a delicious Thanksgiving dinner. Annually, this event is not only open to members, but also to the active-duty military housed at nearby MacDill Air Force Base who may not have anywhere else to go. This event has become a priority event to make sure that young military members are aware of the dinner after it was discovered that the on-base dining facility ran out of food a few years ago, leaving some without a traditional meal. During this time of year when emotions and homesickness can be high, the Post 138 family continues to strive to show both veterans and active-duty that our home is their home. *Submitted by: Tammy Zell*



UNIT 148

Unit 148 - Kids Christmas Party at Unit 148. This year Mr. & Mrs. Santa Clause (Jennifer Jeffrey/Steven Arndt) made 103 kids Christmas very special. *Submitted by: Julia Arndt*



Unit 148 - Wreaths Across America Ceremony-Dec. 16th at Serenity Meadows & Hackney Cemeteries. *Submitted by: Julia Arndt*



Districts and Units

UNIT 186

Unit 186 - District 15 – The holiday season, beginning in November and continuing through the end of the year, is one of the busiest times for Unit 186. Following our Veterans Day activities on November 11, 2023, as highlighted in the last issue of the newsletter, several Auxiliary members were actively involved in the Tunnel to Towers Foundation fundraiser held at the Post on November 12, 2023. The event featured three bands, a 50/50, a raffle basket auction, and many other activities. Auxiliary members were involved in ticket sales, the basket auction, and helping out wherever needed. The fundraiser was a great success for the Post and resulted in a substantial donation to the Foundation. The Auxiliary decorated the Post and put up the Christmas tree on November 21, 2023, hung the angels on the tree, and our Christmas work began in earnest. This year we provided gifts to 29 children from Spring Hill Elementary School, along with food bags and paper products to their ten families; and provided gifts for 15 children of HUD/VASH Veterans in Hernando County. In addition, I worked with another local Veterans Group to provide gifts to 20 HUD/VASH Veteran children located in Hillsborough County. The Spring Hill Elementary student and family giveaway was held at Post 186 on Sunday, December 10, 2023; the Hernando County HUD/VASH children's gifts were picked up by their assigned VA Outreach Case Manager on December 13, 2023; and the Hillsborough HUD/VASH children's gifts were delivered on December 19, 2023. This project requires so much work and so many hours by so many members, but the end results are so worthwhile. It is one of my favorite Auxiliary activities. We also had Auxiliary members visit Aripeka Cemetery the week prior to Wreaths Across America, to place wreaths on the graves of 37 service members buried at this small local cemetery. Volunteers also attended Wreaths Across American at Florida National Cemetery – Bushnell and placed wreaths on many of the graves. When completed, seeing all the headstones with wreaths displayed is a breathtaking sight. As we move into the new year, things tend to slow down a bit, which we are all looking forward to after a very busy month. Happy Holidays to all, and may all your wishes come true!. *Submitted by: Lynda Anderson*



Districts and Units

UNIT 285

Unit 285 - Post 285 had a full house at the recent female luncheon hosts Unit 285 handed out gifts and in attendance was Honor flight, K 9line, quilts of Valor and 16 female veterans. Thank you for your service! Submitted by: Eleanor Amato



Unit 285 - Duel member Coleen Smith received a quilt of valor at the recent luncheon for female veterans hosted by Unit 285 Edgewater Submitted by: Eleanor Amato



UNIT 286

Unit 286 - Donations of School Supplies for National Education Week Thank you for your service! Submitted by: Penny Kanbara



UNIT 291

Unit 291 - On December 16, 2023 American Legion Auxiliary Unit 291 of Steinhatchee helped with the Christmas in the Park. Members of the Auxiliary served dog, chili and drinks to visitors, as they came to see Santa Claus. Pictured from left to right is Marci Cantrell, Judy Shimp, and Joanne Griffin Submitted by: Karen Tidwell



Districts and Units

UNIT 291

Unit 291 - Children's Christmas Shopping

Each year the local thrift store has the children from the Steinhatchee School come over to shop for their family. The children pick their gifts and while they wait for the items to be wrapped they indulge in cookies and hot cocoa. The Auxiliary volunteers to make the cocoa provide the wrapping supplies and wrap the gifts each year. A special thank you for the ladies that worked out in the cold to wrap these gifts. Picture from left to right is: local resident, Cindy Graham, Melinda Tyson, Marci Cantrell, and Susan Baker. *Submitted by: Karen Tidwell*



Unit 291 - On October 31st the American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 291 of Steinhatchee helped to host the annual children's Halloween Event. The legion set up the hayride to take the children to various stops in the area. The Auxiliary bagged up 600 bags of candy and served the children a hotdog and beverage before they left on the hayride. *Submitted by: Karen Tidwell*

UNIT 340

Unit 340 - Unit 340 Pensacola at Veterans Village. It was a very successful day serving those that have served us. *Submitted by: Pamela Pannasch*



UNIT 375



Membership Reports

DECEMBER 21, 2023

DISTRICT 1

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0075	Crestview	213	0	132	132	61.97%
0078	Milton	0	0	10	10	#DIV/0!
0193	Pensacola	78	11	34	45	57.69%
0221	Niceville	127	2	125	127	100.00%
0235	Ft Walton Beach	131	1	89	90	68.70%
0240	Pensacola	254	4	165	169	66.54%
0296	Destin	74	0	61	61	82.43%
0340	Pensacola	338	7	271	278	82.25%
0356	Lynn Haven	136	0	91	91	66.91%
0375	Southport	55	2	31	33	60.00%
0378	Gulf Breeze	44	0	48	48	109.09%
0382	Navarre	171	2	116	118	69.01%
0392	Panama City	175	1	126	127	72.57%
0402	Panama City Beach	41	1	40	41	100.00%
TOTALS		1837	31	1339	1370	74.58%

DISTRICT 3

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0049	Monticello	28	0	26	26	92.86%
0057	Lake City	223	5	164	169	75.78%
0107	Live Oak	55	1	35	36	65.45%
0215	Jasper	35	2	18	20	57.14%
0224	Madison	50	0	36	36	72.00%
0291	Steinhatchee	200	3	133	136	68.00%
0383	Old Town	134	2	102	104	77.61%
TOTALS		725	13	514	527	72.69%

DISTRICT 2

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0013	Tallahassee	78	2	55	57	73.08%
0082	Lanark	67	2	49	51	76.12%
0084	Havana	30	9	9	18	60.00%
0100	Marianna	32	4	29	33	103.13%
0217	Quincy	50	2	24	26	52.00%
0241	Sneads	72	13	36	49	68.06%
TOTALS		329	32	202	234	71.12%

DISTRICT 4

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0016	Gainesville	26	0	23	23	88.46%
0027	Ocala	20	1	13	14	70.00%
0058	Dunnellon	29	0	23	23	79.31%
0077	Inverness	68	1	67	68	100.00%
0149	Newberry	31	3	23	26	83.87%
0155	Crystal River	344	4	338	342	99.42%
0166	Homosassa Springs	146	3	141	144	98.63%
0230	Hawthorne	32	3	35	38	118.75%
0236	Bronson	47	0	34	34	72.34%
0237	Beverly Hills	202	0	121	121	59.90%
0284	Bellevue	77	2	59	61	79.22%
TOTALS		1022	17	889	906	88.65%

DISTRICT 5

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0009	Jacksonville	68	2	37	39	57.35%
0054	Fernandina Beach	166	3	184	187	112.65%
0088	Jacksonville	77	1	52	53	68.83%
0129	Jacksonville Beach	359	9	299	308	85.79%
0137	Jacksonville	424	16	311	327	77.12%
0194	St Augustine	69	5	33	38	55.07%
0197	Jacksonville	44	1	26	27	61.36%
0202	Keystone Heights	73	1	55	56	76.71%
0233	Ponte Vedra Beach	176	18	105	123	69.89%
0244	Jacksonville	33	1	18	19	57.58%
0250	Middleburg	310	20	182	202	65.16%
0283	Jacksonville	460	7	315	322	70.00%
0316	Atlantic Beach	370	36	221	257	69.46%
0372	Mandarin	29	0	31	31	106.90%
0373	Orange Park	32	0	15	15	46.88%
0401	Hilliard	49	1	18	19	38.78%
TOTALS		2739	121	1902	2023	73.86%

DISTRICT 7

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0003	Bartow	78	0	49	49	62.82%
0004	Lakeland	63	1	35	36	57.14%
0008	Winter Haven	601	17	580	597	99.33%
0015	Dade City	22	0	20	20	90.91%
0034	Haines City	78	0	62	62	79.49%
0071	Lake Wales	48	0	25	25	52.08%
0072	Mulberry	166	0	78	78	46.99%
0201	Florence Villa	25	1	18	19	76.00%
TOTALS		1081	19	867	886	81.96%

DISTRICT 6

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0010	Kissimmee	206	2	153	155	75.24%
0018	Wildwood	21	0	17	17	80.95%
0019	Orlando	109	2	63	65	59.63%
0035	Mount Dora	147	1	104	105	71.43%
0041	Eustis	14	0	2	2	14.29%
0055	Clermont	215	4	182	186	86.51%
0063	Winter Garden	35	0	12	12	34.29%
0080	Saint Cloud	264	16	200	216	81.82%
0101	Bushnell	112	0	78	78	69.64%
0109	Ocoee	13	0	0	0	0.00%
0112	Winter Park	26	2	22	24	92.31%
0183	Fern Park	121	0	66	66	54.55%
0219	Fruitland Park	206	1	170	171	83.01%
0239	Groveland	11	0	10	10	90.91%
0242	Orlando	109	8	83	91	83.49%
0286	Orlando	171	7	139	146	85.38%
0330	Leesburg	69	2	35	37	53.62%
0331	Orlando	14	0	12	12	85.71%
0347	Lady Lake	2563	9	2270	2279	88.92%
0412	Orlando	14	0	1	1	7.14%
TOTALS		4440	54	3619	3673	82.73%

DISTRICT 8

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0011	Arcadia	36	0	2	2	5.56%
0024	Bradenton	333	1	248	249	74.77%
0025	Lake Placid	395	0	378	378	95.70%
0030	Sarasota	82	6	53	59	71.95%
0069	Avon Park	720	13	568	581	80.69%
0074	Sebring	132	0	82	82	62.12%
0113	Rotonda West	308	1	268	269	87.34%
0159	Venice	711	2	484	486	68.35%
0254	North Port	119	0	116	116	97.48%
0266	Fruitville	159	2	142	144	90.57%
0309	Palmetto	177	0	157	157	88.70%
0312	Oneco	199	2	77	79	39.70%
0325	Ellenton	200	0	142	142	71.00%
TOTALS		3571	27	2717	2744	76.84%

DISTRICT 9

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0092	Hollywood	98	1	64	65	66.33%
0142	Pompano Beach	186	7	129	136	73.12%
0157	Margate	171	0	113	113	66.08%
0162	Deerfield Beach	172	13	104	117	68.02%
0180	Fort Lauderdale	112	0	60	60	53.57%
0209	Dania Beach	18	0	9	9	50.00%
0220	Ft Lauderdale	28	7	16	23	82.14%
0222	Fort Lauderdale	32	0	33	33	103.13%
0287	Deerfield Beach	17	0	21	21	123.53%
0304	Dania	52	0	42	42	80.77%
0310	Hallandale	25	1	18	19	76.00%
0321	Cooper City	230	19	160	179	77.83%
0365	Sunrise	14	2	12	14	100.00%
Total		1155	52	802	854	73.94%

DISTRICT 12

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0001	Titusville	277	11	172	183	66.06%
0022	Cocoa	106	0	93	93	87.74%
0039	Vero Beach	207	5	139	144	69.57%
0040	Fort Pierce	185	3	166	169	91.35%
0081	Melbourne	172	2	166	168	97.67%
0117	Palm Bay	514	9	423	432	84.05%
0126	Jensen Beach	195	0	21	21	10.77%
0163	Eau Gallie	220	8	214	222	100.91%
0189	Sebastian	159	0	155	155	97.48%
0191	Melbourne	81	8	26	34	41.98%
0200	Satellite Beach	171	9	86	95	55.56%
0318	Port St Lucie	1154	3	1116	1119	96.97%
0344	Merritt Island	47	1	17	18	38.30%
0348	Cape Canaveral	211	0	174	174	82.46%
0358	White City	69	0	51	51	73.91%
0359	Port St John	358	5	238	243	67.88%
0366	Barefoot Bay	69	8	44	52	75.36%
0394	Palm Bay	208	1	224	225	108.17%
TOTALS		4403	73	3525	3598	81.72%

DISTRICT 11

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0020	Belle Glade	40	2	40	42	105.00%
0047	Lake Worth	75	1	75	76	101.33%
0062	Stuart	548	7	585	592	108.03%
0064	Okeechobee	116	0	46	46	39.66%
0065	Delray Beach	58	7	45	52	89.66%
0141	West Palm Beach	73	5	47	52	71.23%
0164	Boynton Beach	150	9	97	106	70.67%
0199	W Palm Beach	38	0	45	45	118.42%
0268	Riviera Beach	85	3	53	56	65.88%
0271	Tequesta	158	8	157	165	104.43%
0277	Boca Raton	111	0	86	86	77.48%
0288	Boynton Beach	22	5	6	11	50.00%
0367	Royal Palm Beach	28	2	20	22	78.57%
TOTALS		1502	49	1302	1351	89.95%

DISTRICT 13

UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0038	Fort Myers	37	0	28	28	75.68%
0090	Cape Coral	287	5	272	277	96.52%
0103	Punta Gorda	649	2	648	650	100.15%
0110	Port Charlotte	635	3	373	376	59.21%
0123	Sanibel	41	0	26	26	63.41%
0130	Labelle	152	0	98	98	64.47%
0135	Naples	367	0	261	261	71.12%
0136	Saint James City	516	1	342	343	66.47%
0192	Fort Myers	21	0	14	14	66.67%
0274	Fort Myers Beach	544	0	299	299	54.96%
0303	Bonita Springs	425	10	325	335	78.82%
0323	Lehigh Acres	409	31	300	331	80.93%
0336	N Ft Myers	440	0	402	402	91.36%
0351	Fort Myers	104	1	47	48	46.15%
0415	Punta Gorda	10	0	16	16	160.00%
TOTALS		4637	53	3451	3504	75.57%

DISTRICT 14						
UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0028	Key West	57	0	37	37	64.91%
0031	South Miami	171	2	93	95	55.56%
0043	Homestead	57	0	5	5	8.77%
0067	North Miami	42	0	25	25	59.52%
0098	Coral Gables	16	0	5	5	31.25%
0133	Miami	63	3	37	40	63.49%
0154	Marathon	146	1	101	102	69.86%
0168	Key West	23	0	16	16	69.57%
0333	Key Largo	78	0	55	55	70.51%
0346	Miami	19	0	9	9	47.37%
0374	Key Biscayne	42	0	26	26	61.90%
TOTALS		714	6	409	415	58.12%

DISTRICT 16						
UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0007	Clearwater	249	0	169	169	67.87%
0014	St Petersburg	117	1	103	104	88.89%
0046	Tarpon Springs	10	2	12	14	140.00%
0079	New Port Richey	458	11	307	318	69.43%
0104	Pinellas Park	255	5	232	237	92.94%
0119	Largo	360	6	262	268	74.44%
0125	St Petersburg	297	26	221	247	83.16%
0158	Treasure Island	256	0	252	252	98.44%
0173	Holiday	259	4	218	222	85.71%
0238	Safety Harbor	314	7	273	280	89.17%
0252	Seminole	1065	6	1009	1015	95.31%
0273	Madeira Beach	3428	3	2945	2948	86.00%
0275	Dunedin	981	2	894	896	91.34%
0305	St Pete Beach	150	0	132	132	88.00%
0335	Hudson	96	5	62	67	69.79%
TOTALS		8295	78	7091	7169	86.43%

DISTRICT 15						
UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0005	Tampa	38	1	17	18	47.37%
0099	Brooksville	21	1	25	26	123.81%
0108	Land O' Lakes	10	0	18	18	180.00%
0111	Tampa	54	0	35	35	64.81%
0138	Tampa	483	9	476	485	100.41%
0139	Tampa	58	0	80	80	137.93%
0147	Odessa	44	0	28	28	63.64%
0148	Riverview	209	4	169	173	82.78%
0152	Tampa	250	7	174	181	72.40%
0167	Tampa	16	1	6	7	43.75%
0186	Brooksville	369	0	278	278	75.34%
0248	West Tampa	15	1	11	12	80.00%
0418	Spring Hill	10	1	30	31	310.00%
TOTALS		1577	25	1347	1372	87.00%

DISTRICT 17						
UNIT	CITY	GOAL	JR	SR	TOTAL	PERCENT
0006	Deland	104	0	65	65	62.50%
0017	New Smyrna Beach	212	0	164	164	77.36%
0045	Palatka	31	1	32	33	106.45%
0115	Palm Coast	40	0	34	34	85.00%
0120	Holly Hill	216	1	160	161	74.54%
0127	Lake Helen	24	0	12	12	50.00%
0255	Deltona	25	7	20	27	108.00%
0259	Debary	28	6	21	27	96.43%
0267	Ormond Beach	229	0	173	173	75.55%
0270	Port Orange	175	2	156	158	90.29%
0285	Edgewater	125	1	116	117	93.60%
0361	S Daytona	226	0	173	173	76.55%
TOTALS		1435	18	1126	1144	79.72%



#ringyourbell

The American Legion Auxiliary
Department of Florida

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