

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA**

88TH ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION, ORLANDO, FLORIDA

FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2018

State Commander Ken Corr opened the 88th Annual Department Convention being held at the Renaissance Orlando SeaWorld Resort, 6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, Florida according to the Ritual including the Prayer by State Chaplain Harry Seiler followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

State Commander Corr recognized Past C-I-C's John Hamilton and Jack Carney and also recognized Bill Lambert past Commander from West Virginia, Stan Martinez from Utah and Al Lipphardt from Georgia. State Commander Corr asked everyone to keep Texas in their prayers due to the floods they are dealing with.

State Commander Corr recognized District 8 Commander Don Pearsall and the members of District 8 for delivering 39,260 meals in his district and around the state and opened another new Post in District 8.

State Judge Advocate Dan Duffy read the Convention Rules and Procedures. Motion made by State Judge Advocate Dan Duffy to accept the Convention Rules and Procedures as read, motion seconded by State Sr. Vice Commander Danny Anderson, motion passed.

Credentials report was read by Credentials Chairman Katie Smailis.

Incoming Grand Commander of the Military Order of the Cootie Gary Godard made a few brief comments referencing membership and getting the Cooties and the VFW members closer together. MOC is the Honor Degree of the VFW.

State Commander Corr recognized members that are attending their first Convention.

State By-Laws and Resolution Committee report by Chairman Gene Perrino was as follows: Gene stated the committee meeting met yesterday and he recognized the committee members. Gene read the amendment to the Department By-Laws to Article VI add Section 5 – Department Convention. Motion made by Committee Chairman Gene Perrino, seconded by State Inspector Don Bult, motion passed.

Veterans Service Office Report was given by Director Jason Smith. 2,436 in person interviews with Veterans and their families were conducted along with 21,600 phone calls and 9,000 emails. Lots of business is done by phone calls and emails they do not have to come to the office in St. Petersburg for assistance. They filed 15,600 claims through the VFW Service office and credited service officers through-out the counties. 8,640 rating decisions were reviewed to include compensation, pensions and burial ratings. Any issues within those reviews were brought back to the VA. 384 hearings were conducted including appeal hearings, which take a little longer and are a big part of the Service Office's work. \$16,500,000 was granted in retro claims for Veterans and their families last year.

A new hire at the St. Petersburg office is Aly Rivers at the Lake Nona VA Medical Center. She has good experience and was at Volusia County VA for the past five years.

Jason stressed the need to make contact with any of the VFW VA Service Officers throughout the state not just the one in St. Petersburg. A lot of the work can be done by phone or by email – Don't Wait. Jason touched base on the VA Mission Act of 2018 (VA Maintaining Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks Act). This Act establishes the Veterans Community Care Program. For more information contact the Veterans Service Office.

Friday, Convention Meeting Minutes

Commanders Special Project (Paws for Patriot's) Chairman Ron Mills thanked everyone for their support in the project to include the VFW Auxiliary. Donations came to \$25,124.00.

Membership Director Glen Tilley stated he was passing the torch to Kurt Schuh as the incoming membership chairman for the department. Glen thanked all the District Commanders and Post Commanders for their support and hard work. Glen stated as of June 22nd the department was at 99.82% with only needing 114 more members to be greater than 100%. Glen recognized and congratulated Tom Randall as the Assistant Membership Chairman who handles the members-at large which reached 101%. Tom has agreed to do it again for the next term.

State Commander Corr stated the Sr. Vice C-I-C asked the District Commanders how many members they were willing to pledge to help the department make the 100%. State Commander Corr asked the Post Commanders present to pledge two (2) members. Districts announced a total of 157 members were pledged.

Programs Chairman Tony Gardner stated the program year was a great success. Reporting for the 2018-2019 term started May 1, 2018. Tony listed the reports that should already be reported. Individual Sub-Committee reports were given.

Department Program Awards are as follows:

Veterans & Military Support Program Certificate: Gold Level –The Department of Florida – Commander Ken Corr.

***National Citations for Department Chairman:**

Community Service Program Award & Voice of Democracy Award – Chairman Glenn Wright

Youth Activities Program Award – Chairman Steven Schneider

Buddy Poppy Program Award – Chairman Ray Jarvis

Safety Program Award – Chairman Dani Hernandez

Citizenship Education & Teacher Program Award – Bob Hernandez

Patriot's Pen Program Award Chairman – Ron Chapman

Scouting Chairman Program Award – Bruce Sitki

Veterans & Military Support Program Award – Chairman Terry Guthrie

***John M. Carney Award:** for sponsoring the Department's Voice of Democracy First Place Winner:
District 7 Post 7122 Floral City

***Milton Davis Award:** for sponsoring the Department Patriot's Pen First Place Winner:
District 17 Post 8205 Panama City

***Teacher of the Year Program Awards:** for sponsoring the Departments Teachers of the Year
K-5th Grade – District 6 Post 4761 Jacksonville
6th-8th Grade – District 1 Post 11367 Mary Esther
9th-12th Grade – District 1 Post 11367 Mary Esther

***John E. Hamilton Award:** The Post with the greatest numerical increase in membership by April 30, 2018
District 7 Post 4864 Citrus Springs with 24 members.

Friday, Convention Meeting Minutes

***Ira Hopper Award:** The Post with the greatest percentage increase in membership by April 30, 2018
District 11 Post 4194 with 11.34% increase in membership.

Community Service Program Awards: 1st Place – District 18 Post 5277 Clermont; 2nd Place – District 17 Post 2185 Panama City; 3rd Place – District 21 Post 8681 Spring Hill; District Winner – District 21 - Commander Stan Budke. Honorable Mention – National Outstanding Community Service Award to be given at the national convention – District 18 Post 5277 Clermont – Commander Kurt Schuh.

Americanism Program Awards: 1st Place – District 10 Post 3233 Sarasota; 2nd Place – District 18 Post 5277 Clermont; 3rd Place – District 8 Post 4228 Titusville; District Winner – District 18 - Commander Kurt Schuh

Youth Program Awards: 1st Place – District 17 Post 2185 Panama City; 2nd Place – District 7 Post 10087 Beverly Hills; 3rd Place – District 18 Post 5277 Clermont; District Winner – District 17 - Commander Kevin Delaney

Best Post Publication Awards: 1st Place – District 21 Post 10167 Holiday; 2nd Place – District 3 Post 10556 Boca Raton

Buddy Poppy Program Awards: 1st Place – District 18 Post 5277 Clermont; 2nd Place – District 8 Post 3991 Melbourne; 3rd Place – District 10 Post 12055 Bradenton; District Winner – District 8 - Commander Don Pearsall

Hospital Program Awards: 1st Place – District 9 Post 9272 Seminole; 2nd Place – District 3 Post 10556 Boca Raton; 3rd Place – District 17 Post 2185 Panama City; District Winner – District 6 – Commander Bob Hernandez

VA Hospital or VA Clinic Awards: Bay Pines VA – District 9 Post 9272 Seminole; Gainesville VA – District 22 Post 10733 Orange Lake; Lake City VA – District 6 Post 11406 Jacksonville; Miami VA Clinic – District 5 Post 10212 Miami; Pensacola VA Clinic – District 17 Post 2185 Panama City; Orlando VA – District 19 Post 8093 DeBary; Tampa VA – District 21 Post 4412 Hudson; West Palm Beach VA – District 3 Post 10556 Boca Raton

“Because We Care” Program Awards: for donating \$500.00 or more to support the “Because We Care Program”: District 3 Post 8195 Hollywood; District 5 Post 3559 Miami; District 6 Post 8255 Middleburg; District 8 Post 4534 Rockledge; District 10 Post 8118 Venice; District 10 Post 10141 Bradenton; District 13 Post 4254 Bonita Springs; District 13 Post 7721 Naples; District 21 Post 8681 Spring Hill.
For donating over \$2,000 to the Program – District 8 Post 3991 Melbourne

Veteran Village Board Report: President Chester Pyatt spoke briefly on the leaking roof and it was voted to replace the roof at the Thursday Council of Administration Meeting. Chester announced the members of the Board and thanked them for a great job.

Director of the Veterans Village Al Lugo presented a gift to the Treasurer of the Board Gene Perrino. Al stated during the hurricane State Commander Ken Corr called him to check on Al’s family, the residents and their homes while he was in 2 foot of water in his home. Al thanked State Commander Corr and presented him a key to the Veterans Village.

Nominations for VFW Veterans Village Home Board: John Burgess – District 6 Post 7909 Jacksonville & Jose Rosa – District 19 Post 3282 Daytona Beach

Friday, Convention Meeting Minutes

Nominations for State Officers:

State Commander – Danny Anderson
State Sr. Vice Commander – Tony Purdy
State Jr. Vice Commander – Glen Tilley
State Quartermaster – Gene Perrino
State Judge Advocate – Dan Duffy, Terry Guthrie & Steve Surface]
State Chaplain – Harry Seiler
State Surgeon – Dani Hernandez, Jack Kelleher & Ron Mills

Nominations for National Council Member:

Ken Corr – District 13 Post 10097 Fort Myers
W. Benny Bachand – District 18 Post 4287 Orlando

State Adjutant/Quartermaster Gene Perrino made announcements for the remainder of the convention. There being no further business meeting was adjourned until Saturday, June 23 at 8:30 a.m.

All State Awards were presented Friday, June 22, 2018 at 2:30 p.m. and a Patriotic Rally was held on Friday, June 22, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 2018 BUSINESS TO INCLUDE ELECTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

Meeting was reconvened by State Commander Ken Corr.

Final credentials report was presented by Chairman Katie Smailis.

State Commander Ken Corr introduced guest speakers for their brief remarks.

Individual Membership & Recruiter Awards were presented by State Commander Ken Corr and National Sr. Vice Commander B.J. Lawrence:

Battalion Brigade Award: The top five (5) recruiters, signing up the most new and/or reinstated members (minimum of 50) by May 31st, received a specially designed commander's challenge coin and a \$100.00 gift card. (Some members may have received part of all of these awards at the Mid-Winter Conference).
District 6 Post 2391 St. Augustine – Glen Tilley with 204 members and 10 N/R Life members.

Company Award: For every new life member recruited by May 31, 2018 (minimum of 5) the recruiter received a specially designed commander's challenge coin and a \$100.00 gift card. (Some members may have received part or all of these awards at the Mid-Winter Conference). District 1 Post 11367 Mary Esther – Barry Bergschneider with 5 N/R Life members; District 3 Post 8195 Hollywood – Vernon Nelson with 5 N/R Life Members; District 7 Post 4337 Inverness – Martin Kloubec with 5 N/R Life Members; District 8 Post 10148 Cocoa Beach – John McIlhenny with 6 N/R Life Members; District 9 Post 4256 Madeira Beach – Ron Mills with 6 N/R Life Members; District 10 Post 10141 Bradenton – Stephen McColm with 6 N/R Life Members; District 19 Post 4250 New Smyrna Beach – Bruce Kelliher with 5 N/R Life Members; District 19 Post 8093 DeBary – David Mears with 34 members and 5 N/R Life members.

Saturday, Convention Meeting Minutes

The Platoon Award: Any member recruiting 25 new and/or reinstated members by May 31, 2018 will receive a specially designed commander's challenge coin and a \$25.00 gift card. (Some members may have received part or all of these awards at the Mid-Winter Conference).

District 6 Post 8255 Middleburg – Daniel Gillespie with 27 members; District 8 Post 12167 Merritt Island – Robert Doyle with 26 members; District 12 Post 4321 Tampa – Joe Dempsey with 26 members; District 19 Post 3282 Port Orange – Jose Rosa with 27 members.

Final Credentials Committee was given for the Veterans Village Board Elections, VFW State Officers and National Council Member

Veterans Village Results for two (2) three (3) year terms: John Burgess Post 7909 Jacksonville and Jose Rosa District 19 Post 3282 Daytona Beach

VFW State Officers Election Results:

State Commander – Danny Anderson

State Sr. Vice Commander – Tony Purdy

State Jr. Vice Commander – Glen Tilley

State Quartermaster – Gene Perrino

State Judge Advocate – Dan Duffy

State Chaplain – Harry Seiler

State Surgeon – Danette "Dani" Hernandez

National Council Member Results:

W. Benny Bachand – District 18 Post 4287 Orlando

State Adjutant/Quartermaster Gene Perrino made the announcements for the remainder of the convention.

There being no further business meeting was adjourned.