



# 4th District Newsletter

## July 2024



Independence Day, known colloquially as the Fourth of July, is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the Declaration of Independence, which was ratified by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, establishing the United States of America.

The Founding Father delegates of the Second Continental Congress declared that the Thirteen Colonies were no longer subject (and subordinate) to the monarch of Britain, King George III, and were now united, free, and independent states. The Congress voted to approve independence by passing the Lee Resolution on July 2 and adopted the Declaration of Independence two days later, on July 4.

Independence Day is commonly associated with parades, fireworks, barbecues, carnivals, fairs, picnics, concerts, baseball games, family reunions, speeches, and ceremonies, in addition to various public and private events celebrating the history, government, and traditions of the United States of America. Independence Day is the National Holiday of the United States of America.



# 4th District Newsletter



## From the Commander

Hello 4<sup>th</sup> District Family,

On behalf of Darcy Bockman-Wright, your 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander; Brian Ploetz, your 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander; and myself I want to extend our best wishes to you and your families for a safe and happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July as we celebrate the birth of our Great Nation.

Well, here we are the start of a new American Legion Year. Just in case you may not know, the American Legion's year is from 1 July – 30 June. Starting to sound a bit familiar, that's right folks it is the same as our membership year. On that note, I want to once again, thank you for the support this past year on membership. As a District we reached the 100% mark just a week shy of the end of the year. The goal this year is to have all Posts in the District reach 100% by 31 December. Membership is our lifeline and vital to our continued existence as the largest Veterans Organization in the United States and biggest advocate for Veterans Rights and Benefits. We simply cannot afford to let that slip through our fingers. This year we have a District Membership Chairperson, and her name is Betty Wagner. Betty is truly knowledgeable of the membership program and in the use of MyLegion.org. She will be working closely with Post Commanders, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commanders, and Adjutants throughout the year and she can be contacted at 352-304-9712 or by email at: [elizabethwagner58@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethwagner58@gmail.com).

Our new Department (State) Commander Chris Hamrick laid out his agenda and vision for the coming year to all of us that attended the Annual Department Convention in June. So let me share what he said. His color this year is Red and attached to this newsletter is the order form if you would like to order the Commander's Polo Shirts. His Motto is simple "Keep It Real." As such, he is stressing honesty and sincerity in all we do, ergo "Keep it Real." His Mission Statement is three-fold – "Training, Mentorship, Continuity." His priorities are Buddy Checks and living up to the words in our Preamble and lastly his charities are Disaster Relief and COTA. I have been talking to each of the Commander's items at your post Installations and will continue to do so in the months ahead.

Attached to this newsletter is the schedule of upcoming district meetings and training sessions that are open to every member. I hope that you will take advantage of the training opportunities to expand your knowledge of The American Legion and the programs we offer along with a list of upcoming key events.

We have a full agenda this year and I hope you will join me as we take the 4<sup>th</sup> District to new heights as we accomplish all tasks set before us. Continue to do wonderful things for our Veterans, their families, and your communities. "KEEP IT REAL."

"For God and Country"

Douglas M "Gatekeeper" Hockenberry  
4<sup>th</sup> District Commander  
Department of Florida, American Legion

**BE THE ONE**



# 4th District Newsletter



## From the 1st Vice Commander

4<sup>th</sup> District Family:

Congratulations to all our newly elected officers, staff, and Program Chairpersons throughout the 4th District. This is the beginning of a wonderful year, and I look forward to all the amazing things we are going to do for our communities, Posts, and State.

I was able to see many of you at the Department Convention in Orlando last month and as we united over 4 days and received some wonderful training. Unfortunately, I had to cut my stay short after being sworn in by our new Department 1st Vice Commander Jessica Moore, as I had to head over to Tallahassee for 9 days to serve as a Counselor for Florida American Legion Boys State. While there, I was able to visit with most of the boys from District 4 and I must admit it was an honor to witness a great program in action. Our program ranks amongst the best in the nation and National was there to interview staff and see us in action. Our very own Alex Wood from Post 27 won the Commanders cup with highest test scores, and I was presented an award for Staff Counselor of the Year – humbling to say the least.

Last year Doug and I embarked on a year full of engagement with all of you and creating relationships and support that was essential in unifying the 4th District. While many of our Posts in our District broke records for attaining 100% or better in membership we had a few posts fall short. Overall, the 4<sup>th</sup> District did a fantastic job in membership, and I know that we see every post achieve that 100% mark for 2024-2025. While the \$3 dues increase from Department did not get approved at convention, please know it is on the horizon and will be brought to the floor once again. We MUST strive to reach the basic goals established by National and we must use those 400 and 400 AD lists to bring those members into our posts. Betty Wagner, our new District Membership Chairperson, and I will be working together with each of you to insure we meet the 100% goal throughout the district. While programs are important, membership is key to the growth of the American Legion. My job is to ensure that each of us within the 4th District are doing our part this year when it comes to membership. If you need any assistance with membership, please reach out sooner in the year. I will be monitoring the weekly reports and will be in contact as I did last year with all of you as we do begin conducting Commanders Visits.

I am here to help and assist you and your post in achieving every success, so here's to the new year. Now get those memberships.

Darcy Bockman-Wright, 4<sup>th</sup> District, 1st Vice Commander

**BE THE ONE**

**BE THE ONE**



## 4th District Newsletter

From the 2nd Vice Commander

AMERICAN  
LEGION

Greetings 4<sup>th</sup> District:

Let me introduce myself, I am the latest addition to Doug's 4th District team. My name is Brian Ploetz, pronounced with a silent "o". I am also the 2nd Vice of Post 284 and now the 2nd Vice of 4th District. I am a strong supporter of the programs of The American Legion. Let me start with the program closest to my heart, and that is the Blood Donor Program. You see in 1984 I was severely injured in a near fatal auto accident. I punctured my right lung with the stick shift. I was clinically dead, zapped back to life twice and transfused with twenty-four (24) units of blood. So, think of this, twenty-four (24) persons stepped up to save my life.

Last year I was introduced to the Oratorical Speech Program. If you have never heard a passionate High Schooler, give a speech based on our American Constitution, I highly recommend you do so. At the convention last month, we heard from the current Governor of the Boy's State program. Again, we heard him speak with respect to the honor of being elected last year to the Governor's position by the young men he attended Boy's State with. After hearing the speakers of Oratorical and Boy's State, you, like I, would realize there is strong hope for the youth of our nation.

Lastly, I would like to address the need to do your Buddy checks. Please call your members current and past who need your encouragement to stay involved in your community and Post. Explain what you as an individual and Post could do for them. Maybe they need help with transport for groceries, a VA appointment, or your monthly meeting. Your calls should not be of just asking them to pay their dues. Your calls should be centered on their welfare. With your help and support they will see that their friendship and yours will be more fulfilled.

Please ask the 2nd Vice of your Post to ask me to come and speak to your Post at their monthly meeting. I would like to visit all our 4th District Posts to speak of the American Legion Programs and encourage your participation with proven ideas.

4th District 2nd Vice Commander

Brian Ploetz

920-918-9832

[read-tired@charter.net](mailto:read-tired@charter.net)

**BE THE ONE**

**BE THE ONE**



# 4th District Newsletter



## July Key Dates/Events

1 July	Be The One Day
4 July	Independence Day
5 July	Red Shirt Friday
12 July	Red Shirt Friday
14 July	Baseball Area Playoffs (14-16)
15 July	Baseball Scholarship Applications due to Department
19 July	Baseball Senior State Tournament (19-23)
19 July	Red Shirt Friday
20 July	National Jr Shooting Sports Championship (20-22)
21 July	Boys Nation (21-27)
25 July	Hire a Veteran Day
25 July	National Membership Workshop (25-27)
26 July	Red Shirt Friday
27 July	Korean War Armistice Day (1953)
28 July	Parents Day
28 July	Buffalo Soldiers Day
28 July	Baseball Jr State Tournament (28-30)
29 July	US Army Chaplain Corps Anniversary (1775)

## Future Key Department of Florida American Legion Events

National Convention	August 23-29, 2024	New Orleans, Louisiana
7 Bridges Ride – POW/MIA	September 21, 2024	Jacksonville, Florida
Department Fall Conference	November 22-24, 2024	Orlando, Florida
Legion College	January 10-12, 2024	Orlando, Florida
Vice Commander’s Picnic	January 25, 2025	Post 8, Winter Haven, Florida
ALR Summit	February 6-8, 2025	Orlando, Florida
Children & Youth Picnic	April 5, 2025	Post 117, Palm Bay, Florida
Commander’s Homecoming	April 26, 2025	Post 117, Palm Bay, Florida





# 4th District Newsletter



## District Meetings

10 August 2024 @ Post 58 Dunnellon  
9 November 2024 @ Post 149 Newberry  
1 February 2025 @ Post 230 Hawthorne  
(Registration begins at 9:00 AM, meetings start at 10:00 AM)

## DCC (District Constitutional Conference)

27 April 2025 @ Post 284 Belleview  
(Registration begins at Noon, meetings start at 1:00 PM)

## Training Dates

7 September 2024 @ Post 56 Starke  
(For Posts 16, 56, 149, 153, 230, 236, & 314)  
(Registration begins at 9:00 AM, training starts at 10:00 AM)

14 September 2024 @ Post 77 Inverness  
(For Posts 27, 58, 77, 155, 166, 210, 225, 237, 284, & 354)  
(Registration begins at 8:00 AM, training starts at 9:00 AM)

7 June 2025 @ Post 16 Gainesville  
(Incoming Officers)  
(Registration begins at 9:00 AM, training starts at 10:00 AM)

## District Oratorical Contest

25 January 2025 @ Post 155 Crystal River  
(Arrive NLT 9:45 AM, competition starts promptly at 10:00 AM)

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## A BIT OF HUMOR

### MEANWHILE AT THE VA





# BE THE ONE

## OUR MISSION

The mission of The American Legion's **Be the One** initiative is to reduce the rate of veteran suicide. It aims to lessen the stigma associated with mental health treatment and empower everyone to take appropriate action when a veteran or service member may be at risk.

We also aim to provide peer-to-peer support and resources and educate people on how they can **Be the One**.

**ASK** a veteran or service member if they need help

**LISTEN** when a veteran or service member needs to talk

**REACH OUT** if you are a veteran or service member struggling





## 24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones



If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, reach caring, trained responders 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**When you call the Veterans Crisis Line, here is what you can expect:**

- A qualified responder will answer your call, ready to listen and help.
- The responder will ask a few questions, such as whether you or the Veteran you're concerned about may be in immediate danger or at risk for suicide.
- The conversation is free and confidential, and you decide how much information to share.
- Support doesn't end with your conversation. Our responders can connect you with the resources you need.

**You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.**

## You're not alone— the Veterans Crisis Line is here for you.



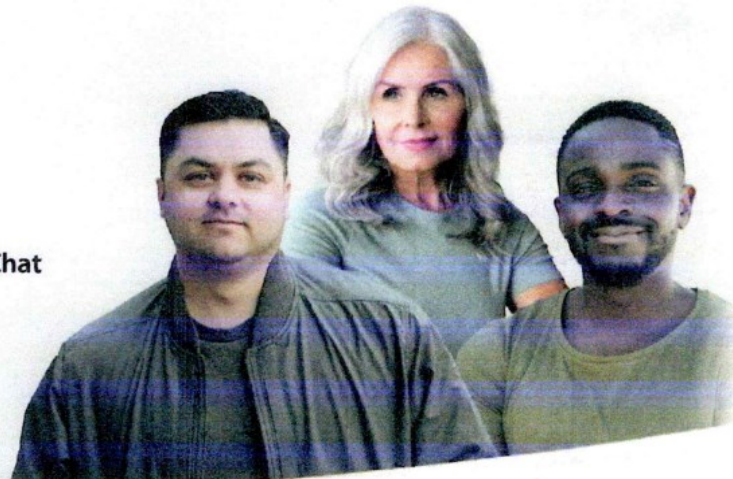
Dial 988 then Press 1



Chat online at  
[VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat)



Text 838255



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Scan the QR code to download  
**Veterans Crisis Line** resources.



07/2022





## 4th District Newsletter

AMERICAN  
LEGION

FOLLOW US ON  
**facebook** 

You're missing out if you aren't following our District Facebook page yet.

It's a great source of information on events happening throughout the District, as well as State - and Legion - wide events.

You'll also find highlights of our Country's history, reminders for recurring items, and much more.

To follow us, visit the **American Legion 4th District Family Dept. of FL** page and click on "Like".

**#AmericanLegionFamily #ALFLDistrict4 #DepartmentofFlorida**

Linda Linthicum

4th District FB Administrator

Email: [lindaalinthicum@gmail.com](mailto:lindaalinthicum@gmail.com)





# 4th District Newsletter



## 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	Cost
Men's Pocket	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		\$
Men's No Pocket	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		\$
Ladies	XS		S		M		L		XL		2X		3X		\$

### 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	\$
Tax (6.5%)	\$
Shipping	\$
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$</b>

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

P.O. BOX 547859 ORLANDO, FL 32854-7859	<a href="http://www.floridalegion.org">www.floridalegion.org</a>	TOLL FREE (800) 393-3378 FAX (407) 299-0901
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# 4th District Newsletter



## COMMANDER SHIRT ORDER FORM 2024-2025

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

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

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

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

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

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

P.O. BOX 547859 ORLANDO, FL 32854-7859	<a href="http://www.floridalegion.org">www.floridalegion.org</a>	TOLL FREE (800) 393-3378 FAX (407) 299-0901
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