

## Department of Florida June 2023 Newsletter



Top Left Chapters 32 & 109 serving veterans at the Vietnam Travelling Wall in Melbourne  
 Top Right Area 4 Training Titusville Chapter 109  
 Bottom left: Chapter 18 Installation  
 Bottom right New National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski

## Department Commander Brenda Reed



May was filled with lots of travel, food, fun, and fellowship. I had the privilege of installing the officers in Chapters 32 and 109 as well as attending the Armed Forces Day picnic at Chapter 109. We also held Chapter Officers Training in Titusville and Bradenton for Area 4. Thank you to the Chapters who hosted and to those who took the time to attend. I hope these sessions have been informative and of assistance to you. The Department Officers are always here, ready and willing to assist you in any way we can.

Our Department Convention is right around the corner (June 15-17) and I do hope to see all of you there. This is your opportunity take an active part in the business of our Department and to voice your opinions and cast your votes to elect the officers who will lead our great state in the coming year. Our National Director of Communications, Dan Clare will be our guest and I can assure you that you will not want to miss his presentation. Please be sure to bring your Delegate Slip with you!

It is summer here in Florida and we all know what that means....HURRICANE SEASON! Please take the time now to make sure you have adequate supplies, especially medications and essentials such as batteries, water, and food on hand. VISN 8 has published a guide for Hurricane Preparedness on their website which is filled with a lot of useful information. We were hit pretty hard last year by Hurricane Ian. Hopefully we will not be hit by another hurricane of that category for some time to come but it is always better to be prepared.

VISN 8 has also rolled out a new program for those who prefer to text than try to call the VA. Veterans enrolled for VA health care in Florida, South Georgia, Puerto Rico and

the U.S. Virgin Island may contact the [VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center](https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat) utilizing the [VA Health Chat App](https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat). The app is available for Android and IOS. You can learn more about VA Health Chat at <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat>.

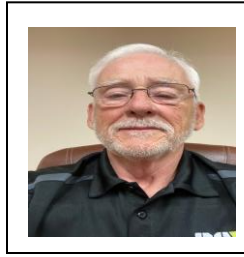
The VA Health Chat app is an exciting technology that provides easy, online access to chat with VA staff when Veterans have health concerns and other questions. The app accesses the VA Electronic Health Record and, for security purposes, requires Veterans to enter My HealtheVet (premium), DS Logon (premium), or ID.me. For those unfamiliar with the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center, it is a 24/7/365 urgent care service available to Veterans. The center functions as a virtual organization and is available to Veterans around the clock by calling toll free 877-741-3400.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at our Department Convention. A trivia contest will again be held on Saturday night. Teams of two can participate and the top winners will receive a \$50.00 gift card each and 2<sup>nd</sup> Place will receive a \$25.00 gift card each. The trivia contest will take place during the Commander's Ball.

The Convention begins on Thursday evening at 6:00 pm with our Department Finance Committee Meeting followed by our Department Executive Committee Meeting.

Safe travels to all of you and look forward to seeing you at the upcoming Department Convention.





## DEPARTMENT SENIOR VICE COMMANDER LAYMOND ROSE

### Membership Standings YTD

ONLY two months left in this membership year! Sixteen (16) chapters have achieved their Membership goals:

|             |         |               |         |
|-------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Chapter 1   | 102.28% | Clearwater 11 | 100.13% |
| Chapter 13  | 101.40% | Chapter 18    | 102.18  |
| Chapter 29  | 101.15% | Chapter 30    | 101.55% |
| Chapter 57  | 102.41% | Chapter 73    | 105.79% |
| Chapter 82  | 101.36% | Chapter 83    | 100.83% |
| Chapter 86  | 100.44% | Chapter 101   | 102.36% |
| Chapter 109 | 106.46% | Chapter 112   | 100.22% |
| Chapter 113 | 100.77% | Chapter 123   | 106.94% |
| Chapter 144 | 100.75% | Chapter 150   | 100.22% |
| Chapter 158 | 100.35% |               |         |

That means the rest of us still have a way to go. But it is not too late. This column will provide some ideas (maybe some new ones) on how to recruit new members.

The Department is now at 99.29%. There are an additional 9 chapters that need 5 or fewer new members to reach their goal (chapters #5, 20, 67, 85, 90, 97, 110, 126, and 129.) Let's all push for the best possible results. Above results as of 5/27. While recruiting new members is an extremely important responsibility for every chapter, an equally important function is getting more of our current members to become active and engage in chapter activities. My subject this month is volunteerism and member participation. I believe these are closely linked. We can use volunteerism to drive member participation and even new member recruitment.

What is volunteerism? It is the act of freely contributing one's time and labor to conduct community service or support a nonprofit organization, such as the DAV. It is the donating of personal time and energy towards a perceived greater cause. That greater cause being the welfare of their veteran brothers and sisters and their families. DAV Volunteers can help change the lives of those veterans in their immediate and greater community. In some cases, they can even save the life of a brother or sister in a crisis.

Volunteering is important because it enables our members to

help and to serve other veterans and their families. When individuals take the initiative to help other veterans in the community it can improve the community by creating tighter bonds and forming lasting relationships.

Unfortunately, volunteerism is on the decline. For decades, volunteerism in America has been declining. But according to a recent U.S. Census Bureau and AmeriCorps survey, it dropped another seven percentage points between 2019 and 2021. And our state, Florida, is experiencing the sharpest decline of all. Florida now ranks last among the fifty states with only 16% of residents donating their time.

This probably does not come as a surprise. I see it on my visits to chapters across the state. Some have difficulty getting enough members to attend monthly meetings to even achieve a quorum (attending chapter meetings is an act of volunteering.) Without active members there is little a chapter can achieve. There is little the chapter can do to serve their local veteran community.

So, what do we do? Give up? Or, maybe, call upon the warrior that might still reside within us and formulate a battle plan to take on and defeat the problem? Our success, or failure, could have a significant impact on the quality of life of many of the veterans in our communities.

First, let's talk about volunteering. Believe it – or not, the number one way to get people to volunteer (and to get them to attend meetings) is to 'ASK THEM.' The best rule for recruiting volunteers and increasing meeting attendance is that 'over communication is better than under communication'.

Increasing attendance at our monthly meetings is very closely associated with increasing volunteerism. There are things that we can do to drive attendance at our monthly meetings, which I believe is where we must start. Once we begin, once we get them to show up, we must capitalize on it by getting those individuals involved in chapter activities i.e.: volunteering. If you want them to come back to future meetings, they need to feel involved, needed, a part of your chapter, and appreciated.

I will address some specific communication strategies in my next column in the newsletter.





## DEPARTMENT JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER CHIP HANSON



Often referred to as "addiction," substance use disorder (SUD) is a disease that causes people to have difficulty controlling their use of alcohol, drugs, and other substances, including opioids. Untreated, this misuse can begin to influence many aspects of life.

Substance Abuse in Veterans, over one in ten US veterans, have been diagnosed with Substance Abuse disorder, and deployment is associated with risky behaviors and unhealthy behaviors like smoking, drinking, and drug use. After service, veterans are more susceptible to alcohol use (56%), with 7.5% heavily drinking or binge drinking. Around 30% smoke tobacco or vape. The period of readjustment and the stress of trying to reintegrate back into normal life, Substance Abuse in Veterans along with suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other issues due to relocation, deployment, and lack of sufficient support when returning home are all factors in veterans drug abuse statistics as well.

Substance use disorders (SUDs) are a significant problem among our nation's military veterans. In the following overview, we provide information on the prevalence of SUDs among military veterans, clinical characteristics of SUDs, options for screening and evidence-based treatment, as well as relevant treatment challenges. Among psychotherapeutic approaches, behavioral interventions for the management of SUDs typically involve short-term, cognitive-behavioral therapy interventions. These interventions focus on the identification and modification of maladaptive thoughts and behaviors associated with increased craving, use, or relapse to substances.

Additionally, client-centered motivational interviewing approaches focus on increasing motivation to engage in treatment and reduce substance use. A variety of pharmacotherapies have received some support in the management of SUDs, primarily to help with the reduction of craving or withdrawal symptoms. Currently approved medications as well as treatment challenges are discussed. Signs and Symptoms of SUD

- Increased urge to drink or to use drugs.
- Inability to stop drinking or using drugs.

- Drinking or using drugs in hazardous situations (e.g., drinking and driving).
- Change in relationships due to drinking or drug use.
- Feeling depressed or anxious about your substance use.
- Feeling sick and experiencing withdrawal symptoms when drinking or drug use stops.
- Increased tolerance refers to the need over time for more alcohol or stronger drugs to achieve the desired effect.

Once you learn to quit, it becomes a habit."

– Vince Lombardi

I hope to see you at our upcoming Department Convention in Lake Mary. I look forward to remaining your Department Junior Vice Commander at the upcoming election on Saturday, June 17. Safe travels to all and thank you for what you do for your chapter, our veterans and your community.



## DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN REVEREND JIM TAYLOR



The end of May always brings a time of reflection with Memorial Day and the Remembrance of those who have given all in service to our country. This pause is always important as I feel a great sense of gratitude for those who gave their life for me and this country. I also feel sadness toward those still suffering to understand why their friend died and they lived. Amid this reflection, time seems to stand still or even go backward to another time as one remembers. However, as we know the clock keeps moving forward. Words that seem to capture this struggle are found in *A Time for Everything*. In the verses of this poetic writing, it shows both times of pain coupled with times of happiness, or times of sorrow with times of joy. Some of the verses that strike me on Memorial Day include:

A time to kill and a time to heal,  
A time to weep and a time to laugh,  
A time to mourn and a time to dance,  
A time to hate and a time to love,  
A time for war and a time for peace.

We all face tragedy when life seems to be more than we can take. This is particularly true for combat veterans. During times of pain and suffering we can feel trapped in the memories of past moments. We have promised ourselves, "We Will Never Forget." The poem offers a way to not be stuck in the tragedy of past situations and to hold onto the possibility for change. Through acknowledging and accepting the past without being stuck in the past we can commit to a better future. We know we will never forget, but we can honor our past by committing to a different future. We can honor our past by committing to participating in making the future better. The best way to not be overwhelmed by a tragedy in our past is to know that our pain, loss, and suffering can be harnessed to become a source of beauty in the end. St. Ignatius of Loyola was a military man before he was a saint. His war experience was so traumatic he came close to suicide. But he used his pain to build the Jesuit Society. St. Francis of Assisi served in the military. The horrors and cruelty of war filled him with self-loathing and guilt. He used these experiences to power his work to establish the missionary work of the Franciscans and the Dominicans of the Middle Ages. These are just two examples of turning pain and suffering into healing and joy.

What is my point. Each of you in DAV has done the same as these two men. You may not reach sainthood, but you have reached out and rescued a fellow veteran. You have taken the pain of brothers in arms lost and helped heal the pain of another veteran. You have taken memories of hate for those who killed ones you served with and turned it into love of those who survived. You have taken times of mourning and turned them into dancing as you help a veteran get the benefits which change his or her life. You have taken time for war and turned it into a time for peace in the life of a fellow veteran.

Do you know the spouse of a service-connected disabled veteran in financial need? The DAV Auxiliary Service Program has been re-developed to provide a small measure of hope that lessens the weight of despair by paying on outstanding utility bills, mortgage/rent, medical bills, etc. The one-time maximum payment will be payable directly to the financial need on behalf of the surviving spouse. Please contact [dava@dav.org](mailto:dava@dav.org) or 833-368-1220 for additional information or to request an application.





## John Markiewicz Department Judge Advocate

Probably one of the most misunderstood officer positions in a Chapter is that of the Chapter Judge Advocate.

In the DAV Model Constitution and By-laws suggested provisions regarding officers and their duties, the duties of the Chapter Judge Advocate are defined as follows:

The Judge Advocate, upon the request of the Commander of the Chapter, shall render an opinion upon all parliamentary questions, upon any question arising out of any dispute upon the floor of the assembly, or concerning the interpretation of the Chapter Constitution and By-laws, or the Constitution or By-laws of the National or Department organizations. Upon receipt of his/her opinion, the Commander (or presiding officer, if the Commander is not in the chair) shall announce his/her ruling or decision, which need not be in accordance with the opinion of the Judge Advocate. Such decision shall be final and binding upon the Chapter unless (1) overruled by a two-thirds vote of the members at the meeting during which the decision is announced or (2) reversed upon an appeal taken to the next higher governing body within thirty (30) days after such decision is made known.

There are a number of key words or phrases contained in this short definition that are often missed or ignored:

1. "Upon the request of the Commander of the Chapter" means the Chapter Judge Advocate only renders an opinion when asked by the Chapter Commander or by the presiding officer if the Commander is not in the chair. The Judge Advocate can be ruled out of order if he/she interrupts with an unsolicited opinion.
2. The "opinion" is just that and the Chapter Commander or Presiding Officer is not bound by that opinion in any way.

3. The Judge advocate does not "rule" or "decide" on anything, only the Chapter Commander/Presiding Officer can make a "ruling or decision".
4. The Chapter Commander when announcing his/her ruling/decision "need not be in accordance" with the Chapter Judge Advocate's opinion.
5. The Chapter Commander's ruling or decision is "final" and can only be overruled by a two-thirds vote of the members "at the meeting when the ruling is announced" or "if the ruling is reversed upon an appeal taken to the next higher governing body (Department of Florida) within 30 days after the decision is announced".

To sum up, the Chapter Judge Advocate is there to provide parliamentary advice and assistance to the Chapter Commander (or presiding officer) when so requested. He/she has no authority beyond providing such assistance or advice when requested. He/she does not own the Chapter's or Auxiliary of the Chapter's Charter (as one Chapter Judge Advocate once attempted to tell me). Remember, the members voting in the meetings run the Chapter and the Chapter Commander runs/facilitates the meetings.





## Andy Marshall Department Adjutant

### HB 139 Benefits, Training, and Employment for Veterans and Their Spouses (2023 Session)

Benefits, Training, and Employment for Veterans and Their Spouses: Requires analysis of VETS Program; revises duties of DVA & Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to include assistance to veterans' spouses; revises purpose & duties of VETS Program to include assistance to veterans' spouses; requires Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to assist veterans or their spouses in accessing employment & licensure in health care professions; requires DOH to waive certain fees for veterans & their spouses; requires appropriate board or DOH to expedite health care licensure applications submitted by veterans; establishes Office of Veteran Licensure Services; provides appropriations & authorizes positions.

APPROPRIATION: \$399,565 Effective Date: July 1, 2023

05/02/23 SENATE

Withdrawn from Fiscal Policy; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading; Substituted for SB 0858; Read Second Time; Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 40 Yeas / 0 Nays)

### HB 339 Education of Dependents of Deceased or Disabled Servicemembers, Prisoners of War, and Persons Missing in Action (2023 Session)

Revises eligibility requirements for educational benefits provided by state to spouse or dependent child of deceased or disabled servicemember; revises eligibility requirements for educational benefits provided by state to dependent child of prisoner of war, person missing in action, or deceased or disabled servicemember who participated in certain military operations. Effective Date: July 1, 2023

05/04/23 SENATE

Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 39 Yeas / 0 Nays)

### SB 366 Dental Services for Indigent Veterans (2023 Session)

Dental Services for Indigent Veterans; Establishing the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program within the Department of Veterans' Affairs; requiring the department to contract with a direct-support organization to administer the program; requiring the department to use a specified standard for determining indigency, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2023

04/25/23 SENATE

Favorable by Appropriations; 18 Yeas, 0 Nays

05/02/23 SENATE

Read Second Time; Substituted for HB 0635; Laid on Table, Refer to HB 0635

### HB 485 Veterans' Services and Recognition (2023 Session)

Veterans' Services and Recognition: Creates Division of Long-term Care within DVA; revises qualifications for county & city veteran service officers; creates "Veterans' Adult Day Health Care of Florida Act"; provides for appointment, qualifications, duties, & responsibilities of program operator; establishes nondiscrimination policy; provides program admittance eligibility & priority; provides for audits, inspections, & operational standards; designates "Veterans Week." Effective Date: July 1, 2023

04/10/23 HOUSE

Favorable by Health & Human Services Committee; 16 Yeas, 0 Nays

05/01/23 SENATE

Withdrawn from Fiscal Policy; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading; Substituted for SB 0824; Read Second Time; Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 37 Yeas / 0 Nays)



## Adjutant's Column Continued

### HB 717 Property Tax Exemptions (2023 Session)

Property Tax Exemptions: Specifies that veterans & surviving spouses are entitled to certain refund; specifies that surviving spouse may choose to transfer certain exemptions. Effective Date: July 1, 2023

04/11/23 Favorable by State Affairs Committee 18 Yeas 0 Nays

05/05/23 Died in Appropriations

### SB 672 Homestead Property Tax Exemptions (2023 Session)

Homestead Property Tax Exemptions; Specifying that certain permanently and totally disabled veterans or their surviving spouses are entitled to, rather than may receive, a prorated refund of ad valorem taxes paid under certain circumstances, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2023

03/23/23 In Appropriations

05/05/23 Died in Appropriations

### HB 8027 Fiftieth Anniversary of Departure of United States Combat Troops from Vietnam (2023 Session)

Fiftieth Anniversary of Departure of United States Combat Troops from Vietnam: Resolution honoring servicemembers of United States & of Republic of Vietnam on occasion of 50th anniversary of departure of United States combat troops from Vietnam. Effective Date: Not Specified.

### Accessing Veterans' records from the National Archives or National Personnel Records Center

Are you looking for your service records, or those of a family member? The National Archives in St. Louis, MO, is the official repository of millions of records for all military personnel—from all service branches—who served during the late 19th and 20th century.

Archival records: The National Archives at St. Louis maintains Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) of those service members that were discharged, retired or deceased 62 years from the current date. These records belong to the National Archives and become archival 62 years after the service member's separation from the military. This is a rolling date. For example, the current year (2023) minus 62 years is 1961. Therefore, records with a discharge date of 1961 and prior are archival and open to the public. Additionally, various records of Persons of Exceptional Prominence (PEP) are also archival and open to the public. Requests for archival records do not require a signature.

A [fire in 1973 destroyed 80% of Army personnel records from 1912 to 1960 and 75% of our Air Force records from 1947 to 1964, with names alphabetically after Hubbard, James E.](#) Please keep in mind when requesting a record from these particular service branches that the record may be fire related and require preservation treatment. If this is the case, it will take several weeks to either receive a copy of the record, if requested by mail, or view the record in the archival research room, if visiting our facility.

#### Non-archival records:

Records of individuals who left service less than 62 years ago are not yet archival. These non-archival records are maintained at the National Personnel Records Center, but remain in the legal custody of the military service departments. A non-archival OMPF is open to the Veteran, the next of kin or to a third-party requester who has the Veteran's written authorization. [Under the provisions of FOIA, the general public may only obtain limited information from these records.](#) Requests for non-archival records must be signed and dated.

A request for military personnel record, archival or non-archival, should include:

The Veteran's complete name used in service  
Service Number  
Branch of Service  
Date and place of birth  
Dates of Service

For archival or non-archival requests, submit a letter or Standard Form 180 with the above information to:

NPRC  
1 Archives Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63138

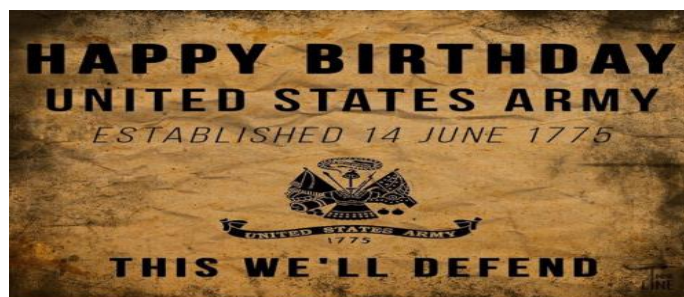


## Calendar of Events

June 14 Flag Day



June 14 Army Birthday



Happy B Day to our Brothers  
and Sisters in Arms in the US  
Army!

June 15-18 Department Convention



June 18 Father's Day



### US Congress Senate Bill 1314

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify the definition of spouse and surviving spouse to include all individuals lawfully married, and for other purposes.

2023-04-26 Senate Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

### US Congress Senate Bill 1100

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the inclusion of certain emblems on headstones and markers furnished for veterans by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

### US Congress Senate Bill 592

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the mileage rate offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs through their Beneficiary Travel program for health-related travel, and for other purposes.

2023-03-01 Senate Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

### US Congress Senate Bill 449

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the assignment of patient advocates at medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

2023-02-15 Senate Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

### US Congress House Bill 3790

To amend title 38, United States Code, to extend increased dependency and indemnity compensation paid to surviving spouses of veterans who die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, regardless of how long the veterans had such disease prior to death.

2023-06-01 House Referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) has rolled out a new Veteran ID Card for veterans who are 100% permanent and totally disabled and reside in Florida. The ID not only provides basic veteran information, but also provides critical phone numbers for veterans in crisis and contact information to file a claim or receive benefits assistance. Veterans can go to their nearest FDVA service office supported by a supervisor, to receive assistance with obtaining the ID card.

If FDVA does not hold the veteran's power of attorney, the FDVA Supervisor will require:

- the veteran to bring a copy of their VA rating decision
- the veteran's Florida driver license or ID for address verification.

In the event the veteran is unable to meet with a FDVA Supervisor in person, they can request the ID card via email by providing their SSN, a copy of their VA rating decision, a copy of their Florida driver license, and a photo directly to [FDVA.VeteranID@fdva.fl.gov](mailto:FDVA.VeteranID@fdva.fl.gov). If no documents are provided to support the ID request, FDVA will request verification from the VA, thus delaying issuance of the ID card. For a list of FDVA offices and phone numbers, please go to [www.floridavets.org](http://www.floridavets.org) and click the Locations button at the top, and then click Claim Examiner Sites on the left.

If you need a copy of the 2023 edition of the *Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide*, please visit <https://floridavets.org/resources/va-benefits-guide/> for options on obtaining a copy.

Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson opened a new [Operation Outdoor Freedom](#) facility on April 26. It is solely dedicated to offering wounded Veterans recreational opportunities free of charge. This new facility, located at Pine Log State Forest in Washington County, consists of 620 acres and a fully ADA-complaint building that can house and feed 12 Veterans during outdoor events. To read more, click [here](#).

This new Operation Outdoor Freedom property will soon host recreational events, including deer, turkey, dove, and hog hunts; freshwater fishing, nearby saltwater fishing; and other recreation activities, such as kayaking, hiking, and camping.

Operation These facilities have bunk houses, outdoor kitchens, dining areas, fire pits, and restroom facilities. Operation Outdoor Freedom outfitted the facilities to accommodate the needs of every wounded veteran participating in the program.



Adjutant's Column Continued

## Florida VA grant program for nonprofits will fund dental care for more Florida veterans

Governor Ron DeSantis has signed a [bill](#) that will create the Veterans Dental Care Grant Program within the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs to offer more grant money for eligible nonprofits to apply for who provide dental care to Florida veterans.

"About 85% of the veterans do not receive dental care through the VA. You have to be 100% disabled or have an oral injury at the time of being in service," Tami Martin, with Wounded Veterans Relief Fund, said.

Martin said the nonprofit is the first in Florida to offer free critical dental care to veterans across the state, helping to fill the gaps beyond local resources that may serve veterans in a single county.

Wounded Veterans Relief Fund reports it has funded more than \$1 million for veteran dental care since the start of its program two years ago.

With the passage of the bill that will allow nonprofits to apply for more grant money through the VA, Martin said, "We would be able to help hundreds of more veterans."

[Senator Danny Burgess](#) sponsored the bill.

"At the state level, we're addressing a big need," he said.

Burgess, a veteran himself, saw that need when he served as the [Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Executive Director](#) from 2018-2020.

"It's a public/private partnership through the Department of Veterans Affairs, any state funding that is appropriated would then flow down to these great nonprofits who could apply to provide greater service and more benefit to the veterans within their respective communities. They know best the needs of those veterans," Burgess said.

## Florida Freedom Summer sales tax holiday underway: Here's what's included

The Florida Freedom Summer sales tax holiday started on Monday, allowing Florida shoppers to skip paying sales tax on a variety of event tickets and outdoor items.

The sales tax holiday, which runs May 29 to Sept. 4, applies to admission to music, sporting and cultural events; state park annual passes; certain boating and water activity supplies; athletic equipment and more.

According to the Florida Department of Revenue, the 2022 Freedom Summer sales tax holiday saved Floridians an estimated \$106 million, which was a slight increase from the \$105.3 million saved in 2021.

The most popular items purchased during the sales tax holiday last year were sporting goods followed by camping supplies and children's toys.

[Click here](#) for a full list of what's included in the sales tax holiday.

### Department Convention Information

Department Officer Candidate Questionnaires for the upcoming Department Election have been received from the following members:

|                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Commander             | Brenda Reed         |
| Senior Vice Commander | Laymond Rose        |
| Junior Vice Commander | Chip Hanson         |
| Judge Advocate        | John Markiewicz     |
| Chaplain              | Reverend Jim Taylor |
| Finance Committee     | John Raber          |

All questionnaires will be in the folders provided to the Department Nominating Committee. Each Area will elect two delegates to the Nominating Committee and the Department Commander will appoint one member to serve as delegate.

Areas 1, 3, & 5 will elect one member to serve on the Department Executive Committee and one member to serve as Alternate Department Executive Committee member this convention.



Chapters visited by Department Officers since June 2022: 11, 13 (x3), 17, 18 (X3), 23, 30, 32 (X2), 38, 49, 67, 78 (X4), 83, 84, 85, 86, 87 (X4), 90, 97, 101, 109, 123, 129, 158



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