



**5<sup>th</sup> District Meeting at Post 129 at 1400**

**Date: 10 December, 2023**

Meeting was opened in due form by District Commander Miguel Garcia, with the advancing of colors by the Sandalwood AFJROTC Color Guard with the salute to the flag. The Sandalwood AFJROTC Flag Team held a flag folding ceremony after the Color Guard presentation in front of all members present. The meeting continued with the Chaplain's opening prayer, POW/MIA Resolution, observed a moment of silence, the pledge of allegiance and reciting the Preamble of the American Legion.

Adjutant announced that the meeting was being recorded.

**Roll Call of Posts by Adjutant Reaves:** 13 Posts attending and 8 Commanders

**Minutes:** Motion was made to accept minutes of 12 November, 2023 meeting as posted on the District Website. Motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

**Correspondence:** Adjutant Reaves read an Endorsement for Joe Maichle for the High Office of 5<sup>th</sup> District, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander for the 2024-2025 Legion year.

**INTRODUCTION OF DISTRICT OFFICERS AND GUESTS:**

Vice Commander Joe Maichle  
Vice Commander Randy Whisman, absent/excused  
Adjutant Deveron Reaves  
Assistant Adjutant Sonny Kirkwood, absent/excused  
Finance Officer Nancy Senter  
Chaplain Brian Hancher  
Historian Toshiko Moultrie  
Judge Advocate Troy Horsley, absent/excused  
Sgt-at-Arms Walter Rasco  
Sgt-at-Arms Tim Pratt  
Service Officer Eduardo Silva

Guests: ALR 5<sup>th</sup> District Chairman, Zane Koonce; Past National Commander, Clarence Hill; 3<sup>rd</sup> District Commander, Stuart Scott; SAL NEC, Bill Kelly; ALR Department Chairman, Jim Wineland; Northern Area Commander, Lena Heredia-Perez; Florida NECA, Jerry Brandt; Department First Vice Commander, Chris Hamrick and Department Commander, Michael Raymond were recognized in attendance.

The following guests spoke to the members present:

- Department Commander Raymond spoke on several items:
  - Mentioned he recently joined The American Legion Auxiliary. Now, he is a 'Quad Member'!
  - Thanked the 5<sup>th</sup> District for an outstanding visit. He has enjoyed time and the meals at the different Posts in the 5<sup>th</sup> District.
  - Please remember that programs are very important. This includes membership (that looks great within the district, by the way) and is past last year's numbers. Programs won't do well without membership. Keep up the great work.
  - The Law Cadet program and is the top program for High School Juniors and Seniors. They will receive training in Tallahassee with State Troopers and will participate in ride a-longs with them. It is an expensive program, but well worth it. Only 10% of the participants that go through it wind up becoming going into Law Enforcement. Bud Boyer, from the Southwest Area, is the Program chairman if you need more information. There will be more brochures available at a later date.
  - We are currently raising money for Boys State. The current cost is \$450 and may be going up. There is a plan about putting together a Boys State Alumni Association in Florida and will be starting soon. Michael Jordan is a Boys State graduate and lives in the Tampa area. This will help the Boys State Program and keep the burden off of many of the Posts. Please get the word out. Several other states have an Alumni Association and have over \$2.5 million in the bank. This will help pay for transportation and other incidentals. Randy Holyfield, from the Tampa area, is sending out invitations to all past attendees and will be held in Plant City for an Alumni Dinner to be held in March/April timeframe. We will start this year as a grass roots situation to get it off the ground.
  - Make Buddy Check calls to make sure they are okay. It is pretty important.
  - Let's finish this year off strong!
- NECA Jerry Brandt spoke on several items:
  - Mentioned about an unfortunate situation involving a Post not allowing a female Veteran to bring in a Service Animal. There is a difference between a Service Animal and a pet. The situation has been resolved.
  - Renewing membership is a key! You can do it online. Check your current dues amounts. The National organization dues will increase \$5 starting next year. At this time, we are not sure about the Department of Florida yet.
  - You will be able to renew for three (3) years in advance if you have not renewed for 2024 if you pay online.
  - The National Commander will be visiting Florida 21-29 January, 2024. He will attend the Southern Area Ball during his visit. If you want to speak with him, sign-up to attend the Southern Area Ball.
  - Make sure your Post dues will be covered to handle the increase from National to continue operation of your Post home.

Post 129 Commander, Joe Maichle, was escorted to the podium to give his welcoming speech to the members present. Thanked everyone in attendance today as well as everyone who attended last night's festivities. He also mentioned the Post's slogan "Friendliest Post on the First Coast" that he started around seven (7) years ago. Commander Maichle was escorted back to his seat after his remarks.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS:**

A) ALR	Zane Koonce
B) Americanism	Robert Brewster, absent/excused
C) Baseball	Mark "Shannon" Wolford, absent/excused
D) Boy Scouts	Joe Maichle
E) Boys State	Michael Flanagan
F) Blood Donor	Mark "Shannon" Wolford, absent/excused
G) Children and Youth	Lena Heredia-Perez
H) Disaster Prep	Shawn Beal
I) FHP Cadet Academy	Robert Brewster, absent/excused
J) Law and Order	Barry Litsky
K) Oratorical	Cindy Anderson
L) POW/MIA	Denny Luke
M) SAL Advisor	Walter Rasco
N) School Medals	Deveron Reaves
O) Shooting Sports	James Nelson, absent/excused
P) Social Media	Virna Luke, absent/excused
Q) Website	John Padgette, absent/excused

#### **REPORTS FROM DISTRICT CHAIRPERSONS:**

- A) **ALR, Zane Koonce**, there are currently 414 Legionnaires, 229 Auxiliary, 142 SAL for a total of 785 members within the 5<sup>th</sup> District. So far, 483,040.3 miles, 47,648 hours volunteered and \$102,723.36 in donations have been calculated for the year. These numbers have been calculated starting in June, 2023. This is only halfway!
- B) **Americanism, Robert Brewster**, absent. No report given.
- C) **Baseball, Mark "Shannon" Wolford**, absent. No report given.
- D) **Boy Scouts, Joe Maichle**, no report at this time.
- E) **Boys State, Michael Flanagan**, payment is due on 3 January, 2024 for your candidates and will need a response as soon as possible if you are sending anyone. There are no more quotas required. Whatever your Post can afford to send will be accepted. Commander Garcia added that he would love to see more going since there are no more quotas.
- F) **Blood Donor, Mark "Shannon" Wolford**, absent. No report given.
- G) **Children & Youth, Lena Heredia-Perez**, no report at this time.
- H) **Disaster Prep, Shawn Beal**, good news is that our area was pretty unscathed during the hurricane season. On the KMAR side, this is getting into the busy time of the year. The next meeting will be held at Post 250 on 9 January, 2024. We are finalizing preparations for the Winter field day. The Orange Park Radio Club will be joining the group at that event. For the Summer field day, it will probably

will be acting as a solo event. It will be operating out of Post 250 and will continue to check equipment to make sure they are operational. There were several hiccups involved in which we had to switch out the repeaters in Orange Park to get them in working order and to have a backup.

- I) **FHP Cadet Academy, Robert Brewster**, absent. No report given.
- J) **Law and Order, Barry Litsky**, no report at this time.
- K) **Oratorical, Cindy Anderson**, Post contestant information are due by 21 January, 2024. You still have time to submit your information.
- L) **POW/MIA, Denny Luke**, DPAA reported that 12 souls have been repatriated. There was a Facebook page created for one (1) soul from Leesburg to be escorted to the National Cemetery.
- M) **SAL Advisor, Walter Rasco**, there are two (2) Squadrons that have reached 100%. The other fifteen Squadrons within the 5<sup>th</sup> District are above the goal for December. There are nine (9) Squadrons that are past the January goal. Currently, the 5<sup>th</sup> District and the Northern Area have met the December goal.
- N) **School Medals, Deveron Reaves**, make sure your Post has sent in a name to have a designated chairman so they can receive the necessary information for your local schools. Your Post should have at least one program that you run and School Medals is perfect because it also falls under Children and Youth as well as Americanism. Also thanked Department Commander Raymond for being appointed as Department School Medals Chairman. If you need help, please let me know.
- O) **Shooting Sports, James Nelson**, Absent. No report given.
- P) **Social Media, Virna Luke**, Absent. No report given.
- Q) **Website, John Padgett**, Absent. No report given.

**FINANCE REPORT:**

Finance Officer Nancy Senter reported on the complete finances of the 5th District as follows:

**5th District Financial Report for November, 2023**

Previous Account Balance – Checking \$ 9,987.37  
(Beginning 1 November, 2023)

**Deposits**

- **Interest accrued** \$ 0.82
- **50/50 Proceeds and sign-in** \$ 81.00

**Total Deposits** \$ 81.82

**(Note: \$50.00 is kept on hand to make change at meetings)**

**Withdrawals - (None – No Outstanding Checks)**

**Total Withdrawals** \$ 0.00

**Checking account ending balance as of 1 December, 2023** \$ 10,069.19

**Previous Saving Account Balance as of 1 November, 2023** \$ 3,207.86

**Interest earned** \$ 0.26

**Savings account ending balance as of** \$ 3,208.12

<b>Previous CD balance</b>	\$ 572.25
<b>Interest earned – November, 2023</b>	\$ 1.51
<b>CD Balance as of 1 December, 2023</b>	<u>\$ 573.76</u>

A motion was made to accept the finance report as stated, subject to audit. Motion was seconded and passed by the members present.

**DISTRICT VICE COMMANDER’S REPORT (MEMBERSHIP):**

Vice Commander Maichle reported on the following information:

- The 5<sup>th</sup> District is in 14<sup>th</sup> place in the Department at 71.88%
- There are two (2) Posts over 80%, and nine (9) that are over 70%, four (4) Posts that are over 75% by 6 December, 2023. Congratulations to Posts 194, 37, 54, and 372. Great job!
- The numbers haven’t caught up yet, but keep working on them. There is a lag time; the numbers will change
- Keep up with doing Buddy Checks. Call them up and talk to them.
- Post 233 is back up and doing very well. They are open on a limited basis. Their membership is at 55.89% and is back on track.

**DISTRICT COMMANDER’S REPORT:**

Commander Miguel Garcia reported on the following information:

- Thanked the Department Commander for accepting our visit. Thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to showcase the 5<sup>th</sup> District to the Department Commander.
- The Department Commander undoubtedly will leave the 5<sup>th</sup> District with an understanding what the Posts do for the Veterans, their families, community and anyone else that will allow us to help because that’s how we roll in the 5<sup>th</sup> District!
- I am so proud of the Posts in their hearty welcome! We are here for each other! All Posts showed up at their scheduled times. Questions were asked and answered very well.
- Special thanks to the following Posts for preplanned meals and well fed: 250, 194, 316, 283, 401, 129 and 9
- Went to the USS Orleck for a humble visit to understand Navy life aboard and what it is really about.
- Buddy Checks are important, especially during the holidays, whether they are a member or not. Make sure they are okay and make those calls! That’s what they do! They shouldn’t be lonely. Service Officers are a must! Service Officers deal with everyone who comes through the door, no matter who are what. That’s what they are trained to do.
- The Northern Area Ball will be held on 13 January, 2024 at Post 57 in Lake City. Please support Commander Heredia-Perez in which it’s for Boys State and Girls State, that’s what it is all about.

**POST REPORTS (should be written and submitted to the Adjutant to include Membership percentage and upcoming Post events)**

## **ANYTHING FOR THE GOOD OF THE LEGION:**

The following was brought up under Anything for the Good:

- American Legion Auxiliary Department Community Service Chairman, Bridgette Greene, spoke about The American Legion Family Day. There is a big push from the American Legion National organization. She read a quote from the Legion National Commander, Daniel Seehafer, in which the National Executive Committee unanimously passed Resolution 7 to create American Legion Family Day. It will be observed annually on the last Saturday in April. Open your doors to the community! This is to encourage education and community bonding. This year it will be held on 27 April, 2024. Awards will be presented for the best Post that promotes American Legion Family Day the best. Designate 4-6 hours for this day and have a team together to form a committee to plan out an event for that day. Have a speaker and/or some type of entertainment. Have one (1) person as your point of contact for visitors and guests.
- Northern Area Commander Heredia-Perez reiterated the challenge presented before on doing something during Children and Youth month in which these falls in line for the time of the year.
- Clay "Chief Chopper" Adams (Active-Duty SCPO, USN) spoke about being new to The American Legion as a member of Post 54 and the information he has gathered from a lot of people. One thing is to reach out to the Active-duty members. Use social media to get the word out about what The American Legion does. There are a lot of members that don't know what the Legion is about. There are 75,000 military members and their families just in the Jacksonville area. The Volunteer Service Medal is awarded to Service members for community service. Fundraising is available for the chopper to sit at your Post for up to a month.
- Post 137 member, Ron Robbs, spoke about hosting 2200+ Gold Star children and their families for the recent Snowball Express event held in Orlando, FL. There was \$52,400 raised in donations. The Woodford Insurance Group donated \$10,000 on their own. The program keeps growing every year and help is always needed.
- The Department ALR Chairman, Jim Wineland, thanked the 5<sup>th</sup> District for all the hard work that was done throughout the year.
- SAL NEC, Bill Kelly, mentioned that he had received the Veteran's Advocate of the Year from The American Legion for the Sons of the American Legion. The award was accepted on your behalf. The Department of Florida, the Florida Auxiliary and the Detachment of Florida teamed up to join the Voter Voice. This is the American Legion's way of getting to our legislators at National. Sign up for Voter Voice if you haven't already. Thanked the Legion for all their support.
- Northern Area Commander Heredia-Perez spoke on the monies raised for the Hillbilly Hoedown that will be held on 20 January, 2024 at Post 117, Palm Bay, FL, will go to help with the Department Commanders Charities. There will be a ceremony on 21 January, 2024 to honor Tim Morris. Help is always welcome, especially with cooking on the big grill.

- Post 202 thanked the 5<sup>th</sup> District family all their help and support to help a homeless Veteran family in Palatka, FL with \$6000 in donations and \$4000 in other necessities.
- Commander Garcia gathered the individuals in front of the podium that wanted to enter the Annual Ugly Sweater Contest. Remember, cute and flashy are not “ugly”. First, Second, Third Place and Honorable Mention will be awarded by applause from the members present. The results are as follows:
  - First Place – Post 37 Commander, Jim Bragg
  - Second Place – POW/MIA Chairman, Denny Luke
  - Third Place – Post 54 Commander, William Bradshaw
  - Honorable Mention – Department Commander, Michael Gambler

Meeting was closed in due form by District Commander Miguel Garcia, Chaplain's closing prayer, retrieval of the POW/MIA flag and the salute to the flag.

**MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 1525 WITH THE CLOSING PRAYER.**

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Northern Area Ball – 13 January, 2024 at Post 57, Lake City**

**Next District Meeting – 14 January, 2024 at Post 194, St. Augustine**

**Hillbilly Hoedown – 20 January, 2024, at Post 117, Palm Bay**

**5<sup>th</sup> District Training – 16 March, 2024 at Post 137, Jacksonville**

**Legion Family Day – 27 April, 2024**

For God and Country,  
Respectfully Submitted,  
Ron Reaves, 5<sup>th</sup> District Adjutant